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Women's Participation and Wellbeing in Weekly Food Markets: Gendered Insights from Dar es Salaam's Urban Peripheries, Tanzania

Weekly Food Markets (WFMs) are an increasingly important feature of urban food systems in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the underserved peripheries of rapidly growing cities. In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, WFMs serve as critical access points for affordable and diverse foods. Despite their importance, the gendered dynamics within these markets remain underexplored. This study investigates women's participation and wellbeing in WFMs, focusing on how socio-cultural norms, institutional arrangements, and structural barriers shape their engagement and economic outcomes. Drawing on mixed-methods research, including a cross-sectional survey of 381 vendors and 506 buyers across 31 WFMs, as well as focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the study applies the Social Relations Approach (SRA) to gender analysis. This framework allows for a nuanced examination of gendered access to resources, decision-making autonomy, and power dynamics within WFM environments. By focusing on WFMs—an emerging, municipally governed yet informally structured food retail model—this study aims to contribute new insights into the intersection of gender, market governance, and urban food provisioning. The findings will be particularly important for policy frameworks that recognize and support the unique role of women in WFMs and that promote inclusive urban food systems. Enhancing women's income stability, mobility, and autonomy within these spaces is key to realizing more equitable urban development and food security outcomes.

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