



Urban Food Markets: A New Leisure Phenomenon in South Africa

Ms. Simone Naicker and Professor Jayne M Rogerson
Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies
University of Johannesburg
Kingsway Campus
Auckland Park
Johannesburg
Email: jayner@uj.ac.za

Corresponding author*

Abstract

Cities are multi-purpose tourism destinations. The objective in this paper is to examine an emerging new phenomenon in the leisure tourism economies of South African cities, namely the growth of food markets – sometimes referred to as farmers’ markets – which are attracting international and local attention as new foci for leisure and recreation. During the past two decades an increasing number of food markets have appeared in several South African cities with many flourishing as leisure foci for both local residents and tourists. Economic impact studies would certainly show economic stimulus accruing from such markets. The extent and characteristics of food markets in Gauteng and food market entrepreneurs are under scrutiny in this investigation.

Keywords: Urban tourism, farmers markets, food markets, entrepreneurs, Gauteng Province

Introduction

The importance of cities as tourism destinations is acknowledged with an extensive international scholarship (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2017; Coca-Stefaniak, et al. 2016; Colomb & Novy, 2016; Frenzel et al., 2012; Frenzel, 2016; Füller & Michel, 2014; Hoffman et al. 2003; Page & Hall, 2003; Wickens, 2017). Large urban centres are seen as multi-purposed tourism destinations with people travelling to them for several different motives including business, leisure and entertainment, to visit friends and relatives (VFR) or for health or religious reasons (Law, 1992, 1993, 1996). Innovation and new product development is a significant dimension of the vitality of large city destinations including the urban centres in South Africa (Booyens & Rogerson, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). One recent analysis of city tourism in South Africa confirmed that the country’s 30 cities (the metropolitan areas and secondary cities) are central nodes in the national tourism space economy and in particular for indicators of tourism spend (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Although VFR tourism is the largest single component of purpose of travel to city destinations the volume of tourism spend is mainly accounted for by business and leisure travel (Rogerson, 2014; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017; Rogerson & Visser, 2007; Visser, 2016).

The objective in this paper is to examine one emerging new phenomenon in the leisure tourism economies of South African cities namely the growth of food markets. The discussion is thus upon this growth area – sometimes referred to as farmers’ markets – which are attracting attention as new foci for leisure and recreation (Farmer et al., 2011; Hall & Gosling, 2013; Hall & Sharples, 2008). In recent times a range of food markets have made an appearance in several South African cities with many flourishing as leisure foci for both local residents and tourists. For example, in Cape Town the most well-known, we find the Neighbourgoods Market, the Bluebird Garage Food and Goods Market, the Bay Harbour Market in Hout Bay; and, the Oranjezicht City Farm Market. Other notable examples are Stellenbosch Slow Market, the Shongweni Farmers’ and Craft Market, the Durban Food Market, and in Pretoria the Boeremark and Hazel Food Market. It is significant that these food markets have garnered



recognition from South African Tourism as innovative tourism products. South African Tourism is seeking to align them as part of food tourism and as such further promoting the country's food culture to international visitors. Food markets as a component of food tourism are viewed as part of the diversification of the country's tourism product away from "the traditional offerings of wildlife, sun and sea" (South African Tourism, 2017a).

It is observed that the country's strong food culture "finds expression in a wide array of food markets around the country offering the best in fresh local and artisanal produce" (South African Tourism, 2017a). International visitors to the country's cities are encouraged to add these food markets to their leisure activities and are recommended strongly to "experience one of these food markets" (South African Tourism, 2017a). The appeal of these markets is described as follows: "These markets make for a fabulous morning or afternoon (or evening) out, allowing visitors to browse the stalls, enjoy the goods on offer and socialise. Many of these markets also offer live entertainment, so you can settle in and enjoy the day. Try and buy artisanal gourmet foods; sweet treats; handcrafted beer; freshly baked breads; home-made cheeses; jams and preserves; mouth-watering pies; organic produce; health products and much more. You can enjoy the goods at the market while you soak up the atmosphere, or take them with you to enjoy at a later stage" (South African Tourism, 2017a).

Notwithstanding the rise of food markets and of their appeal to leisure travellers and food tourists, as yet, the emergence and workings of these markets have attracted minimal attention in South African tourism scholarship. It is against this backdrop of neglect that this paper offers an exploratory analysis of the state of food markets in Gauteng, South Africa's economic heartland and an important urban tourism focus (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017). More specifically, the task in this paper, is to document the extent and characteristics of food markets in Gauteng and of the market entrepreneurs. The setting for this investigation is the international scholarship around the growth of farmers' markets which is examined in the next section of the discussion.

Farmers Markets and Food Markets: International Debates

Farmers markets represent a form of local and alternative food system that support local producers as well as promoting healthy eating and additionally can serve as a source of food security for a region (Hall, 2008). Arguably, farmers' markets are the best example of a local food system as is evidenced in countries such as the USA, New Zealand and Canada to name a few. According to Hall & Sharples (2008) there are many definitions of farmers' markets which has proven problematic because several markets advertise themselves as farmers' markets, but in reality, they are not functioning as such (Hall & Sharples, 2008; Silkes, 2012). Among the core characteristics of farmers' markets, following Hall & Sharples (2008) and Silkes (2012), are the freshness, abundance and quality of the food products; its local character; a fun environment for family; its emphasis on seasonally and local grown produce; high proportion of products which are home-made and home-grown (such as preserves, baked goods and meat) thus the vendors are primary producers and more value is provided to the products; The markets sometimes take place in the open-air, and often this is once or twice a week. They are supported by local residents and generally provide an organic experience for visitors. They often serve as an information-exchange venues for good nutrition and health issues (Holm et al., 2013).

According to Hall (2008) farmers' markets essentially comprise a local component which can be defined by national and regional farmers' market organisations. These organisations make use of terms such as 'local' and 'fresh' which indicate that the food has been transported via short distances from where it originally came from (Hall, 2008; Sims, 2009). For some observers, farmers' markets are not a new phenomenon and can be traced back many years (Trobe, 2001; Turner & Hope, 2014). In some countries, however, the appearance of farmers' markets has been shown to be of recent origin. For example, Hall (2008) draws attention to



the fact that it was only in 1998 that the first farmers' market opened up in New Zealand. Likewise, in post-Communist Eastern Europe, farmers' markets are a new phenomenon (Spilkova & Perlin, 2013). Recent research in Czechia has disclosed the novelty of farmers' markets in that country and especially of their phenomenal growth in surroundings around Prague (Spilkova & Perlin, 2013; Spilkova et al., 2013).

Seen from one perspective, food markets constitute a form of local culinary system that can promote sustainability as well as local food security (Hall & Gossling 2013). Overall, they have become an important component of local food distribution, allowing for easy access to food by local communities (Spilkova et al., 2013). The organic foods offered at food markets also sustain human health and enable consumers to become more environmentally conscious (Hall & Gossling, 2013). One of the functions of farmers' markets is their role in local food systems as related to civic agriculture. Civic agriculture is a concept that highlights community economic development and the social and environmental goals of a community (Hall & Sharples, 2008; Turner & Hope, 2014). Therefore, farmers' markets form an essential element in civic agriculture because they bring about uniqueness to a specific community, allowing it to be distinctive from others (Schnell, 2007). According to Feagan & Morris (2009: 235) in the USA, Canada and Britain farmers markets are often viewed as one key response to the unsustainability of conventional food production systems as they furnish consumers with "a potentially more comprehensive valuation venue for their food purchases".

Food markets are also a form of food event which play a significant role in international, national and regional tourism as well as in food and wine marketing and promotion strategies (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Food events are one of the most sustainable forms of tourism, as they reduce environmental impacts associated with consumption and production, most specifically in terms of farmers' markets. The primary function of food events is to make available a chance for food products and associated destinations to assure a level of good reputation and this aids their sustainability (Hall & Sharples, 2008). The secondary functions of food events can be defined from demand and a production angles. Food events, from a demand angle, function to bring about the development and promotion of products, firms and destination brand values, maintaining customer relationships, inspiring new consumers, teaching and informing consumers as well as increasing visitation through promotion (Hall & Sharples, 2008). On the other hand, the production angle of food events, promotes enhanced methods of production and product quality, minimising supply chains, and encouraging sustainable agricultural development with specific regard to the growth of farmers' markets (Hall & Sharples, 2008).

The positive impacts of local food events are underscored in elements such as 'buying local' as a way to reduce the distances at which food travels and therefore to temper environmental impacts (for example, air pollution) (Feagan, 2007; Hall & Sharples, 2008). The diversity of food markets and the communities they serve is an important consideration, as they can become the heart and soul of a local community, display its common ground and diverse offerings from a culinary perspective, and become a place where people easily interact, in a spirit of vibrant and social and economic activity.

Other ways in which this concept is portrayed is through the support given to local producers by consumers. Food events that best demonstrate these aspects of ethical consumerism include farmers' markets, which are the most prominent type of local food events. Local food events can be described in terms of local food systems which refers "to deliberate formed systems that are characterised by close producer-consumer relationships within a designated place or local area" (Hall & Sharples, 2008:27). Such local food systems foster long-term connections; meet economic, social, health and environmental requirements; connect producers and markets through local focused infrastructure; promote environmental health; and, also make provision for a competitive advantage to local food businesses (Schnell, 2007).

Overall, it is argued the strengthening of local food systems can help boost a local economy since a reduced amount of money is directed towards producers and organisations that are



not embedded within the local region (Schnell, 2007). Accordingly, local businesses receive this money, the local agricultural sector is able to develop more effectively and a variety of jobs may be created within local communities. The food producers, farmers or stall holders benefit from the profits they receive from the local residents and in turn local residents share the privilege of eating freshly harvested food sources, which are often of better quality than those from a supermarket or other retail outlet (Feagan, 2007). In certain areas, it is stressed that these localised food products ensure a sense of food security for local communities and help meet a range of other community needs more effectively than globalised food systems (Feagan, 2007). At farmers' markets in the USA the research by Alkon (2008a, 2008b) highlights that managers, vendors and customers stress the ethical motivations of participating at such markets as compared to purchasing the outputs of capitalist industrial agriculture. The potential economic impacts of food markets and farmers markets include for example, inter alia, direct benefits such as profits for business owners in the market, job creation opportunities, sales and of course added tax revenues. There are also indirect benefits such as stimulating the development of otherwise unvisited areas. Arguably, therefore farmers' markets assume a significant role in linking producers with consumers, hence leading to the establishment of a local foodshed (Hall & Gossling, 2013; Schnell, 2007). For Silkes (2012) these markets reflect the uniqueness and originality of localities and enable the distinctiveness between communities to be recognised. In common with other community-based food events, farmers' markets are a source of entrepreneurship and allow for the development of local entrepreneurial skills. For example, micro-entrepreneurship is characterised by the various stalls at farmers' markets with the majority of the vendors operating their first business venture at farmers' markets. As many of these vendors do not have the money to open up a retail store the farmers' market serves as a viable means for entrepreneurial development, enabling skills such as business management, marketing and communication to be gained by these vendors (Hall & Sharples, 2008). This said, farmers' markets may not always be successful (Silkes, 2012). Certain investigations highlight that not all farmers' markets operate for a long period of time variously due to reasons such as failure brought about by the small size of the market; lack of farm products; or poor salary paid to the market managers (Schnell, 2007).

Hall & Sharples (2008:6) highlight several advantages of farmers' markets at a regional or local level. Farmers' markets can improve community pride and function to generate a sense of community (Hall & Sharples, 2008). In addition, such markets can bring about greater visitation to a specific location and encourage travellers to remain within that area (Schnell, 2007). They can also provide many local economic benefits through the reducing economic leakages. At an enterprise level, farmers' markets help create and sustain good consumer and producer relationships. Consumers have a greater exposure to a variety of products at farmers' markets and product awareness is built (Hall & Sharples, 2008). According to Hess (2008), environmental benefits are provided by the consolidation of the locally owned, independent sector of regional economies. Further benefits can accrue from successful local markets in terms of the creation of employment opportunities as well as poverty alleviation.

Importantly, for tourism scholars, the appeal of many destinations can be enhanced through the development of farmers' or local food markets. According to Holm et al. (2013) the actual meetings with farmers or local producers at these markets is critical to the experience that can be enjoyed by local residents or tourists. Indeed, artisanal producers may share their values, production and also establish new understandings about organic products with consumers. Overall, it is argued that the food producers at these markets 'involve' their customers in their lifestyles which at the same time can make them more environmentally conscious.

Research Methods

This section outlines the methodology used for the primary research and describes the data collection methods applied for this study. The research began with a web-based search in order to build a database of food markets in Gauteng. Subsequently, semi-structured



interviews were conducted during 2015 with stall holders at food markets in Gauteng and direct observation of the food markets was pursued. The interviews focused on the organisation of food markets in Gauteng and the growth and involvement of stall holders of the food markets. The sample population was the stall holders of food markets in Gauteng. The selected food markets were visited and permission to conduct interviews with the stall holders was requested from the market manager or owner. Stall holders were approached randomly and interviews conducted following permission being granted by the manager or owner and the stall holders' willingness to participate.

The research design incorporated the necessary ethical approach into consideration. Cooper and Schindler (2011:32) state that: "ethics are the norms and standards of behavior that guide moral choices about our behavior and our relationships with others. The goal of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequences from the research activities." The research design balanced the following ethical considerations. During the interview process informed consent was obtained from the participants. In order to ensure that the rights of all participants were protected none of the names of interviewees are disclosed in the analysis below. Instead, respondents are indicated only by the market at which the interviews were conducted. The benefits of the research were explained to the participants and their right to privacy was ensured. In terms of the analysis due care was taken to take into consideration all of the views of the participants and not to exclude any data based on the researchers own biases. Overall all accepted processes for conducting ethical research as used by University of Johannesburg were applied throughout this investigation.

In the first phase of the research, quantitative data was collected through an internet-mediated search process. Food markets in Gauteng were audited, using a web-based search, in order to build a database. One local food magazine, *Food & Home*, also was used to triangulate information gleaned from the internet search. The audit depended largely on the following websites: SA Venues website, joburg.co.za and eatout.co.za in order to achieve an overview of food markets in Gauteng. The findings from the audit allowed for the spatial distribution and location of these food markets to be determined and examined. Overall, a total of 35 food markets were identified.

During the second phase of the research, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews. Stall holders of the food markets were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews served as the most suitable methodology because they allow interviewees to share their own "practices, beliefs and opinions" (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). These are in-depth interviews which commonly are referred to as a 'conversation with a purpose'. The use of semi-structured interviews also provides past and present experiences of the individual and enables them to expand and clarify when answering questions (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). This provides better evaluation and understanding of responses, leading to thoughtful and descriptive information. In addition, this research method ensures flexibility in how and in what sequence the questions are answered, therefore providing for the interviewees' own understandings (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004). Further, the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to respond in an open manner, which in turn facilitated more descriptive and explanatory material.

In conducting interviews a voice recorder was used with results transcribed and thematically coded. A total of 40 interviews were conducted. Overall 14 of the 35 markets were visited; however interviews and observations were made at only nine markets. The reason for the elimination of the other five markets was due either to restrictions to conducting interviews, lack of food stalls at the market and in two cases of the markets no longer being in existence (albeit still advertised on the internet). Primary data was also collected through direct observation of the food markets where interviews were conducted.

Direct observation sought to provide a description and allow comparison of the different features, environment and atmosphere of these markets. Photographs of the food markets

were also taken to complement the direct observations. The results of the 40 interviews provide a wealth of information about the food markets of Gauteng, the entrepreneur stall holders and their businesses.

Food Markets in Gauteng

The audit disclosed in 2015 that a total of 35 food markets were established in Gauteng, albeit not all were functioning at the time that the interviews were being conducted. Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of these markets which show the largest clusters in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria. Indeed, 30 of the 35 markets were located in these cities. The remainder were at Randvaal Daleside (Meyerton), at Walkerville (30 kms south of Johannesburg), two markets in Magaliesburg and one in Krugersdorp.

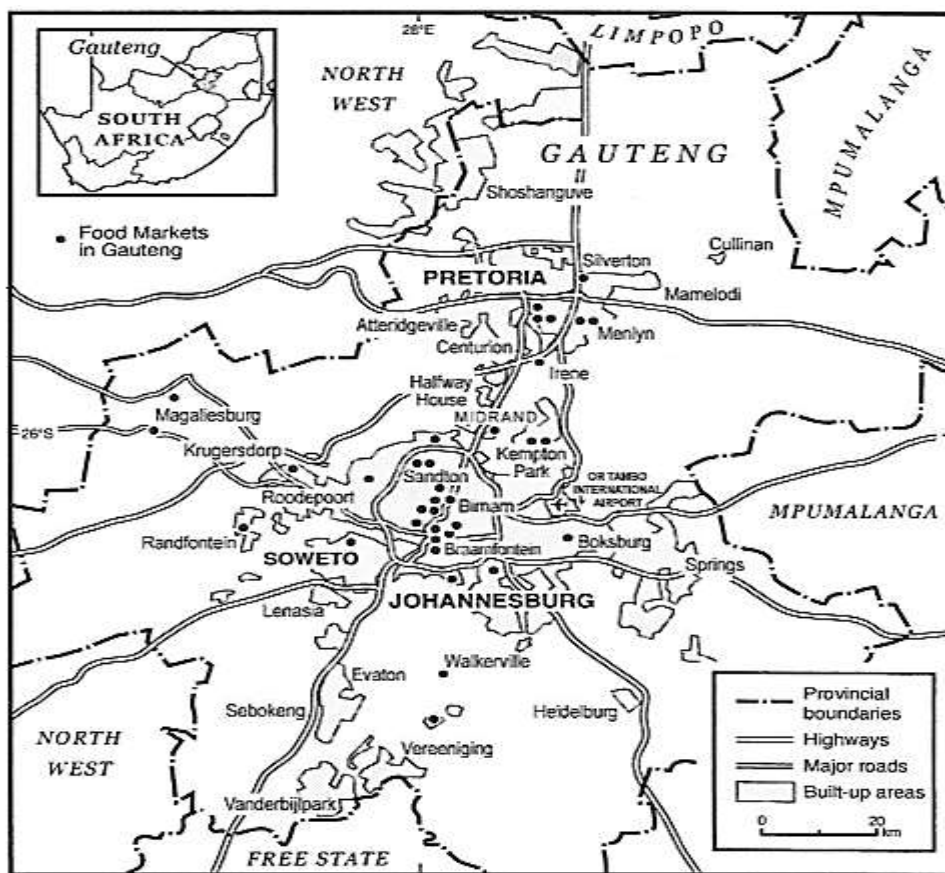


Figure 1 The Location of Food Markets in Gauteng, 2015 (Source: Authors).

Within the Johannesburg cluster of 24 markets, the location of these food markets is spread across various parts of city. Among the most notable food markets are the Neighbourgoods Market which operates in Braamfontein the Market on Main in Maboneng Precinct, the Fourways Farmers Market, the Bryanston Organic and Natural Market, and the Jozi Food Market. South African Tourism (2017b) describes the Jozi Market to potential visitors as follows: “The Jozi Food Market offers a smorgasbord of quality products, handmade with care in the local community. Expect to find everything from raw honey and flavourful homemade sausages to preserves and decadent sweet treats. And, that’s not to mention the home-brewed cordials and juices and heavenly fresh-from-the oven breads”. The Neighbourgoods



Market is housed in a modernist building that has a spectacular 15 story wall mural by the artist Eduardo Villa. It is argued that “the market is as much a source for farm fresh foods and speciality goods as it is a meeting point to enjoy community, swop ideas and stories and be inspired by the energy that makes Joburg” (The Neighbourgoods Market, 2017). The support of food markets for inner-city regeneration initiatives occurring in Johannesburg is reflected both at the Neighbourgoods Market in Braamfontein and at the Market on Main at Maboneng (see Gregory, 2016). Overall, Figure 1 indicates that food markets in Gauteng are located mostly in the central and northern areas of Johannesburg and then extending to the cluster of markets in Pretoria. In addition, several small food or farmers’ markets are found in suburbs such as Fordsburg, Greenside, Melville and Yeoville. The Fordsburg night market which operates from sundown on Fridays and Saturdays is portrayed as follows: “This addictive market offers the likes of refreshing coconut milk or sugar cane juice after a golden roti or scented biryani. On the recently upgraded square and along the street are stalls, shops and restaurants, with lantern lights and clashing tunes. Of course you’ll love the samosas, but also try rose-flavoured sweetmeats and boiled peanuts” (Buxton et al. 2016).

Table 1: The Nine Case Study Food Markets Investigated in Gauteng (authors’ own)

Name of Food Market	Opening Times:	Location
1. Neighbourgoods Market	Every <i>Saturday</i> – 9 am to 3 pm	Braamfontein, Johannesburg
2. Bamboo Farmers’ Market	Every <i>Saturday</i> – 8 am to 1 pm	Melville, Johannesburg
3. Walkerville Farmers’ Market	Every <i>Saturday</i> – 9 am to 3 pm	Walkerville, De Deur
4. Market on Main	Every <i>Sunday</i> – 10 am to 3 pm. Every first <i>Thursday</i> of the month – 7 pm to 11 pm.	Newtown, Johannesburg
5. Blubird Wholefood Market	Every <i>Sunday</i> – 9 am to 2 pm	Birnam, Johannesburg
6. Fourways Farmers’ Market	Every <i>Sunday</i> – 10 pm to 3 pm	Fourways, Johannesburg
7. Bryanston Organic Market	Every <i>Thursday</i> and <i>Saturday</i> – 9 am to 3 pm	Bryanston, Johannesburg
8. Hazel Food Market	Every <i>Saturday</i> – 8 am to 2 pm	Menlo Park, Pretoria
9. Irene Village Market	Every <i>first</i> and <i>last Saturday</i> of the month – 9 am to 2 pm	Centurion, Pretoria

Further insight about the characteristics of the markets and of market entrepreneurs is disclosed through the 40 interviews which were conducted at the nine markets as shown on Table 1. Six of the nine food markets are located in Johannesburg (Braamfontein, Newtown, Melville, Birnam, Bryanston and Fourways) and two are located in Pretoria (Menlo Park and Centurion) and the final case study was at Walkerville. Of the nine food markets the Bryanston Organic and Natural Market is distinguished by its long history as compared to all the other markets having being founded in 1977. The majority of the sampled markets were of much more recent origin with seven of the nine food markets established post-2000 and most of these post-2007.

At almost all of these markets, respondents acknowledged that markets had expanded in terms of numbers of stall holders in response to corresponding growth in customer volumes; the only exception was Blubirds Market where stall holders expressed the view that there were

now “too many markets” and that with increased competition the numbers of stall holders was stagnant. Table 1 indicates the operating times and location of the nine food markets. It reveals marked variations in the trading patterns of these different food markets across Gauteng. Respondents reported that during the year the summer months are the busiest as a whole. The caveats were added that particularly busy periods were the beginning and end of each month, periods when there are no school holidays and especially in December when night markets often are hosted. Market clientele is a mix of local residents, day visitors and some tourists. Tourist flows were reported as strong at both the Bryanston Organic and Natural Market and at Market on Main, both of which were supported by regular tourist buses. Not surprisingly, international tourist numbers were reported as greatest during the summer months and especially noticeable around the Christmas period.

The different food markets seek to create a distinctive and welcoming atmosphere to attract local residents and tourists. The majority of the studies food markets operate in an outdoor environment and whatever the local weather conditions these food markets still are open and operate under their individual gazebos (see Figures 2 and 3). The outdoor setting of most food markets provides an inviting and intimate atmosphere and serves as a place of relaxed enjoyment for a family outing. Some of the other outdoor food markets portray a more vibrant and busy environment, with entertainment to attract a youthful clientele. Cosy seating areas encourage visitors to enjoy the food and drinks purchased from the food market stalls. Distinctive features of food markets are observable. For example, red-topped stalls and paved paths at the Bryanston Organic and Natural Market, beautifully designed garden settings at Fourways Farmers’ Market, numerous trees surrounding the miniature Bamboo Farmers’ Market, straw hut stalls at Walkerville Farmers’ Market, scattered benches throughout Hazel Food Market, and the rustic setting of Irene Village Market. Most markets encompass earthy and natural settings and operate on a spacious piece of land.



Figure 2 Entrance to outdoor Bryanston organic and Natural market (Photo: S. Naicker)



Figure 3 Straw huts at outdoor Walkerville Farmers market (Photo: S. Naicker)

Respondents offered various descriptions to capture the atmosphere of the food markets with the most common emphasizing 'friendliness', 'ambience' or 'exciting vibe'.

Certain food markets in Gauteng operate indoors, most notably Johannesburg's Neighbourgoods Market, Market on Main and Blubird Wholefood Market (see Figure 4). The indoor setting fosters a more intimate atmosphere between stallholders and their customers, a welcoming and friendly ambience which sometimes is accompanied by loud music. Neighbourgoods Market in Braamfontein, is the sister to the Neighbourgoods situated at the Old Biscuit Mill in Cape Town. Both the food markets (Neighbourgoods and Market on Main) have an inner-city appeal attached to it. On the other hand, Blubird Wholefood Market in Birnam is set on the ground floor of Blubird Shopping centre. It operates in a small space but still manages to attract several customers with the delightful stalls. The ambience of Blubird Wholefood Market as compared to the vibe of Neighbourgoods and Market on Main. Stallholders at these three indoor markets described the atmosphere variously as 'funky', 'exciting', 'inviting', 'buzzy', 'metropolitan' and 'eclectic'. Of note is that some markets have deliberately sought to reposition themselves as more vibey by the addition of entertainment. The best example of repositioning is the Fourways Farmers' Market which shifted from being a traditional food market to a more upbeat market including live entertainment and creating a 'busy' or 'electric' atmosphere akin to Market on Main and Neighbourgoods Market.



Figure 4 Communal benches and tables at Neighbourgoods Market (Photo: S. Naicker)

At these markets food and drinks are the core components of the products on offer. It was observed that each of the studied food markets offered a diverse array of products to potential customers. Most stallholders focus on offering one type of product but with different flavours or variations. In addition to fresh vegetables and fruit common food products include home-

baked artisanal breads; donuts; biscuits; cheeses; spices; different types of meats and biltong; olive-related products; eggs; a variety of banting products (sugar free, low carb and medium protein products suitable for diabetics); Asian, Indian, Greek, Portuguese and American traditional cuisines; a range of savoury pastries and desserts; honey products; pickles, sauces, pestos and pates (see Figures 5,6 and 7). The range of drinks include: hot and cold beverages that include smoothies, teas, beer, coffee, hot chocolate, milkshakes and an array of soft drinks. The emphasis is upon the distinctiveness or freshness of produce that is offered.



Figure 5 A pie stall at Neighbourgoods market (Photo: S. Naicker)



Figure 6 Desserts served at Johannesburg Culinary and pastry School stall at market on Main (Photo: S. Naicker)



Figure 7 Fresh produce at Blubird Market (Photo: S. Naicker)

For entrepreneurs running a stall at a food market in Gauteng incurs certain costs. Each food market has different fees which stallholder must pay. Of the sample of nine markets, seven of the food markets require stallholders to pay a weekly fee for their stall or at each time the market functions. These include Neighbourgoods Market, Market on Main, Walkerville Farmers' Market, Fourways Farmers' Market, Blubird Wholefood Market, Hazel Food Market



and Irene Village Market. The stall fees at each of these food markets varies. The cost at Neighbourgoods ranges from R500 to R600 each time the market operates. At Fourways Farmers' Market, the stall fees range between R350 to R600. At Irene Village Market the fees range from R400 to R450, Market on Main stall fees are from R400 to R550 and at Pretoria at Hazel Food Market stallholders pay between R300 and R350. The lowest charges are at Walkerville Farmers' Market and Blubird Farmers' Market where stall fees range respectively from R130 to R350 and R150 to R220. The two remaining markets charge stallholders on a commission basis on a percentage of turnover. These are Bamboo Farmers' Market and Bryanston Organic and Natural Market. The stallholders at Bamboo Farmers' Market pay 10% of their turnover in order to operate their stall. Bryanston Organic and Natural Market works on a central payment system in which stallholders do not leave the market with any money. Instead the stallholders cash monies to the market manager who deducts 10% of their turnover from processed goods and 15% from unprocessed goods.

Much food purchased in supermarkets is highly processed and grown using a wide range of pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and many foods undergo genetic modification. Some food is irradiated, waxed, or even gassed while in transit. Such practices often have negative effects on human health. In contrast, the majority of food items bought at the farmers markets is minimally processed, and many of the food stall owners go to great lengths to grow the most nutritious produce by using sustainable production techniques. Many pick their produce the day before the market, and growing environmentally free varieties free of toxins and other contaminants.

Food Market Entrepreneurs

The 40 interviews with stallholders provide a body of information on the characteristics of food market entrepreneurs in Gauteng. Although the racial profile of entrepreneurs was not a specific focus in this investigation, it was obvious from direct observations that the overwhelming majority of food market entrepreneurs were Whites. Across the sample interviewees 51% (21) of the respondents indicated that being a stallholder is their primary occupation with 49% (19) indicated that it is a secondary occupation. Of the stallholders with other occupations five were students (2 matric students and 3 tertiary education students), three were involved in catering and hospitality jobs, and two were teachers. Other stallholders included a beekeeper, bakery operator, garden nursery, a secretary, working for attorneys, a housing agency, a health NGO.

The reasons for participating as stallholders elicited a range of different responses. Almost one-third of respondents stressed the importance of the market as a primary or secondary source of income. In particular, for a number of retired individuals or for people who had been retrenched the food market was an essential income source. Typical responses were *"my husband and I are at an age where we cannot get jobs and so we created jobs for ourselves"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), *"I am retired and at an age where I cannot get a job"* (Respondent, Neighbourgoods Market), *"I was retrenched and this is also my hobby now"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), *"My husband was retrenched and so this is our way of making a living"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), and *"My wife and I are pensioners so we do this to earn a bit of an income"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market).

For a segment of the market stall holders the food market offers a supplementary source of income. A stallholder at Hazel Food Market expressed the view: *"I am a single mother and this helps bring in more income"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market). Another respondent indicated that *"it serves as something extra to support my income"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market) and at Walkerville Farmers' Market a stallholder reflected that he and his wife became stallholders *"In order to earn more money since I only have another primary occupation and my wife does this full-time"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market).



Another important theme that was evident in the interviews was the passionate character of entrepreneurs for their particular involvement food products. Stallholders pointed out variously that *"I enjoy baking"* (Respondent, Neighbourgoods Market), *"I love to cook as it's my passion"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), *"We enjoy making the product and working as a team"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), *"I've always been interested in good food and started growing my own fresh vegetables"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), *"Baking is my passion and I enjoy making different types of bread"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), *"I have a passion for cultivating fresh produce"* (Respondent, Blubird Wholefood Market), *"I have always been involved with spices"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"Both my husband and I have a passion for food, especially Greek food and like to share it with other people"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"I love cooking, when I found out that there was a market here I decided it would be fun to do this"* (Respondent, Market on Main), *"I like providing a service to people where I can give them a healthier alternative to foods that are rich in nutrients"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market), and *"I have been a butcher all my life and it's my passion"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market).

Other stallholders stressed the importance of food markets for marketing and selling their particular products. Examples of such responses were *"It is a better option in terms of marketing and selling my product since it is less expensive to operate a business at the market, in terms of rental costs"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"It is our only outlet to the public"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"We are farmers and it is just a nice way to market our product"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"I want this to become my primary income, so it's a way of developing and marketing my business"* (Respondent Blubird Wholefood Market), *"It is an outlet for my product, instead of supplying shops or supermarkets with honey products, I sell it at the market at a retail price"* (Respondent, Blubird Wholefood Market), and *"The fudge started gaining commercial attention and so I turned it into a business"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market). Family support and desire to socialise also emerged as motivations of several entrepreneurs in establishing food market stalls. Many of the respondents indicated that they became stallholders in order to assist a relative or boss to run the stall. In response to the question, these stallholders indicated *"The stall is owned by my mum, so I help her out"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market), *"I help out my brother, he owns the stall"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market), *"I help my mum out as a stallholder on the weekends but I have a full-time job during the week"* (Respondent, Market on Main), and *"Because of my connection with the school and respectful lecturers and this business, I currently work at Market on Main on Sunday just to help out"* (Respondent Johannesburg Culinary and Pastry School Stall, Market on Main).

Finally, social motivations were a further additional reason for becoming a market stallholder. This was evidenced in one response from a retiree who indicated that: *"I am a pensioner and so I like to keep myself busy"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market). More broadly, stallholders expressed the positive benefits of their participation at markets not only in economic terms but also the social and community benefits. Interviewees remarked variously: *"The social aspect is rewarding, the people at the market are very friendly and caring, as well as helpful"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"We meet a lot of people and are able to socialise with many people, the social aspect is very rewarding for us... cheese making is a seven day a week and 14 hours a day type of job and we don't have time to socialise in the week, so the market allows for us to socialise and interact"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"Meeting different and lovely people every Saturday, including both the customers and the stallholders"* (Respondent, Neighbourgoods Market), *"I enjoy going to the market, I like the buzz here"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market), *"I get to know a lot of different people"* (Respondent, Blubird Wholefood Market), *"Interacting with people, with different types of cultures, I love socialising with people"* (Respondent, Market on Main) and *"The stallholders are much like a family and so each week that I am here, it is like an outing rather than the fact that I earn some money"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market).



Stallholders had been in business for a range of time from eight years to one day in the case of one interviewee. Across the sample of 40 interviewees the average period for operating a market stall was three years. As businesses have matured many stall holders indicated that they have diversified the kinds of products they offer in order to attract or retain customers. The following responses are illustrative: *"I have added other food and that has gotten me more customers"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market), *"We have grown from strength to strength, we have grown significantly in the past six months, we have more customers and more products"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market), *"We started off with something small and had about two customers, now we have about ten customers that order our products, we started off by only selling samoosas and gradually we added more products and even moved to a more accommodating stall"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market) and *"I have grown financially, I also have more types of vegetables and more customers than when I first started, I have gained a good relationship with many of my customers as they always look forward to seeing me each week"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market).

Diversification was stressed as a critical pathway for enterprise growth and survival. The following responses are indicative: The addition of more and improved products alone have resulted in the growth and diversification of their food stalls: *"I have added biltong as a new product"* (Respondent, Neighbourgoods Market), *"At first we used to only have two different types of dim sums and two different types of spring rolls, now we have six different types of spring rolls, eight different types of dim sums, we also have a sushi anary in place and a bao bun which is like a braised pork styled Chinese burger"* (Respondent, Market on Main), *"We have received more money from the stall, we have changed out products from the time we started selling at the market to different ways of selling it, we have adjusted to the clients' needs as well"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"We started off with a few cookies but now ended up with a range of over 24 products, we went from one weekend of just having sweet treats to selling 40 to 50 breads per market in two markets"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), and *"We started off only white and rye sour dough, now we have about 30 different types of loaves"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market),

Often stallholders seek to differentiate their stall from another by adding a unique aspect to their stall in terms of its appearance and display of goods. Respondents observed as follows: *"The displays and layout of the product at the stall is a big attraction"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"The fact that my wife and I make the product and that it is personally supervised, I do all the cooking and I am very meticulous as far as weights are concerned, that is why the people keep coming back because of the consistency of the actual product"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), *"I bake the breads overnight so that it is still fresh in the morning, my rye bread and stoneground-flour bread is completely pure unlike the ones at a supermarket"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), and *"the layout of my beautiful pies"* (Respondent, Neighbourgoods Market).

The individual character of products on offer at market stalls was also viewed as important for attracting clientele. Typically, it was stated that *"It is a different type of product that tends to bring a lot of customers to the stall, people are willing to try this product"* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *"The uniqueness of the product"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), *"It is a unique product that cannot be found at a supermarket or anywhere, since there are only a few of us that make dry meats and salami in South Africa"* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers' Market), *"The samoosas attract the customers"* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers' Market), *"The decadent Ferrero Roche donut"* (Respondent, Market on Main), *"The Indian cuisine and the fact that I'm the only person selling Indian food here"* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers' Market), *"Our eggs are a big attraction"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market), and *"The pies and the Portuguese milk tarts"* (Respondent Hazel Food Market).

In terms of the uniqueness of food products many stall holders also draw attention to the fact that their goods represent organic products. It was stated in the interviews as follows: *"We use only organic products to make our pastries"* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural



Market), *“Our fresh produce and because many people are looking into buying local organic foods”* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers’ Market), *“If people want to buy natural and organic honey they come to me”* (Respondent, Blubird Wholefood Market) and *“My vegetables are very organic”* (Stallholder, Walkerville Farmers’ Market).

As food market entrepreneurs, stallholders can operate at different food markets in Gauteng on different days. It was revealed that 55 per cent (22) of stallholders operate food stalls at other markets. Other stallholders expressed their reasons for focussing their operations at only one food market. Explanations included: *“I used to travel around and do other markets but not anymore because of transport difficulties”* (Respondent, Market on Main) and *“Unfortunately I only have time to run stalls at other markets”* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market). Other entrepreneurs expressed the view that *“We used to do other markets but not anymore”* (Respondent, Bryanston Organic and Natural Market) and *“No - we don’t have any other permanent markets but we are looking into it”* (Respondent, Market on Main). Almost half of the respondents indicated that as well as operating at food markets that they participated in with stalls at various local festivals or exhibitions. Among the range of such events that were flagged were The Chilli and Wine festival, Gold Fish Concert, Barkpark Live, Newtown Junction, Nirox Sculpture Park, Seed Music festival, Carfax, Bryanston Country Market Show, Good Food and Wine Show, Decorex, Homemakers, Oyster festival, Delicious festival and the Taste of Joburg festival.

In terms of business challenges faced by these market entrepreneurs several issues were raised. Competition from other stallholders clearly was an important factor. This said, it was made clear that *“Yes... but the market it set up in such a way where there is not overtrading of the same product, so you will not have more than two people selling the same product, the market tries to keep the variety, this market went through a stage where they let too many people sell the same product but that has changed now”* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers’ Market), *“Yes there are some people that try to make similar things to us, but I love the competition because it is always good and people pay attention to your product, my product is taken care of in a better way because of competition”* (Respondent, Fourways Farmers’ Market), *“Some people have started selling Portuguese milk tarts as well, and the competition has grown but I still get a lot of customers”* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), *“Yes, every other stallholder is fighting for that rand from a customer as well, there are a lot of people selling cheese as well”* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market), and *“There are people that sell other food products and so we lose customers and profit, there are also other people that sell products just outside the market even though it is not allowed, that is a bit unfair to us stallholders of the market”* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers’ Market).

Almost half of respondents stressed that competition was not a major challenge because of the unique character of the food product that they offered. Responses included: *“because my veggies are organic, I do not see any competition, I give the best”* (Respondent, Blubird Wholefood Market), *“Because I am the only one selling Indian foods, everyone else sells different things”* (Respondent, Bamboo Farmers’ Market), and *“Because we are the only banting stall at the market”* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market). Beyond issues of competition, the key business challenges raised by interviewees included those of matching customer expectations, waste of products, and the difficulties caused by inclement weather. Indeed, the issue of weather was the most commonly reported challenge as bad weather can impact on the growth of fresh produce sold by stallholders or other products that are weather dependent. For example, it was stated that *“Insects and bad weather patterns may affect the growth ad condition of the vegetables”* (Respondent, Walkerville Farmers’ Market), *“The heat is also a challenge because the smoothies can melt”* (Respondent, Irene Village Market), and *“The biggest challenge is the sun which affects our products, so we have to ensure that we are always in the shade to keep our products cool and so it does not melt”* (Respondent, Hazel Food Market).



Conclusions

Urban tourism and recreational products are at the heart of South Africa's tourism economy. This paper has drawn attention to the growth of food markets as a new tourism and recreational product in urban areas of South Africa. The country's growing network of food markets must be understood as in line with the international expansion of farmers markets as part of a wider trajectory of local and alternative food networks. The food markets of Gauteng are sites for recreation and tourism development and important bases for entrepreneurial development. Visiting a farmers market makes shopping for locals and tourists a pleasure rather than a chore. The farmers markets are a community hub and invariably places to meet up with friends, or just get a taste of city life, culture and culinary diversity, in the midst of a big city.

It is revealed that the food market entrepreneurs of Gauteng have established and diversified their businesses for a number of reasons, primarily economic but also extending to non-economic rationales as well. These food markets are an important part of the urban landscape of South Africa and merit further comparative investigation particularly in the Western Cape which is the region seemingly with the greatest opportunities and prospects for expanding food tourism.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Wendy Job for preparing the map and to University of Johannesburg for research funding. Teddy and Skye Norfolk offered valuable editorial inputs to an earlier version of this paper. Useful additions to the draft version of this paper were obtained from two anonymous journal referees.

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