'An area that governs itself'; informality, uncertainty and the management of street vending in NYC (Devlin, 2011)

Abstract
- Laws on street vending = confusing and difficult to consistently enforce
- Therefore street vending managed in a decentralised, privatised and informal way
- Reflection of power, influence, resources and resolve of property and business owners to have control over street vendors and use of public space
- Informal practice = intrinsic to spatial management of New York as it stands

Introduction
- Spatial legitimacy and business security = little to do with formal laws
  - A legal location for someone ended up being less secure than an illegal one due to the personal relationships with the different business owners
- Informality serves as a mechanism of spatial management/control
- NYC = normative ideal others should aspire to, partially due to the state and clear laws regulating space
- de Soto (2000) = distinction between developed organisation of global North and chaotic urban environments of the global South. Informal seen as underdevelopment
- Scholars in global North begin with assumptions on the success of laws governing space
- Studies of informal urbanism often relegated to global South

Street vendors in New York
- Informal vending techniques = densest in central, high value Manhattan e.g. Midtown. (most vendors here have licenses/law exemptions and majority are men)
- Ethnic groupings depending on type of vendor
- Seen as a last resort or step towards a storefront business

Uncertainty, legal ambiguity and management of street vending in NYC
- Spatial arrangement of vending = less to do with legal constraints and more to do with attitudes of individual property owners and property organisations
- Street vending = spatial manifestation of power, influence and resolve of individual property owners NOT expressions of formal law
- Vending laws only published in English - difficult as majority of vending community = immigrants
  - Lack of awareness of laws makes it difficult to contest attitudes of shop owners who tell them they're stalls are illegal
  - Single violation of even a minor rule = fines of up to $1000
- Property owners place (often illegal) planters outside their buildings to discourage vendors; creating their own landscapes of informality
  - Vendors arrange themselves according to these spatialities; where enforcement pressure is light, where they will be subject to aggressive store owners etc. Urbanism produced informally through intimidation, harassment, discipline and evasion

Public policy failure or new regime of public space management?
- Ineffectiveness/complexity of vending laws seen as public policy failure
  - Article argues that it is NOT a failure as this ignores how the current informal regime works to structure public space advantageously to most powerful members of the city
- Responsibility for street vendors generally absolved from the NYPD (representing the state) and instead falls to private entities who use their own informal means e.g. false tickets to keep vendors under control
  - +ve for powerful private entities - even if technically vendors are legal, they don't have to put up with them
- This represents a transition from embedded liberalism —> neoliberal entrepreneurial state (LINK TO GY200). A movement to bring vending reform about on a large scale goes against new programmes of fiscal austerity