

Informalising Economies and New Organising Strategies in Africa
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**Seen but not Heard:
Extending urban citizenship to informal street traders**

Michal Lyons, Department of Urban, Environmental & Leisure Studies,
London South Bank University

Alison Brown, School of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University

Abstract

The growing dominance of the informal economy in sub-Saharan African cities has led to increasing influence of established forms of representation. In some cities up to 80% of the economically active population may work informally, although estimates of the scale of the informal economy are necessarily imprecise.

This paper uses the theoretical debates on urban citizenship, urban governance and poverty, and new approaches to participatory management in developing cities as a lens for exploring the role of trader associations in extending urban citizenship and 'voice'.

The majority of traders associations are seen but not heard. They undertake a wide variety of roles including welfare, business support, storage or business promotion, dispute resolution, networking, training, improving infrastructure, and securing and managing a trading space.

A small number of traders associations make the transition from welfare to advocacy, becoming highly politicised and often unrepresentative. Cultural and ethnic diversity in cities across the world has been amply documented. Engagement with urban life has become increasingly fluid. Economically, the impacts of globalisation and liberalisation have resulted in increasingly diverse means and trajectories of engagement with the labour market. Traders representation is also evolving. While the implications of migration for urban citizenship, politics and management have been studied in some depth, the implications of informality have been largely ignored, and new structures need to be set if rights are to be established for workers in the informal economy.

Focusing on four case studies from sub-Saharan Africa, the paper attempts to link scholarly thinking about the meaning and management of urban voice in an age when the street has become the new locus of employment for the urban poor, with discussion of the implications for cities of increasing street informality for 'voice' for the urban poor.

Key words:

voice, participation, informal traders, urban governance, sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

Informal sector activity in the urban south

In developing regions, the concentration of populations in cities following economic and political restructuring, along with war, famine and disease, has contributed to a rapid growth of the informal economy (e.g. De Soto 1989) and an increase in informal street trade. Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in sub-Saharan Africa, where growth in urban populations has been accompanied by limited job creation amongst the poor (Cohen 2004; Carr and Chen 2002).

Although precise measurement of informality is difficult (see Devey *et al* 2003), it is estimated that informal employment now comprises a greater share of non-agricultural employment, generally significantly higher among women than men. In Africa, over the past decade informal employment is thought to account for around 60% of all urban employment and over 90% of new jobs (ILO, 2002:16). By the end of 2001, informal employment in Kenya was estimated at 81% of all private-sector employment, while small to medium enterprises, largely one-person businesses, comprised close to 75% of all national employment (Mitullah 2003).

Street vendors are the largest sub-group of the informal workforce after home-based workers. Together these groups represent 10-35% of the non-agricultural workforce in developing countries, in comparison with 5% of the total workforce in developed countries. Except in societies that restrict their mobility, women comprise 30-90% of street vendors in developing countries (ILO 2002). For example in Kenya, estimates in 1999 put the number of street vendors at over 400,000, or 8% of the non-agricultural labour force, with women estimated to comprise 33% of this group (Charmes 2002 in ILO 2002 :24-25). Later estimates are higher, putting the number of street traders operating in Nairobi alone at 500,000, while formal sites have only been found for 7,000 (Mitullah 2003).

Focusing on four case studies from sub-Saharan Africa, the paper attempts to link scholarly thinking about the meaning and management of urban voice in an age when the street has become the new locus of employment for the urban poor, with discussion of the implications of cities with increasing street informality for 'voice' for the urban poor. The paper draws together work undertaken separately by the authors in 2003-2005 with case studies in Dakar, Accra, Kumasi, Dar es Salaam and Maseru. Although the fieldwork was not specifically designed to consider 'urban voice', there is nevertheless sufficient material to make a useful comparison in the west and southern African contexts.

Street traders are delegitimised by public discourse

In some senses, street traders do not exist, living in legal vacuum outside and beyond the law (Goldie 2002). The negation of their identity is partly rooted in popular attitudes, as discussed below.

The rapid growth in street trade is acutely visible '*The street ... renders the social visible*' (Keith 1995:310), and embodies a range of urban social relations (Dudrah 2003:343). The people and activities thronging the city streets of sub-Saharan Africa have come to epitomize major economic and social change, and their visibility renders them the focus of fears about the underlying trend of informalization, fuelled by economic change and increased migration.

Informalization is perceived as a sea-change in the nature of urban living, yet 'large-scale changes are always a major burden because they are an encroachment on what is normal. Painfully, people have to reassess their often fragile identities, which were constructed under difficult and stressful conditions' (Hermochova 1997:110). A number of studies exemplify this well. Popke and Ballard's (2004) study of Durban analyses local newspaper reports and interviews to identify the expressions of fear and anxiety that form part of residents' interpretive landscape. The study paints a fascinating picture, arguing that within discourses on urban change, the arrival of street traders has been the most commonly articulated cause of the city's decline.

Fear appears to impel exclusion, and traders are feared for undermining order. Cresswell (1994 in Popke and Ballard 2004) concluded that order is inscribed through space and place and, therefore, breaking the conventions over the use of space challenges accepted notions of order. Popke and Ballard highlight frequent calls to '*bring pavement trading under control*' (p105), for traders '*to be sited in a designated part of town*' (p105), and that '*...the authorities in each area, whoever controls it, should make them operate in very restricted areas...Haphazard street trading - I think it's appalling*' (p105).

The discourse on informal traders mirrors discourse on informal migration. Migrants to Johannesburg's inner city are seen as alien, and a vector of disorder and crime, and local elites are conscious of a vulnerability to potentially violent 'crimes of need' (Kalati and Manor in Reis and Moore, 2005:162). Johannesburg's elites have distanced themselves from the 'invasion' of Johannesburg's CBD by '*hordes of desperate poor*' (De Swaan in Reis and Moore, 2005:191) resulting in an elite exodus to the suburbs, spatial segregation, and expansion of the private security industry, as the rich seek to distance themselves from proximity to informality and chaos.

The congestion accompanying informal trade is a source of complaint about '*hundreds of street traders ...[blocking]... the main shopping thoroughfare*', '*obscuring the view from the street of up-market, high profile shops*', who '*clog...street frontages*' and '*congest the already narrow paths for pedestrians...[who are] 'caught up in congestion', 'have to wade through piles of fruit cartons*' and '*step around and between piles of perishables*' (Popke and Ballard, 2004:105-6).

Street traders are also seen as a form of pollution. '*You've got a whole nation living in Umgeni Rd that are washing, cleaning, cooking, going to the toilet...the infestation, the germs, the stench*' (Popke and Ballard 106). If dirt can be defined as matter out of place (Douglas 1984 in Popke and Ballard 2004) then the street traders and squatters in Umgeni Rd Durban are not where they belong in the popular imagination. And if dirt can spread, then boundaries are threatened with further invasion, as letters to the press suggest that traders have '*infected*' and '*contaminated*' Durban, and the city is now '*stricken*', as the '*rot has set in*' (Popke and Ballard 2004:106), much as in parallel discourses of migration (e.g. Landau 2005; Kalati and Manor in Reis and Moor, 2005).

Thus, public discourse on street trade implies that traders, particularly migrants, are 'other', an economic burden, a cause of crime and pollution, and not fit to be citizens.

Social infrastructure among informal traders

In contrast, agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognise the inevitability of informal-sector livelihoods, their poverty reduction potential and the importance of social infrastructure in supporting traders' activities (Carr and Chen 2002). Preparatory work for the ILO conference in 2002 on *Decent Work in the Informal Economy* explored a policy framework for supporting the informal economy, encouraging governments to create an enabling environment for the sector, and trade unions to foster its grassroots organisations. The study identified informal workers' organisations as a key players in the pro-poor policy debate - unions, cooperatives, associations and other representative groups (Chen *et al* 2001). Yet, at urban as well as at national level, micro-enterprises rarely influence decision making to their advantage against established interests unless they are organised (Rakodi 2003).

Social capital forms a key basis for sustaining economic assets (Bourdieu 1983) and helps the poor to support their livelihoods despite adverse trends and shocks (Rakodi with Lloyd-Jones 2002). The social capital of newcomers to the informal sector undergoes change, as traditional ties are adapted to the urban economy (Kumar and Matsusaka 2004; Lyons and Snoxell 2005a, 2005b), with informal and semi-formal arrangements which provide the trust necessary to provide the bedrock for personal loans and micro-finance (Buckley 1997; Phillips 2002). Market-based social capital enables a traders to manage an intrinsically competitive environment and, to some extent, to negotiate with local government and other relatively powerful actors over urban management issues and utilities with (Lyons and Snoxell 2005a). Social capital also goes beyond a response to austerity and allows traders to take advantage of new opportunities opened by economic liberalisation (Lourenço-Lindell 2002:228)

Trader and market associations – both formal associations and informal kinship networks - are rooted in social capital networks. They are sometimes officially recognised, and often provide the interface with institutions and local authorities. However, despite providing a means for civic engagement, trader organisations have not succeeded in maintaining longer term external influence, and often focus on self-help (Brown 2004). Trade union or political party affiliation sometimes connects traders with broader political interests, and may be influential at times of crisis or during elections. In isolated cases trader organisations have developed sustainable negotiating power, and have even influenced the international policy arena, for example, the international alliance of street vendors organisations, StreetNet set up in the early 1990s (Lyons 2005; Brown, 2006:210, Street Net, 2007).

Innovations in participatory governance

In response to rapid urbanization, there have been a number of attempts to include marginalised groups in urban governance, from the involvement of residents of informal settlements in identifying and managing urban upgrading programmes, to experiments in open governance and participatory budgeting. The discussion below highlights some of the major issues raised and relevant initiatives.

The participation of new constituencies in pro-poor local government reform is now widely promoted and '*honest, efficient and effective government has moved to the top of the international policy agenda*' (Ackerman 2003:447). Development theorists have argued for institutionalised participation at an urban level, to foster partnerships, allow the development of a base for citizen participation in decisions, achieve

progressive transformation, and enhance pro-poor policies (Hickey and Mohan 2005; Devas 2004; Rakodi 2003). Hickey and Mohan (2005:114) argue that, for participatory rights-based development to take place, both political and technical reform is needed, in which development agencies engage with social movements as 'sites of popular participation and political projects' (ibid p166).

Several multilateral urban programmes have promoted partnerships and stakeholder involvement, shifting their emphasis from cooption to direct representation, most notably the Sustainable Cities Programme and the Cities Alliance. Underlying such reforms is an understanding that poverty alleviation and the empowerment of the poor as actors in local-political processes are important factors in the social, economic and environmental sustainability of cities. More recently, participatory local government reform has been enshrined in national legislation, e.g. in Brazil, South Africa and Kenya. One impetus for this relatively widespread development has been the perceived success of participatory budgeting in cities such as Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre (Souza 2001).

To date, participatory governance initiatives have focused on the inhabitants of slums and informal settlements. No parallel effort has been made to engage informal traders in urban political institutions and processes, despite their enormous impact on urban space, life, services and management systems. Thus informal traders are excluded from public debate in the urban areas in which they trade, and where they have a major impact on services and management. For example, participation is based on residence in Kenya's Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (Devas 2001), Colombo's CDCs and Kerala's participatory campaign (Isaac 2000), although there is more flexibility in the participatory budgeting models in Porto Alegre and South Africa, where sector forums have been set up.

Devas' *et al*'s comparative analysis of institutions and processes for inclusion of the poor in urban decision making (2004), although focussed on slums and informal settlements, has produced useful insights into the requirements, strengths and weaknesses of participatory and inclusive governance for the poor. These can also serve as a framework for analysing participation processes for workers in the informal economy, and the vulnerabilities these may create.

Based on an analysis of ten cities, the research (Devas *et al* 2004) concluded that participatory governance was supported by the cumulative building of grassroots structures, and processes which give a sense of purpose and power through regular participatory decision making, e.g. annual budget allocations and annual policy reviews, which provide a framework for accountability. Problems with the systems adopted have included: the weakness of essential partners (Devas *et al* 2004:73); domination of form over substance, and institutional delays leading to antagonism rather than cooperation (Devas *et al* 2004:115).

'There are huge problems for the poor in organizing and exerting pressure: limited time and resources for those who struggle just to survive; lack of leadership and negotiating skills; conflicting interests among the poor themselves; and limited access to decision making forums. Even where they do manage to organize successfully, the representative political system may prove to be unresponsive, whether through resistance or incapacity or both' (Devas *et al* p190)

NGOs can play a valuable role in supporting and articulating the interests of the urban poor, and *'there have been some notable successes at a national level in securing programmes that benefit poor people locally'*, but the poor often regard NGOs as *'opportunistic and self-serving, unwilling or unable to offer real solidarity, and without much clout with the government'* (Devas *et al* 2004:191). In any event, most of the NGOs identified by the study were concerned with welfare provision, rather than livelihoods.

CBOs were also found to offer a rallying point and structure for organising, and there are locally diverse forms. However, many are hampered by conflicting interests, other political concerns, sudden changes in political support, cooption, and exhaustion of those in leadership who themselves struggle daily with poverty (Devas *et al*, 2004:191)

It could be argued that there are intrinsic problems with reliance on NGOs or CBOs for governance functions, as strong NGOs may have the potential to undermine effective government Putzel (1997), or may have to make heavy compromises because of their need to demonstrate results in a difficult environment (Rogerson, 2005). In this regard, CBOs may provide a more sustainable social and organisational infrastructure.

Based on the comparative case studies, this paper explores the potential for development of formal institutions and processes for involving traders in governance of the areas in which they trade, and in the more general urban strategies which affect these areas indirectly. In the sections which follow, we draw on findings from the comparative studies in Dakar, Accra, Kumasi, Dar es Salaam and Maseru, analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the organisations supporting traders, and discussing their significance for the representation of workers in the informal economy.

Manifestations of 'Urban Voice'

In the light of increasing vulnerability of street traders and hostile municipal policy, the attempts by street traders to purchase a platform for legitimacy in which their rights to exit as urban citizens are recognised are manifest in different ways, which are a product of both history and culture and a response to current crises or need. This section explores the experience of the authors in different cities in the light of the discussion above.

Senegal brotherhoods and the colonial legacy

Senegal is a francophone country with a predominantly Muslim population (96%). The brotherhoods in Senegal provide a powerful associational basis for trade. One of the most influential and well-documented is the Murid Brotherhood, a religious association founded in the 19th century. The Murid Brotherhood developed economic power by growing peanuts, becoming incorporated into the colonial economy of French imperialism, and also preserving and evolving Wolof values (Diouf 2000:683). Muridism attracted people of every level of society, but particularly freed slaves, merchants and craftsmen, leading to the establishment of a merchant tradition. The Murids moved to the cities in three waves, after World War I and II and in large numbers during the droughts of the 1970s where they became involved in commerce or informal economic activities (Diouf 2000:692).

Members of the Murid Brotherhood dominate the associational structures of markets in Dakar (Lyons & Snoxill, 2005a), and the 'glue' holding people together is the norms and ceremonies of religious practice and the affiliation with brotherhoods (*Dairas* for women, *Mboutailles* for men). Membership of the brotherhood provides a crucial introduction to customers and suppliers in the market-place. Trading is predominantly carried out by men, but women who work as traders also socialise through women's prayer circles, or *Dairas*. Brotherhood membership provides the social capital necessary for new traders to enter the market, and for hawkers, membership also furnishes the trust on which wholesalers allow them goods on a sale-or-return basis.

There are no product associations in Dakar although several organisations provide welfare arrangements, including two trade unions which deal primarily with petty traders. There is also the Dakar Chamber of Commerce, which is an exclusive membership club for the powerful wholesalers, the *grands commerçants*, who act as spokesmen for the traders. The *grands commerçants* carry out negotiations with the municipality, and discuss important issues such as the setting of trading tolls, the (re)location of markets, the density of stalls and trading.

There is suspicion among small traders and hawkers that the wholesalers do not really represent their interests; this is not strong enough to rock the boat but has some foundation. During 2002/3 there was renewed debate about moving Sandaga market in Dakar. The *grand commerçants* put forward a proposal to re-organise the market in a way that would tie hawkers trading in the market to particular wholesalers, clearly something that could only serve the interests of the wholesalers. This was to be done by designating trading tables as the property of particular wholesalers, with only their goods to be displayed there. This would disenfranchise any non-member wholesalers (e.g. Chinese merchants), but also make sure that hawkers had no freedom to change supplier in the market.

Thus, the heavy dependence of traders on their brotherhood membership has reinforced the political and financial influence of the brotherhood, which acts as a pressure group in all trade policies in the country. The social capital derived from shared spiritual activity is an avenue to developing business ties with people who might otherwise be strangers in the market, which, reinforced and supported by brotherhood membership, form the basis of the political structures in the market-place (Lyons and Snoxell 2005a). It is an interesting and unusual feature of Senegalese market social capital, that both formal and informal traders are embraced by these networks.

Members of the other major brotherhood groups in Senegal, notably the Tijanes and Alayes, are also heavily engaged in trade and have mutual support systems similar to the Murids. Although they are neither as large nor as powerful, they are able to collaborate when the urban-political situation calls for unity, e.g. over the Sandaga market negotiations. However, entirely excluded from this strong binding 'force-field' of brotherhood membership, are migrant traders and non-Muslims. These are marginalised, and have not been able to find a political voice with which to address their issues at either market or municipality level.

Ghana – product associations and women's leadership

In Ghana, the studies of markets and street trade in Accra and Kumasi indicate two main tiers of self-governance for market traders. First are the product associations,

which exist in all markets and are highly specialised. Each type of vegetable, product and craft has its own association, with more than twenty product associations in each market. The associations are generally single-sex, often also single ethnicity, and chaired by a hereditary Queen. They have a powerful welfare function, occasionally a savings and loan function, and are closely involved with day-to-day management of market life (King 2006). Queens' authority can be absolute, although some associations are more democratically run than others.

One sphere of cooperation is utilities. Product associations often manage specific territories or lines of stalls, and pay for electricity for the section. Thus, if things are going badly for a given association, as happened in the dress-fabric association in the Medina Market in Accra, electricity could be disconnected to them, while still being supplied to other traders.

Product associations are also essential for controlling/managing competition, though they are often exclusive and riven with strife, largely as a result of the very competitive trading situations. Interestingly, there seems to be no competition over product differentiation within any of the associations, and association members often source cooperatively. The plantain sellers association and the casava sellers association in the New Makola market are buying cooperatives. For example, the cassava Queen collects funds and takes orders, sources the casava, books the lorry and negotiates with suppliers. Each trader's casavas are distinctively marked with coloured paint before being loaded on the lorry at source. Tomato traders in Medina Market club together to import tomatoes from Cote d'Ivoire during the slack growing season at home. They also ration their trading days during the peak season, so as not flood the market, each trader being barred from the market for one, or sometimes two afternoon a week.

The second tier is provided by the market committee, in which the interests of traders are promoted by their Queen (or chairman if it's a man, e.g. in electronics). All association leaders are members of the committee, which settles boundary disputes and issues over dumping of waste and so on. This committee also negotiates with utility companies and the municipality (generally a markets department, often also planning departments and service departments). In Accra there is also a Metropolitan Market Committee composed of chairmen from all the market committees in the city, which is understood to meet only once or twice a year, but to be relatively effective during election time.

A very important sphere of negotiation in any market is over planning and development – the contestation of the market site as a whole. With central-city markets there can be severe development pressures on the land, but even well organised market committees have trouble in influencing such processes – except close to election time. For example, in Accra the New Makola Market was established on the outskirts of the city centre, after the original Makola Market burnt down in dubious circumstances. On the other hand, Medina Market was formally designated on a central site after the traders had 'squatted' on an adjacent site for a year, and their committee had taken their case to the Metropolitan Market Committee, which lobbied politicians for support (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005a). Negotiation with the municipality on behalf of market traders in that instance was undertaken by the Queens. However, it is rare for Queens to speak if any of the association heads is male, and the market committee chairman is almost invariably male.

Although powerful within the market place, the market leaders were generally overawed by municipal administrators and politicians, reflected in a general apathy toward any negotiations with the municipality or utility companies, and a sense that self-provisioning was the only way forward (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005b). The effectiveness of negotiations is also limited where the municipality is so overstretched that services cannot be improved, for example, in Ga District where the council only owns one garbage truck.

Two factors are fundamental to the continued importance of the product associations. The first is the lines to traditional governance - Market Queens and chairman owe allegiance to tribal chiefs who have a formal representation on municipal councils and are widely respected (Brown, 2006a p63). The second is the predominance of matrilineal family structures amongst some Ghanaian ethnic groups. Women frequently live apart from their husbands and are economically independent (King, 2006 p105). It is thus widely accepted that women take a major share in the informal street economy

Ghana is heavily penetrated by the Christian faith at all social levels, and although virtually all Christian traders belonged to a church, and attended it at least once a week, religion played no discernible role in market-place friendships, and religious affiliation was in any case considered a personal choice, rather than an inherited membership. Traders explained that financial and trading matters were kept separate from the church and that church members should not be involved in loans or savings associations (Lyons and Snoxell 2005b).

The small numbers of Muslims traders in the two markets studied in Accra showed similar associational structures to those of Senegal. Particularly strongly organised are the butchers in New Makola Market, who shared religious and ethnic background, as well as a traditional trade.

The organisational structures described in Kumasi and Accra exist only in designated markets, although trading stretches over a much wider area. For example membership of a product association and the ability to appeal to a market management is dependent on membership of a designated market. Thus hawkers or other traders outside designated markets are excluded from the structure and are essentially unrepresented at either market or municipality level.

Product associations are also quite inflexible, and there are many traders who do not join product associations claiming that membership subscriptions are too high; while for reasons we were not able to establish, some trades, e.g. household goods, have no interest in developing an association and traders prefer to deal directly, as individuals with market or municipal authorities.

Socialist traditions create mixed scope for Tanzanian democratic voice

In Tanzania public policy has been significantly influenced by the philosophy of socialism and self-reliance first articulated in 1967 in the Arusha Declaration shortly after independence. However mis-management of nationalised enterprises, a steep drop in the world price of coffee and the war on Uganda precipitated economic collapse, and the country was forced to adopt an Economic Recovery programme designed to introduce a market-led economy (Evans with Ngalewa 2003:249, Bigsten and Danielson 2001:19). This led to dramatic changes in the structure of urban

employment, and between 1978 and 1991 the proportion of people working in the formal economy fell from 84% to 36% (Tripp 1997:187).

Political participation was central to the socialist era of the 1960s-1980s, and has led to an emphasis on decentralization and local participation although some argue that the changes in fact undermined local social capital organisations (Tripp 1997:70). Elected local government was re-introduced by the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act in 1984, with councils elected for each ward by direct popular ballot and a 25% quota for women. Multi-party democracy was re-introduced by the ruling CCM party (Chama Cha Mapinduzi) in 1992.

Since then, reform and decentralization has been on-going; a national conference in 1996 laid down a shared vision of future local government leading to a policy paper in 1998 and further decentralisation. In urban areas, councillors are elected on a ward basis, with a quota of seats allocated for women councillors. Urban neighbourhoods are represented by a six-member elected *mtaa* council, which provides contact with local government, oversees local affairs, and mobilises development initiatives.

In Dar es Salaam three factors have been critical in giving legitimacy and influence to informal traders. First, despite, local bylaws dating from the 1960s and 1970s which made petty trading illegal, the economic crisis of the 1980s forced some accommodation of the informal sector. The 1983 Human Resources Deployment Act, required every able-bodied person to work and established a system of trading licenses, and was originally intended as a restrictive policy but was subtly 'reinterpreted' by those implementing the legislation, effectively conferring a 'right to work' on urban citizens. Second, the Sustainable Dar es Salaam Project (SDP), a pilot strategic planning introduced by UNDP and UN-Habitat, heralded a participatory basis for city planning, and the city consultation in 1992 identified nine critical urban issues one of which was 'petty trading' (Rutch 2001). Third, the near bankruptcy and suspension of the city council in 1996 led to a restructuring and the introduction of three district councils as an intermediate tier of local government in the capital, and an openness to new ideas (Brown 2006a:71; Brown and Nnkya 2006)

A Working Group on Petty Trading set up through the SDP made a number of recommendations, in particular the strengthening of trader associations to represent traders in dialogue with the authorities. By 1997 about 240 self-help groups representing 16,000 members had been formed (DCC 1999) and two umbrella groups were established VIBINDO (Association of Small Businesses), and KIWAKU (an association of clothes sellers). *Guidelines for Petty Traders* were published in 1997, dealing with various urban management issues. The associations now manage much of the trading in the CBD, with good although informal access to the two tiers of local government, Dar es Salaam City Council and Ilala Municipality (Nnkya 2006).

Some of the associations are formally constituted as cooperatives, for example WAMBOMA, which manages an area within the CBD where imported fruit and vegetables are sold (Nnkya 2006:92). WAMBOMA manages street cleaning (hiring a women's cooperative from an informal settlement) and ensures that all traders within its area are licensed, and traders have confidence in its ability to resolve conflicts and negotiate with the city and district council. However, it is also exclusionary as few women traders work in its domain, and poor traders cannot afford the up-front licence costs. Elsewhere in the city, recognised representation appears to be patchy, and traders lack political voice.

Informal networks are a living reality and crucial element of coping strategies in Tanzania, and exist throughout the informal manufacturing and petty trade sector. They are hard for outsiders to uncover, and the fluidity of defies formalisation and produces a situation of near invisibility (Simone 2001 in Baker *et al* 2002). Informal associations are mobilized in a crisis, for example to fight evictions. Reciprocal relationships between informal traders and the adjacent property owners are common - historically traders in the CBD negotiated space with Indian property owners, and today in outlying areas traders often have agreements with adjacent property owners, for example to provide overnight security in exchange for a trading site.

Although the SDP city consultation was re-run in 2005, street traders in Dar es Salaam are again on a knife edge and lack high level political support. In March 2006 the prime minister issued an ultimatum requiring hawkers to leave the CBD, and several areas were cleared with bloodshed and casualties. Some of the traders went to a magistrate seeking a temporary injunction preventing eviction, and the Prime Minister suspended the process pending the allocation of suitable alternatives sites, but on 30 September 2006 the final clear-up went ahead and traders were moved to new makeshift markets. Continued protests led to an agreement to build a new multi-million 'Business Park' to accommodate up to 10,000 traders and hawkers, with similar parks planned elsewhere (Joseph 2006). As elsewhere, fear of 'the other' seems hard to overcome.

Lesotho - urban management objectives override social need

In Lesotho the predominance of the informal economy is as evident as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. Lesotho is facing major development challenges, including poverty, economic dependence on South Africa, high rates of HIV/AIDS and political uncertainty. Unlike the other localities discussed, historically Lesotho has suffered from high rates of out-migration as Basotho men seek work in the mines in South Africa, often never returning leaving both urban and rural women as the main breadwinners, although this trend has reduced slightly in recent years (Brown, 2006a:64). The structural adjustment programme introduced in 1988 led to a decade of economic growth, but this was undermined by election riots in 1998, and the expiry of a garment textile quota with the US..

Urban management is the remit of Maseru City Council (MCC) which has responsibilities for planning, maintenance of 'good order', promoting health, welfare and convenience, and establishing and regulating control of markets (Setšabi 2006: 134). The city council's Market Master had assumed *de facto* control of all street trading although regulations only permitted him to manage designated markets (where few traders were located). The controlling legislation and procedures for licensing were so complex that it was virtually impossible for traders to comply, and more than seven ministries had powers of inspection or eviction (Setšabi 2006: 141).

Evictions have been a common mechanism for clearing traders from areas outside designated markets. The spaces which traders use are portrayed as crime-ridden, and this argument has been used to evict traders on a number of occasions. The pattern of evictions is not well documented but from a study of newspaper reports, the cycle of evictions has gone through various phases (Setšabi 2006: 142). The first phase of were purges prior to the visit of noted dignitaries, such as the evictions preceding the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1988. Evictions were again threatened prior to Nelson Mandela's visit in 1995, although a compromise was reached whereby traders agreed

to take part in a town cleaning operation. After this there appears to have been an intensification of evictions based on a new rationale of enforcing market regulations.

After the election riots in 1998 destroyed many properties in the CBD, there was intensification of 'spatial cleansing' with direct involvement of the Minister of Local Government, bypassing the city council (Setšabi 2006:142). Traders failed in their campaign to trade in Kingsway and other busy streets in the CBD; a deadline for evictions was set and violent clashes with the police took place as traders resisted their removal. One of the street vendors associations applied to the courts on the basis that the 'right to life' enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho should be interpreted to mean a 'right to livelihood', and that MCC had acted beyond their powers in evicting traders. The courts, however, argued that an association could not have a 'right to life' and the applicants lost their case.

Throughout these negotiations, vendors' organizations have remained small and largely ineffective; the two main associations are divided along broadly lines, leading to lack of clarity in their demands. With a history of hostility between traders and local government, and municipality regulations that are complicated and ineffective, it is easy for heavy handed senior officials to over-ride local governments, leaving little room for accommodation.

Four contrasting traditions

The four examples of trader associations in Senegal, Ghana, Tanzania and Lesotho exhibit very different traditions of 'urban voice'. While the associational structure of traders is significantly influenced by the local social, cultural and political traditions, trader associations increasingly respond to a complex and rapidly changing environment, and are subject to huge pressures of national and international migration and changing trade relations in the context of globalisation. Associations are also in a dynamic relationship with formal institutions including local government and chambers of trade, and are affected by changing local government powers and political and personality struggles. This section draws conclusions from a comparative analysis of the case studies.

Institutional relationships

Reflecting on the experience of Devas *et al's* study of urban governance and poverty (2004), five factors are key in promoting effective participation of the poor: an appropriate legal and institutional framework; inclusive institutionalised participation; partnership and stakeholder involvement; the cumulative building of grassroots structures, and regular operation of participatory decision-making processes.

In none of the case studies, was there an effective legal or institutional framework for inclusion of informal sector workers, or a consistent attempt by local governments to institutionalise participation of informal workers, although these represent the major section of the urban labour force in all five cities. In interviews in Dakar, Accra, Kumasi and Maseru, municipal officials all spoke disparagingly of traders and trading organisations, not only officials in generic service departments like planning, but also in departments designated for market management. Traders in general, but particularly street traders, were seen as unlikely to honour agreements; likely to

encroach on territory designated for other uses; aggressive; dirty, and a source of dirt, echoing the general prejudices discussed above.

The closest to an enabling framework was seen in Dar es Salaam. Here the 1983 legislation established a right to work, which meant that traders associations could not simply be dismissed or street traders evicted. Although not formalised, a general acceptance of participation arose from the socialist traditions of decentralized government, the experiment in participatory governance of the SDP, and the personal sympathies of civil servants having to implement punitive regulations. Local officials still give time to and negotiate with trader associations, but the acceptance of participation has not been fully institutionalised, and despite the recent evictions, the umbrella organisation VIBINDO has been influential in negotiating the promise of significant investment in new markets.

Local politicians were generally more sympathetic to the problems of space and management, but in both Dakar and Maseru where ministers became involved, their determination to 'tidy up' the city led to a very unsympathetic approach. As one trader in Maseru said,

'This government does not acknowledge our rights as human beings. Many of the people who are affected by eviction are women. The Minister of Local Government is a woman, but she does not have a woman's heart – she has no sympathy for the plight of women who have aspirations for their children like her. What we want is peace and security'.

In both Ghana and Senegal, grass roots structures exist but have not been developed through formal partnership or stakeholder involvement. Instead these associations are most vocal in crisis management, operating through local politicians or the press. This does not allow for the cumulative building of negotiation skills and associational capacity.

An interesting move by some traders associations is recourse to the courts. Here associations are trying to use existing legal frameworks to their advantage, with mixed success. In Lesotho, a well-founded challenge fell on a technicality, indicating that the associations were not sufficiently well-resourced to use the system to their advantage and that existing legislation was too heavily stacked against them. In Dar es Salaam the associations had more success in fighting the eviction orders by the government, which were stayed until a compromise was reached. In none of the cases were NGOs influential in building capacity. Traders elsewhere, however, have been more successful in furthering their voice through the courts (Streetnet News No: 5, 6 StreetNet 2007)

Structure and origins of trader organisations

There are many differences in the forms of collective association developed by traders, some based on religion and ethnicity, some on products and some area-based. Traders associations undertake a wide variety of roles including welfare, business support, storage or business promotion, dispute resolution, networking, training, improving infrastructure, and securing and managing a trading space. Their influence in urban decision-making, and extent to which they represent the wider views of their members and other traders varies significantly.

Senegal represents an unusual case, where the brotherhoods have emerged as a representation of Islamic faith and as a means of protecting traditional cultural within

a colonial context. Brotherhoods are influential in Muslim communities throughout West Africa but perhaps most evident in Senegal. The brotherhoods evolved rapidly during the 20th century, and have supported both national and international trade expansion – particularly the Senegalese diaspora to Europe - and have informal but influential links to local government. They also exclude new migrants and the poor and there is evidence that they have been bypassed in emerging international forms of trade (Lyons and Brown 2007).

Ghana's trade associations also have a strong historic and cultural links, but the smaller associations have concentrated on welfare to the detriment of influencing local urban management and decision-making. The product associations are limited in their remit as many are bound to particular localities, and many traders in Ghana see no value in joining these associations. Only where umbrella organisations have been formed representing a powerful voting lobby are the traders' associations able to have wider influence.

In Dar es Salaam the traditional associational life of Africa has proved flexible and responsive to government initiatives to encourage participation at local level which, interestingly, has not been limited to residents. In Lesotho, traders associations have not managed to overcome factionalism and different political affiliations so that the associations are involved in infighting and lack a coherent voice. In both cases, however, traders' associations have resorted to formal means of influence using the courts to achieve their ends, with some limited success.

Social capital is viewed as an individual asset, which people manage to sustain their livelihoods. Traders, whether migrants or locals, join market associations to support their day-to-day trading through access to goods and trading spots, and mutual support through a range of favours and exchange of information, savings and loans, and welfare arrangements (Lyons and Snoxell 2005a). This closely supports Coleman's interpretation (1988) of social capital, and subsequent analyses of entrepreneurs e.g. Woolcock (1998).

However, the case studies confirm that for successful bargaining trader social capital to must have collective, as well as individual value. Umbrella organisations often have more power than individual associations, but may lack the capacity to influence senior politicians or the media. Such associations, however exclude large numbers of traders, often hawkers, migrants and poor women traders, and the danger is that local government officials see the organisations as being widely representative, whereas in practice many individuals are excluded from their membership.

There are massive power inequalities within the system. The rapid influx of migrants and other young people attempting to embark on a business career through hawking has vastly reduced their bargaining power with influential members of the community, for example the *grands commerçants* of Senegal.

Vulnerabilities of the existing associational structures

Associations, even when well established, are vulnerable to change as a result of external economic factors or political or social events which may lead to further influxes of young migrant to the market place. These vulnerabilities arise from a number of sources, discussed below.

Exclusion: Exclusion of poor traders from the established associational structure was a feature of all the case studies. For example, in Accra the formal associations are in danger of being marginalised in urban political debate because membership in associations is predicated on a trading space in a formal market. Only a minority of traders can, in fact, obtain such places. The majority of traders exist in a less formal social-capital world, and are not represented by the association system. Indeed, many association members see these less formal traders as competition and as a threat. As Popke and Ballard (2004) identify it is in the undesignated trading areas that most friction with other urban users is experienced, and which most clearly need further management.

Globalisation: In all four countries increasing informalization is closely linked to increases in migration, both rural to urban and international. There is also evidence that the advent Chinese traders and increased availability of cheap Chinese manufactured goods (unpublished authors' research) threatens the dominance of wholesalers and other gatekeepers to the market. It remains to be seen whether this will have the 'knock on' effect of reducing their political power, which is largely derived the loyalty of petty traders, for example, as new distribution chains evolve with the advent of large quantities of low-cost, Asian-manufactured goods.

Unstable structures: Changes in the negotiating powers of associations are profoundly affected by changing political structures. In Dar es Salaam, local government reform has mainly served to strengthen grassroots action. In Dakar, until independence in 1961, the import of manufactured goods into Senegal, from west Africa or Europe and beyond, was largely the prerogative of Lebanese merchants who had a privileged position in the French colony. Following independence, imports and wholesaling activities became dominated by the indigenous traders who used connections in the customs and elsewhere to undercut Lebanese traders. There are indications that the *grands commerçants* are now being displaced in their role as providers of merchandise to petty traders. A survey in Dakar in 2004 showed a new sector near the main Sandaga market tenanted largely by Chinese émigrés selling such direct imports, whose shops were heavily frequented by hawkers. A recent pilot study of African trade in southern China by the authors showed evidence of a rapidly developing network for distribution of goods imported by west African merchants within the CFA region.

Discussion

Urban governance and citizenship for the informal-sector poor

Two main strands in interpretations of urban governance today are particularly pertinent to the discussion on street trading and 'voice' These are: neoliberalism on the one hand, and empowerment on the other.

Neoliberalism: The neoliberal approach to urban governance has gone hand in hand with the development of a corporatist, managerialist approach to city governance. Urban governments have withdrawn from much direct service provision, taking a regulatory and entrepreneurial role in supporting investment and service delivery by the corporate private sector. Urban governments have also been active in the displacement of informal street traders both in the North (eg Smith, 1996) and in the

South. Devas *et al* (2004) concluded that informal traders and small business people have very little influence over decisions made by formal and informal coalitions of public authorities and large private sector interests in Third World cities.

Empowerment; Perhaps the most structured form of participatory urban governance is Participatory Budgeting (PB). As Hickey and Mohan (2005) observe, participatory budgeting has transformatory potential, but this potential is rarely achieved partly because of a reluctance on the part of authority to recognise of urban social movements. Most powerful representation is generally made through experienced and well connected associations. In Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting initially attracted the involvement of the poor in relatively stable, traditionally well organised/associated, city-centre neighbourhoods. The introduction of themed forums in 1989 succeeded in drawing in the middle classes, but recent migrants have remained outside the process (Navarro, 2005).

In this context, it is interesting to reflect on the StreetNet and SEWA, associations of the informal self-employed, which have developed an international network and found access to influence through international fora, particularly the ILO. However, such influence is indirect at best and unlikely to provide leverage with local decision makers on a regular basis (Devas *et al*, 2004).

Urban Fluidity and Changing Notions of Citizenship

'The notion of citizenship requires continual conceptual, philosophical and value clarification' (Janowitz 1980:1). While the implications of globalization and migration for citizenship of the nation state have been widely analysed, and a certain amount of debate has been devoted to the implications of migration for urban citizenship, the implications of the rapid growth of informality on the concept of urban citizenship has received virtually no attention at all.

The status of citizenship is accorded to individuals in relation to a social, and usually also a spatial entity. What should this entity be? And, under what circumstances can the status be a universal right? Citizenship can be viewed as the right to a voice and an agreed level of support by the state, in exchange for meeting certain obligations and responsibilities. Marshall's view (1950) was that these obligations included payment of taxes, acquiring education, and participation in industrial associations rather than residence-based communities, based on the assumption that national voting is firmly institutionalised but not, perhaps, a means by which progressive social change may take place.

However, the increase in migration and transnationalism, as well as a growing preoccupation with a range of global management issues, have brought a universalist, post-nationalist challenge to the nation-state has been posed by the ideas of global citizenship. These challenge the hegemony of the nation state as the source and focus of citizenship. In the North, reforms and regulations during the past few years have attempted to reassert the role of the state through narrowing of the definition of citizenship; developing protectionist policies for citizens in an era of economic and political insecurity; and questioning of multiculturalism and diversity.

An alternative challenge, or perhaps, a complementary one, has come from a city-region perspective. The argument here is that as long as reforms and decentralization are characterised by devolution of power that is fundamentally held by the state,

delegation to municipalities is conditional and contingent. However, it is conceivable that cities could expand their powers to include the conferral of urban citizenship.

The strong argument is that local issues can be settled by a local franchise, and inclusion in this process can be more comprehensive. Others have taken the argument further and proposed that cities might take over powers from the state, for example, attempting to control inward migration and citizenship. Given that cities have little influence over immigration laws, or over the flow of migrants once they have entered a country, we would argue with Balbo and Marconi that there is little sense in proposing that they take on such additional roles (2005).

Urban citizenship has been proposed as accommodating a flexible association with a city. For example, it could be taken up on arrival and abandoned on departure (Bauböck 2003). Although relocating the focus of citizenship from the state to the city, Bauböck still adopts the three traditional grounds used generally as a basis for citizenship: birth, parental citizenship and naturalization. In a context of fluidity and migration, the grounds for naturalization are heavily contested. It is clear from the debate above that working or living in a city should give grounds for participation in its political process if massive social exclusion is to be avoided, and that participatory governance structures exist which can be adapted to provide a framework for such participation.

This argument becomes more explicit in discussion of multiple urban citizenships, entailing multiple franchises, which can be based on multiple residency and household ties or, for example, on the spatial separation of residency and work (Bauböck, 2003), (or, more radically, on 'any form of connection that they think expresses an aspect of themselves at the moment', Frug, 1993:329)

Bauböck's identification of the political stake of the self-employed in the city is unusual, and yet he rapidly withdraws from this concern: '*...employees and self-employed owners of small businesses will (or should) be represented by their specific corporate organizations...Do they have an additional claim to be counted as citizens of the municipality? I am not sure*' (p154). In the context of African cities where self-employment and informality are the norm, this dismissal is inappropriate.

Towards pro-poor governance

From the case studies in this paper it is clear that a key group of urban citizens in sub-Saharan African cities are denied effect rights and a voice in urban management decisions. Participatory processes are based on residency rights, and those working within the informal sector are seen to be 'alien', 'dirty' and not part of the 'tidy-city' image promoted by politicians.

The research highlighted in this paper shows a rich diversity of trader associations, from those founded on religion and ethnicity to those based on product type or location of trading. These associations allow the development of patronage relationships which are valuable to the smooth operation of established markets, and crucial to the future of new traders with little or no capital to invest. They are also exclusionary often inhibiting entry by the poorest of the poor. However, two problems hamper representation of poor street and market traders.

First, the majority of trader associations are seen but not heard. They undertake a wide variety of roles, including welfare, business support such as bulk purchase,

storage or business promotion, dispute resolution, networking, training, improving infrastructure and securing and managing trading space. They provide members with the benefits of working in a cluster or pooling resources. Such associations often have their roots in the extended social capital networks of kinship, family or religious organisations prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa. However, a small number of traders' associations make a transition from welfare to advocacy, becoming highly politicized or emerging as powerful exponents of pro-poor urban policy change to support the informal economy.

Second, even where effective representation exists, most traders' associations are unrepresentative and exclusionary. In cities of sub-Saharan Africa today, in the fluid and ethnically and nationally diverse resident and trader population, the problems of exploitation within associations is compounded by ignorance of newcomers and fear of landlords and gang bosses (Lipietz 2004). Free-riding is common in these situations, with opportunists who exploit naïve or vulnerable newcomers or elusive communities, and opportunists who, protected by the silence of others, simply do not pay (ibid p7). Existing political structures and their relationship with currently established trader associations are simply inadequate to meet the challenge of representation street traders and other informal workers in cities where informality is the norm.

New structures need to be developed founded on a legislative basis that establishes rights for workers in the informal economy. These should recognised people's right to work, and be based on formalised regular participation in urban management issues that have been the foundation of other successful experiments in participatory governance. They should support established associations with demonstrative credibility in representing a wide constituency of traders, but should recognize the needs of the poor and excluded, often new migrants or women. Only with individual citizenship rights for traders in the city, and that dynamic new associational structures will the challenge of informal cities be met.

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