



## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction: African Secondary City Food Systems in Context

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The sub-field of urban food systems in sub-Saharan Africa has expanded rapidly over the past decade with empirical research and theoretical reflection in multiple fields (Battersby & Watson, 2019; Crush et al., 2020; Frayne et al., 2018; Hovorka, 2013). This body of work dispels the myth that food systems are primarily rural development issues and that food availability in urban areas means that food security is not a problem (Crush & Frayne, 2014; Crush & Riley, 2019). The collection of research chapters in this book focuses on a specific type of urban environment

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in Africa, that of secondary cities, and provides new knowledge on a wide range of topics related to their food systems. This introductory chapter draws several through lines of thematic concepts, shared experiences, and intersecting agendas. We first outline four main reasons for this book. Second, we review the definitions of “urban,” “secondary cities,” and “food security,” with reference to the 12 countries covered in these chapters. Finally, we sketch key themes developed through the chapters. These themes illustrate the multifaceted ways in which food systems research supports the agenda for sustainable and inclusive development throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

## RESEARCHING FOOD SYSTEMS IN SECONDARY AFRICAN CITIES

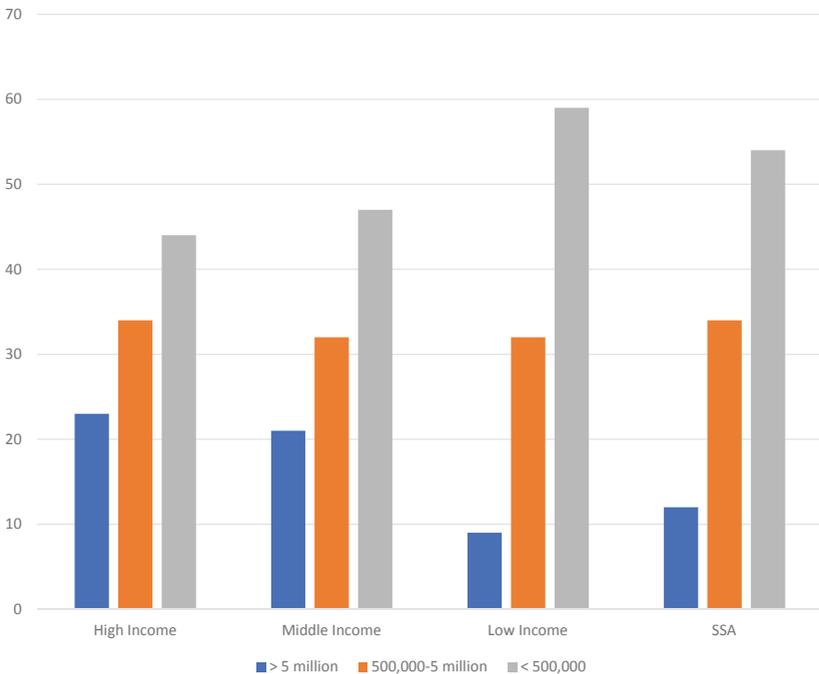
The main purpose of this book is to bring together research that can draw a fuller picture of how food systems are transforming in secondary African cities and the impacts of these changes for residents. There are at least four main reasons why this is an important and timely project: first, because Africa is rapidly urbanizing; second, because food insecurity is widespread in African cities; third, because localizing global development requires knowledge about secondary city food systems; and fourth, because food systems governance is a complex challenge and information about the situation is scant and dispersed across various fields of research and policy.

### *Africa Is Rapidly Urbanizing*

Most of the anticipated three billion increase in the human population by mid-century will occur in cities of the Global South. Cities in low- and middle-income countries will absorb 94% of urban growth in the next two decades, and, by 2050, will be home to 5.5 billion people or 83% of the world’s urban population (UN-DESA, 2018). The significance of this urban transition is recognized in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, which aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN-DESA, 2021). James Duminy et al. (2013, p. 153) note that with rapidly expanding populations, protracted economic malaise, and governance capacity constraints, “the urban challenge in Africa is undoubtedly

more serious than in any other part of the world.” Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to have 1.3 billion people living in its cities by 2050, nearly trebling its urban population in 30 years.

One of the distinguishing features of rapid urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa is that it is increasingly taking place in smaller towns and cities. These urban centers currently absorb two-thirds of all urban population growth, but receive less infrastructure investment, policy focus, and academic attention than large primary cities (UN-Habitat, 2008, 2014). Cities with populations of less than 500,000 now account for a higher share of the urban population in low-income countries than in both high- and middle-income countries (Fig. 1.1). In sub-Saharan Africa, 54% of the urban population lives in secondary cities. Secondary urbanization in



**Fig. 1.1** Urban Population Distribution by City Size in High-, Middle- and Low-Income Countries Globally and in Sub-Saharan Africa Regionally (Source UN-DESA [2018])

Africa has many implications for development planning, which is limited by knowledge gaps both in descriptive studies of how these urban environments function and in theoretical reflection on the role of secondary urbanization in development processes. Several projects have been raising awareness of this knowledge gap in recent years (Battersby & Watson, 2019; Marais et al., 2016; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Hohmann, 2014).

Cities Alliance (2021, p. 16) has recently noted how the impact of COVID-19 has further exposed the underlying vulnerability of African secondary cities:

The impact of COVID-19 compounds existing crises being experienced in many secondary cities, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. These cities face the prolonged effects of climate change, high informal sector employment and poor endowment of public goods and services. The tendency of large cities and metropolitan regions to receive a disproportionate share of public resources, investment and jobs further exacerbates the situation of inequity facing the recovery efforts and the future development of secondary cities in many countries.

A lack of resources, infrastructure, and “autonomy to pursue strategic long-term planning” (Assane, 2019) are some of the key constraints secondary cities face in addressing newer challenges such as COVID-19 and longstanding challenges of poverty, population growth, climate change, and food insecurity.

### *Food Insecurity Is Widespread in Secondary Cities*

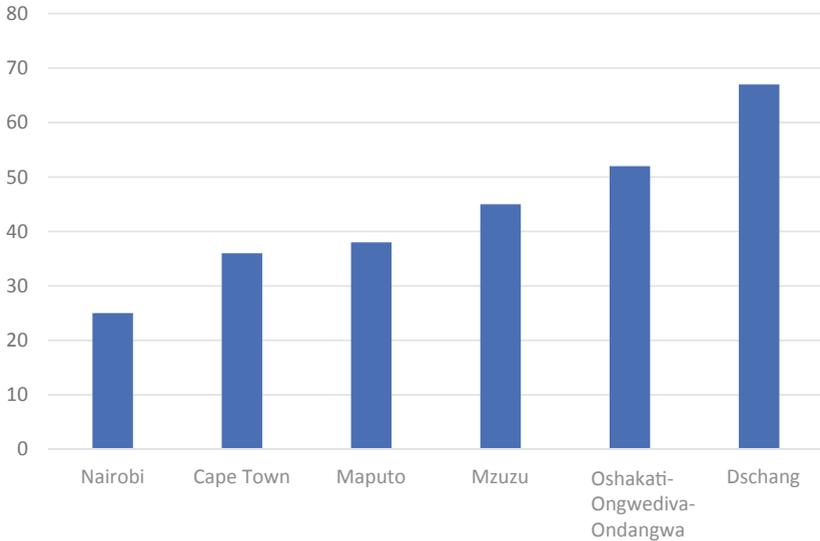
Marie Ruel (2020) notes that “the current state of evidence on urban food security, diets, nutrition, and health and their drivers is shockingly outdated and scattered.” The problem of urban food insecurity on the African continent has been underestimated for years relative to rural food insecurity, often based on misconceptions about the differences between hunger and food insecurity. Even in the absence of consistent data disaggregated by urban and rural, there is growing case study evidence of food insecurity in urban environments across Africa. The African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) baseline survey found most households were severely food insecure in low-income urban areas in Southern African cities (Crush & Frayne, 2014; Frayne et al., 2018). These findings are corroborated by several empirical studies that reaffirm the widespread

presence of hunger, malnutrition, and vulnerability in cities across sub-Saharan Africa (Battersby & Watson, 2019; Berlie, 2020; Chilanga et al., 2017; IPC, 2021; Van Wesenbeeck, 2018). This book provides further evidence of the high prevalence of urban food insecurity, while focusing on the secondary city context and offering specific insights into its drivers and manifestations.

The results of two interconnected research projects provide some indication that secondary cities are home to higher levels of severe household food insecurity than primary cities. The Hungry Cities Partnership conducted city-wide household surveys in three primary cities: Cape Town, South Africa (Crush et al., 2018); Maputo, Mozambique (Raimundo et al., 2018); and Nairobi, Kenya (Owuor, 2018). AFSUN's Food, Urbanization, Environment, and Livelihoods (FUEL) project conducted city-wide household surveys in Mzuzu, Malawi (Riley et al., 2018), Oshakati-Ondangwa-Ongwediva, Namibia (Nickanor et al., 2019) and Dschang, Cameroon (Legwegoh et al., 2020). Both studies used similar sampling techniques and the Household Food Insecurity Access Prevalence tool to assess household food insecurity levels. Comparing the percentage of households who were severely food insecure, the secondary cities had higher rates than the primary cities (Fig. 1.2). In Oshakati-Ondangwa-Ongwediva and Dschang, most households were severely food insecure. It is likely that other dimensions of food insecurity are also different in primary and secondary cities; for example, where the relative diversity of food retail sources creates advantages in primary cities (Mackay, 2019) and where proximity to rural areas and agricultural production creates advantages in secondary cities (Abwe & Daniel, 2021).

### *Localizing Global Development Requires Knowledge About Secondary City Food Systems*

The large and growing population in African secondary cities provides an impetus to spur research into how to meet the SDGs in these contexts. Moreover, food systems intersect with many of the SDGs, such that efforts to understand and address food systems challenges in African secondary cities can advance progress on several SDGs for millions of people (UN-DESA, 2021). The following are six key SDGs related to the research in this book:



**Fig. 1.2** Percentage of Severely Food Insecure Households by City (*Source* African Food Security Urban Network and Hungry Cities Partnership)

- SDG 1 (No Poverty)—Food systems are major sources of livelihoods and engines of local economic development for many secondary cities. Informal activities within urban food systems are particularly important sources of food and livelihoods for the urban poor.
- SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)—Secondary city food systems must be strengthened in order to ensure no one goes hungry. There are also relevant issues about urban food security data and subjective meanings of food insecurity in various cities.
- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)—The goal of food and nutrition security underpins good health and well-being. It also relates to specific issues, such as food hygiene in shops, markets, and homes, and the cultural significance of well-being embedded in food.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality)—The responsibility of feeding households continues to be gendered in most contexts and is often a burden for women, especially in impoverished communities. The experience of food insecurity is also generally more severe for women.

- SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)—The goal of sustainable food systems underpins environmental, social, and economic sustainability for urban communities.
- SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption)—African secondary city food systems include productive and consumptive activities that can be improved. These systems should also be studied to inform global discourse about sustainable food system models.

In the context of urban development challenges, the SDGs are usually paired with the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which sets out a vision and agenda for sustainable urbanization as part of the UN-Habitat system (Habitat III, 2017; Parnell, 2016). Jane Battersby and Vanessa Watson (2020) note that food is frequently linked in the NUA to what they call the “local trap,” which over-emphasizes spatially bounded city regions and local issues of agriculture, rural–urban linkages, and small-scale farmers. While the NUA undoubtedly falls into this trap, it is plausible to think that localism may be more applicable to secondary cities than to their larger primary city counterparts, especially in agriculturally productive areas.

There is increasing recognition of the need for strong local and regional governments to influence global policy development and to implement these global visions (UCLG, 2014). The UN75 vision for post-COVID development places local and regional government in a central role for “localizing the SDGs and adapting them to the realities of the world” (UN75, 2020, p. 18). Through a “governance of proximity,” local and regional governments will “bring legitimacy to the global agenda” and lead to a “renewal of the system” that has tended to be top-down. In most African contexts, and especially in African secondary cities, realizing this vision will require much deeper understanding of local governments and much more investment in their capacity to play this central role. The tendency to overestimate the capacity of local governments in Africa and to imagine their roles in unrealistic terms has been detrimental to the success of past development initiatives (Battersby & Watson, 2019). This book will aid in the effort to build knowledge about local contexts that are needed for the grand UN75 vision to be realized.

### *Food Systems Governance Is a Complex Challenge*

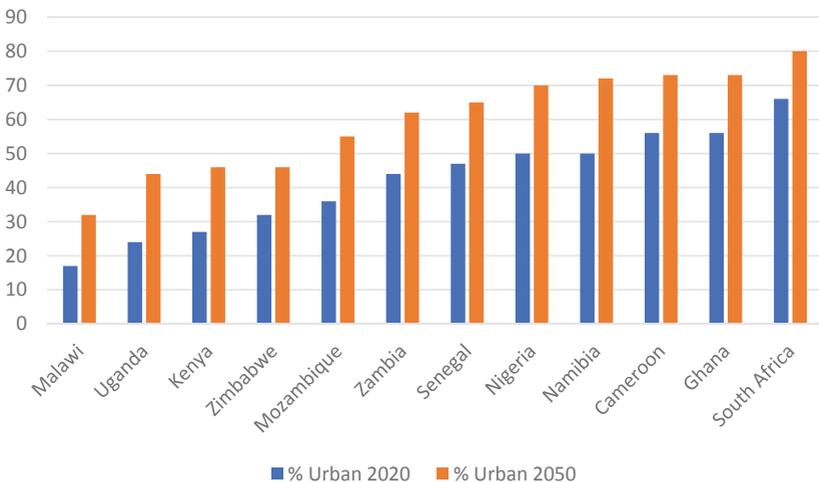
The potential for local governments to make progress toward sustainable, healthy, and inclusive communities through food system improvements can only be realized through much more research into the ways various local governments function and the barriers they face. The contribution of this book is not to provide a roadmap toward sustainable urban food systems, but rather to document critically important and interrelated issues for the purposes of learning and reflection. Because of the diversity of African secondary cities and the complexity of their challenges, it is critically important to understand the context in which specific problems emerge and the vantage point from which they are analyzed and interpreted. David Satterthwaite and Cecilia Tacoli (2003, p. i) have argued that generalizations are “problematic and unhelpful in policy formulation” and that case studies can help to address the diversity of local factors, which include the very definition of “urban” areas in the local context. The multiple case studies in this book highlight the diversity of contexts and the multiple ways that food systems are being transformed through demographic growth, the actions of residents, environmental change, and economic transitions. The various methodologies, disciplinary backgrounds, and focal points of these case studies create a broadly inclusive picture of this change and the threats, opportunities, and challenges it entails. The case study approach facilitates a view of food systems in African secondary cities that situates the governance challenges within a realistic context and provides a ground-up view of the situation.

### WHAT ARE SECONDARY CITIES?

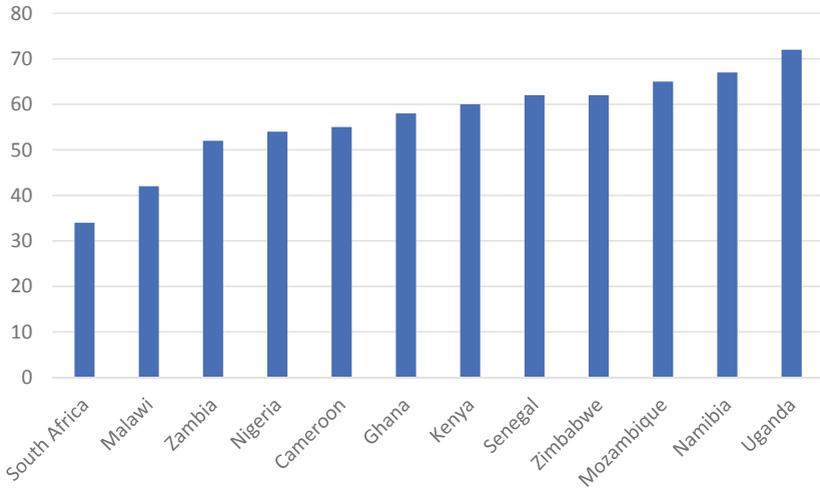
The chapters in this book discuss case studies of urban areas that are not major economic or political centers on the national scale and have fewer than 500,000 residents. Various reports and studies use different population cut-offs, sometimes with a minimum population to distinguish between secondary and large cities (Satterthwaite, 2017). In many parts of Africa, urban population statistics are highly questionable due to inadequate census records, mobile populations, informal urban development, and differing definitions of city boundaries. Coupled with rapid growth, these factors can create wide ranges in the estimated population of a particular city. Brian Roberts (2014, p. 37) provides a “reworked” definition of a secondary city, which recognizes that “population size still has

a significant influence on the importance and classification of cities, but that function, specialty, logistics and trade importance and competitiveness are other determinants of a secondary city's status." He proposes a hybrid definition that integrates size, function, and role within a network of national, regional, and global systems of cities. In the first chapter of this book, Gareth Haysom expands on the relevance of Roberts' typology to research on food governance in African secondary cities.

The demographic trends in sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate the urgent need to address the food system and food security challenges that come with secondary urbanization, even as the specific definitions of secondary cities are being debated. This book is organized around case studies from 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, which form a unique collection of viewpoints that showcase the diversity of African urban environments. Among these 12 countries are examples of societies at varying levels of urbanization, but all are projected to be much *more* urban by 2050 (Fig. 1.3). Among the dozen countries with case study cities featured in this collection, three are currently majority urban (Cameroon, Ghana, and South Africa) and two are half urban/half rural (Namibia and Nigeria). In 2050, it is projected that eight of these countries will be majority urban.



**Fig. 1.3** Urban Population Projections in Selected African Countries (*Source* UN-DESA [2018])



**Fig. 1.4** Percentage of the Urban Population in Secondary Cities in Selected African Countries (*Source* UN-DESA [2018])

In all but two countries (Malawi and South Africa), the urban population is mostly in secondary cities (Fig. 1.4). There are different factors shaping the rates of secondary urbanization in these countries: in South Africa and Malawi, multiple major cities house most of the urban population, whereas on the other end of the spectrum, in Namibia and Uganda, only the capital city is a non-secondary city.

## ELEMENTS OF A POLICY AGENDA FOR SECONDARY CITY FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

This book is organized into three sections. Part I, *Food System Actors, Concepts and Governance*, includes six chapters that draw attention to the theoretical and conceptual issues that underpin their case studies. Part II, *Food Security, Poverty, and Livelihoods*, includes six empirical case studies related to food and nutrition security, poverty, livelihoods, and household food strategies. Part III, *Environments, Linkages, and Mobilities*, includes six additional case studies that cover environmental and geographical factors shaping food systems and food security outcomes. These sections form the outline of a collection of chapters that converge

in multiple ways and, taken together, reveal several key issues and policy dilemmas. Key issues are outlined below and orient the reader to where they are discussed in detail in the individual chapters.

### *Regulating Informal Food Systems*

The informal food sector “plays a critical role in urban food system functioning as a whole” (Young & Crush, 2020, p. 198), and yet by its nature of operating outside of regulations it is inherently difficult to govern (Bromley, 2000; Skinner, 2008). The question of regulating informal traders raises critical concerns about the rights of the poor to participate in urban lifestyles and urban economies (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016; Young, 2018), even as practical concerns about traffic congestion, labor standards, and food safety compel governments to attempt to control the informal food sector.

Several chapters in this volume offer empirical research that is useful for constructive policy and theoretical discourses. Godfrey Tawodzera reviews key scholarly debates about the value of informal food traders in African cities, a debate that he traces back to the 1970s with the introduction of the “informal sector” as an analytical concept for describing the unregulated areas of economic activity. In her chapter, Stephanie A. White critically examines the concept of informality and explains how its significance goes beyond the descriptive value of the degree to which activities are regulated by the state. She notes that the concept permeates the place-making process for African urban environments, to the extent that it is a key characteristic of African urbanism.

The informal sector dominates the food system in many secondary cities, as demonstrated by Tawodzera’s case study in Epworth, Zimbabwe, and other case studies in this volume, including in Namibia (Ndeyapo Nickanor et al.), Cameroon (Alexander Legwegoh and Liam Riley), Malawi (Lovemore Zuze), Zambia (Jordan Blekking et al.), and Nigeria (Danielle Resnick et al.). Jordan Blekking et al. argue that the diversity of food retailers supports wider access to food, partly by providing geographical access to low income residential neighbourhoods. As Zuze’s chapter shows, the informal sector can also provide an important source of income for marginalized urban residents. Although the informal sector is vital to how these food systems currently function, as Emmanuel Chilanga and Liam Riley show in their chapter, it presents challenges such as how to ensure food safety. Resnick et al. further

demonstrate the governance challenge of regulating informal traders in Minna and Calabar, Nigeria, where a lack of public concern and a lack of state resources to enforce bylaws have hindered efforts to address the problems associated with informality.

### *Risk and Resilience of Food Systems*

The ways in which urban food environments are being built in sub-Saharan Africa are creating new forms of vulnerability to climate change, for example, through the expansion of unplanned settlements in flood-prone areas and populations that exceed the availability of water during droughts (Fraser et al., 2017; Parnell & Walawege, 2011). In secondary cities, there tends to be much less capacity for local governments to mitigate these risks through planning and infrastructure development (Satterthwaite, 2017). There is also a gap in the data required to understand how urban food systems are impacted by hazards linked to climate change, insufficient infrastructure, and endemic health hazards. The research that informs the chapters in this book was conducted before the onset of COVID-19, but it is reasonable to speculate, in line with the FAO (2020), that the pandemic has exposed the underlying vulnerabilities of the food systems described in these case studies.

Yanick Borel Kamga's chapter addresses the risk to the food system in Dschang, Cameroon, posed by the effects of climate change on Cameroon's forests. Forests provide a wealth of biodiversity and are a source of many popular and culturally significant foods in Cameroon. Climate change poses yet another threat to these biodiverse ecosystems, which have suffered from human encroachment and unsustainable exploitation over several decades. Inês Macamo Raimundo and Mary Caesar recount the impact of floods on the food system in Xai-Xai, Mozambique, a coastal city where extreme weather events have become more common due to climate change. Climate change is a present threat to these cities and any efforts to improve the sustainability of their food systems must grapple with rapid changes in the natural environment.

Other risks are documented in chapters such as Chilanga and Riley's study of hygienic facilities for informal food traders, which shows that many urban consumers are at risk from foodborne pathogens. The risk of homelessness is high in Gweru, Zimbabwe, as documented in Miriam Grant's chapter on the livelihood strategies of low-income households in the tumultuous political period of the early 1990s. Her case study also

highlights the resiliency of urban residents in the face of multiple challenges. Legwegoh and Riley offer political economic explanations for the high rate of food insecurity amid the agricultural abundance of Dschang, Cameroon, where structural problems undermine the efforts of households to achieve food security. These case studies show the risks and challenges faced by households and cities, and help to address the knowledge gaps that can lead policymakers to underestimate the scale of the problems and misconstrue their nature.

### *Strengthening Local Policy Capacity and Community Input*

In light of challenges such as regulating informal parts of the food system and mitigating risk with limited resources, the question of how to strengthen the local capacity to improve food systems is raised in several chapters. Andrea M. Brown's chapter, for example, addresses this issue directly by describing the activities of Slum/Shack Dwellers International in Mbale and Jinja, Uganda. The organization facilitates community input into the development of practical and policy solutions to their everyday problems. Resnick et al. demonstrate some of the limitations of policy-driven development in Nigerian secondary cities, where instances of progressive policies toward vendors are sometimes not implemented. In the case of the 2016 Hawkers' Rights Protection Bill in Calabar, most vendors were not aware of the policy.

The chapters offer more examples of policies that, far from strengthening local food systems, had unintended consequences. In his chapter on Tamale, Ghana, Issahaka Fuseini draws on interviews with elderly residents who recall the deleterious effects of green revolution agricultural policies on their diets and sense of food security. Research participants in Xai-Xai, Mozambique, whose views are documented in Raimundo and Caesar's chapter, criticized the framing of food security by governments and researchers. Their message was one of frustration with food security research and policy that does not give them what they need: a plate of *xima* for their daily meal. In these critical discussions of failed policy, there is an important lesson relevant to all secondary cities: that the voices of residents need to be heard and their vision for food and nutrition security should inform food system planning.

*Meeting the Challenges of Global Food System Integration*

There has been a sustained interest in the effects of globalization on urban food systems since at least the 1990s (Atkinson, 1995; Smith, 1998). Recent research has focused on the effects of supermarket chains on the local food systems of African cities, which offer more consistent availability of imported and packaged foods but at the cost of disrupting local food networks and informal livelihoods (das Nair, 2020). Secondary cities are generally less closely linked to these supply chains than primary cities, which tend to be the core international trading centers of their countries. The case studies in this volume reflect the diversity of stages of “supermarketization” in secondary African cities. The case studies range from Dschang, Cameroon, and Epworth, Zimbabwe, which have no supermarkets, to Oshakati-Ondangwa-Ongwediva, Namibia, where nearly all households purchase some food at a supermarket. Heather Mackay et al. found some differences in the overall rate of supermarket patronage among their six case study cities in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, but for all six cities higher socio-economic status was associated with higher supermarket patronage, and access to food from supermarkets was not ensured by its availability.

One of the key concerns in the literature is that the expansion of supermarkets is part of a broader nutritional transition whereby urban households consume more convenience foods, with higher sugar and fat content, and therefore experience a loss of nutrition security (Bloem & de Pee, 2017). The model suggests that this process disrupts local supply chains (which are more likely to supply freshly grown produce, locally adapted varieties of grains, and local animal products) and reduces the availability of local food. The posited effect is that the most nutritious food is too expensive for the urban poor and nutrition insecurity is a poverty-related outcome different from the supermarket-centric model observed in American “food deserts” (Crush & Battersby, 2016; Crush & Si, 2019). The process in secondary cities also appears to be more complex than the city-region food system model (CRFS) suggests (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018).

Several case studies in this book do depict secondary cities fed by the farms in their immediate vicinity, which is in line with the CRFS model and could be supported with infrastructure and agricultural investment. On the other hand, the limitations of this model are apparent in the multiple connections with places beyond the immediate hinterland

and the impact of national policies beyond the purview of municipalities. Haysom's chapter, for example, analyzes supply chains for various foods in three secondary cities and finds that supermarkets are often integrated into informal food networks. They often act as suppliers for informal traders, who frequently source food over far-reaching and international networks. From the consumption point of view, the chapters by Mackay et al. and Nickanor et al. demonstrate a strong mix of food sourcing strategies for most households, even among wealthier households who could choose to rely mainly on supermarkets. Any agenda for sustainable urban food systems needs to take these dynamic geographies, which include the food chains and global social and environmental trends described above, into account.

### *Ensuring Gender-Equitable Food Systems*

The issue of gender equality is an important aspect of any sustainable food systems agenda, not least because gender inequality is a causal factor of poverty and gender roles play a central role in how the food system is organized, especially informal food systems (Hovorka, 2013; Riley & Dodson, 2020). In her chapter, Gamuchirai Chakona highlights the situation of female-headed households in four peri-urban centers in South Africa where women cope with limited livelihood opportunities by diversifying their food sources. In Namibia, Nickanor et al. found higher rates of food insecurity and lower dietary diversity among female-headed households compared to male-headed households. However, male- and female-headed households were equally likely to rely on intensive coping strategies. In general, factors such as the use of informal food sources and living in informal housing were much more closely associated with vulnerability than the gender of the household head. These chapters demonstrate the importance of intersecting contextual factors to understand the connections between gender and food insecurity.

Gender roles are rapidly changing in African cities with the re-allocation of women's time to productive and reproductive work (Chant & McIlwaine, 2016). Some chapters demonstrate the effect of this change on food systems. In Tamale, Ghana, Fuseini documents the intertwined processes of economic change with changing food cultures and gender roles. Drawing on interviews with older men and younger women, he presents evidence of what has been lost over time from the perspectives of the older men, such as traditional crops

and recipes with a profound cultural significance. The younger women are not familiar with these foods, and they have less time to cook than women in the past because of their other pursuits. Grant highlights the situation for migrant households in Zimbabwe during a period of rapid economic decline. Housing insecurity and gender roles were key factors that interacted to shape their food security outcomes, while social networks strongly influenced the food security strategies they chose. In Zuze's chapter, the vulnerability of migrant women among food vendors in Mzuzu, Malawi, illustrates one of the ways that gender-based inequality is perpetuated in secondary cities as men and women coming to the city are presented with highly unequitable livelihood opportunities.

### *Including Migrants in Urban Development*

The rapidly changing population dynamics in African cities present a perennial challenge for social scientists and policymakers. The dominant discourse has focused on the flow of rural migrants to large cities, with some literature showing that migrants play a key role in urban food systems while also facing many forms of vulnerability (Crush, 2013; Crush & Tawodzera, 2017). One difference observed between primary and secondary cities is the heightened importance of rural–urban linkages and circular migration in the latter, for example in urban households that operate farms in rural areas or maintain close ties with rural households who send food remittances. These dynamics are evident in several chapters in this volume.

Another type of connection is urban-urban. Legwegoh and Riley note that in the university town of Dschang, Cameroon, most of the migrant population was born in another city in Cameroon and many households receive food transfers from relatives in other cities. There are also many internally displaced people in Dschang and their presence placed a strain on local households that depressed household food security scores. Secondary cities can also be a source of migrants and act in the role usually occupied by rural communities in conventional rural–urban migration models. In his chapter, for example, Anil Dhakal documents in detail how remittances from household members working in South Africa provide support for the food security of households in Mzuzu, Malawi.

The issues of migration and complex population dynamics make it difficult to implement effective local responses to transforming urban food

systems. At the household scale, migration and linkages with other places are key elements of many food security strategies.

### *Developing Sustainable Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture*

The final issue addressed in the chapters in this volume is urban and peri-urban agriculture (or UPA), which is particularly prominent in urban food policy discussions in Africa where it is frequently framed as a key policy tool for sustainable urban food systems. The diversity of forms of UPA food production—from industrial-scale commercial production to backyard gardens—means that the topic incorporates many normative visions of its potential. In practice, however, the extent and opportunities for engaging in UPA in primary cities are quite limited (Crush, Caesar & Haysom, 2018; Frayne et al., 2016). Rates of participation in UPA and its importance to household food security do appear to be more significant, although not barrier-free, in secondary cities than in primary cities (Davies et al., 2020). Most of the chapters in this book that discuss UPA describe situations in which households use the resources available to them to produce food for their own consumption. The high-level picture is that food production on a scale that is sufficient to ensure food security is mainly available to households with relatively greater access to resources. Daniel Tevera notes this as one of several points of political and social tension that emerge from debates about UPA as a policy tool for sustainable urbanization. While there is little evidence that UPA has been a panacea for the urban poor in Africa, it continues to hold promise for strengthening local food systems such that secondary African cities will be more resilient to shocks such as the disruptions to food networks witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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