



The Enabling Environment for Informal Food Traders in Nigeria's Secondary Cities

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization undeniably has altered food systems. The informal food retail sector represents a critical source of food security for the urban poor, for whom food access is heavily conditioned on income, housing, transport, and time (Tinker, 1997). In addition, the sector is a major

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L. Riley and J. Crush (eds.), *Transforming Urban Food Systems in Secondary Cities in Africa*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93072-1_6

source of employment for the poor in many cities of the developing world. This is particularly true in sub-Saharan Africa, where a significant share of the population depends on the informal economy for their livelihoods and most informal workers are concentrated in food retail.

In Nigeria, one of Africa's most populous and fastest urbanizing countries, informal food retail plays a central role. The informal economy is two-thirds the size of Nigeria's formal economy and constitutes about 80% of Nigeria's workforce (Neuwirth, 2012). Within the informal economy, retail represents the employment sector of around 40% of the population (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Food retail is a major sub-sector within informal trade. In fact, despite the growing presence of supermarkets in Nigeria, traditional open-air markets constitute the main source of food for two-thirds of the country's population (Nzeka, 2011). Informal food retail is also a major source of employment for women, who control a large share of market activity and commodity trading in Nigeria (Mangdon & Chintem, 2014). By providing consumers with access to processed foods, the informal economy also has the potential to foster stronger linkages for Nigeria's agricultural value chains, such as in poultry (Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2016).

Yet, despite the importance of informal retail to food security and employment needs in Nigeria and elsewhere, very little is known about the livelihoods of such vendors and the governance constraints they encounter. Much of the existing literature on Nigerian food traders focuses on Lagos, but with Lagos being a megacity with a population of approximately 15 million, such studies may not be reflective of the experiences of traders in urban centres in the country's secondary cities. Furthermore, a substantial share of existing literature focuses on the harassment encountered by traders by the local government areas (LGA) and state governments (Onodugo et al., 2016), with minimal attention given to the broader enabling environment in which these traders operate.

Consequently, this chapter addresses these gaps by combining a survey of 1,097 food traders in the Nigerian cities of Calabar and Minna, with key informant interviews with local and state policymakers as well as civil society organizations. We find some key differences across the two cities in terms of the demographic profiles of traders and the service delivery constraints they encounter within their trading locations, suggesting that policy responses to this constituency need to be properly nuanced, even

at the subnational level. Furthermore, we observe that contrary to findings from other Nigerian cities, especially Lagos, the levels of harassment encountered by traders in these secondary cities is not especially high. However, there is a large gap between the *de jure* roles of local bureaucrats in regulating traders and the *de facto* oversight of traders on the ground. Many traders are unaware of government policies relevant to their occupation or have had little interaction with government authorities on issues of food safety.

To elaborate on these findings in more detail, the following section reviews the state of existing research on informal food traders in Nigeria. The subsequent section discusses the comparative context between Calabar and Minna by providing an institutional map of how informal food retail should be governed in the two cities. This is followed by a discussion of the survey methodology and a description of the findings about the demographic profiles of the traders, the service delivery environment in which they operate, and their degree of engagement with government officials.

INFORMAL FOOD TRADERS IN NIGERIA

Informal food traders include those who are stationary within open-air markets as well as peripatetic hawkers who may operate from various locations over the course of a day or week. Within the food sector, traders may sell fresh foods such as vegetables, fruits, uncooked meats and fish, prepared foods (including cooked meals), and manufactured goods that are typically packaged in plastic or aluminum for retail. Such trading has a long tradition in Nigeria, but was exacerbated by structural adjustment in the 1980s when the contraction of formal employment forced many to resort to informal vending (Onodugo et al., 2016). As in many other developing countries, traders in Nigeria operate in high-risk and unfavourable conditions, in which they are frequently exposed to a hazardous working environment (Abe, 2012).

Much of the existing literature on traders in Nigeria is concentrated on two issues. First, food safety is a major concern, especially for those involved in fresh and prepared foods. Although street foods serve as a crucial link in meeting urban food demands, they pose numerous health dangers as proper sanitary measures are not commonly practiced, frequently due to lack of appropriate infrastructure. A number of studies

have found that food vendors lack necessary food safety and hygiene knowledge, as well as sufficient public services, such as clean water and toilets, in order to pursue safe handling practices (Chukuezi, 2010; Dipeolu et al., 2007). For instance, A. Omemu and S. Aderoju (2008) find that only 12% of food vendors in the city of Abeokuta had formal training in food preparation, while only 31% had the medical health certificate indicating their completion of the recommended physical and medical examinations. Volume and price were valued over freshness and cleanliness of produce. Furthermore, certain known safety practices could not be executed due to a lack of basic services, including water and toilets, at the vending locations.

Second, government harassment features prominently in both academic scholarship and media reports in Nigeria. Such harassment includes bullying, beating, seizure of wares, forceful extortions, and occasional lock-ups in police cells (Olurinola et al., 2014). Such violent acts exacerbate the sufferings of street vendors, pushing them deeper into the cycle of poverty (Abe, 2012).

For more than a decade, and under successive governors, Lagos in particular has been known for its “zero tolerance” policy toward vendors. In 2003, the Lagos State Street Trading and Illegal Market Prohibition Law was passed to prohibit street trading and involves a ₦90,000 fine or a six-month jail sentence (At the time of writing, US\$1 = 363 Nigerian naira.). Under former governor Babatunde Fashola, a series of beautification projects began in 2007 that resulted in the demolition of markets throughout the city. Street traders became especially vulnerable to the Kick Against Indiscipline brigades, which are an environmental law enforcement unit within the Lagos State government that seized the goods of traders deemed to be violating environmental laws (Nwanna, 2018). Another former governor, Akinwunmi Ambode, retained the same policy under the guise of Operation Clean Lagos. In 2015, he stated, “The next hawker could be a robber or a terrorist. You are now well-advised. If we all cooperate and decide not to buy, gradually and collectively, the hawkers will not come to the highways and streets anymore” (Vanguard Nigeria, 2015).

A study in Lagos found that 29% of the surveyed vendors had been arrested for street trading within the previous six months, while 44% reported less severe harassment measures, including frequent seizure and confiscation of merchandise (Basinski, 2009). Another study in Lagos corroborates harassment by government officials, showing that 32.2% of

their sample had had their goods confiscated, 18.8% had paid a bribe to retrieve the said goods, 16.1% had had goods destroyed, 9.6% had been arrested, and 21.6% had been evicted from their trading spot (Lawanson, 2014).

While such harassment is sometimes justified in terms of addressing traffic congestion and pollution, some more recent forced removals in Nigeria have been motivated by the country's industrial development policy, which focuses on a cluster strategy. Specifically, some informal businesses were reorganized into "enterprise zones" to ensure a clustering of the same types of trading within a specific geographic location for the purposes of economies of scale in delivering infrastructure (Iwuagwu, 2011).

Notwithstanding a few studies in Enugu City (Onodugo et al., 2016) and in Ogun State (Omemu & Aderoju, 2008), a majority of the insights about informal food trade have been concentrated on Nigeria's primate city, Lagos. There are a few reasons to expand the focus to secondary cities in Nigeria. First, with a population of more than 15 million, Lagos has a high level of inequality that can precipitate conflicts between poor, informal traders, and more affluent residents who want to live in a world-class city with clean streets and reduced congestion. Elsewhere in Africa, the numerical size of wealthier citizens in capital and primate cities, and their resultant electoral significance, has been found to influence government reactions to informal traders (see Resnick, 2019). These dynamics may be less prominent in smaller cities with less sizeable middle classes.

Second, secondary cities are increasingly recognized as requiring greater policy attention, as they are often driving much of the developing world's rapid urbanization. The population of secondary cities can range from a few hundred thousand to several million people (Roberts, 2014). Some secondary cities take the form of satellite city clusters that surround larger urban metropolitan areas, while others assume the role of key industrial centres or development growth poles. Regardless of size, secondary cities are an important catalyst in enabling local production, transportation and transfer of goods, people, and ideas between the subnational, metropolitan, national, regional, and global systems of cities. Yet, insufficient data on the economic and political conditions of these cities inhibits the capacity to support urban development and encourage employment (Roberts, 2014).

Third, given Nigeria's federal system, oversight of informal trade is devolved primarily to the state and LGA levels. The LGA is constitutionally mandated to oversee the markets as well as to collect taxes

from traders (Grossman, 2016). This means that traders' experiences, and government reactions to traders, should vary across cities in the country.

COMPARATIVE CONTEXT: CALABAR AND MINNA

This chapter focuses on two secondary cities of approximately 500,000 people: Calabar and Minna. These two cities were chosen due to the variation they offer in terms of geopolitical location, ethnic and religious composition, and regulatory framework regarding street vending. Minna, located in the North-Central state of Niger and within the Middle Belt region, consists of three major ethnic groups, namely Hausa, Nupe, and Gwari. Calabar sits in the South-South state of Cross River and is home to the Efik people. While a majority of Minna's residents are Muslim, Calabar's residents are predominantly Christian. Such traditions have implications for food safety practices as well as the gender dimensions of informal employment. In addition, given the geographically biased nature of Nigeria's political system, the two cities have favoured different political parties. At the time of fieldwork, Minna residents heavily voted for the now-ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the last elections and there is an APC governor for Niger State, while Calabar was a stronghold for the People's Democratic Party. Such political differences may translate into different policy stances of the state government toward traders. In Niger State, there has been repeated demolition of vendors' stalls in Tunga and Central markets, while in Cross River State, the governor sent a Hawkers' Rights Bill to the House of Assembly in 2016 to legalize hawking in the state. The described regional differences allow us to observe the presence of subnational variation across informal food retailers and understand the causes at play.

To better understand the enabling environment for informal food trade in the two cities, semi-structured interviews were conducted with almost two dozen key informants at the LGA and state levels between April and May 2018. Collectively, they provide an overview of the complex governance landscape, from both an institutional and regulatory perspective, in which informal food traders are expected to operate. In Calabar, two main pieces of legislation govern food vending. These are the Cross River State Public Health Laws Cap 16 Vol. V of 2004, which stipulates how foods should be prepared for safety reasons, and the Hawkers' Rights Protection Bill of 2016. The latter bill was introduced by Governor Benedict Ayade and passed by the Cross River State House of Assembly in

2016 and signed into law. The bill legalizes street hawking as a livelihood option for persons living in the state and protects hawkers against harassment by government officials while carrying out their daily vending activities. According to one politician involved in pushing for the law, “The vendors are very much aware of the Bill given the wide publicity by government following its passage” (Interview with the Honorable State House Assembly Member, Yala, Cross River).

Figure 6.1 illustrates the complex array of actors involved in overseeing informal food traders. The city of Calabar consists of two LGAs, which are the Calabar Municipal Council and Calabar South. The LGAs technically are responsible for providing adequate infrastructure within the markets, which is why revenue collection is so critical. The revenue department in each LGA plays a key role in collecting levies from traders in the market and on the streets. The vendors in the market and on the streets pay ₦150 and ₦250 daily, respectively. Those in the markets pay a lower daily rate since they must also pay rent on their stalls. The revenue department also issues an operational permit to food vendors and requires them to

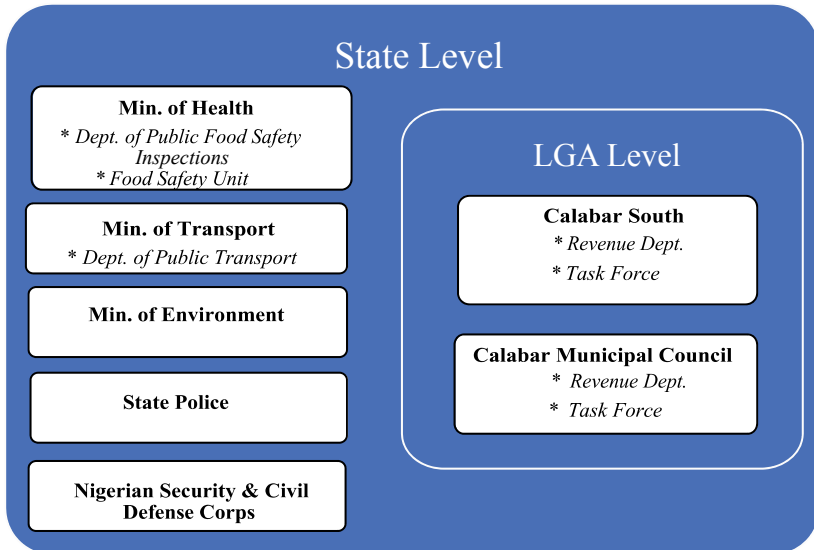


Fig. 6.1 Institutional actors involved in Informal Food Trade Regulation, Calabar

submit a medical certificate to assess their health status (Interview with the revenue officer, Calabar). The Calabar Task Force consists of temporary employees of the LGA who monitor and enforce vendors' adherence to LGA regulations, often with the help of the police.

At the level of Cross River State, five actors are relevant. The Ministry of Health, through the Public Food Safety Inspection Unit, is mandated to certify the safety of foods sold to the consumers by food vendors. Inspections ideally are carried out monthly to ensure that food vendors operate under hygienic conditions and that the vendors possess their required medical certificate. The Food Safety Unit within the Ministry of Health provides traders with hygiene training, increasing awareness on food handling from production to point of delivery to consumers (Interview with the environmental health officer, Ministry of Health, Calabar). The Ministry of Transport through the Department of Public Transportation collaborates with the Ministry of Environment and law enforcement agencies like the police and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in the monitoring of all street activities (including trading and public transportation) to forestall breakdown of law and order. They ensure that the roads in market areas are decongested, and they apprehend vendors who go against the regulations regarding street hawking in the city (Interview with the road traffic officer, Department of Public Transportation, Malabar).

In Minna, laws over food safety have been in place since 1976, but were amended in 2013 to ensure clean, healthy, and safe processing of food and packaging for consumption. Street vending is not banned, but there are restrictions in some of the city's main streets. As in Calabar, food vendors are likewise required to obtain a food vending license before they sell food. According to the LGA councils for Minna, which are Bosso and Chanchaga, food vendors are regularly monitored, and the food they sell is routinely inspected by health workers from the LGA health care department. In addition, there are also sanitary offices in some of the major markets in the city, such as Kure market and Kasuwan Gwari. Like Calabar, the revenue department of the LGA is responsible for the collection of revenue from food vendors in the markets on a daily basis. Petty traders with a stall in the market pay ₦30 for a daily ticket, hawkers with no stall pay ₦20 a day, and food vendors with established shops pay a monthly rate that ranges from ₦500 to ₦800 (Interview with the revenue officer, Chanchaga LGA).

Figure 6.2 shows that seven key organizations are relevant at the state level. The state Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development has no formal role but does apparently retain a repository of data on formal/informal traders/vendors, such as names and locations of business outfits, types of food businesses, and scale of operation (Interview with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Planning, and Statistics Directorate). The Ministry of Livestock, Meat, and Fish monitors the sale of meat and fish in the open market and ensures products sold are safe for human consumption. Along with the Ministry of Health, they inspect animals before slaughter and inspect meat and milk before they are taken out of the abattoir and off the farm (Interview with the Ministry of Livestock, Meat and Fish, Directorate of Veterinary Public Health). The Niger State Urban Development Board is responsible for the siting of markets and maps out where traders are allowed or prohibited.

The Ministry of Environment's oversight of informal vendors is primarily through a parastatal that it houses, known as the Niger State

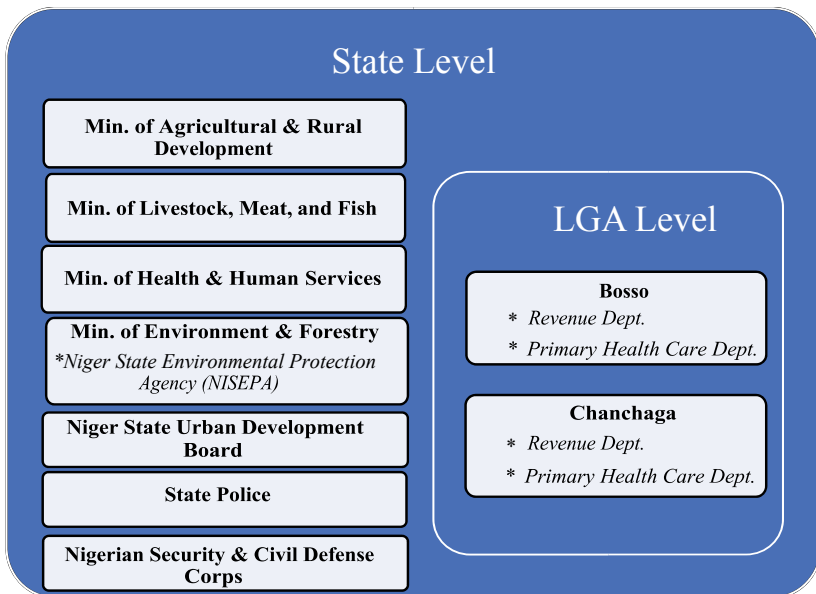


Fig. 6.2 Institutional actors involved in Informal Food Trade Regulation, Minna

Environmental Protection Agency (NISEPA). NISEPA primarily has an oversight and enforcement role focused on bakeries, hoteliers, corporate food vendors, and informal traders.

NISEPA also issues a special license to sell food in the market, which needs to be registered with the Environmental Health Officers Registration Council. With NISEPA's mobile courts, which are simply NISEPA's offices rather than a formal court of law, traders who have violated environmental safety regulations or refused to pay their LGA fees can be arrested by the police and tried with assistance of the NSCDC. In addition, NISEPA works with the LGA's Sanitary Vanguarders on enforcing basic sanitary rules within places where food is traded. NISEPA's functions are limited, however, by inadequate logistics and funding as well as a lack of staff (Interview with the general manager of NISEPA).

The Ministry of Health and Human Services, through its Department of Food and Nutrition, also regulates food vending activities by routine inspections and claims to offer periodic training of food vendors on food safety requirements. In doing so, it interacts closely with the LGA primary health care units. This ministry also has mobile courts for trying food vendors who do not have a special license to sell food in the markets and on the streets (Interview with the Ministry of Health and Human Services, Department of Food and Nutrition).

In neither cities are there many civil society organizations that lobby for vendors' rights. However, the Food Sellers' Association in Minna trains butchers on personal hygiene and sanitary conditions. For instance, they ensure that slabs where meat is placed are washed with disinfectant such as Dettol to eliminate pathogens and microbes. They also train butchers to provide netting in meat and fish stalls so as not to predispose the meat and fish to flies (Interview with the chairman of the Food Sellers' Association, Minna Central Market). In Calabar, the Capital Traders Umbrella Association (CATUA), with a membership of about 3,000, tries to liaise with the LGAs regarding the setting of levies. By paying monthly dues of ₦50, CATUA attempts to protect members from harassment by government agents. In terms of food safety challenges, they note that despite paying heavy taxes, there is poor market infrastructure related to the quality of water, toilets, and waste bins (Interview with the secretary of CATUA). This in turn prevents traders from preparing foods in a hygienic manner.

SURVEY APPROACH

To determine how well traders are aware of the governance landscape that oversees their activities and how well-written policies actually are implemented, as well as to analyze their livelihoods in greater depth, a survey of 1,097 informal food sellers in nine markets within each city was conducted, for a total of 530 respondents in Calabar and 567 respondents in Minna. The interviews took place from mid-May to early June 2018. Figure 6.3 presents the location and names of the sampled markets in each city. Markets were selected because they are typically where a large concentration of informal food vendors are found. To ensure a representative sample, nine markets were selected in each city.

During the survey, we stratified between those vendors located within markets and those on the periphery of the markets, trading on the pavement or roads. This is because those outside the market theoretically can be more vulnerable to harassment, while those inside the market can provide a better assessment of market infrastructure. As such, having a relatively equal combination of two groups allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional and governance constraints they encounter. To be eligible to participate in the survey, the respondents needed to be at least 18 years of age and be a food seller, vending either fresh, prepared, or packaged food.

Survey modules explored the demographic characteristics of the vendors, including educational attainment and migratory history, measures of food security, experiences with local government authorities, and services offered within the market. Due to the density of respondents, surveying informal traders proved much more complex than a typical household survey because traders can be organized in multiple rows along streets or alleyways within the markets. Therefore, a random walk methodology using a zigzagged pattern and targeting every third food trader was employed to both remain systematic and maintain a degree of randomness as to not inappropriately target specific traders. In more densely populated markets, every fifth food trader was targeted.

PROFILE OF INFORMAL FOOD VENDORS

Table 6.1 presents an overview of informal food vendors in the survey locations in Nigeria. In Calabar, there were almost equivalent shares of traders who permanently traded from the same shop or stall (i.e., “fixed”)



Fig. 6.3 Map of survey locations in Calabar and Minna

Table 6.1 Livelihood profile of informal food vendors

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
Respondent location	50.8	61.4
Inside the market		
Outside the market on pavement/street	49.2	38.6
Nature of vending	53.0	50.8
Fixed		
Semi-static	43.8	28.9
Itinerant/peddler	3.2	20.3
Food category	54.8	52.7
Fresh foods		
Prepared foods	11.1	3.3
Processed foods	34.1	44.0
Holds a second job	3.2	2.5
Self-employed	95.7	90.7
Average number of days per week you are working in the market	6.3	6.5
Average number of hours per day working in the market	10.7	10.1
Average number of minutes to travel one way to place of trade	20.3	13.1
Approximately how much do you sell per day	1.1	0.4
Less than ₦1000		
Between ₦1000 and ₦3000	9.3	6.9
Between ₦3000 and ₦5000	21.3	31.8
Between ₦5000 and ₦7000	22.5	21.9
Between ₦7000 and ₦9000	14.3	13.4
More than ₦9000	30.6	21.7
Average monthly taxes	₦4468.7	₦688.5

N = 530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna

and those who traded from the same table or place on the pavement every day but had to remove their wares every evening (i.e., “semi-static”).

More than half of the sampled vendors were selling fresh foods, considerably fewer traders sold prepared foods, and a sizeable portion vended packaged foods. Since food vendors could sell foods that belonged to multiple categories, the total percentages aggregate to more than 100%. Further breakdown of the food categories reveals that fresh vegetables were the top vended fresh food, while roots and tubers were also a commonly sold commodity. In terms of prepared foods, the top items sold were roasted yams, soup, and prepared rice, while bottled oils and canned goods constituted the top packaged foods.

Almost the entire sample is self-employed, rather than employees working for someone else or unpaid family workers, and food vending is their primary occupation. Based on the average number of minutes to their trading location, most are working relatively close to where they live. Nonetheless, they are working, on average, more than six days a week and very long hours. In both cities, more than half have a daily turnover that equals or is less than ₦7000 (US\$19 at the time of field-work). Despite being informal vendors, they need to pay a variety of taxes and fees to multiple actors, including the LGA revenue authorities, the market chairperson, and product associations (e.g., tomato and onion).

Notably, the gender distribution also varies across the two cities. Table 6.2 shows that females represent 64.7% of food traders in Calabar and only 35.1% in Minna. The lower share in Minna may be strongly related to religious differences in the two states, which have implications for female employment. Indeed, while most traders overall in Minna are from the traditionally Muslim Hausa ethnic group, most of the female traders in Minna are from the Gwarri, Igbo, or Yoruba ethnic groups. While young people in Africa are often believed to be disproportionately employed in the informal economy (Banks, 2016; Filmer & Fox, 2014), this needs to be nuanced with respect to food traders. Those who are aged 18–24 comprise a relatively small share of food traders compared with those who are in the 25–34 cohort. The latter represent more than one-third of the traders in each city, as do those in the 35–44 range.

Importantly, the data reveal that food vendors in secondary cities of Nigeria are relatively well-educated, validating previous studies showing that lack of employment, rather than lack of employable skill, shapes informal vending (Adedeji et al., 2014; Olurinola et al., 2014; Onodugo et al., 2016). In other words, informal food vending is no more an activity for illiterates than it is for college graduates. There are, though, some notable differences across the two cities, with Calabar displaying higher levels of education than Minna. In both cities, today's traders have, on average, higher levels of education than that of their primary caretaker when they were children. Indeed, even in Minna, many more traders have completed their secondary education than the previous generation. This supports findings elsewhere in Africa that a major generational shift in Africa has been the expansion of education (see Resnick & Thurlow, 2015).

A number of scholars argue that a significant increase in informal vending is due to rural-urban migration (Bhowmik & Saha, 2012;

Table 6.2 Demographic profile of informal food vendors

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
<i>Ethnic community, cultural group, or tribe</i>		
Efik	35.5	0.0
Gwari	0.0	14.8
Hausa	3.2	58.2
Ibibio	23.1	0.0
Igbo	22.5	8.5
Ijaw	0.9	0.0
Nupe	0.0	2.7
Yoruba	1.9	6.5
Others	13.8	9.3
Female	64.7	35.1
<i>Age</i>		
18–24	9.2	6.0
25–34	34.2	34.7
35–44	34.5	36.0
45–54	15.8	18.0
55–64	5.5	4.9
65 or older	0.8	0.4

(continued)

Table 6.2 (continued)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
<i>Education</i>		
No school	2.4	14.8
Some primary	2.1	7.2
Primary completed	11.3	21.3
Some secondary	10.2	5.3
Secondary completed	46.8	37.6
Post-secondary qualification	27.2	13.8
<i>Education of caretaker</i>		
No school	13.2	38.8
Some primary	10.4	13.2
Primary completed	22.3	16.1
Some secondary	11.7	4.1
Secondary completed	26.8	15.5
Post-secondary qualification	15.7	11.1
Migrant to LGA	54.9	32.3
From different LGA ^a	11.5	3.5
From different state/country ^a	43.4	28.7
Average number of years in LGA	10.3	14.2
Parent was a trader	80.8	77.3
Member of any association/organization related to job	2.1	4.6
Public participation within the last 12 months	35.3	50.8
Attended a community meeting		
Attended a meeting or rally of a political party	20.9	20.6
Participated in a protest or demonstration	15.5	16.1

^aThe observations for this variable are 285 and 180 for Calabar and Minna, respectively, since it only refers to those who are migrants to the LGA. N = 530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna.

Bromley, 2000; Skinner, 2008). Our data reflect the prevalence of migrants within the food vending sector as well, especially in Calabar, where 55% of the sample had moved to the LGA in which they currently reside.

Of this migrant population, 21% moved from a different LGA within the Cross River State and the remaining 79% migrated from either a different state within Nigeria or a neighbouring country. A lower proportion of Minna's food traders are migrants, with 32.3% reporting that they were not born within that LGA. Of this migrant population among Minna food vendors, 10.9% migrated from a different LGA within Niger State, while 89.1% moved from a different state in Nigeria.

Evidently, there is far more migration occurring across state boundaries than across LGAs of the same state. A closer examination of the migration patterns reveals from where most traders are moving. As Calabar is located in the South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria, it is unsurprising that 80% of the surveyed migrants moved from either the South-South region or the neighbouring South-East zone. As for Minna, located in the North-Central zone, 44.2% of its food vendor migrants reported having moved from the bordering North-West zone, while 19.0% migrated within the same geopolitical zone of North-Central. Twenty percent moved from the further away South-East region. Overall, migration to Calabar tends to occur from geographically adjacent areas, while migration to Minna appears to take a larger cross-country movement. Notably, in both cities, women constitute a larger share of migrants, with their primary reason for moving being either for marriage or to join their families, while men noted that their main motivation was to find work.

In both cities, traders spend an extended period of time in one location. In Calabar, the average number of years in the current LGA was 10.3 years, while a typical food vendor in Minna had been living in the current LGA for an average of 14.2 years. These data demonstrate a sense of permanency within their present living situation and, as a result, their occupation, emphasizing the importance of trading for their livelihoods. Data on length of time trading reveal that 49.5% of traders in Calabar and 35% of traders in Minna have been vending in their current location for at least six years. Food vending therefore is not a temporary job, but rather for most it is the sole means of income. This notion is further highlighted by the strikingly small number of traders who hold a second job—3.2% in Calabar and 2.5% in Minna.

Ray Bromley (2000) notes that street vending provides pathways of upward social mobility through entrepreneurial channels, in particular for marginalized groups that have limited wealth and power. Similarly, Margaret S. McMillan, Dani Rodrik, and Claudia Sepúlveda (2017) argue that as structural transformation unfolds, individuals shift from agriculture to modern economic activities, including informal trade, where incomes are marginally higher. To examine whether informal vending is either a stepping-stone or the status quo, respondents were asked if at least one of their parents had also been a trader. Table 6.2 shows that 80.8% and 77.3% of traders in Calabar and Minna, respectively, had a parent who is or was a trader. On the one hand, this suggests that vending is more of a family tradition for most food traders rather than an active step toward a new livelihood. On the other hand, of the smaller share of vendors whose parents were not traders, the most common employment for mothers and fathers included farming or they had been unemployed. As such, this suggests that for a segment of these vendors informal trade signifies a step toward potentially higher incomes than their previous generation had attained.

As it has been found more generally in Africa regarding informal sector workers (Lindell, 2010), these vendors rarely participate in associations representing their interests because of the potential costs involved, as well as the difficulty of an association being able to speak on behalf of a highly heterogeneous constituency. Nonetheless, they do engage in some forms of political participation, with half the Minna sample claiming they attended a community meeting in the last year and 20% in each city claiming to have engaged in a political party meeting or rally.

Studies have demonstrated that even with the recent expansion of supermarkets, the urban poor continue to obtain their food through informal means (Abrahams, 2006; Crush & Frayne, 2011). While this survey did not explicitly look at urban consumers, informal traders are themselves a major share of the urban poor. Table 6.3 strongly supports trends found elsewhere, emphasizing the importance of informal food retail on urban food security. Respondents were asked to specify where they regularly source eight different groupings of food that are viewed by major international organizations as critical to a healthy diet and for dietary diversity (see FAO, 2016). Except for milk and other milk products, such as cheese and yogurt, supermarkets play a negligible role as a food source for these traders.

Table 6.3 Share of informal traders who obtain food from listed sources

<i>Food Groups</i>	<i>Calabar</i>			<i>Minna</i>		
	<i>Street vendor/ market trader</i>	<i>Small shop/ kiosk</i>	<i>Supermarket</i>	<i>Street vendor/ market trader</i>	<i>Small shop/ kiosk</i>	<i>Supermarket</i>
Fresh fruits	99.4	69.1	8.1	99.3	79.9	8.1
Fresh vegetables	99.1	70.4	4.2	99.1	84.5	6.9
Meat, fish, other animal products	98.3	68.9	4.0	99.1	86.2	6.5
Eggs	93.6	74.3	8.7	83.4	89.6	5.8
Grains and flours	97.7	70.2	8.3	91.2	88.2	7.6
Milk and other milk products	91.5	71.5	15.3	85.0	90.3	12.3
Roots, tubers, and plantains	97.9	70.2	5.1	93.8	88.9	7.2
Prepared snacks and meals	95.3	63.4	6.6	99.5	67.7	6.2

N = 530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna

NB Values do not total to 100% since respondents may purchase food from more than one source

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR INFORMAL VENDORS

As noted earlier, informal traders often face a complex array of actors regulating their activities, which can create opaque lines of accountability and opportunities for extortion and harassment. As such, respondents were asked about their experiences with three types of harassment, including seizure of goods by authorities, forced removals, and arrests. In addition, traders were given the opportunity to share any other types of harassment they might have encountered from government authorities. Table 6.4 shows that in contrast to Lagos, where documented experiences of harassment and even brutality are quite high, this has not been a major problem in these two secondary cities. Eighteen percent of food traders in Calabar have experienced some type of harassment, while

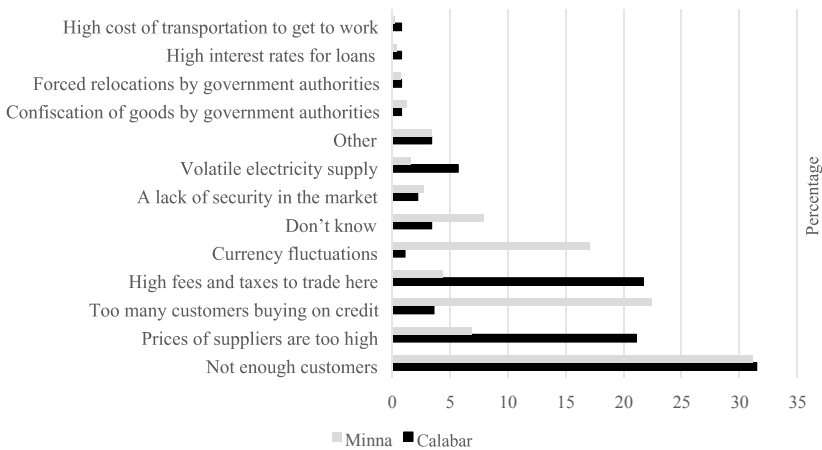
Table 6.4 Experiences with forms of harassment by government authorities (%)

<i>Types of harassment</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
Ever harassed at all	18.3	3.2
Goods seized	13.0	2.1
Forcibly relocated	8.7	1.4
Arrested	0.8	0
Other	2.3	0
Never harassed at all	81.7	96.8

N = 530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna
NB Percentages do not sum exactly to the overall harassment percentage since some respondents experienced multiple types of harassment

the corresponding figure in Minna is only three percent. Despite being relatively low percentages overall, the difference in harassment between the two cities is statistically significant. Importantly, of the 115 traders who were harassed across the two cities, 70% were women and most of them reported experiencing a seizure of their goods. This is a troubling dynamic, given the importance of informal trade to their livelihoods.

Figure 6.4 highlights that government harassment, through either forced relocations or confiscations, is not perceived to be the biggest challenge faced by traders in either city. Instead, a lack of sufficient



N=530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna.

Fig. 6.4 Top challenges faced by traders

customers is the main concern of traders since that obviously affects their profitability. Beyond that, there are some stark inter-city differences. In Calabar, the other top concerns include high prices by suppliers, high fees, and taxes by authorities who oversee the markets and volatile electricity supply. In Minna, currency fluctuations and the tendency of customers to buy on credit are perceived as the major challenges. These divergences can be attributed to economic, geographical, and cultural differences. For instance, it is not surprising that fees and taxes are a source of complaint in Calabar since, as noted earlier, they are between five and six times higher than they are in Minna. On average, Table 6.1 shows that respondents reported paying a little over ₦4,400 per month in Calabar to trade compared with ₦687 in Minna. Moreover, volatile electricity supply is less pronounced in Minna because it is near the Kainji Dam, which provides the city with an almost constant electricity supply.

Customers buying on credit is most likely more problematic in Minna because this is a common practice within the Hausa community (Aker et al., 2014; Lyon & Porter, 2009), which, as shown earlier, tends to dominate informal trading in Minna. While harassment is a relatively small problem for traders compared with other anxieties, how do they engage with the broader governance landscape they encounter related to food licensing and safety? As noted earlier, there are a variety of actors at the state and LGA levels that are responsible for regulating informal food trade in these two cities. However, in contrast to the official statements by state and LGA officials in the two cities, less than one percent of the survey sample in each city claimed that they need a license to sell food. Moreover, on average, 78% of the sample in each city noted that they had never had an inspection by a health officer of their food handling or food quality in at least the six months prior to the implementation of the survey. This was even true for markets that have sanitation officers housed in the market, such as Kure market and Kasuwan Gwari, as well as for a major meat market in Calabar known as the Suya Arcade. As another example of the gaps between policymakers' beliefs and informal traders' knowledge, 78% of those in Calabar had never even heard of the Hawkers' Bill.

The traders were also asked which government officials they come into contact with the most over the course of a month in the context of their work as a food trader. In Minna, half the sample claimed that they did not encounter any authority. Otherwise, the LGA revenue officer was the main authority identified by most of the respondents in each city

Table 6.5

Government official that traders engage with most often in the course of a month (%)

<i>Official</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
Local government market managers	18.7	21.2
LGA health officers	6.4	4.4
LGA revenue officers	33.8	22.8
State-level authorities	2.1	0.4
Task Force	23.2	0.9
Police	1.9	1.0
None	13.0	49.4
Other	0.9	0.0

N = 530 in Calabar and 567 in Minna

(Table 6.5). Neither state-level authorities nor LGA health officers were encountered frequently by these food traders. Importantly, in Calabar, 23% identified engaging often with the municipal task force.

These patterns have important linkages to the broader institutional environment. For instance, when comparing Figs. 6.1 and 6.2, a key difference is the presence of a task force within the relevant LGAs in Calabar and its absence in Minna. Traders in Calabar that reported experiencing some type of harassment often attributed it to the task force locking their shops until they paid the required taxes and fees to operate. Since no task force exists in Minna, engagement with that authority is not reported there. Furthermore, more respondents in Calabar (85%) than Minna (69%) reported being asked to pay taxes and fees to the LGA, which suggests that reach of an LGA revenue department may be enhanced by an enforcement actor, i.e., the task force.

Of the relatively small number of respondents who vend prepared foods (Table 6.1), 30% noted that they lack clean water and soap within the markets to wash their hands and utensils. This situation exists even though 81% of prepared-food vendors in Calabar and 95% in Minna make the meals and snacks they sell within the marketplaces. The latter point suggests that for food safety concerns to be addressed, market infrastructure requires as much attention as regulation and oversight.

Indeed, Table 6.6, which only focused on traders inside markets who would be more knowledgeable about market services, reveals that access to clean running water and health facilities are major deficiencies in the markets of both cities. Toilet access is a particular concern in Minna, while insufficient drainage, which can contribute to cholera and

Table 6.6 Share of Respondents Reporting Access to Key Services in the Market (%)

<i>Service</i>	<i>Calabar</i>	<i>Minna</i>
Trash collection	43.1	44.5
Toilets	62.1	36.2
Electricity	40.2	66.1
Clean, running water	16.7	8.9
Safe storage facilities for merchandise	28.3	37.6
Shelter during bad weather	28.3	55.2
Fire extinguishers	2.2	1.1
Security	74.3	82.5
Health facilities	1.9	2.9
Proper drainage	15.2	53.7

N = 269 in Calabar and 348 in Minna

other foodborne diseases during the rainy season, is more problematic in Calabar.

In addition, more than half the traders in each city lack access to trash collection, which can attract pests and vermin with negative impacts on human health. In many cases, having physical access does not provide a comprehensive perspective since those utilizing the services often must pay a repeat user fee to either a market official or a private citizen who is renting out a toilet or collecting garbage as a means of earning additional money.

Overall, then, while traders do not face high levels of government harassment, their daily efforts to earn a living as traders can be thwarted by the substandard service environment in which they operate. This presumably is even more pronounced for those operating on the streets and pavements that may not even be entitled to use the services that do exist within the markets. Since access to services was limited to those who worked inside a market, the number of observations is smaller than for the entire sample of informal traders.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the recognized importance of traders to urban food security in Africa and elsewhere (Resnick, 2017; Skinner, 2016), very little is known about this relatively heterogeneous constituency. The challenge is exacerbated by the predominance of empirical work that is concentrated in

just one city, even though the demographic trends and governance structures that characterize cities can vary quite substantially. By focusing on two similarly sized but culturally and geographically distinct secondary cities in one of the world's fastest urbanizing countries, this chapter used an original survey of informal food vendors to understand their livelihood profiles, demographic composition, work challenges, and public opinions. This was combined with semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable policymakers involved in regulatory and oversight activities relevant to informal food trade. The joint integration of perspectives from both government and vendors allows for identifying where gaps exist to improve the livelihoods of the traders.

In doing so, the analysis presented here reveals two key findings. First, the enabling environment encountered by vendors in Calabar and Minna varies substantially from the findings in other Nigerian cities, especially Lagos, where the government is well-known for its draconian treatment of informal vendors. A number of reasons have been offered for harsh crackdowns on informal vendors in capital or primate cities, including aspirations to create world-class cities that attract tourists and business (McDonald, 2008) and electoral incentives to co-opt middle-class voters (Holland, 2016). However, these circumstances may be less relevant in Africa's smaller secondary cities, where a negligible middle-class and less dense urbanization reduce the need for crackdowns against informal vendors. As noted by one respondent in Minna, who explains that there is no ban on street vending and hawking in the city, "Economic realities are part of the reason why there was no explicit ban" (Interview with the revenue officer, Chanchaga LGA, April 2018). In Nigeria in particular, the ability of the governor to dissolve opposition-led LGAs also reduces the likelihood that crackdowns on vendors are tied to inter-governmental power struggles, as has been found in some African capital cities (see Resnick, 2019).

Instead of harsh repression of their activities, these food traders are operating more in an environment of benign neglect by the government. Despite the range of hygiene training, food licensing and oversight activities that state and LGA officials claim to execute over traders, many of those in our sample had not been exposed to these activities, except for revenue collection. Notwithstanding the collection of taxes and fees, important investments in services essential for hygienic food preparation have not sufficiently materialized. In Nigeria and elsewhere, informal food

traders are frequently blamed for outbreaks of foodborne disease. Establishing laws and regulations for governing their behaviours is necessary but not sufficient to improve food safety. Regular sensitization to food sourcing and preparation issues is critical, as is the investment of revenues collected from traders into the relevant water, sanitation, and waste collection infrastructure that will enable them to implement these practices. This is especially important given recent analysis that suggests that food safety becomes most problematic in rapidly urbanizing countries, due to longer supply chains coupled with growing incomes to consume foods outside of the home (Jaffee et al., 2019).

This benign neglect seems closely tied to both low capacity and a high degree of opacity in the governance of informal vending. Low levels of staff and resources were directly reported through interviews by the government actors in charge of overseeing informal food trade. Insufficient compliance with revenue payments exacerbates the situation as there are not enough resources to investment back into the infrastructure of the markets (Interviews with the revenue officers in Chanchaga LGA and Calabar Municipality, April 2018). Figures 6.1 and 6.2 further show that there are multiple institutions involved in informal food trade; as has been found elsewhere (Adamtey, 2015; Roever, 2005), this undoubtedly stretches scarce resources and undermines accountability for oversight. Moreover, in both cities, traders report very little engagement with any of the state-level authorities charged with overseeing the sector and instead interact much more with their respective LGAs. This points to the importance of strengthening and consolidating the functions of the LGA into potentially one unit focused explicitly on informal traders and that collectively concentrates on collecting revenue from, and enforcing environmental and health regulations among, this constituency.

Secondly, while sharing many similarities, the profile of vendors in Calabar and Minna is quite diverse in notable ways, including their gender and religious composition, experience with government harassment, the priority challenges to their business profitability, and the profile of services to which they have the greatest access. Recognizing this variation is critical to ensure that policy responses for food safety, gender inclusion, taxation, market siting, and other key issues are properly nuanced to actually resonate with traders. Therefore, in the clear absence of strong associations that voice the concerns of informal traders in these two cities, LGAs need to invest in mechanisms of outreach and engagement, such as monthly town hall meetings or regular visits to market chairpersons,

which enable the communication of the diverse priorities of traders into the local government policy arena.

Acknowledgements The authors are grateful for funding from the USAID Nigerian Agricultural Productivity Project and from the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute. They also thank the CLEEN Foundation and NoiPolls Nigeria for their implementation of the surveys with informal traders in Calabar and Minna. Mekamu Kedir provided excellent research assistance by developing maps of the survey locations. All errors remain those of the authors alone. A modified version of this chapter was published in 2019 in *Urban Forum* 30: 385–405.

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