

Sally Roever is Urban Policies Programme Director of WIEGO and a Visiting Researcher at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. She has over 15 years' experience studying the ways in which laws, policies and politics – at both local and national levels – shape informal work and informal workers' organizations. This experience is based on grounded, in-depth knowledge gained through mixed-method field research and collaboration with informal workers and their membership-based organizations. She holds a PhD in political science from the University of California at Berkeley (2005) with specializations in research design, qualitative methodology, comparative politics and Latin American politics.

Address: e-mail: sally.roever@wiego.org

Caroline Skinner (corresponding author) is Urban Policies Research Director for WIEGO and a Senior Researcher at the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town. For over 15 years, Skinner's work has interrogated the nature of the informal economy with a focus on informing advocacy processes and livelihood-centred policy and planning responses. She has published widely on the topic. She has been involved in policy and advocacy work in South Africa at a local,

Street vendors and cities

SALLY ROEVER AND CAROLINE SKINNER

ABSTRACT This paper synthesizes recent research and evidence on urban policies and local government practices as they relate to street vending, one of the most visible occupations in the informal economy. It presents the latest available evidence on the size, composition and contribution of street vending, and reviews the rich literature on street vending as well as media coverage reflecting the extent of exclusionary policies and practices. While many analyses explore the reasons behind evictions and relocations through case studies, this paper draws on participatory methods and surveys to examine the more “everyday” challenges that street vendors face, even when licensed. The data demonstrate the livelihood impacts of generalized workplace insecurity, harassment and confiscation of merchandise on street vendors' earnings, assets and time. We briefly explore the models of organizing and policy approaches in Ahmedabad, India and Lima, Peru, where collective action among vendors has resulted in more innovative policy approaches. We argue that legislative reform and greater transparency in the content and implementation of regulations are needed, combined with the political will to challenge the appropriation of strategic urban spaces by more powerful interests.

KEYWORDS collective action / community organizations / evictions / inclusive cities / informal economy / street traders / street vending / urban governance / urban policies

I. INTRODUCTION

A central challenge for the New Urban Agenda is to position quality employment alongside quality habitat as pillars on which sustainable urbanization may take place. This challenge is significant when, in most regions of the global South, informal employment accounts for more than half of total employment, and when self-employment outweighs wage employment.⁽¹⁾ Within self-employment, street trade is one of the most visible occupations, yet few cities successfully balance the need to support livelihoods with the need to manage public space.

In the context of that challenge, street vendors and market traders in many cities operate in uncertain work environments. Recent research documents a host of evictions and relocations, but focuses less on the day-to-day struggles of these workers to make a living within policy environments that regulate street trade in exclusionary or contradictory ways. This paper fills that gap by examining the impact of exclusionary practices in five cities where street vending is an important occupation. The paper draws on data from the Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS), a 10-city study of working conditions among home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers undertaken in 2012 by the WIEGO network and local partners.⁽²⁾

Following this introduction, the paper presents recent labour force statistics on the size and composition of the street vending sector. After a short review of research documenting street trade's contributions to cities, it draws together existing evidence on street trade policy and practice. This suggests that exclusionary practices in the form of evictions, relocations and harassment are pervasive. Explanations for these trends are explored. Next, a structured comparison of IEMS data from five cities traces the everyday impact of exclusionary practices, suggesting that the most significant impact is on vendors' productivity. The paper then briefly examines organizing and advocacy in two of the five cities to show how different forms of collective action can counteract these negative practices. The paper concludes with a discussion of implications for building more inclusive cities.

II. SIZE, COMPOSITION AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STREET VENDING SECTOR

a. Size and composition

Street vendors are visible in urban public spaces all over the world, but the total number of people who work as street vendors is notoriously hard to come by.⁽³⁾ Yet, where available, labour force statistics show that street vendors account for a substantial share of urban employment.

The share of street vendors in employment is higher where trade is a more important branch of economic activity. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, trade accounts for 43 per cent of all informal non-agricultural employment.⁽⁴⁾ The weight of trade as an activity is evident in the size of the street vending population at the city level, which ranges from 13 per cent (Dakar, Senegal) to 24 per cent (Lomé, Togo) of all those engaged in non-agricultural informal employment (Table 1).

Trade is an even more important source of employment for women in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 51 per cent of all women informal workers outside agriculture. Likewise, street vending accounts for a significant share of women's informal employment in the region: as much as 35 per cent in Lomé and 28 per cent in Bamako, Mali. The proportion of women in informal employment and in street trade is higher than that of men in most cities: indeed, in West African cities, less than 10 per cent of women in the labour force have a formal job.⁽⁵⁾

In Asian cities, street vendors account for a slightly lower share of informal employment. For example, city-level data for Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam show that street vendors form 11 per cent of total non-agricultural informal employment, with a higher share among women than men. But in Indian cities, the share of street vending is lower – from 4.4 per cent (Mumbai) to 6.5 per cent (Ahmedabad) of total urban informal employment⁽⁶⁾ – and is higher among employed men than employed women. While trade is still an important branch of economic activity in Indian cities, non-trade services and manufacturing account for higher shares of total urban employment.

Labour force data on street vendors have not been compiled in many Latin American cities. Countries that have these data include Argentina and Peru, where street vendors account for 2 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, of urban informal employment.⁽⁷⁾

provincial and national level. Internationally, she has written policy papers for United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. She also provides technical support for informal worker organizations both internationally and in South Africa.

Address: African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa; e-mail: caroline.skinner@uct.ac.za

1. Vanek, J, M Chen, F Carre, J Heintz, and R Hussmanns (2014), "Statistics on the Informal Economy: Definitions, Regional Estimates and Challenges", WIEGO Working Paper (Statistics) No 2, Cambridge, MA, 48 pages, page 1, available at <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Vanek-Statistics-WIEGO-WP2.pdf>

2. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global research–action–policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy through building stronger organizations and networks of informal workers, improving statistics and research on the informal economy, and promoting policy dialogues with organizations of informal workers to improve the regulatory and policy environment in which they work (<http://www.wiego.org>). Further details on study methodology are discussed in Section IV. A total of 743 street vendors in five cities participated in the study.

3. Official statistics on street vending as an occupation are obtainable in countries whose labour force surveys include a relevant place of work question and/or an occupational code for street vendors. But not all countries use these questions or codes, and even those that do may not tabulate or publish the results. Moreover, these statistics tend to focus on primary occupations, so it

TABLE 1
Share of informal traders and street vendors in total non-agricultural informal employment (per cent)

	Informal traders			...Of which street vendors		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Africa						
Niamey	31.9	28.8	36.7	13.5	12.9	14.4
Ouagadougou	42.9	37.0	50.1	16.7	17.1	16.3
Bamako	48.3	32.6	64.9	19.9	12.0	28.2
Dakar	32.1	20.0	46.6	13.0	9.4	17.3
Abidjan	40.5	23.1	56.6	16.0	8.2	23.3
Lomé	44.6	20.8	62.7	24.0	9.6	35.0
Cotonou	43.8	19.7	61.6	18.8	7.9	26.9
Antananarivo	33.5	31.6	35.3	15.3	13.2	17.3
Latin America						
Lima	28.1	18.4	37.6	9.2	6.6	11.7
Asia						
Hanoi	26.2	17.9	33.8	11.3	5.0	17.1
Ho Chi Minh City	29.5	24.4	35.1	11.3	7.2	15.7

SOURCE: Compiled from Herrera, J, M Kuépié, C Nordman, X Oudin and F Roubaud (2012), "Informal Sector and Informal Employment: Overview of Data for 11 Cities in 10 Developing Countries", WIEGO Working Paper (Statistics) No 9, Cambridge, MA, 167 pages, available at http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Herrera_WIEGO_WP9.pdf.

is unlikely that they capture people who use street vending to supplement income earned from another activity.

4. See reference 1, page 12.

5. Herrera, J, M Kuépié, C Nordman, X Oudin and F Roubaud (2012), "Informal Sector and Informal Employment: Overview of Data for 11 Cities in 10 Developing Countries", WIEGO Working Paper (Statistics) No 9, Cambridge, MA, 167 pages, page 18, available at http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Herrera_WIEGO_WP9.pdf

6. Figures generated by G Raveendran, formerly of the Indian Statistical Service, for the WIEGO network using the National Sample Survey 2011 data, still to be published.

7. International Labour Organization (2013), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, Second edition,

Across these three regions, self-employment accounts for as much, or more, of total employment as wage employment,⁽⁸⁾ but tends to be much less visible than wage employment in policy agendas. Despite their positive contributions, street vendors are infrequently valued in policy terms as economic assets to cities.

b. Contributions

Street vendors' contributions to urban life go beyond their own self-employment. They generate demand for a wide range of services provided by other informal workers, including transport workers, tea sellers, market porters, security guards, recyclers and others.⁽⁹⁾ They also generate demand for services provided by formal sector public and private actors, including transportation, and formal shops and suppliers from whom they source their goods. The Supreme Court of India has noted that, from a consumer point of view, street vendors "*considerably add to the comfort and convenience of the general public, by making available ordinary articles of everyday use for a comparatively lesser price*".⁽¹⁰⁾ This is a particularly important role for the urban poor who cannot afford to shop at supermarkets.

Significantly, there is also evidence of the role played by informal food vendors in urban food security. The African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN),⁽¹¹⁾ for example, found that 70 per cent of 6,453 households surveyed across 11 sub-Saharan African cities sourced food

from informal outlets, with 59 per cent of households reporting that they patronized informal food outlets once a week or more. Further, the more food insecure the household, the more likely it is to rely on informal food sources.⁽¹²⁾ Steyn et al.⁽¹³⁾ reviewed 23 studies (conducted predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa) and similarly found that the daily energy intake from street foods in adults ranged from 13 to 50 per cent, and in several cities street foods contributed around half of daily protein intake.

Conventional wisdom suggests that street vendors avoid taxes and fees.⁽¹⁴⁾ But recent research shows that street vendors commonly pay a variety of taxes, fees and levies that contribute to local and national government revenue. The IEMS found that nearly two-thirds of the 743 street vendors sampled pay for a licence, permit or access to public space, and that many pay value added tax on their purchases, although they are unable to charge it on their sales.⁽¹⁵⁾ Street food vendors in many cities are required to pay for special licences. Market traders often pay even more: in Accra, Ghana, for example, market traders pay yearly, quarterly, monthly and daily tolls to local and national authorities.⁽¹⁶⁾ In some contexts, fees paid by street vendors and market traders are a key revenue stream for the local and in some cases even the national government. In Ghana, King⁽¹⁷⁾ finds that a significant proportion of total metropolitan revenue in Kumasi comes from trader fees.

III. STREET VENDORS: EXCLUSIONARY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

There is a particularly rich literature on street vending as it relates to urban policies and local government practices. In addition to monitoring this literature, WIEGO has systematically gathered news coverage on street vending worldwide in four languages since October 2012.⁽¹⁸⁾ Together, the literature and the media coverage provide a strong evidence base on global policy and practice. On balance, this evidence base suggests that exclusionary policies, laws and practices are common, while more inclusionary practices, where they exist, are infrequently documented.⁽¹⁹⁾

On the exclusionary side, the evidence suggests three dominant practices. At one extreme are large-scale, violent evictions where street vendors are simply removed from public space. In less severe cases, some or all vendors are relocated, but often to more marginal locations with low pedestrian footfall and/or inadequate facilities. Finally, there is lower-level, ongoing harassment of vendors by predatory state officials, often facilitated by legislation.

A brief analysis of WIEGO's news database supports this characterization of common practices. Over a three-year period, there were over 50 cases of significant eviction of street traders reported in cities across the global South, including Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Dhaka, Harare, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Kathmandu, Kingston, Lagos, Luanda, Manila, Medellín, Mexico City, Mumbai, San Pedro Sula, San Salvador and Tegucigalpa. The news coverage suggests high levels of violence in some of these cases, most notably Cairo, Harare, Luanda and San Salvador. In Latin America, there were more cases of relocation, but vendors frequently complained about the viability of these alternatives (particularly with relocations in Lima and Mexico City). Ongoing harassment of vendors was reported in China, Angola, Egypt and Zimbabwe, and human rights

International Labour Office, Geneva, 219 pages, page 47, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_234413.pdf

8. See reference 1.

9. Roever, S (2014), *Informal Economy Monitoring Study Sector Report: Street Vendors*, WIEGO, Cambridge, MA, 72 pages, pages 53–54, available at <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/IEMS-Sector-Full-Report-Street-Vendors.pdf>.

10. Supreme Court of India (1989), *Sodan Singh v. New Delhi Municipal Corporation*, available at <http://indiakanoon.org/doc/1767433/>.

11. <http://www.afsun.org>.

12. Crush, J and B Frayne (2011), "Supermarket Expansion and the Informal Food Economy in Southern African Cities: Implications for Urban Food Security", *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol 37, No 4, pages 781–807, pages 799–802.

13. Steyn, N, Z Mchiza, J Hill, Y Davids, I Venter, E Hinrichsen, M Opperman, J Rumbelow and P Jacobs (2013), "Nutritional Contribution of Street Foods to the Diet of People in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review", *Public Health Nutrition* Vol 17, No 6, pages 1363–1374.

14. Bromley, R (2000), "Street Vending and Public Policy: A Global Review", *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* Vol 20, Nos 1/2, pages 1–28.

15. See reference 9.

16. Adamty, N (2014), "Informal Economy Budget Analysis: Accra Metropolis", WIEGO Working Paper No 33, Cambridge, MA, available at <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Adamty-Informal-Economy-Budget-Analysis-Accra-WIEGO-WP33.pdf>

17. King, R (2006), "Fulcrum of the Urban Economy: Governance and Street Livelihoods in Kumasi, Ghana" in A Brown (editor), *Contested*

Space: Street Trading, Public Space, and Livelihoods in Developing Cities, Intermediate Technology Publications, Warwickshire, pages 99–118, page 117.

18. The four languages are English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. See <http://wiegog.org/news-informal-workers-wiegog-global-monitoring-system>.

19. Of course, media coverage is likely to be biased toward significant events, such as large-scale evictions, while it is less likely to document the more mundane existence of street vendors, especially in terms of inclusivity.

20. Öz, Ö and M Eder (2012), "Rendering Istanbul's Periodic Bazaars Invisible: Reflections on Urban Transformation and Contested Space", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol 36, No 2, pages 297–314, page 297.

21. Eidsø, N, S Turner, and N Oswin (2016), "Contesting Street Spaces in a Socialist City: Itinerant Vending-Scapes and the Everyday Politics of Mobility in Hanoi, Vietnam", *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* Vol 106, No 2, pages 340–349.

22. Crossa, V (2009), "Resisting the Entrepreneurial City: Street Vendors' Struggle in Mexico City's Historic Center", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol 33, No 1, pages 43–63.

23. Bromley, R and P Mackie (2009), "Displacement and the New Spaces for Informal Trade in the Latin American City Centre", *Urban Studies* Vol 46, No 7, pages 1485–1506.

24. Carrieri, P and I Murta (2011), "Cleaning up the City: A Study on the Removal of Street Vendors from Downtown Belo Horizonte, Brazil", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences* Vol 28, No 2, pages 217–225.

25. Xue, D S and G Z Huang (2015), "Informality and the State's Ambivalence in the Regulation of Street Vending in Transforming Guangzhou, China", *Geoforum* Vol 62, pages 156–165; also Huang, G Z, D S Xue and Z G Li (2014), "From

abuses were investigated in Bangladesh, China, Rwanda, Egypt, Angola and Mexico. What is clear from the news reports is that there is often a hostile legislative environment. New laws banning street trading were reported in Angola, Jordan, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and the Philippines. A recent development, which is particularly prominent on the African continent, is not only placing a ban on street vending but declaring purchasing from street vendors to be a criminal offence. Instances of this have been reported in Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia, as well as in Indonesia.

Recent research provides some insight into the logic behind policy choices for outright evictions, relocations to marginal trading sites, and ongoing harassment. In the case of evictions, one prevalent motivation is the pursuit of the "modern", "ideal" and "hygienic" city. The assumption is that street vending is symptomatic of "backwardness" and harbours "dirt", and is therefore a stumbling block to attracting both domestic and international investors and tourists. As Öz and Eder note,⁽²⁰⁾ in this discourse of urban renewal, vendors become the "new undesirables of the urban landscape".

This is the dominant explanation not only for specific evictions – including the government ban on street vending in Hanoi,⁽²¹⁾ the removal of street vendors from Mexico City's Historic Centre,⁽²²⁾ and the displacement of informal traders from city-centre streets in Cusco, Peru⁽²³⁾ – but also for relocations (see e.g. Carrieri and Murta on Belo Horizonte, Brazil⁽²⁴⁾). It also accounts for general ongoing antipathy, as in present-day urban China⁽²⁵⁾ and Mumbai.⁽²⁶⁾ Preparations for mega events can also lead to wide-scale evictions, as in the case of the FIFA World Cup⁽²⁷⁾ and that of the Delhi Commonwealth Games.⁽²⁸⁾

Another strand of research examines the actors behind the design of evictions and relocations. Many of these analyses point to the role played by property developers and management companies in the exclusion of vendors. Morange's⁽²⁹⁾ analysis of the displacement of street vendors in Nairobi's central business district, for example, details the emergence of private sector actors in securing the relocation of vendors. Walker⁽³⁰⁾ similarly describes how downtown street vendors in Porto Alegre, Brazil, were relocated into an enclosed building constructed and managed by a property developer. In explaining the disappearance and/or relocation of the periodic bazaars that were once such a key feature of Istanbul, Öz and Eder⁽³¹⁾ note that this has been driven by rising real estate prices in the city, where "land has simply become too precious a commodity to be left to the bazaaris".⁽³²⁾

These processes of exclusion are sanctioned and actively facilitated by governments. Tranberg Hansen and Vaa,⁽³³⁾ in their study of the violent eviction of street traders in Lusaka, Zambia, identify a leadership change in the local authority as a key reason, noting that a new mayor and council had come into office in Lusaka and were "bent on cleaning up the capital".⁽³⁴⁾ In a Ghanaian context, King argues that decentralization, leading to more frequent changes in local authorities, also leads to evictions of street traders as "a common way to impress the public".⁽³⁵⁾ The role of political patronage networks may also intensify electorally driven mandates to clear street vendors where middle- and upper-class voters are being courted, as in the case of the 2006 Operation Dongosolo in Blantyre, Malawi⁽³⁶⁾ and in Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe, in which 700,000 urban dwellers lost their homes, their source of livelihood, or both.⁽³⁷⁾

Behind these instances are broader approaches to urban planning that leave little room for small-scale livelihoods to be undertaken in urban public space, or that justify operations such as Murambatsvina. Potts,⁽³⁸⁾ for example, details how colonial-era anti-informality approaches to urban planning in Zimbabwe have been extended into the post-colonial period as “*adherence to the ideology of planned and orderly cities remained a core belief for many*”. This, combined with political leaders’ anger against the urban electorate who had largely voted for the opposition, was a fertile field for those who always desired urban “order” to gain ground. Kamete’s⁽³⁹⁾ detailed analysis of the same case also concludes that the planning system in Zimbabwe was at “*the forefront*” of the operation and that planners and the planning system served as “*the handmaiden of state repression*”. This backs up Roy’s argument that “*engagement with informality is in many ways difficult for planners. Informal spaces seem to be the exception to planning, lying outside of its realm of control.*”⁽⁴⁰⁾

The preceding explanations focus mainly on significant moments in time when eviction or relocation operations are undertaken. Another set of studies focuses more on harassment, documenting how hostile legislation, plus inadequate licensing systems, create an environment in which predatory state and non-state actors can extract rents from vendors who lack legal standing. Studies have shown that the number of vendors in many cities considerably exceeds the number of available licences. This was a key finding for Asia in Bhowmik’s⁽⁴¹⁾ multiple-country analysis and Lyons and Snoxell’s⁽⁴²⁾ study of Nairobi, Kenya, where 7,000 licences and formal sites were offered for an estimated 500,000 street traders. Similarly, Itikawa⁽⁴³⁾ found that there were an estimated 100,000 vendors in São Paulo, Brazil in 2009, of which only 2,200 held licences. The evidence also suggests that food vendors are subject to particularly complex licensing regimes that can create openings for street-level bureaucrats to extract side payments. Mahadevia et al.,⁽⁴⁴⁾ for example, found that a licence for a vegetable vendor in Ahmedabad, India specifies 21 restrictions on when, where and how she can sell.

Recent research and mass media coverage of the sector therefore paint a picture of widespread evictions, relocations, and hostile regulatory and political environments. However, there is less documentation of the everyday challenges that street vendors face, even when licensed, because of insecure access to urban space; of the specific livelihood impacts that exclusionary policy approaches have on street vendors; and of the ways street vendors respond to these approaches in their everyday strategies. Further, there are many case studies but very few structured comparisons of street vendors in multiple cities and regions. In order to fill that gap, the following section examines recent comparative data on impacts of, and responses to, policy challenges from the five cities included in the IEMS study.

IV. THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE INSECURITY ON STREET VENDING LIVELIHOODS

How does an insecure workplace impact street vending livelihoods on an everyday basis, and how do street vendors respond? To explore these questions, this section examines qualitative data from the 2012 IEMS, a 10-city, 3-sector study of the driving forces behind working conditions

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26. Anjaria, J (2006), “Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 May, pages 2140–2146.

27. Cottle, E (2010), *A Preliminary Evaluation of the Impact of the 2010 FIFA World Cup: South Africa*, Labour Research Services occasional paper, 14 pages, available at <http://lrs.org.za/docs/A%20Preliminary%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Impact%20of%20the%202010%20World%20Cup%20by%20EddieCottle.pdf>; also Corrarino, M (2014), “Law Exclusion Zones”: Mega-Events as Sites of Procedural and Substantive Human Rights Violations”, *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal* Vol 17, No 1, pages 180–204, available at <http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yhrdij/vol17/iss1/9>.

28. Pandey, G (2010), “Delhi street vendors evicted before Commonwealth Games”, *BBC News*, 20 August, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-10716139>.

29. Morange, M (2015), “Street Trade, Neoliberalisation and the Control of Space: Nairobi’s Central Business District in the Era of Entrepreneurial Urbanism”, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* Vol 9, No 2, pages 1–23.

30. Walker, A P (2015), “The Conflation of Participatory Budgeting and Public-Private Partnerships in Porto Alegre, Brazil: The Construction of a Working-Class Mall for Street Hawkers”, *Economic Anthropology* Vol 2, No 1, pages 165–184.

31. See reference 20.

32. See reference 20, page 297.

33. Tranberg Hansen, K and M Vaa (2004), *Reconsidering Informality: Perspectives from Urban Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 235 pages.

34. See reference 33, page 68.

35. See reference 17, page 117; also (on Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Dakar, Senegal)

- Brown, A, C Msoka and I Dankoco (2015), "A Refugee in my Own Country: Evictions or Property Rights in the Urban Informal Economy?", *Urban Studies* Vol 52, No 12, pages 2234–2249; and (on Bogotá, Colombia) Donovan, M (2008), "Informal Cities and the Contestation of Public Space: The Case of Bogotá's Street Vendors, 1988–2003", *Urban Studies* Vol 45, No 1, pages 29–51.
36. Riley, L (2014), "Operation Dongosolo and the Geographies of Urban Poverty in Malawi", *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol 40, No 3, pages 443–458.
37. Tibaijuka, A (2005), *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe*, 100 pages, page 7, available at www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/zimbabwe/zimbabwe_rpt.pdf.
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41. Bhowmik, S (2005), "Street Vendors in Asia: A Review", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 May, pages 2256–2264.
42. Lyons, M and S Snoxell (2005), "Creating Urban Social Capital: Some Evidence from

in the informal economy.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The study explored street vending in five cities: Accra, Ghana; Ahmedabad, India; Durban, South Africa; Lima, Peru; and Nakuru, Kenya. It sampled both men and women who sell a wide range of products as either street vendors or market traders.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Given the widespread documentation of exclusionary policies described above, we began the analysis by assessing references to four issues related to city government policy and practice: workplace insecurity; harassment; merchandise confiscations; and evictions.

The data examined here were produced in focus groups designed around nine participatory tools. These tools were derived from urban participatory appraisal⁽⁴⁷⁾ and were designed to elicit workers' perceptions of the key drivers of working conditions in the informal economy. Participants were prompted to think about drivers related to macroeconomic conditions, city government policies and practices, and value chain dynamics, but they were not asked directly about workplace insecurity, harassment, confiscations or evictions. Mention of any one of these four issues should therefore be interpreted as an indicator that the group considers the issue salient, rather than as an indicator of whether or not they experience it. In other words, focus group participants were asked in general terms about drivers related to city government, but they spontaneously raised workplace insecurity, harassment, confiscations and evictions as specific issues. Local research teams conducted 15 focus groups with five participants each in each of the five cities.

The five cities vary considerably in terms of size, macroeconomic indicators, and the policy environments in which street vendors operate.⁽⁴⁸⁾ We would therefore expect to see considerable variation in the issues identified as important, given the open-endedness of the prompts used in the focus groups. The aim of this part of the analysis was to evaluate the extent to which vendors perceive these issues as important, as the literature suggests they should.

The first step of the analysis was to determine how many focus groups (out of 15 in total from each city) spontaneously identified workplace insecurity, harassment, confiscations and evictions. For the first issue, workplace insecurity, focus groups were coded as relating to workplace insecurity if they involved discussions related to *spatial* security (i.e. security of access to a work site) or *physical* security (i.e. a work site secure from physical threats such as crime and abuse). For the second, third and fourth issues, focus groups were coded based on word searches for harassment, confiscations and evictions.

Despite the different policy environments, each of the four issues was discussed in every city, and often in more than half of the focus groups. In four of five cities – the exception being Accra, where the sample consisted mostly of market traders⁽⁴⁹⁾ – well over half of the 15 focus groups discussed at least one of the four issues (Figure 1). In Ahmedabad, workplace insecurity, harassment and evictions were so common that they were identified in all 15 groups, and more than half of the groups discussed merchandise confiscations. In Durban, workplace insecurity, harassment and confiscations were identified in about three-quarters of the groups, but traders there were not worried about evictions. In Lima, confiscations and evictions were identified in at least two-thirds of the groups. In Nakuru, neither confiscations nor evictions played a prominent role, but all 15 focus groups discussed challenges relating to police harassment. Together, data from the five cities present a mixed

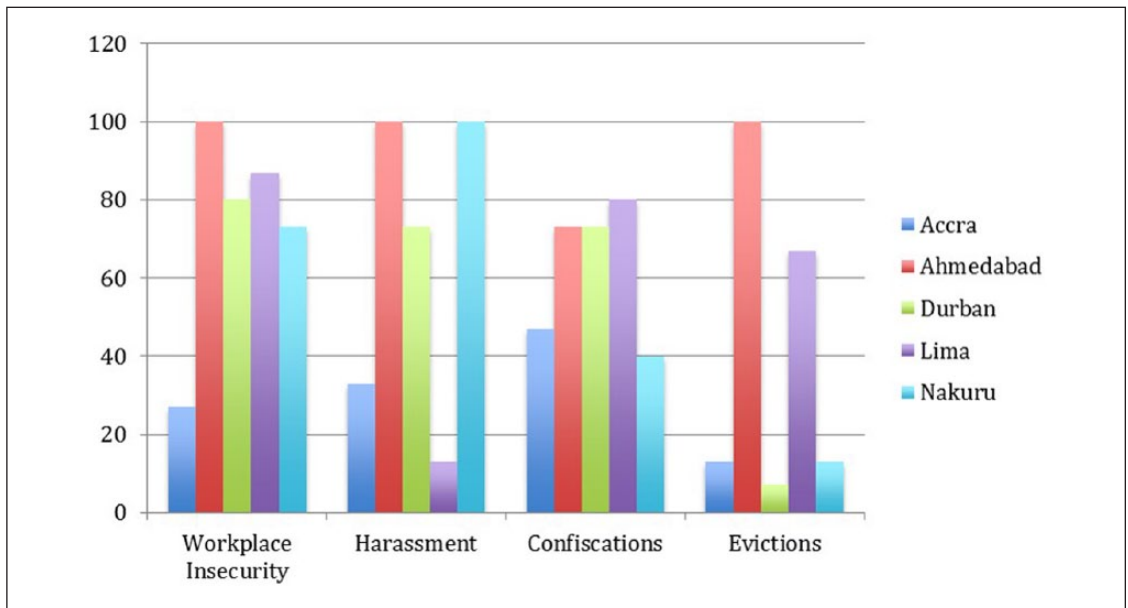


FIGURE 1
Percentage of focus groups that discussed four key exclusionary practices

NOTE: N = 15 focus groups per city x 5 cities = 75 focus groups.

picture: while perceptions of exclusionary approaches are present in all cities, they carry different weight city by city, and only in Ahmedabad are evictions and relocations commonplace.

The next step of the analysis was to tease out the links between the four issues, on the one hand, and specific livelihood constraints on the other hand. To do this, we examined causal chains that each focus group produced for the first- and second-most important issues in their sector.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Of the total of 150 chains produced by the 75 focus groups, 63 were based on one of those four issues. Each focus group was asked to diagram how the issue affected their sector, and how they responded (Figure 2). We hypothesized that their main impacts would be on earnings.

The data confirm several direct impacts of workplace insecurity, harassment, confiscations and evictions on vendors' economic wellbeing, although the impact pathways vary considerably (Table 2). More than one-third of the total 315 references related to loss of income. In about one-quarter of the mentions, vendors described a loss of income due to their inability to stay at their work site, or to keep themselves or their goods secure. In one-quarter, vendors said their expenditures increased, because they had to pay fines, fees or bribes in order to stay in the streets or to recover their merchandise. In slightly less than one-quarter, they said they had to take out loans from suppliers, friends or informal moneylenders in order to recover their work site or their merchandise. Others said they lowered their prices in order to move stock quickly when they lost time for work due to one or more of these issues; and some just stopped working altogether for a while. Finally, some said their

Informal Traders in Nairobi", *Urban Studies* Vol 42, No 7, pages 1077–1097, page 1078.

43. Itikawa, L (2014), *Street Vendors and the Right to the City*, Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos, São Paulo, 121 pages.

44. Mahadevia, D, A Brown, M Lyons, S Vyas, K Jajoo and A Mishra (2013), "Street Vendors in Ahmedabad: Status, Contributions and Challenges", Centre for Urban Equity Working Paper 22, 64 pages, available at http://cept.ac.in/UserFiles/File/CUE/Working%20Papers/Revised%20New/022_Street%20Vendors%20in%20Ahmedabad%20Status.pdf.

45. The three occupational sectors studied were home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers. Study reports can be found at <http://wiego.org/wiego/informal-economy-monitoring-studies-publications>.

46. The sample in each city was designed to be as representative as possible

of the membership of the partner organization(s), not representative of street vendors city-wide. Partner organizations were membership-based organizations (MBOs) of informal workers or local non-governmental organizations that support such organizations. The partner organizations were: StreetNet Ghana Alliance and ISSER in Accra; the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad; Asiye eTafuleni in Durban; FEDEVAL in Lima; and KENASVIT in Nakuru.

47. The methodology was developed collaboratively with Caroline Moser, Angélica Acosta and Irene Vance, who designed the tools and trained the city teams. It is an adaptation of earlier participatory methodologies originally developed by Chambers, and then advanced by these researchers. Chambers, R (1994), “The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal”, *World Development* Vol 22, No 7, pages 953–969.

48. Roever, S (2016a), “Informal Trade Meets Informal Governance: Street Vendors and Legal Reform in India, South Africa, and Peru”, *Cityscape* Vol 18, No 1, pages 47–66.

49. The Accra sample also included street vendors who sold their goods in residential areas just outside their homes, where they were less likely to be subject to the scrutiny of municipal authorities.

50. Once each group had listed all issues and ranked the top two most important ones, they were asked to draw causal diagrams of the impacts of

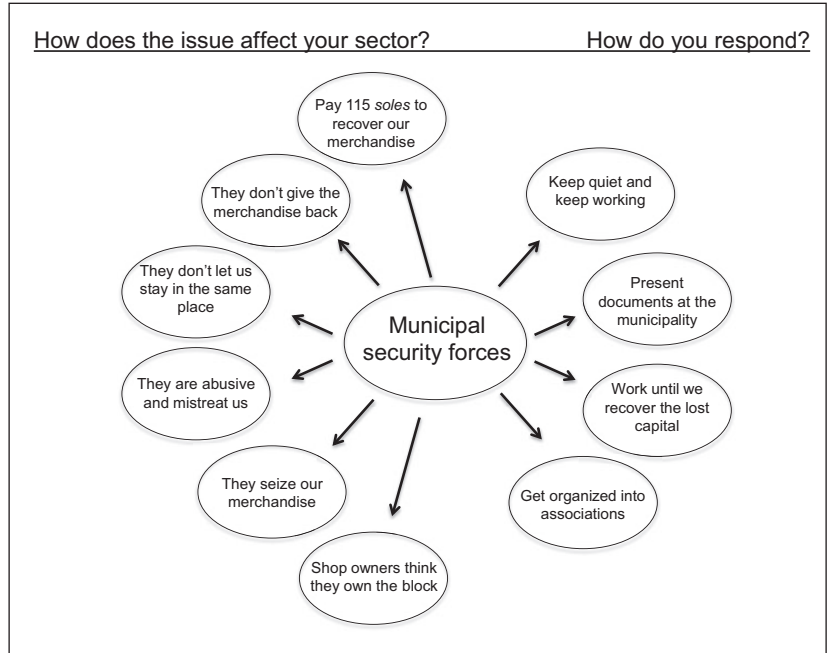


FIGURE 2
Sample causal chain, Lima

NOTE: 115 Peruvian soles = approx. US\$ 36 as of July 2015.

TABLE 2
Main categories of impacts and responses to exclusionary practices

	No of mentions (%)	Components
Loss of income	116 (36.8%)	Earnings reduced; expenditures increased; loans taken; prices lowered; stopped working; customers lost
Asset erosion	71 (22.6%)	Goods lost; goods damaged; capital lost; stalls/permits confiscated
Change in mode of work	41 (13.0%)	Shift to itinerant vending/scale down; run and hide/change site or work hours; find other work
Violence/ conflict/arrest	43 (13.7%)	Physical injury; police beatings; arrests; anxiety; conflict among vendors; household tensions
Collective action	44 (14.0%)	Pursue solutions through MBO; work with market leader or other vendors to resolve
Total	315 (100.0%)	

SOURCE: IEMS focus groups (2012).

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incomes went down because they lost customers due to the conditions of insecurity at their work site.

More than 20 per cent of the 315 mentions related to asset erosion, an important element of livelihood insecurity, especially for women.⁽⁵¹⁾ Not only were their goods often permanently lost or damaged when confiscated, but vendors also said sometimes their permits, stalls, trays or stands were also confiscated. The result, many said, was that their working capital was lost in the process. Notably, the permanent loss of goods was more common among vendors of perishable goods such as fruits and vegetables, and in the IEMS sample women are far more likely than men to be vendors of perishable goods.

About 13 per cent of the mentions related to vendors shifting their mode of working in order to work around their lack of secure access to a workplace. For example, vendors mentioning harassment on the part of local authorities said they would shift to itinerant vending for a while or scale down the amount of stock they purchased. Another 14 per cent reported that they were subject to physical abuse from police or that they were arrested for perceived violations. A few also reported anxiety and household tension as a result of an insecure workplace. Notably, 14 per cent of the causal chains named collective action as a response, whether through the vendors' MBO, a market committee, or informal cooperation among vendors.

The data above confirm that the four issues identified in the literature – workplace insecurity, harassment, confiscations and evictions – impact significantly on workers' incomes. But they also suggest that the more significant impact may be on vendors' productivity. Of the 315 mentions, 29.2 per cent related to loss of time, on top of the 22.5 per cent that related to loss of assets. Furthermore, workers' perceptions captured in the focus groups suggest that the losses of time, capital and assets are all related, and are more disruptive to their livelihoods than an occasional loss of earnings (Table 3).

These data suggest the magnitude of exclusionary practices affecting street vendors' day-to-day livelihoods even at moments when large-scale, newsworthy evictions are not underway. They further suggest the relevance of systemic factors hindering productivity for street vendors, above and beyond the needs for access to finance and skills training that are more often the focus of policy interventions.

V. OVERCOMING EXCLUSION: ORGANIZING AND INCLUSIVE POLICY

At the same time, the importance of collective action as a response, while less common than individualized coping strategies, should not be overlooked. Of the 44 mentions of collective action noted above, 36 came from either Ahmedabad or Lima, where partner MBOs have been active since the 1970s. This section briefly explores the models of organizing around inclusive policy in those two cities as a counterweight to the literature's emphasis on exclusion.

a. Ahmedabad

In 1972 Ela Bhatt, a union labour organizer and lawyer based in Ahmedabad, founded the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

the issue and their responses to them. For examples see reference 9.

51. Moser, C (editor) (2016), *Gender, Assets and Just Cities: Pathways to Transformation*, Routledge, London; also Roever, S (2016b), "Key Drivers of Asset Erosion and Accumulation in Informal Employment: Findings from the Informal Economy Monitoring Study", in C Moser (editor), *Gender, Assets and*

TABLE 3
Disruptive impacts of exclusionary practices

Accra (FG 3)	<i>"We have to move our goods from point to point looking for places to sell. Sometimes our goods are destroyed and the business comes to a standstill, making us poorer. Sometimes we try to relocate by asking for money from friends, looking for money from a bank, but this often doesn't work as relocating is quite expensive and it's difficult to raise the money."</i>
Ahmedabad (FG 7)	<i>"During evictions, the municipal authority confiscates our goods, scales and carts, and then we have to go to court to pay fines and get our goods back."</i>
Durban (FG 8)	<i>"Sometimes when we are running away, if they are chasing us, they spray us with teargas, hit us and swear at us." "If it gets in your eyes, you have to go to the doctor and get treated." "When I went to the police station once after they had taken my goods [and did not give them back after the fine was paid], I was told that I didn't have the right to accuse a police officer."</i>
Nakuru (FG 10)	<i>"The officers sometimes steal money from you as you struggle with them during arrest. When you're taken to court, you are forced to admit the offence charged, because if you refuse, you will be remanded for 14 days."</i>
Lima (FG 12)	<i>"When they seize things from us they don't give them back. They don't give us a receipt and make us pay. Without a receipt, we can't get our goods back, and [instead] they just send us from one place to another."</i>

SOURCE: IEMS focus groups (2012).

Just Cities: Pathways to Transformation, Routledge, London.

52. <http://www.sewa.org>.

53. SEWA (2013), *Annual Report*, page 23, available at http://www.sewa.org/pdf/Sewa_Annual_Report.pdf.

54. In addition to sector-specific support, SEWA offers a range of additional important services, most notably savings facilities and loans through the SEWA bank as well as social protection. For further details, see Chen, M (2004), *Towards Economic Freedom: The Impact of SEWA*, Self-Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad, 95 pages, available at <http://www.sewaresearch.org/impact.pdf>; also Bhatt, E (2006), *We Are*

SEWA now operates in 14 states in India, with a membership of just under two million.⁽⁵²⁾ Street vendors have always been a focus of SEWA's work, numbering 80,000 members in Ahmedabad alone.⁽⁵³⁾ In the IEMS street vendor focus groups, SEWA was unanimously identified as the institution that was most helpful to them.⁽⁵⁴⁾

There are a number of areas where SEWA has proactively negotiated integration of vendors into urban plans so as to pre-empt evictions where possible. For example, IEMS participants identified the important role played by SEWA-initiated market committees in organizing and managing trading space so as to allow for better movement of cars and pedestrians. As one group noted, "SEWA helped us arrange ourselves into two lines to avoid traffic jams" (FG 10). A much-cited example of collaboration is the Jamalpur market, where the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) planned and then built a bridge to ease traffic that could have seriously impeded trading for the estimated 1,000 traders operating there. SEWA, working with AMC officials, developed a plan and design for relocating vendors to a space created under the bridge. Mahadevia et al.⁽⁵⁵⁾ identify this as a case of good practice in joint management, representing an "imaginative use of urban space".

The documentation of SEWA's activities suggests that, although there are a few cases of cooperation with the AMC, SEWA is more frequently

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in negotiations to resist harassment and eviction of vendors. This was the most cited form of assistance in the IEMS focus groups. When the AMC eviction teams came, vendors reported that a combination of market committees and SEWA leaders or organizers mediated between the vendors and officials. In some cases, evictions were averted and in some cases not. When goods were confiscated, vendors stated that SEWA both helped them access their goods and ensured that the fines were reduced. As one trader noted, “*Sisters from SEWA help when our goods get confiscated; without them it is impossible to retrieve back our wares from the corporation*” (FG 12). Where SEWA fails to secure cooperation, legal action is a strategy of last resort. Over the years it has pursued numerous legal cases.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In addition to responding to immediate threats, SEWA focuses on changing the policy environment and legal framework. SEWA together with other allies in the street vending sector, most notably the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI),⁽⁵⁷⁾ initially lobbied for a national policy on urban street vending. After many years of struggle, in 2004 the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors was passed. This was later developed into a bill, the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, adopted by the Parliament of India in March 2014.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Both the national policy and the new Act affirmed the positive role of vendors in cities, identifying the need for livelihood protection and providing an innovative and inclusive framework for planning and ongoing management of vending. The Act specifies that Town Vending Committees (TVCs) must be established to carry out surveys of vendors, ensure that all existing vendors are accommodated in vending zones, and issue certificates of vending. The Act stipulates that street vendors, of which one-third are women, must constitute 40 per cent of the TVC members; and that an additional 10 per cent of TVC members must be from non-governmental organizations. With half of the TVC members coming from civil society, there is less scope in principle for governance practices that ignore the protections of vendors outlined in the legislation. In addition, the Act recognizes “natural” (open air) markets as “*places where sellers and buyers have traditionally congregated*”.⁽⁵⁹⁾ This would preclude the relocation of vendors to places that are inaccessible and have low levels of pedestrian footfall, a common occurrence in street trader planning. In Ahmedabad, before the Act was even passed, SEWA had appealed to the High Court of Gujarat to implement the National Street Vendors’ Policy, and there is an existing TVC of which SEWA is a key member.⁽⁶⁰⁾

b. Lima

Lima’s estimated 280,000 street vendors are organized mainly at the block or market level, but some district-wide federations, product associations and metro-wide federations exist.⁽⁶¹⁾ Of those, some have been around since the 1970s, although their strength and reach has varied considerably over time. Over the past five to ten years, metro-wide street vending federations have formed a joint platform to identify common needs and to engage in policymaking forums behind a more united front than has existed in the past. They have also have engaged in multi-sector dialogues with federations of other worker groups.⁽⁶²⁾

Poor but So Many: The Story of Self-Employed Women in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 233 pages.

55. See reference 44, page 51.

56. For further details, see reference 54, Bhatt (2006).

57. <http://nasvnet.org/newsite/>.

58. The process of securing both the policy and the act was fraught with difficulties; for further details see Roever, S and S Sinha (2011), “India’s National Policy on Urban Street Vendors”, WIEGO Policy Brief (Urban Policies) No 2, Cambridge, MA, 12 pages, available at http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Sinha_WIEGO_PB2.pdf; also Amis, P (2015), “Symbolic Politics, Legalism and Implementation: The Case of Street Vendors in India”, *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* Issue 18, pages 36–47.

59. Government of India (2014), *Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act*, page 2, available at <http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Recent%20Acts/Street%20Vendors%20%20Act,%202014.pdf>.

60. The critical issue is the extent to which the Act is implemented. This is being closely monitored by NASVI, which notes the numerous cities that have now established TVCs; see <http://nasvnet.org/newsite/progress-in-the-implementation-of-the-street-vendors-act-2014>. This process however has not been without its setbacks, suggesting that in some places further litigation is likely.

61. Aliaga-Linares, L (2012), “Shaping informality in the free market city: a comparative spatial analysis of street vending policies in Lima and

Bogotá”, PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, available at <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/19590>; also Roeber, S (2005), “Negotiating Formality: Informal Sector, Market and State in Peru”, PhD dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of California at Berkeley; and Castellanos, T (2014), *Estudio de Monitoreo de la Economía Informal: Vendedores y Vendedoras Ambulantes de Lima Metropolitana, Perú*, WIEGO, Cambridge, MA, 60 pages, available at <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/IEMS-Lima-Street-Vendors-City-Report-espanol.pdf>.

62. The activities of the platform have been documented through communications with WIEGO team members based in Lima; with FEDEVAL, one of the oldest street vending federations in Lima and the IEMS local partner; and with field visits over the past five years.

63. See reference 61, all works.

64. The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT).

65. See reference 9; also see reference 61, Castellanos (2014).

66. Lindell, I (2010), *Africa’s Informal Workers: Collective Agency, Alliances and Transnational Organizing in Urban Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 238 pages.

67. Bayat, A (2000), “From ‘Dangerous Classes’ to ‘Quiet Rebels’: Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South”, *International Sociology* Vol 15, No 3, pages 533–557, page 546.

68. Dobson, R and C Skinner (2009), *Working in Warwick: Including Street Traders in Urban Plans*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Development Studies, Durban, 137 pages.

69. Yasmeen, G and N Nirathron (2014), “Vending in Public Space: The Case of Bangkok”, WIEGO Policy Brief (Urban Policies) No 16, Cambridge, MA, 18 pages, available at <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Yasmeen-Vending-Public-Space-Bangkok-WIEGO-PB16.pdf>.

The platform has made some gains in overcoming a divisive policy and regulatory framework. For example, there are different legal–regulatory regimes for street vendors, market traders, shoe shiners, newspaper vendors, herbal tea vendors and others.⁽⁶³⁾ These different regimes create different interests and incentives for the different groups, making unified advocacy difficult. The platform has provided a space in which different interests can be appreciated, but common needs and demands that supersede those differences can also be identified.

The platform has enabled the participation of several street vending federations in multi-sectoral dialogues with the Ministry of Labour, to develop a new law for self-employed workers; the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, for the inclusion of self-employed street vendors in social programmes; the Metropolitan Lima government, for the development of a new city-wide street vending ordinance to replace one that was three decades old; and other social systems for which informal workers qualify. Some of these efforts – particularly the development of the law for self-employed workers – have been supported by the affiliation of street vending federations with one of the main central trade union confederations.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This alliance was mentioned in the IEMS focus groups in Lima as having a positive effect on vendors’ ability to engage with authorities.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The forms of organizing and mobilization among street vendors differ considerably between Ahmedabad and Lima. In Ahmedabad, the organization grew out of a trade union model and is more proactive in forming institutional alliances and engaging in international networks, strategies that Lindell⁽⁶⁶⁾ found significant among informal workers in Africa as well. In Lima, the approach of street vending organizations more closely resembles Bayat’s⁽⁶⁷⁾ notion of “*quiet, largely atomized and prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action*”, where organizational presence ebbs and flows in accordance with periodic threats and opportunities. Interestingly, there are also a few examples of inclusive policies that rely less on large-scale mobilization, such as the well-known case of Warwick Junction in Durban, South Africa⁽⁶⁸⁾ and the case of Bangkok, Thailand.⁽⁶⁹⁾

VI. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE CITIES

Several lessons emerge from the data presented above. First, while large-scale eviction drives and relocation projects are widely documented, more everyday challenges – such as general workplace insecurity, harassment, and merchandise confiscations – are also significant, and in the IEMS cities appear to be more salient than evictions as drivers of difficult working conditions. Second, those drivers impact not only on street vendors’ earnings, but also on their assets and their time. This impact is very significant for self-employed workers without employees (which most street vendors are) as they tend to have more labour than capital to invest in their livelihood activities.

Furthermore, the different strategies pursued by vendors and their organizations suggest that there may be ways to reduce the risks of this occupation without imposing significant costs on cities. For example, greater transparency around local by-laws and how they are implemented may go a long way towards providing a more stable business environment

for vendors. The spatial regulation of street vending is a common feature in cities, but the lack of transparency and due process with which it is enforced imposes high costs on vendors. Legal reforms like the Street Vendors' Act in India that explicitly recognize street vending as a legitimate livelihood, and that put in place basic livelihood protections, could help shift policies and practices in other countries as well. This moves the approach away from criminalizing street trade towards making it a more productive activity – thus capitalizing on its ability to generate employment, government revenue and household wellbeing and to provide goods at low prices in convenient locations to the general public.

Finally, where organizations can facilitate bargaining platforms or negotiation channels with city officials, there is potential for better and more appropriate regulation of street vending and for better access to social programmes for street vendors. The challenge for cities is to weigh the social and economic contributions of street trade against the demands of the corporate private sector for access to valuable urban land and space. To be sure, more powerful players commonly oppose the use of public space for livelihood activities, arguing that it amounts to privatization of public space. But the appropriation of strategic urban spaces by powerful interests, driving land values up and effectively shutting the urban poor out, amounts to privatization as well. For cities to be inclusive they must commit to placing limits on accumulation and enabling the urban poor to access these strategic spaces.

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