

The Politics of Informality: An Insight into the Informal Solid Waste Recycling Sector in Kaduna, Nigeria

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While informality is on the increase in African cities and remains on top of the agenda of international development agencies and donors, the concept remains under-utilized and the process little understood. The discourse on the informal sector has been largely framed within poverty reduction and livelihoods perspectives. The overwhelming focus on poverty has led to the neglect of other critical issues. There is little recognition that informality is a differentiated process embodying varying degrees of power and exclusion based on gender, age and income among others. In addition, informal sector workers do not operate in a vacuum. Urban governance processes and politics including the nature and extent of state regulation, nature of state-civil society relations and linkages with various actors both within and beyond the city scale have implications for informality. This project highlights the complexity and dynamism of the informal sector through a case study of informal recycling in Kaduna, Nigeria. Specifically, it examines the structure and functioning of the sector by posing certain crucial questions. Who are the actors? What sets of relations have emerged? What is the nature and extent of organizing? How are the activities of the actors shaped by place-specific conditions?