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**MEAN STREETS: MIGRATION, XENOPHOBIA AND INFORMALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA. J.Crush, A.Chikanda and C.Skinner (eds.), Southern African Migration Project, the African Centre for Cities and the International Development Research Centre (Cape Town, South Africa), 2015. No. of pages: x+287, Price:\$35, ISBN: 9781920596118.**

This volume paints a vivid picture of the adversity and inequities faced by international migrant populations in South Africa, with a particular focus on those eking out a livelihood in the informal sector. In the opening chapter of *Mean Streets*, the editors set out a strong and compelling case for the need to reform the way the state and society in South Africa view and interact with its' many international migrant populations operating in the informal sector. This sets the tone for the subsequent chapters which focus on varying issues and localities, firmly from the viewpoint of migrants.

Chapter 2, *Doing Business with Xenophobia*, presents a longitudinal analysis of the prevalence of collective violence against migrant businesses since the 1994 elections, based on newspaper reports. The results suggest there has been a worrying upsurge in the number of attacks over time, with almost three quarters of the attacks during the observed time period occurring between 2010 and 2014. The chapter progresses to consider the response of officials and politicians to such violence, which the authors describe as 'official evasion': a tendency for authorities to resist taking action on addressing xenophobia and/or linking such violent attacks to xenophobia.

Chapter 3 focuses on the implications of *Operation Cleansweep*, a street trading ban implemented in the Jeppe area of Johannesburg which hosted a high concentration of Ethiopian street traders. Johannesburg is also the study site for the next three chapters (4-6) and situated within Gauteng; highlighted in chapter 2 as a province with a very high prevalence of attacks against migrant businesses in recent years. Based on qualitative interview data, the authors document the disastrous effect of *Operation Cleansweep* on the lives and livelihoods of migrant traders in Jeppe and instances of brutal and violent implementation of the ban by police. In addition, the authors highlight the indirect effects of the ban on the owners of formal shops (often non-migrants) within the locality who were reliant on the traders as customers. The following chapter, chapter 4, progresses this theme and describes strong interdependencies between the livelihood strategies of local and migrant populations in the Ivory Park area of Johannesburg, pointing to the examples of labour, capital for investment and access to goods.

In chapter 4 the reader is also reminded that international immigrants in the South African context are competing for livelihood opportunities with a local population experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment. Several practices used by migrants to sustain their livelihood can contribute to tensions between locals and migrants. For example, it is noted that migrants running Spaza shops, small informal convenience stores, often open their shops for longer hours than their local counterparts. Such strategies are described in greater depth in chapter 5 which focuses on Spaza Shop owners in the Soweto suburb of Johannesburg, and again in chapter 9 which focuses on Somali Spaza Shop owners in Cape Town. The narratives here are very clearly focused on migrants as resilient innovators. However, as is hinted in chapter 4, such strategies, agile and successful as they may be, have been linked to tensions with host communities.

In Chapter 4 the authors also note that whilst migrant Spaza shop owners create jobs, these are predominantly filled by others from the same origin community as the owner rather than South

Africans. To some extent this links to ideas discussed in Chapter 6 which focuses on the Chinese immigrant community in Johannesburg. The chapter is based on survey data and demonstrates the agility of Chinese business owners, achieved in part through the strong connections this group have to each other and to communities in China, known as *Guanxi* networks. However there is also evidence that such networks can lead to very inward-facing behaviour amongst the group. Thus these chapters highlight the resilience of migrant groups, often in the face of discriminatory treatment; but also describe the factors which could contribute to tensions with host communities.

Chapter 7 focuses on the migration-decision making process amongst Cameroonians living in the city of Durban. The focus on Cameroonians is an interesting one as this group have actively decided to migrate south, rather than north towards North Africa, the Middle East and Europe which are not further geographically. Whilst the majority of participants did not originally plan to enter the informal sector, those who migrated with entrepreneurial ambitions viewed South Africa as a land of greater opportunities than other destinations. Chapter 10 focuses on the role of social networks in the decisions of African migrants living in Cape Town. Rather than showing a heavy reliance on networks, the authors' data documents the independence and self-sufficiency of many migrants in the initial move and start of trading. However the success of enterprises once established was very closely linked to assistance from networks, with the most important group being others living in South Africa from the same origin community, highlighting the supportive relationships which exist between migrants.

Chapter 8 examines the circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers in Cape Town's informal economy and is the only chapter to explicitly focus on forced migrants, although this group do appear amongst the research participants in several other chapters. The particular challenges of having to spend potential trading time visiting government offices to fulfil the bureaucratic requirements of asylum seekers and refugees as well as the emotional trauma of the circumstances of their migration are discussed alongside many of the same challenges of discrimination against migrants discussed in other chapters. An additional unique feature of this chapter is that it includes an explicit focus on gendered experiences of migration and delves into differences in the lives and opportunities of migrant men and women. Whilst women have always been involved in migration, the trend towards an increasing female participation in migration in Africa means analysing the role of gender in migration experiences is an important contribution. The interview data presented in the chapter particularly highlighted that women's livelihood strategies are heavily influenced by encouragement (or opposition) from family and that men and women are clustered in different occupations, with women tending to be engaged in less secure means of making a living than men.

To some extent chapter 11, *The Malayisha Industry and the Transnational Movement of Remittances of Zimbabwe*, can be linked to the changing gender composition of immigrant communities. The chapter describes how an informal industry, known as the *Malayisha* Industry, emerged to facilitate the movement of remittances in all forms, but particularly foodstuffs, to the families of Zimbabwean migrants across the border. As such, it is an example of an informal industry which is explicitly supported by a migrant population. After 2008, when foodstuffs became more readily available in Zimbabwe, the economic case for sending food rather than money was significantly weakened and this informal industry was forced to adapt. The authors of the chapter describe how one of the ways individuals working in the *Malayisha* industry maintained their business has been to transport the children of migrant mothers working in South Africa between extended family in Zimbabwe and visits

to their mothers in school holidays. Thus the industry is catering for the changing nature of family life as a greater proportion of women are engaged in migration.

The final empirical chapter, chapter 12, also focuses less on migrants living in South Africa and working in the informal sector, and instead focuses on informal traders who operate across borders using survey data collected at border posts. The chapter's findings highlight that despite the often negative image of this group, they play an important role in the South African economy, as goods are often purchased in the formal sector and traders use the public transport network, as well as a very significant role in poverty alleviation in neighbouring countries, where the goods are sold in the informal sector. The very final chapter, chapter 13, is a review of policies relevant to migrants' engagement in the informal sector. It documents many of the contradictions in current and recent policies, but also makes recommendations for a future policy regime which could harbour the talents of migrant communities to benefit both South Africa *and* migrants and their origin communities.

The overarching themes of this volume include the resilience of international migrant populations working in the informal sector in South Africa, the positive contributions such migrants make to their destination communities and the often contradictory, discriminatory and short-sighted policy response of South African authorities. Whilst emphasising the willingness of many migrant groups to integrate and exchange skills with locals, there are also hints at the underlying reasons for the tensions surrounding migrants in South Africa including their relative economic success (albeit through innovation and hard work). The strengths of the volume include the breadth of origin countries, destination communities, types of migration experience and types of interactions with the informal labour market covered. Collectively, the evidence presented in this volume illustrates the diversity of experiences of international migrants engaged in the informal sector in South Africa and as such make a unique contribution to an otherwise scarce academic knowledge base. The material is compiled in an accessible style and is therefore a useful resource for university teaching. The volume also lends itself for use as evidence to affect policy change: *Mean Streets* presents a compelling case for shifting towards a policy regime on migration and the informal sector with a more developmental focus.

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