

# Inequality Studies from the Global South

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## BOOK SYNOPSIS

This book offers an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to thinking about inequality, and to understanding how inequality is produced and reproduced in the global South.

Without the safety net of the various Northern welfare states, inequality in the global South is not merely a socio-economic problem, but an existential threat to the social contract that underpins the democratic state and society itself. Only a response that is firmly grounded in the context of the global South can hope to address this problem.

This collection brings together scholars from across the global South to address broad thematic areas such as the conceptual and methodological challenges of measuring inequality; the political economy of inequality; inequality in work, households and the labour market; and inequalities in land, spaces and cities. The book concludes by suggesting alternatives for addressing inequality in the global South and around the world.

The pioneering ideas and theories put forward by this volume make it essential reading for students and researchers of global inequality across the fields of sociology, economics, law, politics, global studies and development studies.

## EXTRACT

### **The Crisis of Social Reproduction in Petty Commodity Production and Large Scale Mining: A Southern Perspective on Gender Inequality by Dr Hibist Wendemu Kassa**

The increasing concentration of women in the informal sector, in the aftermath of economic liberalisation, has drawn attention to deepening gender inequality in the global South. While the persistence of the gender segmented nature of the labour market is widely recognised, the challenge has been understanding the manner that the intersection between production and reproduction is both ‘...cause and consequence’ of gender inequality (Braunstein, Bouhia and Seguíno 2018: 3). Integrating the informal sector, a distinctive feature of the global South, provides a better understanding of how social reproduction is integral to the accumulation process (Mezzadri, 2019).

This chapter explores how the erosion of social infrastructure, shrinking formal sector employment and pervasiveness of precarious work has had direct bearing on the emergence of non-formal mining<sup>1</sup> operations in Africa. It draws attention to how the state has essentially left a gap in terms of social provisioning but also in providing support for petty commodity producers and petty capitalists. These

circumstances do not only have bearing on petty commodity production and petty capitalist mining operations, but also on Large Scale Mining (LSM) operations. The latter are developing policy innovations in the form of public private partnerships (PPPs) in response to the gap left by the state. I suggest that the above has had a bearing on the contradictory manner that social reproduction and production relations reproduce gender inequality in the cases investigated in this study. The chapter draws on empirical evidence from Obuasi, a mining town in Ghana, and KwaThema a township in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

The challenges with formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining are discussed in Kassa (2018) *Formalising Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining: Problems, Contradictions and Possibilities in The Future of Mining in South Africa: Sunrise or Sunset?*. Editor Salimah Valiani. Johannesburg: Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection.

## ENDNOTES

1. I deploy the concept non-formal to capture part of the complexity surrounding categorisation of these operations. Particularly in Obuasi where non-formal operations are criminalised can also include financiers who hold licenses in other areas.
2. The chapter draws on empirical data from a broader PhD study on the political economy of artisanal and small-scale mining which compares cases in Ghana and South Africa. **NA**