

Street Economies in the Urban Global South

I

Introduction

Street Economies in the Urban Global South

**Karen Tranberg Hansen, Walter E. Little,
and B. Lynne Milgram**

When a young fruit and vegetable vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, a small city in central Tunisia, on December 17, 2010, he ignited demonstrations that helped topple the country's autocratic ruler (Fahim 2011). The volatility of the economy of the street helps explain his desperate act: he might have conducted business without a permit, city officials confiscated his goods, they even slapped him, and, meanwhile, his debt grew, making him unable to bribe officials to overlook his vending. In fact, changing combinations of circumstances like these give street economies their ambiguous nature and complicate the explanatory power of worn-out analytical dichotomies like public–private, illegal–legal, and informal–formal.

Focusing on economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics of street economies across the urban Global South,¹ this volume showcases the embeddedness of street economies with cultural practices and norms shaping vendors' life worlds and their spatial and organizational shifts in conflict with, or accommodation to, regulatory efforts at different levels of society. The street economies we showcase are fueled by socioeconomic and political changes influenced by market-driven shifts in postsocialist Vietnam, a struggling democracy in the Philippines, former command economies in Africa, and previous authoritarian regimes in Latin America.

This volume differs from recent works (Bhowmik 2010; Brown 2006c; Cross and Morales 2007), some of which center on policy and advocacy, because it focuses on the Global South and the recent global conjuncture of profound politicoeconomic changes and their sociospatial consequences. At the turn of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century, the street economies we describe here were experiencing far-ranging transformations that make the very recent past a unique moment for analysis. For although contestations over public space have a long history, we argue, the contemporary dynamics that drive them have changed, namely, the recent conjuncture of neoliberal economic policies with unprecedented urban growth in the Global South. At the local level, diverse sociospatial processes are unfolding in the wake of urban economic restructuring on a global scale guided by international development institutions and concurrent development projects coordinated by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This economic and political environment shapes how vendors sell and organize, and it helps give rise to new conceptions of civil society.

THE URBAN GLOBAL SOUTH AND STREET ECONOMIES

The unprecedented urban growth in the Global South at present and predicted in the future takes place against a demographic and economic backdrop that challenges livelihoods in several ways. The rapidly growing cities in the Global South are divided along lines that in many places are accentuating and extending long-existing polarizations in new ways (UN-Habitat 2011). When combined with socioeconomic and political inequality, divisions along lines of age and gender have sociospatial exclusionary effects. Such processes are affecting young people particularly adversely because almost everywhere in the Global South, they compose a very large segment of these growing urban populations. What is more, these processes are unfolding at the same time as urban space is becoming reconfigured in at least two interconnected ways. One of them involves private or foreign investments that are changing conventional land values. The second is exemplified by new urban master plans that may include multiple-lane ring roads, face-lifted city centers for tourism consumption, shopping malls with upscale entertainment centers, high-rise hotels, and gated communities for the very rich. These new topographies of inclusion and exclusion define large proportions of urban residents such as the workers in the street as out of place in new spectral urban politics (De Boeck 2011). But while street vendors may appear not to be part of the new urban master plans, they have not been evicted. In fact, turning space into

a resource, street vendors are probably the most conspicuous urban economic actors throughout the Global South.

Street economies are livelihoods that are practiced on the street and in urban public space—for example, on sidewalks, in office corridors, in aisles of public markets, around train and bus stations, and in vacant spaces where vendors sell fruits and vegetables, prepared foodstuffs, drinks, handicrafts, toiletries, items of hardware, pirated music CDs, new and secondhand clothes, shoes, books, and many other goods and services. These vendors set up temporary stalls in urban public spaces and move around with their goods, changing locations, strategies, and commodities, depending on the level of surveillance. The street economy serves the vast majority of urban populations in the rapidly growing cities of the Global South by providing basic commodities and services at affordable prices in convenient locations to residents with limited means.

Because street economy livelihoods frequently are the bane of city administrations and occasionally are the target of development initiatives by NGOs, the street economy is not bounded by the street but forms an integral part of urban life in general and is shaped by the rules and regulations that govern it. Relations between vendors and regulatory agencies are not always and everywhere hostile. Some cities have pro-vendor policies, and vendors and politicians may depend on each other for protection and votes. In other settings, vendors become their own government. Vendors may organize themselves into associations based on the goods they sell or on their selling locations, and some vendor associations form broader umbrella federations. In both instances, such collective organization enables vendors to better advocate for their access to city streets for business and their rights to socioeconomic and political participation as urban citizens. Yet, several problems beset vendors' efforts to develop institutional linkages. Some organizational strategies trap them in clientilistic relations with power holders; others are short-lived or fragment into opportunistic survival networks.

Urban authorities intent on ridding streets of vendors, markets, and shoppers who contribute to congestion and disorder have occasionally formed alliances with NGOs in programs to incorporate informal vendors into the formal economy. In cities throughout the Global South, municipal administrations, NGOs, and vendors have become embroiled in confrontations varying from the forceful removal of vendors by the police, riots, and public demonstrations by vendors to mutual suspicion among city officials, NGOs, and vendors. Such embroilments have contributed to the rise of vendor-based New Social Movements, some of them with transnational

participation (Butcher and Velayutham 2009; Lindell 2010c). In the current global economic recession, especially since 2008, these political and economic phenomena will only be exacerbated, raising key questions for scholarship and policy formation and implementation.

Above all, streets are multifunctional spaces whose changing resource environments—buildings, commodities, street-savvy economic and social practices, and rules and regulations—both enable and restrict the livelihoods of female and male street vendors of different ages and backgrounds. Depending on the dominant sociocultural norms, the street as a place for vending is distinctly gendered, as in Lusaka, Zambia, where male mobile vendors far outnumber women. Focusing on the street, literally or not, connects our preoccupation with economic practices to the social and cultural dimensions of urban life in a more general sense. In this view, street economies link micro and macro processes and their variable interaction, as well as their politics. Joshua Barker identifies the broader problematic in research on street life: “the street is a terrain for creativity and a starting place for democratic or oppositional politics, or it is a terrain pre-structured by political, legal and economic forces that reinforce existing social hierarchies and patterns of exclusion” (2009:156). The contributions to this volume demonstrate vividly how changing, context-dependent forces affect this problematic. They also illustrate that rules and regulations frequently exist on the books but rarely are successfully implemented. Instead, when regulatory authorities continually fail to manage street activities, vendors may set up their own management and governance strategies. In short, street vending conveys many creative potentials yet is almost everywhere volatile, subject to the vicissitudes of everyday life and government politics.

RECENT POLITICOECONOMIC GLOBAL CONJUNCTURES

In most of the cities in the Global South that we discuss in this volume, the 1980s and 1990s were characterized by neoliberal structural adjustment reforms advocated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and aimed at fiscal restraint while encouraging foreign investment and private enterprise under the aegis of market forces. The increased poverty rates such programs generated in many places have been addressed in the most recent development approach of the World Bank and the IMF in the so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), now pursued in several countries in the South. Some of the adverse effects of fiscal restraint, for example, in education and health, are being relieved, and poverty reduction is expected to result from economic growth

of selected sectors with investment potential. Although these programs contain few explicit concerns with urban employment and vulnerable parts of the labor force like women and youth, they hail entrepreneurship and self-employment as avenues toward poverty reduction.

The PRSP approach is tied up with reforming corruption through new accountancy and budget-keeping practices and a process of political and economic decentralization. Ideally, in such programs, municipalities should operate independently from central governments in decentralized governance structures composed of various local-level participatory stakeholders. Yet, the involvement of supra- and international-level agencies with governance practices impinges on the role of the state and other regulatory agencies, blurring lines of authority and unhinging power flows. Because of the limited resources available for local-level development in many countries in the South, decentralization programs rarely operate smoothly but rather draw on existing power constellations, in which vendors rarely get the opportunity to speak in their own voice.

Much current economic development discourse is replete with notions of self-employment and entrepreneurship as solutions to widespread poverty. Yet, the observations we present in this volume provide far less base for optimism than the view expressed in a recent work on street entrepreneurs with worldwide coverage. Characterizing the present as a “postmodern” economic/political system, John Cross and Alfonso Morales suggest that “street commerce is often seen as a source of growth and flexibility” (2007:2). By contrast, we are struck by the many constraints that circumscribe the actors in the street economy across the Global South, hampering their ability to break through their economic marginalization in social and legal terms (Lindell 2010c). Indeed, in this volume, we note not less, but increasing, antagonism between vendors and regulatory agencies. Some repressive regimes have been extraordinarily heavy-handed and physically violent against vending in public space (Kamete 2008). We have the impression that street vendors themselves would rather not sell in the streets, if they had a choice, but instead would prefer to do something else, a conventional job. In fact, we found in many places that local-level discourse does not support the widespread development ideal that everybody is or can be an entrepreneur. As this volume demonstrates, small-scale economic actors are well aware of obstacles toward expansion, and, more striking, today’s youth generation rarely wishes to follow in the footsteps of its vendor parents.

More and more urban residents in the Global South make a living on the street because they are faced with weak or ineffective state and local

governments, no social safety net, and few opportunities for secure employment. Not only is the street economy the first resort for people with few marketable skills, but it is also often the last resort for formerly employed persons who have lost private or public sector jobs due to economic retrenchment. Their economic ventures connect with the overall economy in complicated ways, not always licitly, and crisscross public and private space. This is why it may make constructive explanatory sense to approach informality as an urban organizing logic rather than as a specific sector of the economy (Roy 2005:148). The pervasiveness of street vending in a time of economic liberalization and globalization testifies to the interpenetration of formal and informal economic practices. The activities that states consider legitimate (“legal”) and the pursuits that vendors view as acceptable (“licit”) raise questions about taken-for-granted understandings of legality (Van Schendel and Abraham 2005:4–5). What is more, street vendors’ organizational efforts across formal-informal and legal-illegal divides provide evidence of alignments between groups of workers who are not conventionally linked and whose interests may conflict or become reconciled.

STREET VENDING AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Markets and vendors are a foundational domain of anthropology’s economic inquiry (Bohannan and Dalton 1962; Geertz 1963; Plattner 1985). The role of market trade in the sociopolitical integration of complex society and the rise of urban civilization has been extensively studied, yet the persistence and growth of street economies, particularly street vending, have received far less attention (Smart 1989) until recently. This volume takes up critical issues in the contemporary relationship between vendors in the street economy and agents of the state in the context of ongoing global economic transformations. Drawing on personal expertise in socio-cultural anthropology, human geography, and development, the contributors explore several theoretical issues, including (1) how culture, power, and difference are mutually shaped and reconfigured in the public sphere; (2) how changing from a politicoeconomic approach to an analysis of cultural politics within the context of governance yields insights into activism and emerging conceptualizations of public space and citizenship; (3) how commodified cultural identities go beyond simple touristic consumption practices; and (4) how street vendors participate in social movements that are part of larger, transnational political and economic forces. Through ethnographically informed case studies, contributors cast fresh light on the complex array of livelihood decisions, resistance strategies, and mobilization practices street vendors pursue.

Local authorities, national governments, and international agencies often place limitations on urban informal livelihoods in efforts to modernize and globalize (Elyachar 2005). Vendors, because of their frequently illegal status in urban public space, are extraordinarily vulnerable in their attempts to earn a living, protect their goods from confiscation, and avoid fines, prosecution, and imprisonment. They have developed a variety of strategies to evade, circumvent, or negotiate restrictions on their trade. As we noted earlier, some have organized into trade-specific groups and networks and established transnational umbrella associations. StreetNet International, for example, a South Africa-based NGO established in 2002, supports organizations of street vendors, informal market vendors, and hawkers, with branches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Inspired by a class-based model, StreetNet seeks to create alliances between labor and social movements rather than to focus on micro-enterprises and the NGO development sector. Such alliances provide new approaches to appropriating public space and pursuing political action that cut across established divisions.

By examining how street economies are embedded in local systems of regulation, cultural practices, and norms that shape the life worlds of street vendors, the rich comparative and cross-cultural perspectives provided in this volume raise several important questions: How do street vendors defend and improve their livelihoods? How do wider global urban economic transformations affect them, and how, in the context of these transformations, do their actions shape urban space? What are the relations among street vendors, NGOs, and state and municipal institutions, and how do these relations influence urban politics?

Our discussions of broad debates about informality, urban development policy (Ramsamy 2006), and the effects of globalization on economic life in the Global South cast important light on the interrelationship between culture and economy in some of the world's fastest-growing cities. Above all, individual contributors identify processes by which differentially positioned vendors act on the sites and ways in which globalization plays out, not simply by responding to such processes but by actively engaging them and, in effect, redefining civil society.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In order to explain the diverse life and cultural worlds of street vendors, the contributors explore several aspects of the street economy within local-to-transnational contexts. These aspects include considering the composition of central actors in gender, generational, class, and ethnic

terms and identifying their protagonists, including clients, patrons, police, urban and state authorities, and international regulatory agencies such as the World Bank and the European Union, whose policy agendas affect the conduct of informal economic activity. Some of the contributors focus on the nature and scope of organizational activism from the perspective of vendors and NGOs. In terms of methodology, the authors describe the circumstances within which they conducted their field research, and they firmly ground their analyses of street economy practices by documenting the connections between local everyday life events and transnational processes.

At grassroots and international levels, and between them, are emergent economies and politics that invite scholarly inquiry into the significance of street vending (Brown, Lyons, and Dankoco 2010). The contraction of the global economy that has contributed to the expansion of informal economic activities in the Global South, as the urban poor seek out livelihoods and reconceptualize ways to organize (Edelman 2001; Tostesen, Tvedten, and Vaa 2001), is making nuanced analyses of street vending even more important to policy makers and social scientists studying economic and political phenomena.

Ray Bromley's (chapter 2) overview anchors the volume chapters by exploring the social, economic, and political functions of streets as public spaces and the changing ideas about the role street vending has played in the economy and labor market. Building on his long-term research of urban planning and street trade, Bromley outlines that over the past half-century, descriptions of street vending by scholars and policy makers have moved from depicting this activity as folkloric, temporary, and essentially outmoded—a superfluous occupation soon to disappear—to resituating it as mainstream, growing in worldwide significance, and supplying much needed jobs, goods, and services. Because street vending does not easily fit into traditional models of communist, modernist, or capitalist development, Bromley argues, its persistence and proliferation have contributed to a major rethink of development alternatives, turning attention to questions of social justice and environmental sustainability. He maintains that any viable future for our rapidly growing cities depends on finding a balance among citizens' rights to services and participation in governance, livelihood, mobility, safety, security, and a pleasing environment realized in multipurpose public spaces.

Gracia Clark (chapter 3), drawing on her more than thirty years of research with Kumasi market women in Ghana, provides a historical analysis of Kumasi street vending practices with a focus on food provisioning. Clark investigates how street traders have negotiated or resisted the Ghana

government's ongoing local-to-national interventions to ban this work and the driving forces that fashion the constant reshaping and perseverance of trading practices. Focusing on the city of Kumasi, she identifies the disjuncture between the government's marginalization of street economy work and the lived reality that vendors' provisioning activities are already integrated into the local economy, fulfilling urbanites' demands and needs. Clark's fine-grained historical analysis traces the integral role vending plays in the relationships of marriage and parenthood for the predominant Asante ethnic group and the historical timelines of hostile government interventions and vendor resistance. She explores alternative explanatory frameworks to make sense of apparent contradictions in policy making, implementation, and impact. Clark concludes that the continuing denial of legitimacy to street trading precludes its potential to enable vendors' upward economic mobility and belies its integration into the fabric of daily life for Kumasi residents and for Ghanaians more generally.

Karen Tranberg Hansen and Wilma Nchito's (chapter 4) research in Lusaka, Zambia's capital, focuses on the long-term interconnections between street vendors and formal market traders. Regarding mobility as street vendors' main advantage, the authors argue that vendors' occupation of locations with high pedestrian traffic, including some market locations, and their reluctance to move beyond the city's Central Business District are tactics of resistance. Specifically, the authors investigate the channels through which vendors operationalized in-between spaces for business within the New Soweto Market, Lusaka's newest ultramodern market, when the market's formal opening was delayed. Displaced street vendors turned the inside of the new market into the street, occupying open space in front of formal shops. One result of vendors' actions was to renew tensions between marketers, that is, the people with stands and shops and the vendors, who need to be highly mobile. Yet, during the impasse, even some shop owners did not occupy their shops but worked from the open space in front, or both. The authors suggest that in the process of such an "interiorizing" of the street, the social attributes that make street vending a lively enterprise also play out in this changed setting. Resonating with the inquiries of other chapters on the changing dynamics of space relations, Hansen and Nchito's Lusaka case study highlights the context-specific changes in spatial regulation that have accompanied restructuring of Zambia's economy in the wake of economic liberalization since the transition from a socialist command to a market economy in 1991.

In a related street-vendor movement from street to formal market, Lynne Milgram's chapter 5, situated in Baguio City in the northern

Philippines, charts how competition among vendors for street locations has prompted some sellers to occupy alternative spaces (aisles) inside Baguio City's public market—the regional hub for fresh produce. Milgram argues that the early success of vendors' relocated businesses within the market demonstrates that consumers want their trade and that it is already incorporated into the city's economy. She maintains that female ambulant vendors' claims to rights to their Baguio City market spaces not legally sanctioned for commercial use encourage us to reconsider categories of space use and legal/illegal practice. Indeed, Milgram reports that the Baguio City Market management collects daily rental fees from these vendors, allowing them to occupy their illegal locations, and some permanent market traders expand their businesses by selling products in the same in-between sites. Like street vendors in Turner's Hanoi study and those in South Africa explored by Lindell and her collaborators, Baguio City street sellers activate business spaces that are subject to conflicting claims by making personalized agreements across market sectors, forging uneasy alliances with city officials, and organizing associations to advocate their collective rights. Milgram concludes that female vendor actions that straddle notions of what is legal and illegal point to alternative and transformative uses of space, facilitating the viable livelihoods they demand and deserve.

In a case study about street vendor political subjectivities in Antigua, Guatemala, Walter Little (chapter 6) draws on twenty years of experience to describe transformations in the ways vendors view themselves as economic and political actors. Unlike the vendors discussed by Milgram and by Hansen and Nchito, mobile Maya vendors who sell handicrafts to tourists do not see formal marketplaces as sites to develop and maintain sales. They are keenly aware of what their primary clientele is interested in purchasing, from whom, and where. This puts them, ideally, on the Spanish colonial-style streets, but also right where the municipal government does not want them. Little argues that in their self-recognition that they are part of the tourism spectacle for tourists, vendors are gaining small ways to resist municipal regulations and police seizures of their merchandise. As in Seligmann's discussion of street vending in Cusco, Peru, the relationship between vendors and the municipality in Antigua is contentious. In effect, Maya vendors are not recognized as an important part of Antigua's tourism economy, much less as part of the touristic landscape the tourists expect to see. Much like the vendors described by Turner in Hanoi and by Lindell and her collaborators in South Africa, Maya vendors find themselves struggling against street vending bans, forced expulsions, and heavy fines. With limited success through formal collective organizing, they have

nevertheless come to better recognize how integral they are to the national and international representations of Antigua, which has emboldened them against local law enforcement and municipal officers.

Drawing on twenty years of field research in Cusco, Peru, Linda Seligmann (chapter 7) argues that municipal authorities' current promotion of tourism as a significant source of revenue has resulted in dramatic shifts in the use of urban space that do not necessarily coincide with resident, tourist, or vendor expectations and needs. To realize the potential of tourism for the city's economy, city officials have removed vendors from the city center, formalized and individuated them according to the type of commodity they sell (crafts, fresh produce, souvenirs), and moved vendors, both ambulatory and those who work from makeshift stalls, to permanent market spaces in high-rise buildings with improved hygienic and electricity services but located far away from the city center. Seligmann demonstrates that such development initiatives have widened the fissures between more and less established craft and food vendors, in particular, through licensing mechanisms differentiated by locus. Like other contributors, she analyzes the ways in which vendors actively take advantage of and/or resist these policies that have affected their access to and use of space, and she charts the ongoing challenges vendors face with the government's neoliberal agendas. Seligmann concludes by identifying the paradox that has emerged with the Cusco government's urban development initiative. Although most vendors have not benefited economically in any substantial way from formalization and relocation, increasing the number of stalls in the new buildings and regrouping enterprises by type may, in fact, prove lucrative to some sellers.

Sarah Turner's (chapter 8) exploration of street economy trades in Hanoi, Vietnam, introduces a different dynamic by exploring tensions that arise when a socialist regime incorporates neoliberal economic practices. Turner focuses on the ramifications of the city government's 2008 ban on street vending activities in key downtown city streets and in public spaces around hospitals, schools, and bus and train stations. The vast majority of street vendors targeted in this ban were rural migrants who used the city's streets as a setting for their only alternative livelihood. Also pursuing a living via street vending are long-time Hanoi residents who feel fully entitled to their small slice of public space. Turner demonstrates that by carefully negotiating spatial routines, drawing on social capital, and negotiating power relations with state officials, street vendors in both groups continue to trade on the streets of Hanoi, circumventing the ban and defending their "counter-spaces." Distinguishing between fixed-stall and itinerant sellers, she dispels

any idea of a homogenous street-vending population. Her study highlights the importance of recognizing such heterogeneity among vendors when she concludes that Hanoi residents operating fixed stalls have maneuvered themselves into working relationships with officials that to some degree are tenable and resilient whereas itinerant street vendors remain in a far more precarious position. Turner's Hanoi case study, like the other chapters, highlights political context and heterogeneity in order to identify the variable dynamics of street economy practices.

Suzanne Scheld and Lydia Siu's (chapter 9) investigation of street economy practices in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, focuses on racism and racialized discourse among vendors and marketers. Exploring how racism is initiated and perpetuated by immigrant Chinese storeowners and native Senegalese street vendors, they analyze the extent to which vendors are advantaged and/or disadvantaged by such race-based communication. Scheld and Siu note that for the past ten years, Chinese traders have been immigrating to Dakar and several other African countries to open small shops that offer clothing, home decorations, and other inexpensive Chinese goods. Although the increasing number of Chinese traders in Dakar has created competition for Senegalese importers, it has also opened opportunities for Senegalese street vendors who sell Chinese goods on the sidewalks in front of Chinese shops. Their co-habitation and interdependent relationship, the authors argue, have generated a discourse debating the "problem" of Chinese trading in Dakar—a discussion that carries distinct racial undertones. Whereas Senegalese vendors use economic arguments to question whether the government should permit Chinese trading in Dakar while African traders struggle to survive, the Chinese merchants talk of Senegalese street vendors in clearly race-based terms. Scheld and Liu demonstrate how racialized discourse "in the street" provides evidence of the globalized nature of the city's localized street economy.

Like the work of Scheld and Liu, Ilda Lindell, Maria Hedman, and Kyle-Nathan Verboomen's (chapter 10) case study of World Cup 2010 in South Africa showcases the global dynamic of locally based street economy practices. The authors argue that according to municipal authorities in the host cities of Port Elizabeth and Durban, mounting a mega-event such as World Cup 2010 would generate economic benefits for everyone. The reality proved to be very different for people working in the street economy, as evictions, relocations, and restrictions caused many vendors to lose their livelihoods or restricted them from benefiting economically from the event. The authors argue that although street vendors were promised a voice in how their services could be incorporated into those offered to city visitors

during this event, in fact, vendors' informal activities were treated as a nuisance to be eradicated and as an unhealthy deviation from internationally accepted standards of modern, tidy, urban centers. In some cases, new by-laws were introduced that criminalized street vending. Charting the different experiences and resistance strategies of street vendors in Port Elizabeth and Durban, the authors document how vendors formed associations and aligned themselves with international civil society organizations to advocate for their collective demands. Vendors in Durban were more successful in their collective actions than those in Port Elizabeth because the former gained broad-based support from the city's substantive civil society organizations. The authors conclude that vendors achieved some of their goals by local-to-transnational collective organizing but the results varied because of the different place-based politics of the two cities.

Florence Babb's (chapter 11) concluding commentary invites a reading across and beyond the collected ethnographic essays, addressing such themes as how street economy workers navigate economic and political marginalities and how to understand processes of formal and informal work. She considers contributors' attention to social differentiation, gendered and racialized identities in street economies, and the often fraught relationships between street vendors and states. She underscores the quickening pace of change in street economies that has come with rapid urbanization and globalization. Notwithstanding the changing currents in the urban Global South and in the scholarship on street economies, Babb suggests that it is important to trace intellectual genealogies and to recognize precursors to current work. She points to significant conceptual work in an earlier generation's scholarship and describes how it influenced her own thinking in the 1970s and 1980s on marketers and street vendors in Andean Peru. Even so, Babb concludes that more recent postcolonial and poststructural critiques have added a much needed dimension to the discussion, notable here in the work of volume contributors. Most fundamental, Babb argues, we are better positioned today to raise the vexing question of who has the right to make a living on the streets when informal economies reach the breaking point.

Given the uncertainty and immediacy of rapidly changing global economic circumstances and the uncertain ramifications for street economy vendors, who are working on the edge, the detailed ethnographic accounts of *Street Economies in the Urban Global South* will inform the current process of urban transformation in several ways. The contributions provide vivid accounts of the diverse experiences of street vendors in urban, globalized, social contexts by focusing on often marginalized street workers

HANSEN, LITTLE, AND MILGRAM

who describe their projects and plans. Bringing together ethnographic evidence that traces the numerous processes and factors instrumental in exacerbating the marginality and disempowerment of street economy work, the chapters simultaneously highlight individual and collective resistance by street vendors to overcome such processes. We expect that this book will make the precarious local life worlds of the street economy challenge the far too common exclusion of activities on the edge—street economy practices—from analyses of political and global market forces.

Note

1. We use the term *the Global South* in preference to *the Third World* because of the normative developmentalist associations of the latter.