

'An exemplary study of social class and its ramifications for the lives of people [...] It should be read [...] by anyone interested in the problem of class in the contemporary world.'

– Erik Olin Wright, Vilas Distinguished Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, President of the American Sociological Association

Soweto, South Africa's most populous and politically important township, is in many ways the microcosm of the country's stratification of extremes. This impeccably researched study offers an in-depth look at the phenomenon of class and its ramifications from the point of view of urban South Africa. How do Sowetans understand class and how do they locate themselves and each other within the broad divisions of class schema? What are the markers and indicators that influence their perceptions of class and does the terminology of class affect these perceptions through dilution into indigenous languages?

Emerging out of a research project conducted under the auspices of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, this rich study presents an analysis of more than 2000 questionnaires and offers insights gleaned over a six-year period. Setting out class structure and class identity in the context of South Africa's extremes of unemployment and inequality, this book speaks not only to the daily life of Soweto residents living in the most unequal major city in the world, but also to the urban condition of the global South.

'This is an incredibly insightful and groundbreaking account of class structure and identity in South Africa's biggest township.'

– Trevor Ngwane, sociologist and activist, Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and Anti-Privatisation Forum

 UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL PRESS
www.ukznpress.co.za

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