



# Securing Livelihoods: Informal Economy Practices and Institutions

*Isabelle Hillenkamp, Frederic Lapeyre, Andrea Lemaitre*

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Far from the vision of popular actors in the popular economy as reactionary and archaic, stubbornly resisting any move towards change, this book's overall aim is to contribute to a broadening and deepening of our understanding of the logic and socio-economic practices of those operating in the informal economy. It focuses on the vulnerabilities of these participants, resulting from high exposure to different risks combined with low social protection, and on the interactions between vulnerability and poverty. It considers security of livelihoods as the guiding principle for multiple practices in the informal economy. Thirteen studies, based on careful analyses of empirical data in different contexts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, contribute to this multidisciplinary discussion.

This book describes how people develop their own strategies to solve their problems through the use of interpersonal networks, associations, and other community-based arrangements. Moreover, it shows that informal economy actors systematically reposition themselves vis-a-vis the State, markets, international, and national policies with the aim of enhancing their economic and social security, and they may do this either individually or collectively. The book emphasizes how adaptability of the informal economy can be influenced by such factors as the macroeconomic context, access to financial, technological, and information resources, infrastructure, social protection schemes, and the institutional environment within which adaptations occur. Case studies stress the need to reformulate questions relating to policy intervention based on a more thorough understanding of the perspective of informal economy actors.

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