Jua Kali Strategies for Socio-Economic Change in Nairobi

Abstract:
The term jua kali which literally means hot sun in Swahili is used to describe informal micro and small enterprises in Kenya. These businesses have remarkably persisted in the space economy of Kenyan cities and rural areas. This has occurred in spite of problems such as lack of capital, low level of technology, lack of formal contracts and small scale of operation. This paper outlines the strategies used by jua kali business to persist and extend. They include active legitimization of jua kali identity through lingua and discourse, ordinariness, use of social relations and associations as a platform for social organization, learning processes and gate keeping.