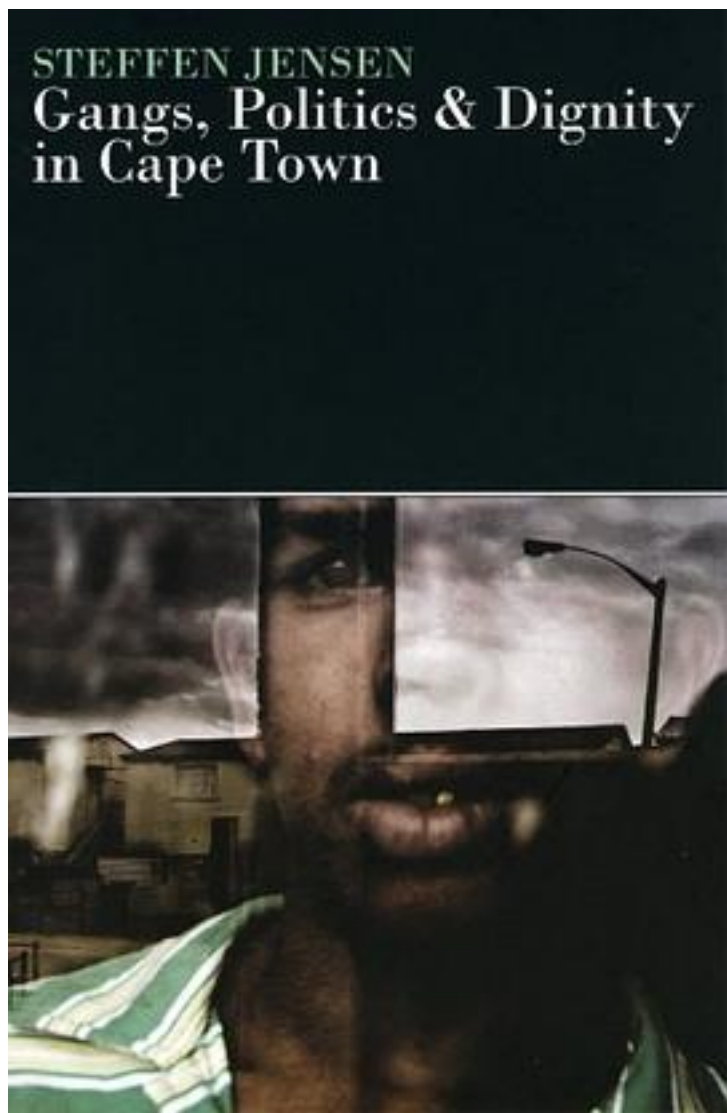


Gangs, Politics & Dignity in Cape Town



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After nearly fifty years of rigid segregation, the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the African National Congress's relatively peaceful assumption of power in 1994 were hailed as a miracle. But a few years into the transition, this miracle appeared increasingly threatened by crime and violence. In this compelling ethnography, Steffen Jensen focuses on a single township in Cape Town in order to explore how residents have negotiated the intersecting forces of political change and violent crime. Jensen spent years closely observing the actions of residents both male and female, young and old, as well as gang members, police officers, and local government officials. The poisonous legacy of apartheid also comes under Jensen's lens, as he examines the lasting effects that an official policy of racist stereotyping has had on the residents' conceptions of themselves and their neighbors. While "Gangs, Politics, and Dignity in Cape Town" brims with insights into ongoing debates over policing, gangs, and local politics, Jensen also shows how people in the townships maintain their dignity in the face of hardship and danger.

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