



# Linking Giants to Mites: A Qualitative Study on Business Linkages Between Large Firms and Small-Scale Enterprises in South Africa 2004

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## Abstract

This study examines the business linkages between large firms (giants) and small-scale enterprises (mites) in South Africa, focusing on the period from onwards. Qualitative research methods were employed, including semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Data was collected from a sample of large firms across various sectors and analysed using thematic content analysis. A significant proportion (34%) of the interviewed SMEs reported receiving material inputs from their larger business partners, with manufacturing being the most common type of input provided by giants. The study highlights that while there are substantial benefits for both large firms and small-scale enterprises in these linkages, challenges such as unequal power dynamics and limited access to resources persist. Policy recommendations include fostering a more equitable business environment where SMEs can negotiate on equal terms with larger firms and ensuring access to necessary inputs by supporting local supply chains.

**Keywords:** *Sub-Saharan, microfinance, ethnography, interfirm networks, entrepreneurship, qualitative analysis, South Africa*

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