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ARE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE 'CITY REGIONS' DEVELOPING IN SOUTH AFRICA? FORMULAIC ASPIRATIONS OR NEW IMAGINATIONS?

Abstract:

This paper examines the 'global city region' concept, as it has gained currency in a large and growing contemporary literature on urban agglomeration and economic/location cluster formation in the large cities of the developed and developing world. Following a review of this literature, the applicability of newly emerging concepts to describe the recent pattern of urban growth in African cities is tested. The discussion then turns to a review of South African cities as they experience various forms of contemporary transition, following which economic profiles of the country's 'big four' urban conurbations are offered. The international literature and the concept of 'global city region' formation is then revisited to assess the extent to which South African cities may be joining the new and recent global city region arrivals in the developing world. The paper concludes that the city that may be South Africa's best 'global' prospect, and that is most likely to approximate 'city region' status, is Johannesburg and, in particular, a spatially-quadrangular tract of land referred to as the 'urban' core of the province of Gauteng. Bibliography. [ASC Leiden abstract]

Keywords:

Global Economic Restructuring, City Regions, Localities