

PART I**SOUTH AFRICAN PLANNING SCENE****Guest editor: Marthinus S. Badenhorst****FOREWORD**

This edition of ESR&P focuses on the South African planning scene. The articles cover a wide range, starting with an overview of the socio-economic-political situation in the country, moving on to provide an overview of South Africa's metropolitan areas, followed by a discussion of growth management in the largest province and economic hub of the country and concluding with a description of post-apartheid spatial development planning. The topics hence cover a wide field. The choice was determined by two considerations. The first was simply to broaden as far as possible the exposure of readers to the South African planning situation/scene. In the second place, it was decided to keep the contributions in-house in order to celebrate, albeit in a small way, half a century of training in town and regional at the University of Pretoria which began in 1959. All the authors, with the exception of one of the co-authors, hence have close ties with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria. This further limited the selection of topics somewhat to the fields of specialisation of the respective authors and their capacity to fit the request to partake in their busy schedules. The mix of topics and end result of the papers nonetheless turned out quite satisfactory and are of such a nature that it will certainly stimulate interest in planning and other issues in South Africa.

The study by Marthinus S. Badenhorst provides an overview of South Africa to serve as a backdrop of the articles that are to follow. The paper describes the country's salient features in facts and figures in order to highlight the situation on the ground, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of society in terms of demography, education, employment, public health care, poverty, housing, crime and the economy. The golden thread running through the discussion is, regrettably, one of decline on practically all fronts. Violent crime emerged as the single most important threat to all South Africans and main reason for emigration by skilled persons. The (main) ray of light in an otherwise difficult, at times

even disheartening, situation is a resilient economy which is not only the largest on the African continent, but also the most modern and sophisticated.

In their article Elsona van Huyssteen, Cathy Meiklejohn, Maria Coetzee, Helga Goss and Mark Oranje examine the threats to metropolitan viability and resilience caused by continued spatial and economic concentration and duality. Their focus falls on the socio-economic dynamics and significance from a national viewpoint of metropolitan regions in the South African development context. The authors stress the national importance of metropolitan regions from an economic, social and political point of view and their role in the future of the country. The article argues that, as in many other countries, the agglomeration challenges facing South Africa's metropolitan regions and complications brought about by intra-metropolitan inequality are key aspects underlying the resilience of these regions. The authors go beyond a narrow focus on South African metropolitan regions as such to make a case for greater collaboration in research and knowledge-production between South Africa and Central European countries, most notably Poland, which face similar challenges and prospects.

In her article Anele Horn relates the 'story' of urban growth management in Gauteng, the wealthiest and fastest growing, but spatially by far the smallest province in the country. Her paper provides a clear analysis of the reasons for the rampant accretion on the city edge and the need to bring the 'city closer to the (mostly black) people' living on the edge. This resulted in the implementation of the Gauteng Spatial Development Framework in 2000 to serve as an instrument for addressing past imbalances and steering development towards a sustainable, equitable and economically viable future settlement pattern. To this end an urban growth management approach, 'The Gauteng Urban Edge' was adopted. Her 'story' is about the unfolding of events which in due course led to the Urban Edge gradually to erode first to become 'only a guideline' to eventually and steadily being reduced to 'just-a-line-on-a-map'.

In his paper Mark Oranje provides an overview of the post-apartheid 'experimentation', as he calls it, with national spatial development planning in South Africa. In his analysis of the different initiatives, he concludes that virtually all efforts to date reflect an anti-urban bias, and strong preference for 'balanced development' and an underlying assumption that the state has the power to direct, guide and plan economic activity across the national territory as it deems fit. Planning institutions in turn has oscillated between that of a super planning agency in 1994, followed by a period of decentralised intergovernmental planning, and most recently back to super planning agency. One of his main conclusions is that planning initiatives have had far more of a life on paper than in practice – a view that Horn in her article shares with him. Like van Huyssteen

in her study, Oranje makes a case for comparative research with countries like Poland and her neighbours.

The guest editor wishes to thank the editor of ESR&P for the invitation and opportunity to dedicate this particular issue to South African planning issues. We all hope that it will somehow lead to closer contact and cooperation between South African and European academic and planning institutions.

Marthinus S. BADENHORST*

* Marthinus S. BADENHORST, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Pretoria, South Africa, e-mail: msbaden@iafrica.com.