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The role and purpose of provincial-scale planning in post-apartheid South Africa

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2006-11-14T12:31:19Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/1704

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Abstract

With the global socio-economic restructuring, a phenomenon that has a tremendous impact of the way nation-states interact with each other, the rise of the sub-national level of government has been celebrated. From a new regionalist perspective, the region is canonised as a functional space and an arena effectively negotiate with the challenges and opportunities posed by globalisation. The region – that is the province, is well positioned to effectively translate national policies and projects into a reality. Without necessarily displacing the nation-state as a focal point for economic governance and development, the region particularly in developed countries has played a pivotal role in shaping the way societal activities are approached.

With the subsequent devolution of political power from the centre to the sub-national government, the latter has proved to be more developmental primarily in its approach to strategic development. Using New Regionalism (NR) as a launch pad, this research seeks to unravel and effectively engage with the debates around regional-scale planning. The regional-scale planning experiences from the United Kingdom (UK), Netherlands and India will be explored. Most importantly, the current role the provincial sphere in South Africa will be explored. Realising that the South African planning system is in a process of being redefined and refined, the relevance and importance of the provincial sphere in monitoring local government planning activities cannot be undermined.