

## **Development and Change in a Dynamic City Region**

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### **Abstract**

The Gauteng City Region is one of the largest cities in the world, with a population size comparable to London and Rio de Janeiro. Its development is constrained by the realities of extreme inequality and mass unemployment. Despite this, multitudes are drawn to the city region in their quest for a better life and as South Africa urbanises, Gauteng is home to a rising share of the national population. The province functions as a source of economic value for national and regional development.

Gauteng's demographic structure reflects the continuing importance of circular migration. The legacy of national and urban apartheid remains clearly inscribed in spatial structures, social relations and economic developments. Even while racial polarisation of welfare remains acute, new forms of exclusion are being constructed on the foundation of apartheid's geography. But the last twenty-five years has also been a period of dynamic and rapid change. Important successes have been registered in social policies and provision for basic needs. The quality of life has gradually improved even though various factors pose questions about the sustainability of these developments. These include a decline in per capita incomes, and huge environmental challenges that lurk ominously in the not-too-distant future.

This research paper examines key macro socio-economic trends in the Gauteng City-Region since the dawn of democracy. It draws extensively on the research work of Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) – including successive quality-of-life surveys and intensive studies of spatial dynamics. This is augmented with other sources, including StatsSA, provincial and national government data and private data providers.