

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book, *Empowerment Through Economic Transformation*, is the third in a series of volumes that arose as part of a research programme to understand the state of transformation in South Africa. The first two volumes, *Infrastructure Mandates for Change* and *Empowerment Through Service Delivery*, which were published in 2000, received a critical reception and review.

Empowerment Through Economic Transformation explores in detail the theoretical concepts around empowerment and transformation. While not exhaustive, the book largely focuses on the prospects of empowerment through the transformation of the South African economy. Through some 16 chapters written by over 15 authors drawn from a wide range of fields such as infrastructure development, public-private partnerships, spatial development corridors, South African labour market strategies, and gender and empowerment, the book argues that although at policy level there appears to be progress towards empowerment, the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy has come to substantially undermine some of the radical proposals contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was aimed at fundamental transformation.

The conclusion in this book is that there have been far-reaching changes in the political and policy-making spheres. However, the outcome of these changes is unevenly spread. The daunting task of redressing past inequality is currently being undermined by the legacy of the past, massive unemployment, lack of co-ordination between policies and programmes, and limited human and technical capacity. The negative consequences of globalisation have been added to the complex web of current challenges.

One of the critical aspects about this book is the pool of authors who hail from academia, government, research organisations and vibrant social movements. The authors all brought a rich tapestry of expertise, experience and insight, which makes this contribution a valuable collection for students of politics, economics, geography, development studies, policy analysis, sociology and political science.

Empowerment through Economic Transformation

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