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Special Economic Zones: Challenges and Opportunities for Territorial Development

Michele Pigliucci (Ed.)

7. Spatial transformation and industrial diversification through Special Economic Zones: a look at South Africa

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Giuseppe Borruso³; Massimiliano Bencardino⁴*

Abstract

This study investigates the role of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in supporting South Africa's effort to rebalance the fractured economic and urban landscape inherited from Apartheid. This role is embedded within an evolutionary trajectory that culminated in the 2014 SEZ Act, which facilitated their establishment throughout the country, including in rural and less developed areas. To this end, a descriptive approach was adopted based on the identification of 20 currently designed or proposed SEZs. Through spatial overlay, information on SEZs was then integrated with socio-economic, demographic

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and infrastructural data collected at the provincial and municipal scale. SEZs were also analyzed in relation to the settlement typology of the territories in which they are located, using the classification of the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework (MIIF). The results provide a comparative assessment of SEZs in terms of geographical distribution, performance, and coherence with development priorities articulated at different governmental levels.

Keywords

Special Economic Zones; Place-Based Industrial Policies; Territorial Disparities.



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