

African Transport Corridors: A Problem-Driven Framework for Applied Political Economy Analysis of the North-South Corridor Programme

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The present understanding of cross-border transport corridor assessment and macroscopic transit trade simulations, without demonstrating a nuanced methodology, provides a limited rhetorical construction of corridor efficiency and considers transit trade flow as a systemic, stochastic and rational choice of travel demand. Taking the African cross-border transport corridors as the main domain of study and the North-South Corridor Programme as the focus of the research, the form of the study was designed as a qualitative case study that is exploratory and descriptive in purpose. Through subjecting a thoroughly reviewed academic literature on the African transport corridors, cross-border corridor assessment, and the complex corridor-transportation ecosystem to an inductive content analysis and hermeneutical interpretation, the present research reconstructed the conceptual, systemic, and politico-historic paradigms of the African transport corridor. A problem-driven framework for applied political economy analysis was developed to reveal the spatial, political, and operational bottlenecks impeding the efficiency of the North-South Corridor Programme, i.e., the transport corridor programme endorsed by the economic development communities as the most promising corridor programme to unlock unutilized economic for the landlocked countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region and considered as the busiest multimodal transport network in terms of traffic and freight volumes. The analytical components of the study were designed with particular focus on the political geography and spatial morphology of the corridor location, transit transportation infrastructure quality, transit trade and transport regimes, and transportation governance issues with regard to the multi-country cross-border corridor management.