

Chapter 9

Infrastructure, City–Region Development, and Africa’s Territorial Spaces: Gauteng as the Exemplar

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ABSTRACT

The chapter seeks to investigate, explore, and document the management and development of infrastructure in city-regions within the context of Africa. The specific objectives guiding the chapter are to explore the significance of the city-region concept in Africa, to examine the state of and approaches to infrastructure development in selected city-regions in Africa, to assess the approaches that have been used to facilitate the success of the such city-regions as the Gauteng in South Africa with regards infrastructure development and management, and to draw the lessons and positive implications for planned infrastructure development in city-regions in Africa. Hence, the Gauteng City Region provides a good case because the city-region is of utmost significance to the local, regional and national level. Specifically, data were gathered through a desktop approach wherein various plans and city visions will be critically analyzed to have a broad understanding of the issues on the ground.

INTRODUCTION

Africa is urbanising at an unprecedented rate. According to estimates by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), approximately 90% of the 66% of the world population that is projected to be residing in urban areas by 2050 will be in Africa and Asia (UNDESA, 2014). This urbanisation process is owed to the reclassification of rural areas into urban centres, rapid population growth and rural-urban migration (Chirisa, Matamanda & Bandaiko, 2014). Interestingly, the populations tend to be soaring, particularly in the capital cities such as Kinshasa, Cairo and Lagos whose populations are now at least 10 million people, making them megacities (Sow, 2015). Interestingly, there are also a number of small urban centres which are growing rapidly, one such example is Mozambique where 16 urban centres are growing faster than Maputo and some major cities in the country (Potts, 2014). These cities attract people who believe that cities are territorial spaces of vast opportunities ready for tapping and exploitation. Many times such population growth often results in the outward spread of city space due to urban sprawl (Polidoro, de Lollo & Barros, 2012: 1011). This presents an extra burden on local authorities who have to cater for the needs of the additional population within this extended urban space.

The worst situation is when this expansion is unplanned and irregular. Were it that the extension of the cities was by peri-urban encroachment, it was going to be a different story. However, in this case, urban dwellers are shifting out from the city, due to the push factors such as higher land values and cost of living in the cities as compared to the periphery of the city. This inter-linkage between the city and its less economically developed surrounding areas explains regionalism. On the other hand, the functionality of the city to its surrounding areas, taking one particular city, or geographically located developed areas, in relationship to the periphery and the surrounding areas, the city-region concept is borne. It is thus critical to consider how the city-region helps in transforming infrastructure development with a view to promote and sustain economic growth and development of the region. Nonetheless, Greenberg (2010) argues that both physical and social infrastructure is required to sustain a city-region. However achieving this sustained growth is never easy considering that many times, the city regions emerge without commensurate socio-economic development. Therefore, this chapter examines how infrastructure development contributes to the transformation of city regions as well as how city regions relate with infrastructure growth. Specifically, the Gauteng city region is used as the exemplar of city-region and infrastructure development with other cases drawn from Harare, Cairo and Kampala, which help to support the discussion proffered.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Growth Pole theory explains how a city may develop and expand, from a relatively small entity into a larger complex unit. From its inception as a concept, the Growth pole theory has been based on the industrial era spatial economics. Perroux (1950; 1955) argue that growth does not occur everywhere all at once; rather, it begins as points or nodes of economic significance and influence. However, it seems the theory fails to proffer adequate explanation on the initial triggers of development in these nodal areas (Darwent, 1969). Rather, the theory explains that with time, due to agglomeration of economies, development is spread outwards, from these nodal points to the peripheries. The general assumption is that the spreading out is a reaction to the vibrancy of the nodal point. Therefore, the periphery is engulfed up by the whirlwind of development. Consequently, considering different circumstances, growth

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