

The political economy of economic infrastructure provision and industrial development in southern Africa: A case of two corridors

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This paper will examine the relationship between economic infrastructure and patterns of industrial development in southern Africa. Over the past decade major infrastructure investments have been made under the heading of Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI). The Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) has been promoted at the sub-regional and most recently the regional level, to help turn the page on the use of the region's transportation system as a mere channel for resource exploitation, with little or no social benefit. An SDI is a designated existing transportation corridor whose rehabilitation and expansion complemented by government incentive packages and the area's natural endowments are used as a magnet to attract upstream and downstream economic activities. Therefore by catalysing industrialization and employment growth in the micro-region, the SDI essentially transforms the corridor from a *transport* to a *development* corridor (De Beer, 2001:4).

The paper aims to add to the limited comparative work that has been done on SDIs across the continent. More specifically, it aims to unravel the influence vested interests acting within and around the corridors on the region's industrialisation processes and their development implications. Two cases are used to tease out these dynamics: the Maputo Development Corridor a long established SDI straddling South Africa and Mozambique and the Zambesi Valley Corridor which has been invigorated by coal mining activity located in the Mozambique's Tete province.