



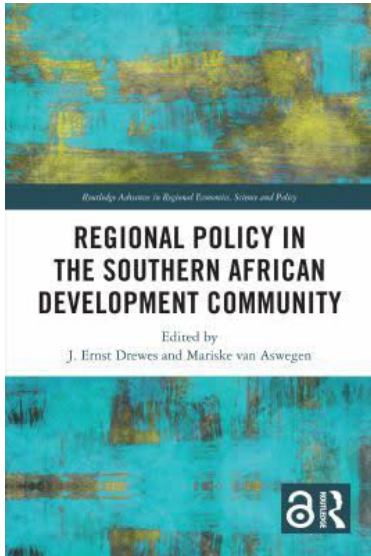
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Regional policy in the Southern African Development Community



Editors: Ernst Drewes and Mariske van Aswegen

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leadership, and scholarship. The multi-authored book by writers from both the Global North and the Global South, edited by J. Ernst Drewes and Mariske van Aswegen, has twelve chapters, including the introduction and a signing-off chapter. Chapter twelve explores the implementation options of a tenacious and decisive regional policy approach in SADC aimed at engendering progressive regional transformation changes in practices and actions that has happened to date.

Making use of a thematic approach to the organisation and structure of the book, regional planning and policy is dissected and analysed from policy, structural, economic and future perspectives. This structural and logical alignment allows for the presentation of a strong narrative and portrait of how regional policy and planning matters play out in the SADC landscape.

In addition, this book employs a multi-perspective lens in analysing and interpreting the complex spatial economic science, regional development experiences, practices, dynamics, and realities tapestry in the region. In doing so, the book proceeds to provide incisive and foresight regional economic policy planning intelligence, policy thinking, and scenario building options for both enhancing and anchoring alternative regional policy and planning styles operative and necessary in catapulting transformative practices and outcomes. The book further provides insight into the role of the SADC within the context of regional development, and analyses regional policy applied at national, regional, and continental scale case studies with reference to the SADC. In this way, the book outlines an evaluation of the inherent potential in the regional economy for valorisation as well as barriers to regional development. Through the identification of gaps in the existing

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1. INTRODUCTION

The book *Regional policy in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)* is a timely, appropriate, and critical Global South scholarship contribution to the growing collection on regional development planning art and science in the planning profession, with a specific focus on Southern Africa as a distinct planning region. This is achieved by way of analysing regional development policy presence, absence, cracks, deficits, distortions, difficulties, and gaps in the SADC, which forms an integral trading bloc in Africa and the world. The book explores the beacons delineating the formulation of robust and resilient regional policy, *i.e.*, covering different geographic scales and hierarchical, nested and intertwined substantive (over)layers of issues embedded in socio-economic policies associated with the implementation (hi)story of spatial planning instruments. Consequently, this collective body of scholarship work represents a much-awaited knowledge contribution in an area that is inadequately represented in both research, academia, policy

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regional policy framework(s), the book advances recommendations for improved regional policy frameworks, including the concomitant coupling implementation actions and strategies that act as conditions for assured success, impact, and relevance.

The book is essentially divided into four parts. Part one explores policy perspectives, while Part two unravels the physical and structural perspectives. Part three is dedicated to an in-depth analysis that is pivoted on an economic and trade perspectives dimension. Part four focuses on presenting future perspectives considering the combined analysis and policy implications of the spatial economic science and development discourses attempted by Parts one, two, and three, read together as a unit. Invariably, the book's work succeeds in integrating the macro and sectoral policy frameworks by evaluating the goal achievement logical framework as represented by different tribes of spatial targeting instruments, mixed fortune outcomes in respect of practices and experiences within *SADC* as a developing region. The focus of the engaged scholarship research and work is to reflect on the social, economic, environmental, and political complex web and system arguments through a focused analysis of relevant planning instruments, policies, and barriers in terms of the regional policy goals for the *SADC* region.

2. DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE BOOK

The book covers several key regional policy and planning matters. Exploring and understanding the drivers of regional policy and planning in the *SADC* is essential for corresponding and appropriate action to be taken (Chapter 1). Van Aswegen and Drewes explore how, in Africa, shifts, changes, movements and advances in regional conceptualisation and intent give 'birth' to a re-imagined 'new' regionalisation process, in

which the fifty-five countries can potentially metamorphise into a super-regional economic bloc. These eclectic movements in regional policy and planning paradigms raise critical questions on the adequacy and inadequacy of existing and proposed regional development policy and planning frameworks in the *SADC* to meet and fulfil the expectation and obligations of such an expanded envisaged role.

Building on the foundation set in Chapter 1, Drewes and Van Aswegen demonstrate how enhanced understanding, through structured exploration of the regional drivers and barriers to growth and development, constitutes a 'fish bone' upon which transformative regional policy, planning measures and actions can be proffered by central or local governments in Chapter 2 of the book.

Chapter 3 of the book covers the importance and relevance of properly locating and situating regional policy and planning debates within the new economic geography theory. This represents one practical way in which marginal, depressed, disadvantaged, declining, polarised, and peripheral regions' potential can be optimally exploited and integrated in the wider economic ecosystem. Thus, an expanded conceptualisation of local and regional interactions between a region's core and periphery are a window to advance new developments, regeneration, revitalisation of peripheral, marginal, depressed, polarised, and lagging regions. The interventions and actions can take the form of tackling poverty, inequality, and various forms of stagnation and backwardness. These are important perennial regional policy and planning "pain action areas" to which Van Aswegen and Drewes draw policy and decision makers' focus, including everyone's attention.

In Chapter 4, Yankson draws our attention to the contours and curvatures of challenges with which regional development actors and stakeholders must grapple in respect of the changing nature

and dynamics of a subnational regional development policy. Negotiating this regional policy and planning postcolonial identities in the *SADC* region must, at times, entail acknowledging the critical role and space for granulated and dynamic system nuances of how the site, neighbourhood, local, provincial, and nation-state shape policy choices by region.

On the other hand, in Chapter 5, Brand's work underscores the elusiveness, ambiguities, and contradictions inherent in deploying corridors as spatial targeting instruments and mechanism to channel and focus economic development. This is an important subject matter, especially given the promise, mixed fortunes and, at times, failures of corridors in (re)shaping regional policy and planning in the region dating back to the *SADC*'s establishment in 1992. One practical way out of this quagmire is to couple regional spatial corridor economic policy, planning initiatives and interventions with clear measurement and interpretation frameworks of outcomes. This would create spatial policy and planning barometers, dashboards, and atlases for tracing and tracking regional planning and policy transformative practices and actions progress and performance metrics.

Chapter 6 articulates the *SADC*'s settlement hierarchy, infrastructure networks, and cross-border regional development and geographies nexus theme, spatially with the aid of mapping graphics by Maritz, Le Roux and Van Huyssteen. Indeed, *SADC* is undergoing rapid urbanisation in the context of both under-resourced and under-prepared smaller towns, cities, and peri-urban regions and rural areas. Rapid urbanisation demands and pressures occur in a context in which both local and central governments are facing crises and disruptive challenges linked to informalities (in both urban and rural regions), swelling unemployment, growing poverty and/or inequalities, repeated and frequent climate changes and crisis (e.g., drought,

floods, heatwaves and, to some extent, cold waves), failure to rectify and reverse the socio-economic and physical scars of the colonial past, among other equally important challenges. By way of examining the development trends influencing the region's settlement patterns and emphasis, the significance and inert benefits of establishing a 'regional settlement profile' for *SADC* is recommended. The proposal for an analytical profile that uses combined datasets to analyse the evolving settlement landscape in *SADC* is an important contribution to decision-making datasets and models for informed policy and decision-making.

In Chapter 7, Tandrayen-Ragoobur's research work illustrates how tapping the full cycle value analysis of spatial infrastructure investment in regional trade in the *SADC* is vital. Focused spatial infrastructure and services investment requires that attention be directed to the planning, designing, construction, maintenance, and management of both hard and soft infrastructures. The argument for such an approach is that infrastructure investment acts as a pre-condition to improve trade potential and competitiveness. Undertaking 'a hard and soft infrastructure diagnostic of the region', at any geographic scale, is tactical regionalisation in (re)solving regional problems and issues. Such tactical regionalism diagnostic tools act as preambles to developing a regional trade infrastructure atlas that depicts the infrastructure constraints, deficits, bottlenecks, and barriers that need overcoming. These forms of regional policy innovation and solutions have been inadequately attempted, with scant grey literature on emerging practices. However, this suite of innovations represent a tenable new generation of regional strategies and approaches in addressing infrastructure investment demand and supply requirements that need scaling up, knowledge transfer, and further refinement.

In Chapter 8, Kleynhans and Mhonyera remind the reader of the enduring influence of location in explaining how investors,

firms, and investment decisions play out and coalesce into a competitiveness index and/or outlook of *SADC* industries and countries. By drawing the reader's attention to this reality, Kleynhans and Mhonyera emphasise that site and locational specific factors should not be given a blind eye, as these constitute both factors and constraints in regional development. Indeed, the *SADC* region is home to land-locked and/or sea-locked countries. Similarly, other countries enjoy vast kilometres of access to the sea or coast in the *SADC*. Meanwhile, in the same region, some countries have a complete enclosure of sealine or coastline. Kleynhans and Mhonyera direct the reader's attention to the interplay of human resources, human capital, infrastructure, technology, economic and political stability, market-related factors, and agglomeration considerations that block or oil regional integration. Guiding and framing industrial investment flows of capital, labour, and resources should be predicated on clear and complete strategic regional policy and planning frameworks, strategies, plans, actions, programmes, and projects at micro-, meso- and macro-levels, in attempts to create a better region and world.

In Chapter 9, Steenkamp and Ferreira's witty craftsmanship in penning "The road less travelled: Exploring the untapped potential of intra-regional trade in the *SADC*" is an unequivocal critique of trade agreements shortcomings in Africa, including the *SADC*. These trade agreements are criticised on the ground that they have been developed faster and require higher capacities, implementation, stamina, pace, and innovation speed from coordination entities outside or assumed in advance of regional development policy approvals or proposal documents and protocol realities. Viewed alternatively, this can serve as both an advantage and disadvantage dependent on philosophical perspectives and inclinations applied. There is, however, hardly any doubt

concerning the massive potential and huge appetite to process alternative development stimulus and possibilities available in the *SADC* region. A heightened perennial call and urgent focus on the need to remove trade and non-trade constraints and barriers that frustrate and delay the optimal implementation of intra-regional trade agreements for maximum benefit to the region and beyond is the sound of a broken record player that once again finds expression in this work. This buttresses the need to address the matter while questioning the slow and pedestrian regional policy implementation commitment towards its logical conclusion and full implementation.

A worrying and concerning observation is that industrial exports, employment, value addition, and competitiveness are comparatively lower in the *SADC* region, as benchmarked against other regions in the world. This reality is discussed at length by Pretorius, in Chapter 10 of the book. To increase the competitiveness of the *SADC*, regional policy and planning ought to prioritise deeper economic and spatial integration, including trade liberalisation and improved quality of trade-facilitating infrastructure. According to Pretorius, a strengthening resource-based industrialisation (RBI) approach will enable the realisation of regional value chains that exploit the competitive advantages of member countries, while increasing industrial value addition, labour productivity, and employment.

Approximately half of the world's vanadium, platinum, and diamonds originate in the *SADC* region, along with 36% of gold and 20% of cobalt. The book would not have been complete without some dedicated attention to the mining landscapes in Southern Africa. In Chapter 11, Goliath and Campbell bring alive the issue of artisanal mining and link the matter to regional policy and planning. Lessons learnt from a Kimberley case study feed into the regional policy and planning

debates in the *SADC*. While there is no denying the significant role of artisanal mining in the *SADC* (*i.e.*, in terms of contributing to livelihoods and income), the dark side of artisanal mining requires attention (*i.e.*, informal, and unsustainable practices that produce environmental degradation, social inequalities, and economic volatility, trigger conflicts, and undermine regional policy objectives), in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable regional development.

Turning to regional policy and planning future perspectives, the final Chapter 12, written by Van Aswegen and Drewes, is portrayed from a positive and futurist perspective. Van Aswegen and Drewes propose that, for a better *SADC* regional policy vision and landscape to be achieved, an implementation model that fulfils the following two conditions, namely the determination of regional development policy for the *SADC* and the establishment of an implementation agency to facilitate progressive integration and interactions, needs to be in place. The ambitious vision is a tenable and practical solution whose implementation success hinges largely on uptake by the *SADC*'s decision-making organs or research and/or development agencies in the region. The implementation agency proposal represents a much-needed steering mechanism tool in influencing the crystallisation of optimised supranational and subnational locational and investment decision-making framework (*i.e.*, relevant government and industry can brand and package regional policy inducements and/or incentives to investors – *e.g.*, in terms of tax incentives, grants, subsidies, regional employment premiums, and so on) to (re)attract, (re)direct, (re)distribute, (re)allocate, and manage the *SADC* regional policy and planning landscape. Developing and implementing a supranational regional policy could be considered a step towards modernising and restructuring the economic foundation of *SADC* from being a peripheral

to a core region in the world global regional bloc economic systems of interaction and engagements. While this is surely a stretching goal and enticing vision for the region, achieving it is possible, although it is no mean task. The journey will require a unified and concerted one or joint or co-joint shift towards a more sustainable and efficient production model in the *SADC* region by all member countries. Such an advanced model will implement regional policy and planning transformative practices while not negating the underlying subnational normative standards, values, and objectives of the sixteen member states that comprise the bloc.

Overall, the bold message running through all the chapters in the book is that scientific, evidence-based, and empirical-based engaged scholarship and research are a key centrepiece in unpacking the theoretical and practical implementation options required in supporting optimisation efforts and initiatives that firmly anchor regional policy and planning transformative agenda in the *SADC*. The climax of the book's message is to suggest, first, the need for urgent attention in promoting balanced socio-economic spatial policy and planning outcomes. Secondly, an aggressive and decisive confrontation and fight against poverty, inequalities, injustices, informality, rapid urbanisation, climate change and resilience, food security, and sustainable development plan and strategy should be relentlessly followed to enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa. Thirdly, the establishment of a regional policy implementation agency to oversee and provide leadership, guidance, direction, and management of regional policy and planning actions in the *SADC*. The chapters' messages are also consistent in cautioning scholars, researchers, policymakers and practitioners from implementing "regional spatial blind policy and planning solutions", given the differences in *SADC*'s places, spaces, cultures, and history.

3. CONCLUSION

In concluding, this book contributes to the *SADC* regional policy and planning landscape domain which previously received inadequate attention and focus. The book further advances the contribution of the Global South scholarship and voice on spatial economic and regional development science. Intermittently, the book plays the role of sustaining the regional policy debates, thus paving the way for continued conversations aimed at anchoring improved attempts for transformative regional policy and planning practices and actions. The book is, therefore, a must-have book for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students studying international trade, development economics, regional and economic development, urban and regional planning, and policy, to name a few among other professions. This is indeed a useful resource and reference for policymakers, as it provides practical policy guidelines for improved regional planning towards a comprehensive regional policy framework with relevance in similar developing, emerging, and regional blocks in the world. Furthermore, the book also succeeds in exploring the nexus between spatial economic science, regional development and policy planning, with practical implications and relevance for academia, practice, and policy. I am more than convinced that this book adds significant value to the collection of must-have books for academics, researchers, and practitioners interested and working in the dynamic *SADC* regional economic, growth, and development matters.