The African Continental Free Trade Area and Developmental Regionalism: Leveraging Transport Corridors to actualise the AfCFTA.

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Compulsory Declaration

I have not previously submitted this work in whole, or part, for the award of any degree. It is my work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people, has, been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

The AfCFTA is a significant opportunity for African countries to promote intra-Africa trade and long-term economic growth. However, a gargantuan obstacle to realising these ambitions is Africa's infrastructure deficit. Energy and transport infrastructure are essential for trade facilitation. Without the development of adequate, reliable, and efficient infrastructure alongside soft infrastructure advances, the AfCFTA risks becoming a paper tiger. As such, the AfCFTA must be a developmental trade agreement – promoting the congruent development of soft, and importantly, hard infrastructure to fulfil its promise of broadening and deepening economic integration. This thesis advocates that the AfCFTA should adopt a developmental approach to integration. In doing so, it highlights that the AfCFTA must operate within a developmental regionalism framework to coalesce member countries to cooperate on cross-border infrastructure development to improve trade facilitation. To this end, using the Maputo Development Corridor as a case study, this thesis highlights the importance of transport corridors for improving cooperation on cross-border transport connections and trade facilitation to actualise the AfCFTA.

Dedication

To my grandmother, a woman who not only had a bitter taste of apartheid education but chose to raise us to value education not only as the key to success but as an institution that needs to be engaged, challenged, and transformed. To my grandfather, a man who worked himself to the bone for us to have a future that was far better than his, may you continue resting in peace Khwalo. To my son, who continues to be a pillar of strength for me yet. My sincerest hope is that he may inherit a far better Africa than the one I live in. This thesis is dedicated to all who resonate with my life story, those who have lost, given, and sacrificed in the hope of a better united Africa. This thesis is for the renegades, the economic nomads, and street vendors on the dusty streets of South Africa. Most importantly, this thesis seeks to answer your lingering questions Adedeji Adebayo. May the dawn of the African Continental Free Trade Area be a breath of fresh air and a realization of a better Africa!

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To my supportive grandmother – Nobuntu, and mother – Bulelwa, your consistent support, love, and never-ending belief in my abilities have carried me through some of the darkest and most challenging times in my life. Ndiyabulela ngokungazenzisiyo!! Sambeswa, you might be young, but my son your existence has made me stronger and more determined to finish what I started. I love you.

Further gratitude goes to my friends and those who have played a significant role in my journey here. I would like to thank Nomonde, your love and support will echo through many lifetimes. To Isasiphinkosi Mdingi your support, friendship and encouragement were unmatched. Simisosenkosi Mloyi, thank you for your input, your harsh critiques and willingness to help are appreciated.

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List of Abbreviations

AEC – African Economic Community

AfDB – African Development Bank

AfCFTA – African Continental Free Trade

AU – African Union

BOT – Build, Operate and Transfer Model

COMESA – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

EAC – East African Community

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EWEC – East-West Economic Corridor

EU – European Union

FTA – Free Trade Area

GVC – Global Value Chain

LDCs – Least Developed Countries

MCC – Maputo Corridor Company

MCLI – Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative

MDC – Maputo Development Corridor

OAU – Organization of African Unity

PIDA – Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa

PPP – Public-Private Partnership

REC – Regional Economic Community

RVC – Regional Value Chain

SACU – Southern African Customs Union

SADC – Southern African Development Community

SDI – Spatial Development Initiative

TFTA – Tripartite Free Trade Area

TRAC – Trans Africa Concessions

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The African Continental Free Trade Area's (AfCFTA) establishment on 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda was a watershed moment for Africa. The AfCFTA provides an opportunity for the long-awaited ambition of uniting Africa in pursuit of the African Union's Agenda 2063. Africa is pursuing a strategy of integration to build a continental free-trade zone. Faizel Ismail (2021:3) in his seminal book on the AfCFTA, asks a critical question: "How can African policymakers and leaders ensure that this phase of regional integration in Africa that is being advanced through the AfCFTA succeeds and does not suffer from the travails of other regional integration processes in the world?" This research attempts to answer this question.

For the AfCFTA to succeed, it needs to take a developmental approach to regional integration. According to Ismail (2018:26), "The concept of 'developmental regionalism' incorporates the need to adopt a strategy to regional integration that is based on a heterodox economic view of the world and an idealism that incorporates values or solidarity as an essential ingredient for the success of regional integration in Africa." He further explains that developmental regionalism has four parallel and interconnected pillars (Ismail, 2021):

a) Cooperation in building mutually beneficial trade integration (fair trade integration).

b) Cooperation on industrial development and upgrading of regional value chains (transformative industrialisation).

c) Cooperation on investment in cross-border infrastructure and trade facilitation; and,

d) Cooperation in the building of democracy, good governance, peace, and security.

This thesis is especially concerned with cooperation on investment in cross-border infrastructure and trade facilitation. Studies have indicated that one of the critical hindrances to the success of the AfCFTA is Africa's infrastructure deficit (Mitullah et al., 2016; Ondiege et al., 2013; UNCTAD, 2013a). This thesis critically engages with the theoretical foundations of regional integration and advocates that if the AfCFTA is to be actualised, it needs to adopt a developmental regionalism framework. Couching transport corridors within the developmental regionalism framework, this thesis critically examines the Maputo Development Corridor to assess whether transport and development corridors can help to actualise the AfCFTA.

1.2 Research Statement

The AfCFTA presents a unique opportunity to foster intra-Africa trade, improve physical infrastructure development, and sustain economic growth. However, for these benefits to be realised, this thesis espouses that the AfCFTA needs to take a developmental approach to regional integration and use transport corridors as tools to improve, stimulate, and facilitate intra-Africa trade and economic development.

1.3 Research questions

The primary research question of the study:

- How can transport corridors contribute to the AfCFTA's goal of increasing intra-Africa trade and simultaneously enhance Africa's economic development?

The secondary research questions are:

- Why should the AfCFTA adopt developmental regionalism as an approach to regional integration? And how is it different from Africa's past approaches to regional integration?
- What lessons can be drawn from international experiences with transport corridors, and what has been the African experience so far?
- How can transport corridors support developmental regionalism?

1.4 The research objectives of the study:

- Firstly, this thesis aims to demonstrate that transport corridors can play a critical role in regional integration and, more specifically, the success of the AfCFTA.
- Secondly, it highlights that for the AfCFTA to succeed, it needs to adopt a developmental approach to integration.
- Lastly, this study illustrates the significant role transport corridors can play in improving trade facilitation in Africa.

1.5 The rationale of the study

There is an enormous amount of literature that emphasises that reducing Africa's infrastructure deficit is critical for economic growth and long-term development. This thesis contributes to the existing literature on regional integration and infrastructure development, especially emerging literature, on how to ensure that the AfCFTA is a success. It also aims to provide African policymakers and leaders with some insight into how to leverage transport corridors to actualise the AfCFTA.

1.6 Research methodology and design

1.6.1 Research methodology.

Using qualitative research methodology, this study will explore economic and policy parameters of regional integration in Africa, specifically the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Meadows (2003) explains that in qualitative research, findings and conclusions are generated directly from data, such as interviews of participants, academic journals, and policy papers. Concepts and hypotheses are developed and assessed using primary and secondary data explicitly collected to draw insights and conclusions about the topic being investigated. For the purposes of this study qualitative research becomes a better-suited methodology as it deals with complex contextual and textual research questions that deal with lived experiences and theoretical, conceptual, and institutional frameworks.

1.6.2 Research design

This study employed a case study approach. According to Yin (2015:53), "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident." When the critical research questions are "how" or "why" a researcher has little or no influence over behavioural occurrences, therefore because the topic of this study is contemporaneous as opposed to dealing with historical phenomena, case study research would be the favoured technique above the others (Yin, 2015). As a case study, the Maputo Development Corridor was selected to assess the efficacy of the transport corridors in advancing developmental integration efforts and cross-border trade. It will be used to provide some insights into the role of transport corridors in advancing developmental regionalism.

1.6.3 Data collection

This research leans towards explanatory research with descriptive elements. This means, whilst the research question is investigative, the study will also have descriptive elements as the AfCFTA is in the initial stages of implementation. The study collected primary data through twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews. Participants were from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Academics (from regional and international) universities, and national government officials directly involved in trade, infrastructure development, and international relations. Additionally, secondary data was consulted and informs this thesis. Peer-reviewed academic journals, books, publications, and reports from regional and international organisations and think tanks were reviewed.

1.6.4 Sample design

This study made use of purposive sampling. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018:10), purposive sampling is a "selection of participants based on the researchers' judgement about what potential participants will be most informative." Interviewees for this study were chosen based on their in-depth academic knowledge and experience in regional integration, economic policy, and African economic integration.

1.6.6 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted as the AfCFTA is being implemented and cannot be replicated because of the constantly changing conditions. If the same methodology is used, it will be impossible to duplicate the results, limiting future investigations of a similar sort. Lastly, due continuous evolution and implementation of the AfCFTA the study might be outdated when it is published. Nevertheless, it will still provide useful insights and analysis on the role of transport corridors in Africa's pursuit of regional economic integration.

1.6.7 Ethical considerations

This research was guided by ethical considerations as outline by the UCT Code of Research. Such as the freedom for each participant to withdraw from participating in the study, guaranteed anonymity of each participant providing insight into the study and refraining from using deception to get the desired response from the participants. In addition, informed consent was sought before the commencement of interviews through written consent forms.

1.7 Conceptual clarity

- **Developmental regionalism**: includes trade cooperation, with a focus on intraregional trade and integration into the global economy. It extends beyond trade to include collaboration in other, more ambitious areas, such as industrial policy.

- **Transport corridors**: Physical infrastructure (such as road, railway, and ports) that serve to integrate economic activities in a region that are developed along a route that physically connects an area or region.

- **Cross-border infrastructure**: Relates to the cooperation initiative between two or more countries to strengthen physical connectivity by using hard and soft infrastructure such as road, and railway lines, border stops, etc. Typically, cross-border projects need to create value beyond what two national infrastructure projects would bring through the integration of markets and connecting communities.

- **Development economic corridors:** They connect economic agents along a defined geography. They provide important connections between economic nodes or hubs that are usually centred in urban landscapes.

- **Regional economic communities**: These are regional groupings of African states. The RECs have developed individually and have different roles and structures. The purpose of the RECs is to facilitate regional economic integration between members of the individual regions and through the wider African Economic Community (AEC), which was established under the Abuja Treaty (1991). The AU recognises eight RECs namely, Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

- **Regionalism**: The term "regionalism," as used in this study, refers to initiatives taken by a group of countries to improve their social, political, economic, or cultural relations. According to Ravenhill (2016:37), "regionalism is a social institution: as with other institutions, regional interstate collaboration can take place within formal organizations or on an entirely informal basis." Regional collaboration, market integration, development integration, and regional integration are only a few examples of the various configurations these initiatives might take. African leaders have long viewed regionalism as a workable approach to employ to bring about political and economic unification of the continent.
- **Regionalisation**: Regionalisation may be defined as an undirected or spontaneous regional activity. It is a process that may be influenced by regionalism and policy, but it is not a purposeful effort (Ravenhill, 2016). Söderbaum (2012:4) argues that regionalisation can be "characterized by an expanding cast of actors (state and non-state) operating in the regional arena and across several interrelated dimensions: security, development, trade, environment, identity and so on." Therefore, regionalization—a process of greater integration within a certain geographic area—should be separated from regionalism. Arguments that claim the "new regionalism" has emerged during the past two decades typically confuse the two ideas by focusing on nonstate actors and their role in facilitating cross-border trade. Regionalisation processes, which are frequently led by nonstate actors, may make it more desirable for governments to work together, although one process does not necessarily follow another (Ravenhill, 2016).

- **Old vs new regionalism**: new regionalism encompasses a range of regional organizations as well as broader, more flexible networks and partnerships that incorporate both state and non-state players. Old regionalism was concentrated on state-led regional institutions (Söderbaum & Brolin, 2016). Consequently, "the greater interdependence of today's global political economy and the focus on regional as well as global challenges make contemporary regionalism more extrovert in nature than old regionalism. Compared with old regionalism, the new regionalism has become more comprehensive and multidimensional." (Söderbaum & Brolin, 2016:26-27)
- **Deep and shallow regionalism:** It is important to note that, there is scholarly consensus on the definitions and characterisation of deep and shallow regionalism. Deep integration is a concept that encompasses all actions that, in the end, seek to harmonize modes of production, commercial and public service delivery, environmental and consumer protection, and society at large across national or continental borders. Only trade in commodities is liberalised through shallow integration, and the African RECs still reflect a fragile intra-African "shallow integration" among neighbours (Asche, 2021).

1.8 Chapter outline

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter one outlines the dissertation's context and rationale. It also provides a short summary of Africa's perspectives on regional integration. The research statement, questions, objectives, and methodological approach are also presented. Moreover, chapter one includes the research methodology as it is an integral part of this dissertation given the qualitative nature of the study. additionally, the chapter provides clarification on the concepts used in the research.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature that was consulted for this study. The literature review highlights key scholarly discourses on regional integration and African efforts to integrate. Moreover, it provides an analysis of the challenges and opportunities for the continent pre- and post-establishment of the AfCFTA. It does so through a detailed analysis of the key challenges such as inadequate trade-related soft and hard infrastructure, and previous regional integration schemes based on the linear model of integration. Lastly, it advocates for developmental regionalism as the most viable approach to implementing the AfCFTA.

Chapter three is presented the theoretical framework that frames this research study. The theoretical framework relied on is developmental regionalism. This chapter uses theoretical foundations rooted in the old and new regionalism theory as a means of rationalising

developmental regionalism as an approach to regional integration that Africa must adopt if it is to achieve its regional integration ambitions.

Chapter four explores the opportunities that transport corridors provide as a practical policy approach to improve trade facilitation and realise the AfCFTA. This is illustrated through a case study that focuses on the Maputo Development Corridor.

Chapter five provides a detailed analysis of the research data coupled with discussions that have emanated from the data analysis.

Lastly, chapter six provides a summary and conclusion, policy recommendations based on the analysis and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Overview of regional integration efforts in Africa

Regional integration in Africa is not a new phenomenon. According to Aniche (2020:71), "integration in Africa preceded European colonialism and predated European integration. Africa has a long tradition of regional cooperation, its trade and monetary integration schemes being the oldest in the developing world." Cilliers (2021) posits that the benefits of African economic integration were recognised even before the foundation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union, in 1963. For example, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is the world's oldest customs union. However, the primary purpose of SACU, of course, was not to promote regional unity but rather to aid Great Britain in managing its taxes and integrating its southern African territories' economies (Cilliers, 2021).

Postcolonial Africa, however, undertook more concerted efforts towards regional integration. For instance, Ludger (2006) contends that following the end of European colonialism in the 1960s, Africa underwent a wave of state-building. Pan-Africanism was a rhetorical and ideological foundation of this state-building. The OAU was formed because of previous efforts to unify Africa, which were followed by the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. The Lagos Plan of Action was Africa's reaction to the World Bank's structural adjustment programs. Following this a Treaty establishing the African Economic Community of 1991, also known as the Abuja Treaty, was produced. It outlined the precise economic, political, and institutional procedures required to accomplish Africa's economic integration (Cilliers, 2021).

The Abuja Treaty (1991) outlined a step-by-step approach to regional integration through the creation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), it essentially adopted a linear approach to integration (The AU recognises eight RECs namely; Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC)). The Abuja Treaty and the RECs have encountered critical challenges. The notion of the "spaghetti bowl" in the development of the REC has explanatory value in outlining some of the key challenges faced by the RECs. Jagdish Bhagwati (1995) originally

conceptualized the spaghetti bowl phenomenon. Bhagwati explained that it is a phenomenon where members of free trade agreements agree on a reduced internal tariff to be imposed among themselves, but each member can levy its external tariff on imports from non-member nations (Bhagwati et al., 1995). Additionally, Tavares & Tang (2011) argue that multi-memberships within many RECs resulted in irrational structures, weak negotiating positions, and inconsistencies in harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation.

Africa has pursued different regional integration strategies over the decades. Studies (Kayizzi-Mugerwa et al., 2014; Margaret, 2002; Vickers, 2017) point out that efforts to integrate regional economies in Africa have adopted market integration as a central strategy to boost intra-Africa trade. Moreover, regionalism in Africa took on various forms to meet shifting national, regional, and international environments. African regionalism has primarily been guided by the linear paradigm of integration as espoused by Europe. According to Vickers (2017:6), "linear integration can be seen as the textbook model of economic integration and is attributed to the work of economists Jacob Viner (1950) and Bela Balassa (1965). It is best viewed as a stepladder approach with five progressive stages of economic integration: from a free trade area (FTA) to a customs union, common market, monetary union, and political union." This is illustrated in Africa's integration designs, such as the Abuja Treaty, as well as existing RECs (Margaret, 2002; Vickers, 2017). Moreover, it is important to characterize the type of regionalism that African leaders have consolidated. Most African regional integration schemes can be characterised as closed regionalism, this is because most regional integration schemes like the RECs have been inward-looking and concerned with eliminating trade barriers amongst members. Closed regionalism is defined as trade agreements that lower or eliminate trade barriers among member states of a regional organization but do not extend to other countries (Khan & Marwat, 2017).

2.1.1 Challenges of regional integration in Africa – from linear integration towards developmental regionalism

Historically, regional integration in Africa has been sought for two reasons. The first is to strengthen political cooperation, popularly known as the pan-African agenda. The second has been to promote economic growth and development (Margaret, 2002). In the first two decades of the post-colonial era, the focus of regional integration in Africa was on political cooperation rather than economic cooperation, as African leaders attempted to rid the continent of colonial relics (Margaret, 2002). Efforts have been undertaken since the 1980s to move the focus of regional integration away from only political cooperation and towards economic integration. It

was seen as a solution to the challenges experienced by African economies. It is suggested through integration, economies of scale would be obtained, and industrialisation would increase (Margaret, 2002; Osakwe, 2015; Vickers, 2017).

Regional integration serves a purpose of making it possible for African nations to address the problems of development. Though there is concurrence on the benefits of regional integration, the linear approach that has dominated Africa has not yielded the projected returns. Vickers (2017) contends that this form of integration, with its robotic sequencing, is unsuitable for Africa. It puts the "cart before the horse" by imposing unrealistic integration aims and timeframes that frequently ignore the current political, economic, and institutional realities of Africa (Vickers, 2017). There are several limitations to the linear model of integration. The first one is Africa's poor regional trade performance and poverty figures when compared to those of other emerging regions. The second limitation is that it treats trade policy's most crucial component, trade liberalization as if it were the only one that matters. Third, it assumes that trade barriers are the primary impediment to African nations' capacity to promote regional trade and successfully harness trade's promise for poverty reduction. The underlying premise is that trade leads to poverty reduction. On the contrary, the assumption misses the equally significant reality that poverty hinders on impoverished countries' ability to produce and trade (Osakwe, 2015).

For Africa, current regional integration objectives should transcend beyond narrow economic concerns. Africa's regional integration objectives are being reimagined towards developmental perspectives that surpass the confines of traditional static economic analysis usually associated with regional integration. Osakwe (2015) makes a valuable argument that one of the most pressing development challenges confronting Africa today is how to increase productive capacity and induce structural transformation to create job opportunities and alleviate poverty. As a result, regional integration should be focused on addressing this development obstacle rather than promoting trade liberalization in general. A more development-led integration agenda that encompasses structural transformation, investment, services, regional infrastructure, enterprise and private sector growth, institutional capacity, and technology and innovation might solve the challenges facing African economies far more efficiently than an approach that focuses primarily on tariffs and other border barriers to trade (UNCTAD, 2013a).

In summary, the experience of the African continent with the linear model of integration has not been as fruitful as it has been in Europe. As the literature points out, it not only failed but

is not conducive for the African continent because of both objective and subjective reasons. These include Africa's lack of supranational institutions, its need for states to relinquish their political and economic sovereignty, and the model's inability to address some of the structural limitations faced by African economies (Kühnhardt, 2010; Vickers, 2017). Hence, UNCTAD (2013a) asserts that a paradigm shift is required to strengthen and revitalize the African integration drive. Adopting "developmental regionalism" has great potential for Africa because this strategy leverages regional integration to construct an industrial base and overcome supply-side barriers to private sector growth and, in doing so enhance global competitiveness.

2.2 Developmental Regionalism

Developmental regionalism as an approach to regional integration represents an alternative to the linear model of integration. It is an approach that utilizes strategic trade liberalization mixed with infrastructural and industrial policy. Developmental regionalism as a practical approach to regional economic integration has evolved over various contexts and time periods. As such, developmental regionalism has various definitions. For instance, Sloan (1971) defines it as collaborative initiatives among least developed economies (LDCs) to coordinate and integrate their economies to speed up the development of both member states and the region. Comparatively, Scholvin (2018:118) argues that "developmental regionalism is about proactive economic policies advanced and coordinated by states of the region in question – as opposed to a politically passive approach of mere liberalisation." On the other hand, Adejumobi and Kreiter (2020:22) view developmental regionalism as an analytical tool for understanding the synergetic development processes and outcomes of regionalism. It underscores how regional integration institutions and initiatives promote collective development capacity and outcomes."

Although developmental regionalism has been conceptualised and interpreted in various ways, this research study subscribes to the definition presented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its 2013 report titled *Economic Development in Africa. Intra-Africa Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism*. The report defines developmental regionalism as "a development-based integration agenda aimed at securing the traditional benefits of regional integration, ensuring that such benefits flow to all member countries and seeking to enhance the integration of member countries into world markets as a means of fostering sustainable development" (UNCTAD, 2013b:97) Furthermore, Ismail (2021) elucidates that the concept of developmental regionalism includes cooperation among African countries in a regional integration framework on four parallel and interconnected pillars: a) fair

trade integration; b) transformative industrialisation; c) cooperation on investment in cross-border infrastructure and trade facilitation; and d) cooperation on the building of democracy, good governance, peace, and security.

Admittedly, developmental regionalism has not been without critique. For instance, Adejumobi & Kreiter (2020) argue that interpretations of developmental regionalism outlined by UNCTAD stem primarily from the neoliberal environment of "new regionalism." In this context, emphasis is placed on globalisation and integration into the global economy as the most feasible method of fostering economic change for less developed nations. The argument is that these definitions are only concerned with asserting a neo-liberal regional integration paradigm.

Additionally, Zarenda (2013) provides a valuable critique of UNCTAD's 2013 report that advocated for Africa to adopt developmental regionalism. He argues that the report is based on a case study which examines the Greater Mekong Subregion in South-East Asia in 1992, which comprised only six countries (including China which was experiencing rapid economic growth at the time). Zarenda (2013:13) further elaborates that the "experiences of various regional integration communities have shown that there is no real universal template for success in developing and sustaining such communities." Therefore, Zarenda concluded that the appropriateness of this model in an African context is subject to debate. This is because regional integration schemes are not universal, the context and time matter as regional integration schemes do not take place in a vacuum, societies change, economies are dynamic, and political landscapes are fluid. Therefore, the case study of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region is not a good example to base the practicality and compatibility of developmental regionalism in contemporary Africa.

However, Ismail (2021) emphasizes that the notion of developmental regionalism includes the necessity to adopt a regional integration strategy that is based on a heterodox economic outlook and an idealism that includes values of solidarity as an essential factor for regional integration success in Africa. Developmental regionalism from a policy perspective can occupy a strategic advantage in Africa's regional integration strategy. Doidge (2007) highlights the economic and non-economic benefits of developmental regionalism. The economic benefits include expanded markets from the national to the regional level, trade and investment, security, and stability. On the other hand, the non-economic benefits include the creation of a secure community, ensuring relative political stability through regional efforts and the promotion of

common norms and collective identity (Doidge, 2007). Overall, most of the literature reviewed leans towards the argument that developmental regionalism has substantial prospects as a regional integration strategy for Africa.

2.2.1 The Tripartite Free Trade Area's experiment with developmental regionalism

There have been various attempts to integrate Africa politically and economically, with varying degrees of strategies. For instance, the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) established a Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) in 2008. In June 2015, the twenty-six member states of the three RECs decided to proceed with the formation of a TFTA, which entered into force in January 2016 (Mold & Mukwaya, 2015). The TFTA further adopted developmental regionalism as a regional integration approach based on fair trade integration, infrastructure development and industrial development to address limitations of productive capacity (Vickers, 2017). However, Scholvin (2018) presages that developmental regionalism as it is envisioned by South Africa within the TFTA had some significant drawbacks. Such as the difficulties in closing Africa's infrastructure deficit through the TFTA, the notion of building regional value chains (RVCs) to spur industrialisation is laden with challenges. Scholvin (2018), further argues that the establishment of RVCs will create win-lose scenarios with unsolvable disputes over who obtains the most profitable value chain segments, even though the corresponding discussions are yet to be finalised and implemented.

Despite the valid theoretical misgivings of the impact of developmental regionalism, especially in the TFTA. Scholars such as Oloruntoba (2017) and Nubong (2021) argue that beyond market access, which has been the focus of other regional integration initiatives, the TFTA's emphasis on industrialisation and developmental regionalism might aid in achieving a successful integrative outcome. For the TFTA to be successful, the member states of the TFTA must place a strong emphasis on cross-border infrastructure investment and development, while also pursuing initiatives to harmonize standards and relevant trade facilitation efforts. This shift in emphasis to a developmental regionalism strategy is likely to result in more developmental benefits and improve the TFTA's chances of success (Nubong, 2021; Oloruntoba, 2017).

2.3 The AfCFTA and Developmental Regionalism

While efforts to unite the continent have long been advocated, actual implementation has remained elusive, and mostly, restricted to political rhetoric at the AU level. To develop its economies and improve intra-Africa trade, Africa is pursuing the implementation of the African

Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), also commonly referred to as the Continental Free Trade Area. The AfCFTA is poised to be a game-changer for the continent economically. The essential factors for the success of the AfCFTA relate to the size and scope of economies of scale, market potential, and population. These are powerful impetuses for trade-led diversification away from Africa's commodity dependency and towards industrial growth and fundamental economic change. The case for the AfCFTA is irrefutable because it benefits women, youth in Africa, and all African nations (Luke, David, 2019).

Several estimations on the possible positive impact of the AfCFTA, have all been quite favourable. For instance, the AfCFTA is predicted to enhance intra-Africa trade by up to US$35 billion annually, and a US$10 billion decline in imports into Africa (UNCTAD, 2013b). In line with the CFTA's objective of industrialization and structural transformation, the AfCFTA further seeks to improve the manufacturing sector because it has the highest employment growth rates, followed by several services and agricultural subsectors (Cilliers, 2021; States News Service, 2018; UNCTAD, 2013b). Thus, the case for the AfCFTA becomes relatively easy because of the positive economic spin-offs it promises to deliver. Furthermore, Luke (2019) emphasizes that the AfCFTA will also provide more jobs for Africa's growing young population. Consequently, the AfCFTA would increase job opportunities by encouraging more labour-intensive trade through its goal of developing productive capabilities (Luke, D. & MacLeod, 2019).

For the AfCFTA to benefit member states, it needs to have a practical developmental approach that considers Africa's structural realities. Ajibo (2019) emphasises that political will, technical capability, and resource availability will all be critical to the AfCFTA's success. Gebremariam (2020) makes a valuable argument that reorienting the AfCFTA towards a developmental path may require a continental development framework based on "developmental regionalism." Gebremariam (2020:39) points out that "developmental regionalism goes beyond a narrow focus on tariff and non-tariff barriers and technical issues on quotas and standards. Developmental regionalism incorporates the trade-specific issues within broader development goals such as enhancing the domestic productive capacity of African states and addresses the structural and institutional bottlenecks of African economies." Therefore, developmental regionalism provides the best odds for dealing with Africa’s structural challenges.

There is widespread agreement that poor infrastructure significantly impedes the continent's international competitiveness. Zalk (2021) points out that the main issue for the continent is its

underdeveloped industrial capability. Large-scale investment in trade-related infrastructure is essential because it lowers the cost of doing business and provides the foundation for increasing intra-Africa trade. Therefore, for the AfCFTA to achieve its lofty goals, it must be located within a framework that not only provides possible mechanisms for success but also addresses the structural deficiencies of African economies (Zalk, 2021). Echoing Zalk, UNECA's flagship publication Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (2021), noted that "given Africa's huge infrastructure deficit, infrastructure development and financing are key for Africa's integration and development."

Davies (2019:74) argues that "if the AfCFTA is to fulfil its promise as a tool for inclusive development, industrialisation and diversification it needs to embrace more of the perspectives of a development integration programme." Likewise, Ismail (2021) contends that for the AfCFTA to thrive, it must adopt developmental regionalism which advocates for asymmetrical trade integration, structural transformation, and industrialisation, including the creation of regional value chains to build a robust regional market, cooperation on cross-border infrastructure investment and trade facilitation. Developmental regionalism as a regional integration framework provides a platform that enables the AfCFTA to not only increase intra-African trade through the removal of tariffs but also eliminate structural that hinder the continent from realising its full trade potential.

The AfCFTA aims to ensure that all its members reap the economic benefits of being a part of the Continental Free Trade Area. These benefits include economic growth, access to jobs, diversification of the economy and productive capacity development. Hence, industrial policy is critical to actualise developmental regionalism. It is important to note that there is no set agreed definition of industrial policy. This thesis subscribes to Wade's definition of industrial policy "as targeted efforts to change the production structure of an economy to accelerate economic development…" (2015:68). Based on historical and scholarly data, every nation that advanced economically and increased its welfare (like those in East Asia such as China and Japan) adopted an aggressive industrial strategy (Wade, 2015). Africa's economic growth must be influenced by industrial policy goals, and productivity development must be at the centre of the continents' development plan (Ismail, 2021).

The need for productive capacity and industrialization to transform African economies has been significantly underscored. For instance, inadequate energy infrastructure, which often results in frequent power outages in many countries across the African continent, reduces

manufacturing potential and output while increasing risk factors for value chains (Lopes & Willem te Velde, 2021). The dynamism and practical interventionist approach of industrial policy provide a platform for African countries to have a proactive policy instrument with which to address the continent's productive and infrastructural challenges.

2.4 Infrastructure development and regional integration

Economic development and the eradication of poverty both depend heavily on infrastructure. Contrarily, the lack of infrastructure has an impact on productivity and boosts production and transaction costs, which impede growth by lowering enterprise competitiveness and government capacity to implement programs for economic and social development (African Union, 2020). The relationship between regional integration and Africa's regional infrastructure is a gravely underappreciated facet of integration in the continent. Compared to other developing regions, notably, Asia and South America, Africa has the lowest level of physical and economic integration. The African Union's analytical report, *Elaboration of the 2021-2030 Priority Action Plan for the AU Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA): The Integrated Corridor Approach – "A Holistic Infrastructure Planning Framework to establish PIDA-PAP 2"* notes that:

> In Sub-Saharan Africa, poor infrastructure cuts national economic growth by 2% every year and reduces productivity by as much as 40%. Currently, only 38% of the African population has access to electricity, less than 10% is connected to the internet and only 25% of Africa's Road network is paved. (African Union, 2020:2)

Africa's infrastructure deficit has particularly contributed to Africa's inability to achieve and deepen regional integration. The lack of access to physical infrastructure such as roads, trains, ports, and energy is frequently cited as a key hindrance to African trade, investment, and cross-border labour mobility (Jerome & Nabena, 2016).

2.4.1 Transport and energy infrastructure

Transport and energy infrastructure are not well developed in Africa. This is overly concerning as a successful transportation and energy sector is needed for the distribution of goods and services. Since transportation services and energy accessibility are essential components of both the manufacturing of commodities and the delivery of sales and after-sales services, they have a significant positive impact on developing a country's and region's supply chain (UNECA, 2021).

Due to high transportation costs in Africa, locally produced goods are uncompetitive in price (UNECA, 2021). Transport infrastructure is critical to boosting the competitiveness of the African economies. More reliable and efficient transport infrastructure, should in theory, reduce transport costs for businesses. The importance of maintaining competitive transport prices and investment in transport infrastructure cannot be over-emphasized.

Another aspect of infrastructure that is critical to economic development and regional integration is energy infrastructure. Africa's greatest infrastructure gap is in the energy sector, whether evaluated in terms of energy use, generation capacity, or supply security (Jerome & Nabena, 2016). Most of Africa's energy industry is characterized by limited access (particularly in rural areas), poor purchasing power, low energy efficiency, and excessive reliance on traditional biomass for basic energy requirements (Jerome & Nabena, 2016). Comparatively, Africa's generating capacity is around half that of Southeast Asia; six hundred million Africans lack access to electricity, and nine hundred million do not have a clean source of energy for cooking. The quality and dependability of power are often poor for those who have access to it. Moreover, the average annual per-person consumption of approximately two hundred kilowatts per hour in Africa is too low in comparison to other parts of the world (Jerome & Nabena, 2016; UNECA, 2021; Zajontz, 2021). According to World Bank data, in 2020 only 48.4 % of the Sub-Saharan African population had access to electricity. This is extremely low when compared to other developing regions such as South Asia which was at 95.8 % and Latin America & the Caribbean at 98.5% (World Bank, 2022) (See figure 1). The disparities in electricity access alone are problematic considering the gap between these developing regions.

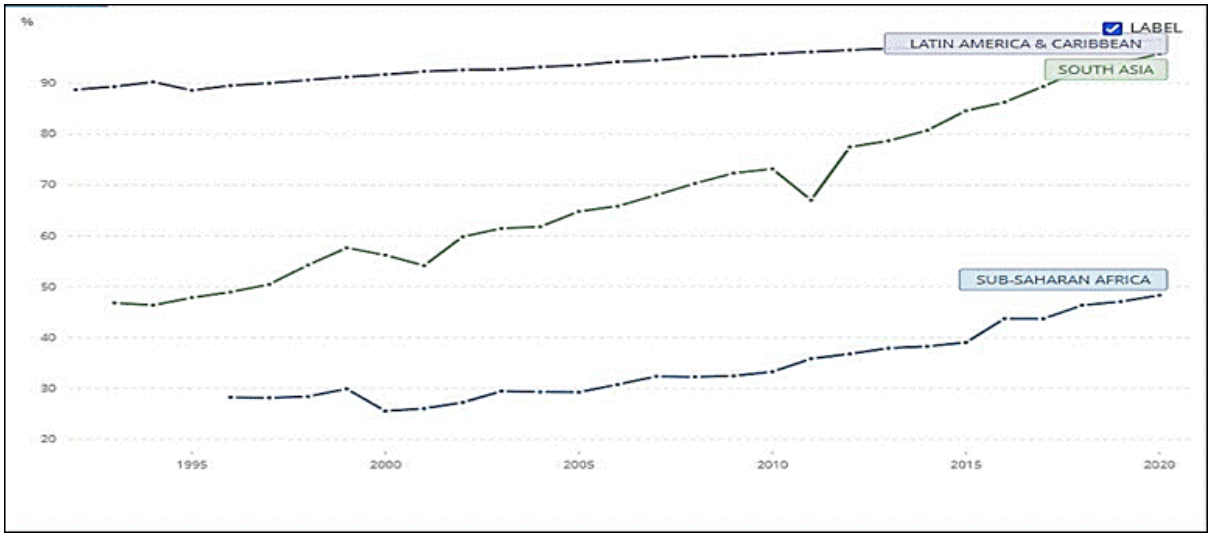

Figure 1: Access to electricity (% of the population) - Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Latin America & Caribbean.

Many African nations have national power networks that are less than the minimum efficient scale of a single plant. Regional trade may cut annual electricity costs by $2 billion if African nations could share large and cost-effective energy resources (Jerome & Nabena, 2016). Africa must address its severe infrastructure deficit to integrate the products and services markets and undergo structural change to benefit from regional integration. It is important to see the AfCFTA as a chance to assist with the growth of the regional market to create productive capacity, regional value chains, and cross-border infrastructure. Building industrial capacity and improving infrastructure are crucial for Africa's structural transformation goals. Ismail (2021) postulates that trade, the expansion of the productive sector, cross-border infrastructure initiatives should all work together to facilitate Africa's structural transformation.

2.5 Infrastructure development along transport corridors

The geographical distribution of economic activity is determined by modern economic geography models that include transportation costs as a crucial component. Trade expenses and border processing times have a significant role in determining the amount of trade between nations (Neogi, 2014). The African Union (2020) argues that to address and facilitate cross-border infrastructure development, the next iteration of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Priority Action Plan will emphasize the integrated corridor approach. This method is used to optimize the planning process of multiple infrastructure assets while achieving maximum economic and social effects (African Union, 2020).

Cross-border infrastructure is a critical component of the AfCFTA's trade integration agenda and its success. Three elements are considered to highlight the importance of infrastructure development along transport corridors as a key driver of socio-economic growth: direct employment impacts, indirect employment effects, and spillover effects. Mulenga (2013) and Ismail (2021) reaffirm that the corridor approach can enhance regional integration and trade and alleviate poverty, particularly in inland areas. Through trade and service centres along the corridor, a transport corridor can revitalize current regional markets, generate new ones, and enable the formation of value chains. The transport corridor approach provides not only a platform to cooperate but to foster cooperation on infrastructure development amongst African economies.

Empirical research suggests that to improve economic development, both hard and soft infrastructure must be developed. In response to Asia's infrastructure deficit, the Asian Development Bank pioneered the concept of an "economic corridor", intending to encourage

regional cooperation in investment and infrastructure development (De & Iyengar, 2014a; Isono, 2010). De and Iyengar (2014a) succinctly explain the evolution of a corridor:

> Transport corridors are a set of routes that connect the economic centres within and across countries. A transport corridor encompasses several centres of economic activity. Subregional transport corridors connect to a regional transport system from urban areas in a country. Upgrading transport and energy infrastructure brings investment to a region, initially into sectors where there is potential to develop projects… Thus, a transport corridor in a geographic space is enhanced with improved infrastructure and logistics and grows as an economic corridor. The economic corridor approach emphasizes the integration of infrastructure improvement with economic opportunities such as trade and investment, and it includes efforts to address the social and other outcomes of increased connectivity. (De & Iyengar, 2014b:1)

The development of corridors is a complex task to implement because of the variations and different corridor types. Srivastava (2011) demonstrates that complexity through the explanation of the transformation of a transport corridor to an economic corridor. There are five stages in the transformation: stage 1 (transport corridor) stage 2 (transport and trade facilitation corridor) stage 3 (logistics corridor) stage 4 (urban development corridor; and stage) 5 (economic corridor). The degree of the regionalisation of corridors, as well as their area of impact, serve as the foundation for a framework for regional corridor development (Srivastava, 2011). Hope and Cox (2015:1) provide a valuable depiction of the evolution of corridor, see figure 2. While not all corridors are meant to be economic corridors, intermediary corridors (trade, freight, industrial, agricultural, and so on) also contribute to greater economic activity (Hope & Cox, 2015).

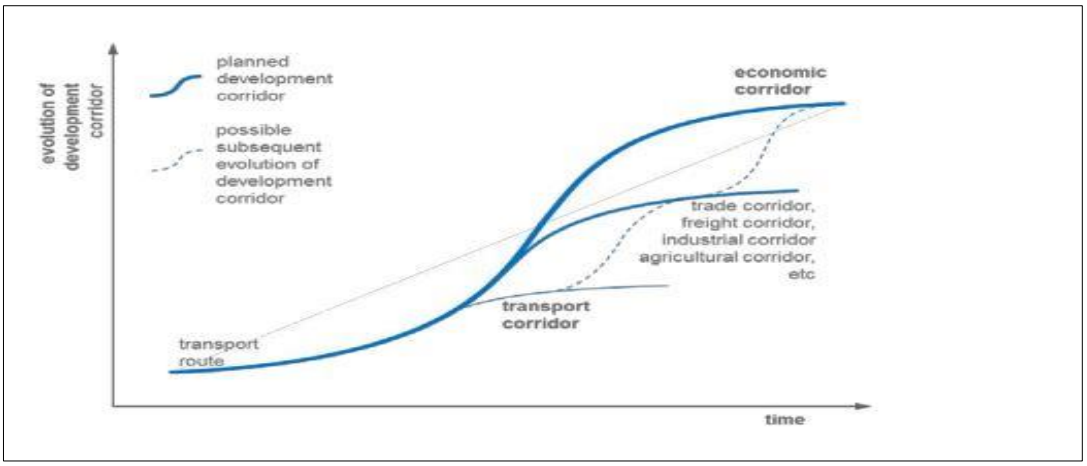

Figure 2: Evolution of Development Economic Corridor.

Corridors can attract new businesses and connect current manufacturing and agricultural clusters to new cross-border markets. These corridors do so by establishing an integrated regional trade system with enhanced infrastructure, increased and more efficient cross-border product movement, higher business participation, and more lively tourism within the area (Bowland & Otto, 2012).

2.5.1 Lessons from the global community.

A full assessment of transport corridor performance over time for investment and policy decisions requires data. The corridor idea has been implemented in various parts of the world, including the Americas and Europe. Some of the most successful examples in the developing world can be found in Asia (Mulenga, 2013).

2.5.1.1 East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC)

The Mawlamyine Port in Myanmar, located on the Andaman Sea's western coast, and Danang deep-sea port in Vietnam, located on the country's eastern coast, are directly connected by the 1,600 km EWEC land route constitute the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007). The goal of the EWEC was to create a highly efficient system that allowed the freer flow of products and people by removing trade barriers and decreasing transportation costs and travel time, hence promoting growth and poverty reduction (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007).

The construction of the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) improved connectivity and regional integration in the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic's province of Savannakhet. It decreased travel times in some cases from 12 to 3 hours—and transportation costs, boosting competition (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007). The number of buses increased from 600 in

2000 to 1,600 in 2005, while the number of transport companies increased by double over the same period (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007). New concrete homes, markets, guesthouses, restaurants, gas stations, vehicle repair shops, and other small businesses appeared as the economy and the townships expanded along the corridor (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007).

The EWEC illustrates how a transport corridor can evolve to being an economic corridor because it started as a transport corridor. Development of the infrastructure and trade facilitation mechanisms are both essential. These policies' combined advantages exceed the "highway alone" and "customs only" scenarios' respective economic effects (Luanglatbandith & Mission, 2007).

2.5.1.2 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a joint initiative between China and Pakistan for the development of roads, trains, and ports, to improve Pakistan's trade opportunities. The CPEC enables developed connectivity and electricity to Pakistan's energy-hungry economic hubs. Technically, the CPEC, a US$46 billion project, aims to connect the Gwadar Port in Pakistan with Kashgar, in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, via Gilgit-Baltistan. The CPEC will be finished in 2030 and spans three thousand kilometres. (Ahmad & Malik, 2017).

According to Irshad (2015), Pakistan which continues to face energy shortages and has limited trade with its neighbours, would benefit from enhanced connections and, if all goes well, will become energy abundant. The connection between Pakistan's west and east neighbours will be made possible through a road network. This transport corridor is necessary for better economic integration between India and Iran. Even while the CPEC streamlines regional trade in commodities and services, China's economic involvement in the area transforms adversaries into partners in maintaining security and stability in South and Central Asia (Irshad, 2015). Therefore, one can assume that despite the infrastructural development and economic spin-offs, this corridor also contributes to peace and security in the region.

Malchow and Waldamann (2017:13) contend that if the transport corridor approach is put into use, the infrastructure of its roads, railroads, and ports has a cascading effect that can spark a thorough socio-economic growth of a region. A transport corridor has the potential to significantly boost productivity and competitiveness, open new business opportunities, and eventually improve both regional and national GDP (Malchow & Waldamann, 2017). In doing so, transport corridors can decrease cross-border infrastructure deficit, create economic spill

overs that contribute to economic growth, connect rural agricultural markets, and create job opportunities (Malchow & Waldamann, 2017).

2.6 The Maputo Development Corridor: Southern Africa's experience of with a transport corridor

The Maputo Development Corridor was initially conceived as a transportation corridor by South Africa and Mozambique in 1996. It was, however, envisioned that it would eventually develop into a development economic corridor. These two countries' transportation agencies, together with the participation of South Africa's then Department of Trade and Industry, transformed this project into the first of the regional Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) programs in Southern Africa (Ismail, 2021). Following the signing of the Mozambique peace accord in 1993 and the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, both nations led an extensive rehabilitation project to reopen the corridor's economic potential, but this time through private sector investments in transportation infrastructure and financially sound anchor projects (Sequeira et al., 2014).

In 2011, trade between South Africa and Mozambique totalled R25,1 billion (US$2.96 billion), with 38 per cent of it passing through the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia border station (Mommen, 2012). The Maputo Corridor is a transport corridor linking the east coast port of Maputo in Mozambique with the highly industrialised and productive regions of the Gauteng province in South Africa. The key elements of this transport corridor are the N4 toll road, the rail corridor, the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia border post, and the port at Maputo (Ismail, 2021).

The key determinant of the success of a corridor's development is also dependent on its socioeconomic impact on low-income citizens. Though the Maputo Development Corridor is frequently used as an example of a successful corridor, it still faces challenges. Research shows that the Maputo Development Corridor benefits mostly large South African corporations and local investors in Mozambique's infrastructure projects, with modest development benefits for low-income populations (Byiers & Vanheukelom, 2014). Moreover, Dzumbira *et al* (2017) highlight that the MDC was founded, like other SDIs, on the growth pole idea. It depends on backward and forward linkages to spread development spill overs across a larger area by directing industries away from end nodes and toward secondary nodes along the corridor. Due to the MDC's import/export focus, there are few meaningful connections to local businesses, which results in a dearth of employment prospects (Dzumbira et al., 2017). Hence, the Maputo

Development Corridor is an ideal case study to analyse how corridors can play a significant role in facilitating regional integration or can have a questionable impact if not well executed.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the main theories of regional integration, as well as other pertinent concepts and alternative theoretical methods that could be applied to analyse developmental regionalism, the AfCFTA, and transport corridors. The relevance of developmental regionalism as an alternative to the linear model of integration was presented in relation to the challenges of regional integration in Africa. A detailed analysis of the role of transport corridors was provided by outlining the insights behind the problems caused by the infrastructure deficit as a barrier to intra-Africa trade and regional integration. This provides a key perspective for analysing how developmental regionalism can actualize the AfCFTA by leveraging transport corridors.

An overview of the major historical phases of regional integration in Africa revealed how significant different periods of integration have been on regional integration theory in Africa. This is critical to remember while applying the concepts. An assessment of existing scholarly theory yielded crucial insights into the several ways to drive the integration process. Additionally, it is clear how history influenced the aspirations for regional integration on the African continent as well as the deciding elements that influenced policy choices in regional integration processes. This has been demonstrated through a comprehensive review of the limitations of earlier models of regional integration, such as the linear model. These insights were considered in relation to developmental regionalism as an alternative paradigm for implementing the AfCFTA.

Africa's infrastructure deficiencies were discussed as a critical challenge to the prosperity of the AfCFTA. In asserting that the absence of tools like industrial policy and insufficient trade-related infrastructure prevent the Continental Free Trade Area's policy goals from being completely fulfilled. By utilizing the MDC as a lens to analyse how the transport corridor concept could be applied as a strategy for cooperation on infrastructure development and trade facilitation, this section illustrates the crucial relationship between infrastructure development and the role of transport corridors. These are essential factors for the effective implementation of the AfCFTA.

The explanatory literature provided a solid framework for assessing the AfCFTA's goals, which are to increase regional integration and eliminate trade barriers to promote intra-Africa trade

and economic growth. As such developmental regionalism, the main theoretical framework of the study, is examined, followed by the MDC case study which provides a contextual lens to analyse the potential of transport corridors as practical instruments to realise the AfCFTA.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines developmental regionalism. First, this chapter will outline definitions of regional integration, and briefly describe the different types of regional integration. Secondly, the chapter will explain why developmental regionalism is a preferred theoretical framework with which to anchor the research study, and more importantly, why it is a viable integration framework that should be adopted by AfCFTA.

3.2 Definition of regional integration.

It is important to note that, from a theoretical perspective, there is no clear definition of regional integration which is often used interchangeably with 'regionalism'. For example, Fawcett (2016) argues that regional integration refers to a process wherein formerly fragmented territories come together, signifying the relinquishing of sovereign authority to some supranational organization. Despite the contrasting perspectives, this study aligns with the definition by Ravenhill (2016:37) that "regionalism as a form of intergovernmental collaboration on a geographically restricted scale. Regionalism reflects purposive action by states… a social institution: as with other institutions, regional interstate collaboration can take place within formal organizations or on an entirely informal basis."

3.2.1 Conceptual differentiation of region-building, regionalism, and regionalisation

The discourse of regional integration theory especially in less developed economies has been characterised by contending theoretical arguments about its facets and features. This section attempts to demystify and differentiate the conceptual understanding of region-building, regionalism, and regionalisation as the theoretical framework of this study is rooted in these concepts. According to Fawcett (2016) "Region-building" encompasses a broad range of activities, from cooperation and integration within regional organizations to more informal or ad hoc procedures and practices. On the other hand, Kühnhardt (2010) contends that region-building is a comprehensive effort that encompasses political components, is linked by shared institutions, and attempts to develop a regional community with a sense of belonging and identity. However, what is clear between the two characterisations, is the fact that region-building as a concept has to do with a broad spectrum of policies and institutions that are committed to building a unified region.

Regionalism and regionalisation are two related terms that are often used as means of characterising processes or features relating to regional integration. For instance, according to Kang (2016), economic integration refers to both the institutionalised economic frameworks formed by regional agreements (regionalism) and the process/status of integration driven by trade and investments (regionalisation). On the other hand, Ravenhill (2016) argues that regionalism refers to any kind of structured regional cooperation involving more than two countries. To avoid confusion, regionalisation should be separated from regionalism. Regionalisation processes, which are frequently led by nonstate actors, may make it more desirable for governments to work together, although one process does not necessarily follow another. For example, during the past 25 years, the expansion of value chains throughout East Asia has significantly increased intraregional trade without, yet compelling states to sign a regional preferential trade agreement (Ravenhill, 2016).

This descriptive analysis illustrates the fluidity and interconnectedness in the regional integration theory. Genuine regional economic integration comprises both regionalism and regionalisation, and a region may be considered economically integrated if and only if it contains a concentration of trade flows between nations as well as an institutionalised trading scheme based on binding and durable shared standards (Kang, 2016).

3.3 Critical perspective of Ravenhill's "smile curve"

Regional institutions have a legal character in international law since they are founded on treaties and charters. Most importantly, this legitimacy is reinforced by the status and recognition given to regional organisations by the United Nations and other international institutions like the World Trade Organisation (Fawcett, 2012). Moreover, the legality of regional institutions is also derived from contextual regional aims, norms, and conceptual foundations. Hence, Ravenhill (2016) points out that "all forms of regional collaboration arguably have a political underpinning", for instance, the conceptualisation of the AU and its predecessor the OAU have drawn their legitimacy from its very African-ness and Pan-Africanism.

Africa's efforts to realise its aspirations for regional integration should be viewed against the backdrop of how rarely regionalism has been successfully pursued. Regional integration should be understood within the context of Africa's relatively 'thick' borders. State autonomy is unavoidably subject to some restrictions under all forms of regional integration. Members of

the African Union (AU), for example, would not often speak out against the institution's core values (Ravenhill, 2016).

3.3.1 regionalism and state autonomy 'smile' curve

Ravenhill (2016) provides a valuable typology for analysing several types of regional integration schemes based on their feature and goals. The relationship between state autonomy and the scope of cooperation in the context of political, functional, and economic regionalism is illustrated in Figure 3.

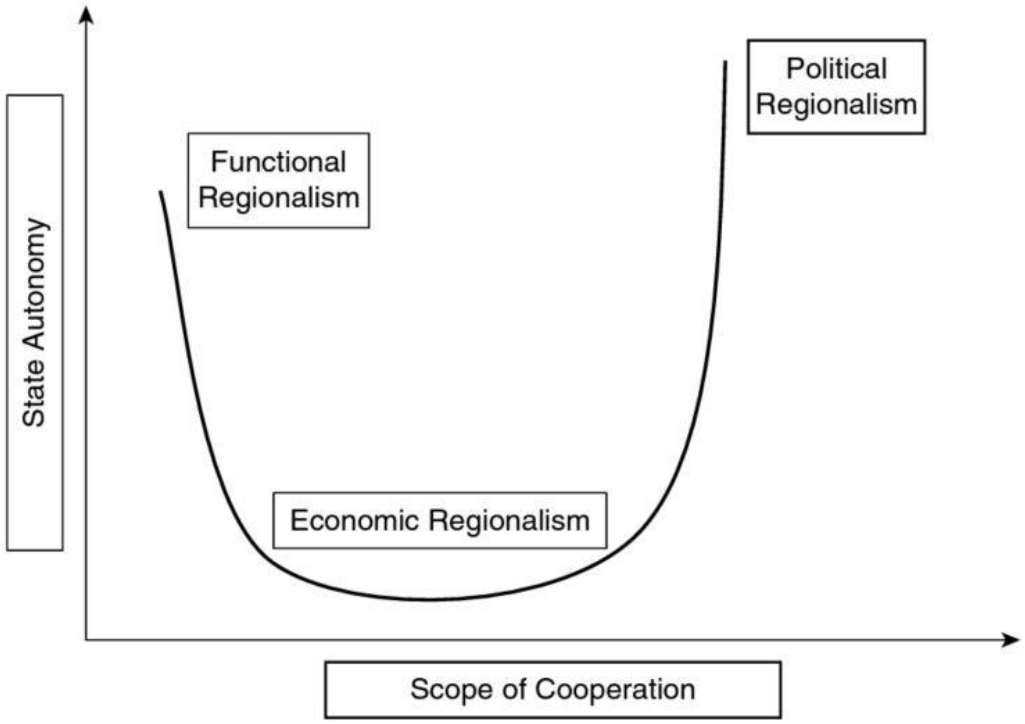

Figure 3: regionalism and state autonomy 'smile' curve

Political regionalism refers to institutions whose principal function is to cultivate a sense of collective identity or to strengthen a group of nations' voices in multilateral organizations or global affairs more broadly (Ravenhill, 2016). Instead of placing restrictions on national sovereignty, political regionalism may help to strengthen the international role of individual nations and so support the expansion of sovereignty. Regional cooperation that is based on a strong underlying political motive may be preserved even in the absence of a successful economic partnership (Ravenhill, 2016).

At the other end of the spectrum is functional regionalism, which implies working together across state lines on certain interests, such as those relating to river basins, transportation, or meteorology (Ravenhill, 2016). Additionally, there are several instances of effective regional

integration, such as the Southern Africa Power Pool (SAPP) in 1995 and the Senegal River Basin Multi-Purpose Water Resources Development. The use of functional regionalism has several benefits. Such collaboration typically results in quick and tangible advantages. Investing in various functional projects, especially infrastructure development, might be expensive, but they are the kinds of initiatives that commonly receive funding from foreign sources (Ravenhill, 2016).

Contrary to political and functional regionalism, economic regionalism demands more state sovereignty. Economic regionalism is about collaborative action by states to reduce barriers to the movement of goods and services, migration, and capital. The well-known typology of types of regional economic collaboration—from free trade area (FTA) through customs union, common market, and economic union—reflects a hierarchy of restrictions on state sovereignty imposed by regional integration schemes (Ravenhill, 2016). The AfCFTA is a good case of economic integration, Ravenhill (2016) contends that economic regionalism in Africa frequently combines a dedication to an overly ambitious integration agenda (particularly, customs unions and shared currencies) with a frail institutional structure, in which only a few duties are assigned to regional organisations. This misalignment between institutional design and the ostensible purpose of regional collaboration has been a key contributor to Africa's regionalism credibility crisis.

3.4 Developmental Regionalism

Africa's penchant for governmental trade and factor market integration has frequently resulted in excessively ambitious regional integration plans that ignore the African economy's fundamental flaws. The AfCFTA should avoid the mistakes of earlier regional integration plans that failed to produce the desired benefits by taking a developmental approach. Furthermore, there are also reservations about premature trade liberalisation which may result in fiscal income losses and other negative consequences for certain nations like least developed countries and small vulnerable economies. Hence, the discussion of developmental regionalism as a theoretical and practical approach is important.

Developmental regionalism has a proven record of accomplishment of intervention as both a theoretical and practical approach. Sloan (1971) argues that the best option available to the LDCs may be 'developmental regionalism' – which is comprised of joint policies of economic cooperation, coordination, and integration among underdeveloped countries. It is designed to accelerate the rate of development of both the member-states and the geographical region.

Moreover, trade and aid policies pursued by developed nations toward developing economies are inadequate and not likely to improve in the foreseeable future (Sloan, 1971). In line with the developmental regionalism discourse, Davies (1996:29) advocated for 'development integration', a strategy that emphasizes the need for both macro and micro coordination in a multisectoral program including industry, infrastructure, and trade. In contrast to the market integration method, which emphasizes close political collaboration later in the process, it emphasizes the significance of close political cooperation from an early stage of the integration process.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2013b) maintained that Africa's economic prospects will remain unfulfilled unless the challenges of inadequate infrastructure, a low level of diversification, and the limitations imposed by small and fragmented economies are addressed. Adopting a "developmental regionalism" approach, where regional integration is used to build an industrial base, holds much promise for Africa's economic growth. Ismail (2021) postulates that developmental regionalism is a heterodox approach that considers the realities and structural challenges of Africa. Adejumobi & Kreiter (2020), believed that the economic and non-economic benefits of developmental regionalism can take many different forms. They range from economic, social, and political, which include the possibility of hastening the process of poverty reduction and ensuring relative political stability through regional efforts. Non-economic benefits could include the creation of a secured community and the promotion of standard norms and collective identity, all of which may aid in the processes of regional economic transformation.

Ismail (2021) explains the theoretical foundations of developmental regionalism, and states:

> The analytical framework on regional integration draws on the work of Davies (1996), UNCTAD (2013), Adejumobi and Kreiter (2016), and UNECA, AU, and AfDB (2017) and extends the concept of "developmental regionalism" to include cooperation among African countries in a regional integration framework on four parallel and interconnected pillars: a) cooperation on building mutually beneficial trade integration (fair trade integration); b) cooperation on industrial development and upgrading in regional value chains (transformative industrialisation); c) cooperation on investment in cross-border infrastructure and trade facilitation; and d) cooperation on the building of democracy, good governance and peace, and security.

When considering the pillars of developmental regionalism as proposed by Ismail (2021), it becomes a viable framework on which to base the key theme of this study. Which seeks to

address the structural challenges that hinder intra-Africa trade such as infrastructure deficit, and trade facilitation harmonization. Consequently, a developmental regionalism based AfCFTA may prove to be a valuable component of a larger shift of African economies toward the higher value-added output. The potential for increased intra-regional trade is only one of several benefits of continental integration, however. If properly implemented, the AfCFTA might enable the formation of regional value chains, allowing the continent to shift to a higher level of value-added production (Davies, 2019). According to Ismail (2021:40), a viable strategy for addressing important economic obstacles is the creation of transport corridors, which combine physical and soft infrastructure to boost regional economic activity, connect rural communities to market opportunities, and create new job prospects.

3.4.1 Transport corridors as instruments to support developmental regionalism framework.

The term "corridor" has been used as a spatial and urban planning concept since the 1880s (Athukorala & Narayanan, 2018; Hope & Cox, 2015; Inan & Yayloyan, 2018). Transport corridors have taken on strategic importance in Africa's efforts to advance its regional integration agenda and policy objectives. For instance, The NEPAD Spatial Development Programme (SDP), a comprehensive spatial initiative to stimulate investment facilitation along "multi-country development corridors," is a part of the NEPAD African Action Plan (AAP) 2010-2015 (Byiers & Vanheukelom, 2014). The program's goals include boosting trade, fostering regional economic integration, making the best use of infrastructure, promoting economic diversity and competitiveness, and generating employment (Byiers & Vanheukelom, 2014). Consequently, in the African context, transport corridors are gaining recognition as policy/economic instruments that promote infrastructure and economic growth.

Given the emphasis placed on infrastructure development at a continental and regional level, corridors (specifically transport corridors) offer a way to concentrate the improvement of both hard and soft infrastructures. Through commercial and service centres along the corridor route, a transport corridor can revitalize current regional markets, generate new ones, and enable the formation of value chains. This can lead to more intra-African commerce and efficiency improvements, eventually boosting economic diversity on the continent and helping African economies to become industrialised middle-income countries (Malchow & Waldamann, 2017). Therefore, transport corridors, from practical and policy perspectives, not only provide an opportunity for cross-border cooperation on infrastructure but also possess significant potential for economic growth.

3.4.2 A brief critique of the transport corridor approach

Corridors (transport and economic) also face political economy challenges. A study by Smalley, *et al*. (2021) highlights that though investment might be a challenge, it might also be tied to a failure to recognize the needs and reality of smallholders, small agribusinesses, and women. For example, pastoralists and smallholder farmers in Lamu, Kenya, expressed fear that opening the region to commercial agriculture would intensify the exploitation they already faced from local intermediaries (Smalley et al., 2021).

Similarly, the question of 'who is benefitting?' has emerged as a critique of corridors in general. Do women, youth and small-scale farmers equally benefit? Söderbaum and Taylor (2008) contend that though there is a high reliance on economic viability, there are few clear measures for a people-centred development route or how locals in the corridor may contribute to economic growth. Local participation happens haphazardly or when favourable conditions develop, rather than being an important and methodical component of formal undertakings (Söderbaum & Taylor, 2018). That is, rather than people-centred development, the corridor approach to development is based on a capital-intensive, large business, and top-down development model. As such "the winners in the ongoing processes within the micro-region appear to be restricted to a small fraction of the population, the well-connected elites."

However, despite the existence of these challenges, there are arguments that transport corridors are significant policy instruments for bridging the infrastructure gap, creating jobs, and facilitating intra-Africa trade. Hence, developmental regionalism specifically its prioritisation of infrastructure development could be used to address these challenges. This is supported by Ismail (2021) who emphasises that infrastructure development is a critical component of the developmental regionalism paradigm, and transport corridors can support the implementation of developmental integration agenda. To illustrate, most African nations are far from their primary markets, and the high transportation costs of their products prevent them from participating in the global economy. As a result, the development of "transport corridors" has become a significant instrument for assisting African countries in lowering trade costs and stimulating investment in cross-border infrastructure and productive capacity (Ismail, 2021).

3.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed the fundamental theories of regional integration as well as other pertinent ideas and alternative theoretical stances that explain a study of the AfCFTA, regional integration, and transport and economic corridors. The connections between

developmental regionalism and the fundamental idea of regional integration were detailed by explaining the key ideas behind regional integration theories. Developmental regionalism as an integration approach is advocated as a more likely suited for Africa if all four pillars of the developmental regionalism framework are implemented concurrently and in tandem with one another.

Similarly, several views on transport corridors—particularly cross-border transport corridors—have been considered. Based on the literature consulted, it is evident that corridors can have both positive and negative impacts on economic development. The subject of how transport corridors can promote economic growth in both smaller and larger nations while encouraging more productive trade was explored. For instance, in this section the role and importance of transport infrastructure and its contribution to intra-African trade was highlighted.

Chapter 4:

The Maputo Development Corridor (MDC): A critical analysis.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter's main goal is to assess the potential efficacy and degree of success attributable to transport corridors in Africa. This will be accomplished by conducting a detailed analysis of the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC). This chapter focuses on cross-border corridors, especially on their capability to foster cooperation on infrastructure development and economic impact. First, analyse focuses on the degree of success that this corridor has attained, starting from the time of its original conception in 1996. Second, this chapter provides a critical assessment of whether transport corridors can be effective policy tools to support and operationalize the AfCFTA.

For conceptual clarity, it is important to define what type of a corridor is the MDC. The MDC has been studied by various scholars from development economists to spatial planning specialists, but there is no consensus on what kind of corridor it is. For instance, Roodt (2008) argues that "The Maputo Development Corridor is an economic corridor linking the Gauteng province in South Africa and the city of Maputo in Mozambique." While on the other hand, because of its infrastructure development and economic activity along the corridor, Sequeira *et al*. (2014) consider it a development corridor. Yet, according to Bowland and Otto (2012:2), "The Maputo Corridor is a transport corridor…" Based on the literature, the MDC is often referred to as a "transport corridor". For the purposes of this study, the MDC is understood as a transport corridor.

The MDC has been hailed as one of the most successful transport corridors on the continent. For instance, Sequeira *et al*. (2014) highlight that the reason the Maputo Corridor is an ideal African corridor case study is because it has so many different aspects. It is a well-established commercial corridor with a development focus, in addition to a hinterland corridor, it is a mining and resource-based corridor. Other corridors (such as the Walvis Bay Corridor) are far less diversified.

4.2 The genealogy of the Maputo Development Corridor

It has been more than a century since millions of migrants, substantial informal trade, and intense socio-ethnic linkages created a cross-border micro-region spanning southern

Mozambique and eastern South Africa. The Maputo Corridor was a crucial link in the Southern African transportation system before 1975, providing easy access to the sea for South African provinces in the Eastern Transvaal. Maputo's port handled approximately fourteen million tons of goods each year, with the bulk being transferred by train. After Mozambique gained its independence and civil war broke out in 1978, cargo levels at the port drastically decreased to approximately one million tons annually, and the railway lines connecting to Maputo suffered significant damage. The MDC, a more formal Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) initiative that aims to rebuild, revitalize, and, most crucially, formalise cross-border links between Mozambique and South Africa was established in 1996 (Söderbaum & Taylor, 2008).

The Southern African region benefited from the South African government's formulation of an SDI strategy in the middle of the 1990s. In 2000, a regional SDI unit that had been housed in the department of trade and industry was transferred to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), which, while receiving support from the South African government, had a mandate for regional development. The MDC served as a model for subsequent regional corridors (Sequeira et al., 2014). Moreover, the corridor, which is centred on a network of roads, rails, border posts, ports, and terminals, connects the most industrialised but landlocked northern and eastern provinces of South Africa (Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces) to Mozambique's port of Maputo (Thomas, 2009). According to Dzumbira *et al*. (2017), the South African government launched Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), which are intended to promote economic growth in regions with economic potential.

As a flagship corridor (see figure 4), the intention behind the development of the MDC was to combine infrastructure development and economic growth through a multiplicity of projects to realise its objectives. According to Hope and Cox (2015:8), the MDC had five objectives.

- economic growth in areas of unrealized potential.
- rehabilitating primary infrastructure along the corridor (road, rail, port, border posts).
- maximising investment in inherent corridor potential with facilitated global capital, regional markets, and regional economic integration.
- maximising social development, employment opportunities and increased participation of historically disadvantaged communities; and
- ensuring sustainability by developing policies, strategies and frameworks that ensure a holistic, participatory, and environmentally sustainable approach to development.

Dzumbira *et al*. (2017) argues that the major goal of the MDC is to build physical infrastructure systems that will support integrated, inclusive, diverse, and long-term economic growth in both nations. A total of 180 prospective projects worth $7 billion were proposed for the MDC (Dzumbira et al., 2017). The Witbank Maputo N4 toll road, the Maputo Port, the southern Mozambique rail network, and the Ressano Garcia/Komatipoort border post were among the major projects.

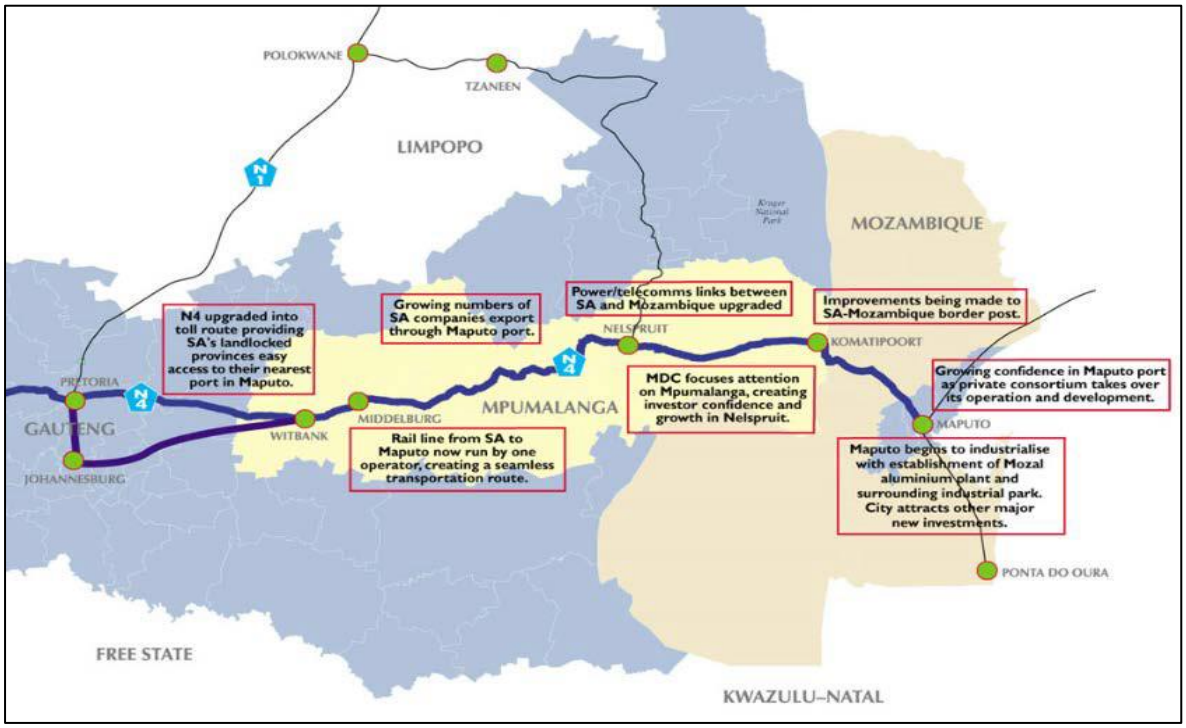

Figure 4: Maputo Development Corridor

4.3 The institutional framework of the Maputo Development Corridor

The development of the MDC's institutional framework was and continues to be founded on the facilitation of various public and private stakeholders in pursuing the MDC's objectives. For instance, the Witbank-Maputo N4 highway using the build, operate, and transfer (BOT) model Trans Africa Concessions (TRAC). It was granted a 30-year concession for this first significant public-private partnership (PPP) in southern Africa. Other initiatives included the reconstruction of Maputo's port, the formation of a public/private partnership to manage, operate, and maintain the southern Mozambique rail network, and the development of a single facility/one-stop border post at Ressano Garcia/Komatipoort (Söderbaum & Taylor, 2008).

Initially, state actors mostly drove the MDC project, there was no formal institutional architecture that was responsible for the governance of the MDC. Söderbaum and Taylor (2008:10) explain that "the initial phases were driven by a loose and fluid network consisting

of political champions, central government institutions, the different line departments (mainly transport, and trade and industry), the project managers and the technical teams." The following phase, according to the SDI methodology, was to be the 'exit strategy,' or the establishment of a specialized local institution that would take over project identification and subsequent dialogue with private investors to perform the function of a corridor dedicated investment promotion agency (Sequeira et al., 2014). To kickstart growth and prevent burdensome or difficult cooperation between weak provincial bureaucracies, planning, management, and monitoring were all relocated to the national level. As a result, the process of the establishment of the Maputo Corridor Company (MCC), which was scheduled to take over the 'exit strategy,' did not happen (Sequeira et al., 2014; Söderbaum, 2001).

Accordingly, the institutional vacuum left by the Maputo Corridor Company created coordination and operational challenges for the MDC. Negative impressions of the Port of Maputo and the corridor were multifaceted at the time: few shipping lines were calling the port, the economies of scale for cargo to attract shipping lines were extremely restricted, the absence of rail capacity and delays in the repair of the rail connection between Ressano Garcia and Maputo, and the limited border post working hours led to significant congestion and delays increased costs for cargo owners, and operational inefficiencies (Mommen, 2012). All these issues collectively contributed to the failure of a viable and efficient transport corridor (Mommen, 2013). Consequently, the establishment of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) in 2004 was a response to these challenges.

4.3.1 The Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative.

The inability of the MCC to take off created a void, making private-public sector communication more challenging and ineffectual over time. Mommen (2013) alludes that "in the absence of an institutional framework, the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) was established in 2004 by users, infrastructure investors, cargo owners and service providers looking for logistics solutions on the corridor." It became critical to form a body capable of combining and coordinating business and public sector interests in both nations (Sequeira et al., 2014). Moreover, Bowland and Otto (2012) argue that the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative is one of the most essential tools for achieving the goals of the MDC. The MCLI, a Private-Public Partnership (PPP) with operations in both Mozambique and South Africa, has played a key role in organising efforts and advocating for the resolution of unresolved issues that pose challenges.

The structural architecture of the MCLI is that of a non-profit organization whose objectives include public, and private sector interests. Sequeira *et al*. (2014:50) outline the MCLI goals:

> The main goals of MCLI were to revitalise the corridor as a key transport route for a broad hinterland, remove physical and nonphysical barriers to trade, generate awareness of corridor developments among potential users, unify communities of stakeholders around a common goal, coordinate investments that crossed multiple jurisdictions and establish Focus Work Groups and Operational Efficiency Working Groups to act as platforms for the resolution of operational inefficiencies.

Though the MCLI has been established as an institutional framework to drive the objectives of the MDC, it faces numerous challenges. Mommen (2013) argues that the institutional structure of MCLI is also being reviewed. While the organisation's private-sector orientation has been its biggest asset until now, the lack of a formalised connection with its government partners is problematic. The initial needs-driven plan must now be transitioned to a more long-term approach centered on the region's development requirements. The organisation must collaborate with corridor governments to ensure that long-term planning and actions on the corridor are integrated (Mommen, 2013).

Despite the progress made as far as developing an institutional architecture that will propel the goals of the MDC, scholars have criticised the state of the MDC's institutional framework. For instance, its top-down management structure and implementation did not consider the priorities of local stakeholders, and hence it did not always enhance the general well-being of local citizens (Dzumbira et al., 2017). Thus, there needs to be a review of the framework such that it takes into consideration the interests of small and medium enterprises, especially on the side of Mozambique.

4.4 The Maputo Development Corridor – An analysis of its contribution and challenges.

The MDC as a transport corridor has indeed contributed significantly to regional trade, transport infrastructure development and economic development. The corridor's key goals have been to rebuild existing core infrastructure, attract investment to the corridor and region, make it sustainable through applicable policies and strategies, and maximize the benefit of investing in and developing the corridor (Bowland & Otto, 2012). This includes increasing trade, opening neighboring markets to one another, and providing access to global markets (Bowland & Otto, 2012).

Thomas (2009) argues that the MDC served as a model for other corridors and SDIs across Africa. It provided a slew of industrial and commercial prospects along the 590-kilometre road from Johannesburg to Maputo, which today, is densely packed with steel mills, petrochemical plants, quarries, mines and smelters, sugar cane and forestry plantations, and manufacturing facilities (Thomas, 2009). Moreover, Dzumbira *et al*. (2017) highlight that the MDC improved the attractiveness of the region for foreign direct investment (FDI) and facilitated the flow of South African capital into Mozambique. By promoting growth in the tourism, construction and manufacturing sectors, the initiative created seven thousand employment opportunities by 1998 (Dzumbira et al., 2017). Additionally, according to Roodt (2008:49), "only 29 000 tons of goods passed through the border post between South Africa and Mozambique by road in 1997. By 2007 this increased to approximately 2.25 million tons per year." From a developmental perspective, the MDC has attained significant successes especially in facilitating infrastructure investment, and regional cooperation.

A noteworthy achievement has been the construction of a freight bypass road, which allows freight to be cleared in a single stop at KM77 on the South African side, before the border post (Dzumbira et al., 2017). Transit times from the border to the port and back have been reduced to five and a half hours for some customers. It is a notable accomplishment since a one-day decrease in interior travel times may increase exports by up to 7% (Bowland & Otto, 2012). Finally, Ismail (2021) makes a valuable argument that the Maputo Development Corridor serves as a case study illustrating the value of an integrated approach to infrastructure development. While the physical infrastructure serves as the foundation for the effort, it also depends on access to funding, regulation, a forum for dispute settlement, and connections to other trade facilitation initiatives like border control.

4.4.1 A reflection on the MDC's contribution to economic growth in the region

According to economic theory, as transportation costs fall, traffic grows, and so does trade in goods and services. As a result, the corridor has the potential to deliver significant competitiveness and productivity benefits, as well as new economic prospects, leading to a rise in national and regional GDP (Ismail, 2021). Notably, Thomas (2009) points out that by 2002, the corridor had accomplished several remarkable achievements. Over $5 billion in private sector investments in regional infrastructure development, industrial growth, and natural resource exploitation and beneficiation were enabled. Furthermore, according to Hope and Cox (2015:22), "the corridor attracted further investments to the value of $600 million and created 8,000 new permanent jobs together with 15,000 new construction temporary jobs." The MDC,

has over the years made significant strides in fulfilling its mandates through these kinds of investments.

The MDC as an SDI also looked at the tourism sector as a sector that has unrealized potential for economic growth in the region. According to Rogerson (2001:130) "the area had an estimated 1.7 million tourism arrivals, the largest segment of which were domestic rather than international tourists." However, the establishment of the MDC also had a growth factor (see figure 5) on the tourism of the MDC area.

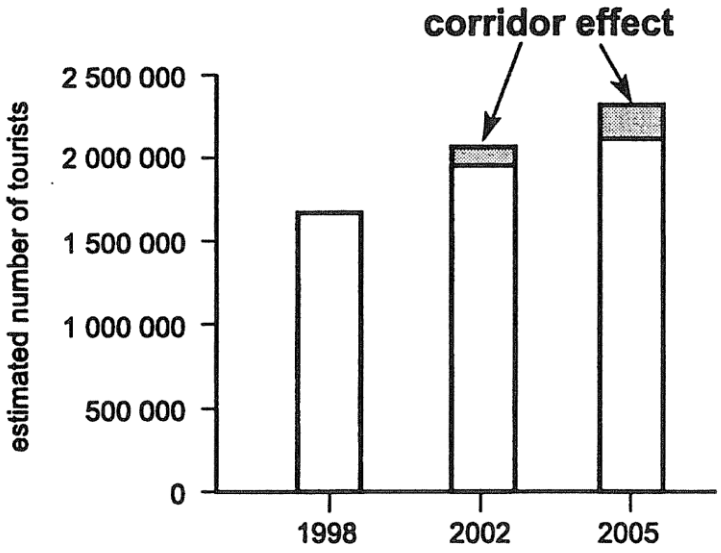

Figure 5: The growth of tourism in Mpumalanga, 1998-2005

The MDC offers a broad mix of tourist destinations that demonstrate distinct characteristics of exploration, cooperation, and growth (Rogerson, 2001). Similarly, the corridor has also been pushing for private sector investment in the development of productive capacity, which in turn would have increased productivity and competitiveness. For example, the Beluluane Industrial Park, a 600-hectare industrial free zone development adjacent to the Mozal plant, is attracting a mix of foreign, regional, and local investors into heavy industry, manufacturing, and hi-tech businesses (Thomas, 2009). The observable success of the MDC has prompted the establishment of similar transport corridors throughout the region of Southern Africa, as decision-makers recognized that transit efficiency for imports and exports is not the sole benefit of transport corridors.

4.4.2 The challenges of the Maputo Development Corridor

The MDC has developed significantly since its inception as a corridor, despite the numerous challenges that it faces and continues to grapple with. The first criticism against the MDC lies

with the neo-liberal underpinnings of the SDI. Söderbaum and Taylor (2008) contend that the development impulses of the MDC are seriously jeopardized by the SDI neoliberal premises and the attendant components within neoliberalism, which can only serve to erode any cohesive sense of integration among the disadvantaged peoples along the Gauteng-Maputo axis. Furthermore, any public feeling of integration is undermined by the neoliberal push of both South African and Mozambican economic policies (Söderbaum, 2001; Söderbaum & Taylor, 2008). Moreover, Söderbaum and Taylor (2008) critically argue that a considerable focus is placed on economic viability, but there are few actual plans for a development route that is oriented toward people, or on how residents of the corridor might contribute to economic growth. Instead of being an essential and planned component of formal programs, local engagement happens randomly or when favorable circumstances exist. This indicates that the MDC is mostly directed at large corporations, particularly those from South Africa and other countries (Söderbaum & Taylor, 2008).

Another challenge confronting the MDC relates to its policy, operational and institutional framework. Its top-down management structure and implementation do not consider the priorities of local stakeholders; therefore, it does not always promote the general well-being of local citizens. The institutional strategy for the MDC, which promotes GDP growth through export activities, is not always a people-oriented development (Dzumbira et al., 2017). Consequently, the corridor is an investment initiative rather than a prospective development corridor, which has socio-economic development imperatives. For instance, a study by Hope and Cox (2015) posits that the MDC needs to further improve its social policy mechanism. Hope and Cox (2015) point out that governmental and non-governmental organizations operating in development corridors must be given the authority to approve and carry out initiatives alongside civil society organizations, without this cooperation, the goals of economic growth and social development are jeopardized. Thus, the MDC must improve on these aspects so that it can fulfil its developmental mandate.

Similarly, Bowland and Otto (2012) expressed a concern that even though there is political will at the executive level to advance the Maputo Corridor initiative, some stakeholders claim that there appears to be a lack of political will at the administration and executive levels. The South African Parliament's bureaucratic delays have made this situation worse. Operational challenges and logistical costs are exacerbated by the corridor's unbalanced trade flow, where South African exports are 120 times greater than Mozambican imports, especially given that these are far higher than transit times and costs in more industrialised nations. (Bowland &

Otto, 2012). Hope and Cox (2015) make the key point that some aspects of the MDC's planning and implementation were admirably executed but require improvement. For instance, major investment projects were not well packaged to maximize the benefits and value. Hence, social benefits and employment creation have not been as beneficial as was expected. They were packaged, but no planned linkages were adequately implemented (Dzumbira et al., 2017; Hope & Cox, 2015).

4.5 Summary

In summation, the case study has made clear five points, (1) though the Maputo Development Corridor is hailed as one of the most successful corridors in the continent, it still has a long way to go to be a development economic corridor. (2) As highlighted before, the neo-liberal foundations of the MDC as an SDI have hampered the developmental imperative of the MDC, thus, only benefiting the political elite and large corporations, specifically on the South African side. (3) There needs to be a strengthening of the institutional architecture of the MDC to deliver on its promises. (4) Despite the challenges, it continues to play a vital role in facilitating regional integration and provides a platform for supporting developmental regionalism.

There is potential for beneficial and constructive corridor consolidation. It is possible to integrate the formal region's development strategy and institutional framework to better serve the needs and welfare of its residents as well as those of the unorganized sector in SADC. Building from the theory of developmental regionalism as a theoretical framework which is an alternative approach to neo-liberalism, this chapter illustrates that transport corridors have the potential to provide significant economic returns through regional integration while also linking landlocked nations to regional and global markets (Ismail, 2021). Thus, transport corridors are an important instrument for operationalizing the AfCFTA's objectives, and they can contribute to developing and strengthening RVCs and GVCs and, overall, play a significant role in Africa's industrialization.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings. Additionally, it collates information from the primary data collected through interviews. It also details the supposition of perspectives from those interviewed and collates this with the consulted literature. Lastly, the development of transport corridors as a policy instrument to support the AfCFTA and developmental regionalism will be discussed.

5.1 Developmental regionalism.

As discussed in previous chapters, there are complications associated with implementing regional integration initiatives in Africa. There is a danger that the AfCFTA is faced with challenges such as inadequate infrastructure (hard and soft) and framework concerns due to the failure of prior regional integration frameworks such as the linear model. The analysis of the primary and secondary data supports the critique of the European linear model of integration. Similarly, some interviewees also argued that developmental regionalism provides the most viable strategy for the AfCFTA to succeed. For instance, research participants Fredrik Söderbaum (2022, int.) and Tim Zajontz (2022, int.) contended that the EU model has long been criticized by scholars firstly because of its focus on supranational organisation. Moreover, they argue that developmental regionalism can steer the AfCFTA towards industrialisation and diversification of African economies. This is a similar argument made by Ismail (2021:82) that "the process of developmental regionalism is more likely to become part of a virtuous circle of growth, development and reduction of poverty."

The data also emphasized that cross-border infrastructure will be a vital for the to the AfCFTA's trade integration program, and it, together with industrialization, must constitute part of Africa's main endeavor to promote the continent's economic growth (Ismail, 2021; UNCTAD, 2013a). The question of infrastructure development has been a topical issue in the context of Africa's regional integration efforts. All the interviewees agreed that Africa's infrastructure deficit will be a challenge for the AfCFTA. According to Ify Ogo (2022, int.), "trade-related infrastructure is critical in the success of the AfCFTA as it improves trade facilitation processes though in hindsight the inadequate infrastructure has not stopped trade in Africa." Correspondingly, Tsotang Tsietsi (2022, int.) asserts that "trade-related infrastructure development should be prioritised to make cross-border trades to be far more efficient, making

African companies far more competitive." The development of soft infrastructure has, however, not been emphasized enough in developmental regionalism discourse. The developmental regionalism discourse emphasizes that the constraints to intra-regional trade in Africa are more related to weak infrastructure than to tariffs and regulatory restrictions (Vickers, 2017).

5.1.1 Contrasting perspectives on developmental regionalism

It is important to note that although there were misgivings on the concept of developmental regionalism most of them were more theoretical. For instance, seven participants pointed out that developmental regionalism as a regional integration framework is a better alternative to previous regional integration schemes implemented in Africa. However, they were wary of the practical interpretations by policymakers at regional and state levels. Tim Zajontz (2022, int.) explains that just like the EUs linear model of integration, policymakers should be critical of their implementation and interpretation of developmental regionalism. Akinkugbe (2020:300) argues that "developmental regionalism in African regional trade agreements is incoherent... The incoherence of developmental regionalism is reflective of the heterogeneity and post-colonial reality of the African States and the diverse social, economic, political, and physical infrastructure development goals they pursue." The entire arguments raised here, are based on descriptive conceptualisation because he further explains that developmental regionalism, from an interpretation point of view, is 'development(al)' that can be universally defined because of context differences.

Despite the theoretical critiques of developmental regionalism, Ismail (2021) makes a compelling case. He points out that developmental regionalism is based on fair trade, the promotion of regional value chains, the integration of cross-border investment in infrastructure, and the strengthening of democratic governance as a reaction to the negative consequences of trade liberalization and the changing global climate. Among these is the recognition that, above and beyond economic rewards, political commitments to collective action are crucial for the success of regional integration programs. Therefore, the strength of developmental regionalism lies within its context-oriented approach and its economic and non-economic benefits as outlined in the literature review.

5.2 The transport corridor approach as a practical tool to support developmental regionalism.

Given Africa's infrastructure deficits, the study and an analysis of the continent's situation have revealed that infrastructure is certainly an essential prerequisite to ensure the success of the AfCFTA. This would also assure economic growth, diversification of the African economies and the creation of job opportunities. According to Jeronimo Caicedo-Delgado (2022, int.), transport corridors are especially important in restoring decades-long of infrastructural deficiencies, furthermore, they foster regional integration. As observed in the literature, a viable strategy for addressing key economic barriers is the establishment of corridors, which link physical infrastructure and soft infrastructure issues to stimulate regional economic activity, connect rural communities to market opportunities, and generate new job opportunities. Transport corridors consist of port, road, and rail facilities and typically extend from harbors to regionally integrate hinterland economies (Malchow & Waldamann, 2017).

Bruce Byiers (2022, int.), Head of African Economic Integration at ECDPM raises another critical issue about transport corridors. He argues that corridors are complementary policy tools to operationalize the CFTA. Because they provide a platform in which regional and state actors can actively target economic bottlenecks such as infrastructure with transport corridors. This is also similar to the assertion made by Ify Ogo (2022, int.). She argued that corridors help build on what works and take lessons from there for further implementation. Accordingly, literature also supports the idea that transport corridors provide a suitable approach to boost cooperation on infrastructure development investment and trade facilitation.

Africa has sixteen landlocked countries (Ismail, 2021) and these countries need access to ports, rails, and roads to reach market opportunities. Any regional integration strategy that does not integrate these countries will not succeed. A corridor's economic purpose is to facilitate internal and international trade by offering cost-effective and reliable transportation, or a transit corridor in the case of landlocked nations. In contrast to conventional transport policies, the transport corridor approach is innovative because it adopts a more trade-oriented strategy that includes not only investments in hard infrastructure but also focused interventions on the soft dimension of the transport corridor—policy reforms and other improvements (Sequeira et al., 2014).

5.2.1 The Maputo Development Corridor – A case study

The Maputo Development Corridor as it has been discussed is one of the most successful corridors. It offers some insights and lessons on how can transport corridors be leveraged to support the AfCFTA and developmental regionalism. Based on the data collected and analysed, transport corridors are most suited to support developmental regionalism because of the ability to create cooperation on infrastructure development and trade facilitation and create backward and forward linkages for trade. Hugh Lamarque (2022, int.) asserts that transport corridors and trade facilitation have a symbiotic relationship. This means that while transport corridors like the MDC have been central in strengthening trade facilitation processes, harmony in trade facilitation processes in turn makes transport more efficient.

Despite the consensus among the participants on the critical role, that the MDC has played in consolidating cooperation between South Africa and Mozambique, especially on cross-border infrastructure. There was also strong criticism of the corridor, especially with regards to its institutional framework and stagnated delivery of economic development. For example, Lovemore Bingandadi (2022, int.) critically points out trade growth increased because of the MDC, especially in agricultural and extractive goods, and economic growth along the corridor has stagnated. Additionally, he laments that the MDC's institutional framework has been weak. These insights have also been deduced from the literature review. The MDC has not been able to translate investments to real economic growth for the local people and its top-down approach has failed to include for example small-holder farmers, and local businesses and create job opportunities (Hope & Cox, 2015; Sequeira et al., 2014; Söderbaum & Taylor, 2008)

Notwithstanding the challenges that MDC continues to face, as a corridor, it provides a good case study for further research but also as a model of transport corridor development. This is because it offers a key context to understand the link between regional integration and Africa's regional infrastructure. The literature review of the study highlights the reality that for the AfCFTA to have the intended outcomes, from a social and economic perspective the challenge of infrastructure needs to be addressed. Based on the literature, the MDC has pivoted in addressing this dichotomy amidst all the challenges it continues to grapple with.

5.4 Summary

In summary, this chapter has discussed three key concepts that have emerged from the data analysis and literature consulted which are the AfCFTA, developmental regionalism and

transport corridors. This has been done through a detailed analysis of the primary and secondary data collected and reviewed.

The study recognizes that AfCFTA is a multifaceted development instrument that tackles social, economic, and political development challenges. The goal of AfCFTA is to promote regional integration, boost intra-Africa trade, and foster economic growth in Africa. Based on the literature review and interview answers, Africa needs to move away from the linear model of integration to developmental regionalism. This assertion is a product of robust theoretical analysis of regional integration initiatives that Africa has undertaken which have not yielded the intended outcomes. According to the analysis of the data, while the removal of tariff barriers is important in the process of regional integration, developmental regionalism is a framework that looks beyond static economic perspectives, but it is an alternative to the market-oriented regional integration framework. It is grounded on the heterodox economic outlook and focuses on cooperation on infrastructure development investment, industrialisation, and fair trade (Ismail, 2021). As such, developmental regionalism provides better chances for the AfCFTA to succeed, and consequently, improve Africa's economic development.

The data analysis uncovered that the success of the AfCFTA is in jeopardy because of Africa’s infrastructure deficit. Infrastructure such as rail, road and energy are critically weak, thus causing bottlenecks to intra-Africa trade and trade facilitation. As a result, the primary conclusion from the data analysis was that, under the framework of the AfCFTA, transport corridors have a large potential to improve infrastructure development, regional integration, and continental economic growth. For instance, in the case study on the Maputo Development Corridors, three key insights were drawn out from the comprehensive analysis of the MDC.

- The transport corridor approach provides a multi-facet approach to cooperation on infrastructure development that is coupled with spin-off economic benefits.
- Hard and soft infrastructure is equally important to improve intra-Africa trade, therefore, transport corridors provide a platform to not only harmonise trade facilitation processes in the region but increase investment in the labour-intensive sector along the corridor.
- Lastly, transport corridors are most suited to support developmental regionalism and RVC and GVC development, facilitate industrialisation, and consolidate regional integration.

The AfCFTA's implications on relations with external partners like the EU and China is another significant factor that relates to the prospects and limitations of the agreement, and future research may find it interesting to concentrate on this issue. The AfCFTA cannot be detached from the larger global context of trade even if it is an African initiative. As a result, future study on Africa's foreign partner relations, particularly within the context of developmental regionalism, is essential.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

The signing of the AfCFTA in 2018 was a significant development in Africa's path toward regional integration. However, several problems might make it difficult to implement. Given the critical importance of infrastructure as a vital catalyst for increasing intra-African trade, regional infrastructure projects and economic regional integration efforts must be synchronised. To promote regional integration, African policymakers must invest in practical policy tools for infrastructure development.

This thesis undertook an exhaustive analysis of scholarly literature in conjunction with primary data collected from twelve interview participants to answer the research question. It argued that as AfCFTA is being implemented, it needs to move from previous regional integration frameworks. Consequently, through engaging with theoretical foundations and reviewing literature in chapters three and four, the thesis was able to respond to the question; Why should the AfCFTA adopt developmental regionalism as an approach to regional integration and how is it different to the past approaches? They brought to light the incompatibility of past regional integration frameworks within the African context and their failures to meet policy expectations. Through data collection and analysis, the thesis found that despite scholarly critiques, there is wide consensus on developmental regionalism being an appropriate alternative to past regional integration strategies. Finally, it outlined that transport corridors, can be used to support and actualise developmental regionalism and subsequently, the AfCFTA.

This dissertation outlined and discussed global experiences that continue to serve as the benchmark for corridor analysis. Moreover, it analysed the Maputo Development Corridor as a unit of analysis for the use of transport corridors in supporting regional integration initiatives. However, due to the dynamic nature of the regional integration and development theory, it would have been difficult to analyse the appropriateness of policy tools to assist developmental regionalism, including the building of corridors for Africa, without the contrasting key theoretical propositions within the scholarly research. This was done through an elaborate consultation with scholarly research and industry experts as research participants. The research further, confirmed that transport corridors can support developmental regionalism.

6.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to serve as an evidence-based policy development and implementation strategy. This study established and emphasized the ideas that continue to serve as the standard for analyses of regional integration. It would have been difficult to construct and judge the suitability of the new theory of progressive regionalism without the comparison of the old static ideas.

- Through the AfCFTA Secretariat and other interregional organizations, policymakers and African political leadership need to formally adopt developmental regionalism as a strategic approach to implementing the AfCFTA.
- Transport corridors illustrated that investment in soft infrastructure (regulatory and policy frameworks, implementation and monitoring agencies, accountability relations, etc.) is just as important as the actual design and creation of hard infrastructure.
- Therefore, the RECs, the AU and the AfCFTA Secretariat need to review and implement policy recommendations that are encompassed in the Elaboration of the 2021-2030 Priority Action Plan for the AU Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA): The Integrated Corridor Approach – "A Holistic Infrastructure Planning Framework to establish PIDA-PAP 2".
- For ensuring sustainable and well-functioning development corridors, there needs to be an institutional architecture review at a continental or regional level that will support and guide the development of effectively managing corridors.

The potential for developing transport, economic, and development corridors still requires a great deal of research. To reap the benefits of a new era of the AfCFTA, Africans must develop and implement a combination of novel and tried-and-tested policies, which is why scholarship and contextualization of Africa's basis for economic integration are crucial.

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