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Regional development and migration in the Lower Basin of the Zambezi River. The importance of property rights

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ABSTRACT

Globalization is associated with pressures and conflicts over natural resources, with migration, urbanization and development. The analyzes these phenomena focusing the Lower Basin of the Zambezi River in Mozambique where external demand over natural resources have been associated with huge projects on transport infrastructures, coal mining and agroforestry, somehow correlated with recurring conflicts. The approach proposes and uses a regional development model that highlights the impacts of the spatial allocation of property rights on income and migration. Results show the importance of resources ownership in the spatial profile of development and social unrest.

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1. Introduction

In most of the developing world, namely in Africa, the main economic drivers of economic growth are the rents on oil and mineral exports and the spatial allocation of public employment they allow influencing strongly the spatial profiles of economic growth [4]; actually, due to the spatial allocation of property rights, the location of oil and minerals resources that generate such rents do not coincide with places where they are spent, leading to a detachment between the local communities and the exploitation of natural local resources. Furthermore, besides environmental degradation associated to the use of natural resources, the use of natural resources under these circumstances might generate poverty, migration and conflict [6,8,11].

The paper tries to analyze these phenomena focusing the Lower Basin of the Zambezi River in Mozambique where the increasing demand over natural resources have been associated with huge projects in coal mining – Tete and Moatize - energy - Cahora Bassa and Mepanda Uncua - natural gas - Temane and Pande - and also to the creation of railway corridors associated to the exploitation of those resources [1]; all this coexistent with immanent conflicts over the spatial allocation of the rents obtained from the exploitation of those natural resources.

Beyond the analysis of the impacts of major projects in the national accounts due to the exploitation of natural resources performed by authors like [2] the focus of this paper is to understand why these projects are associated with increased migration from resource rich regions with resilient poverty to regions that own the property rights over those resources.

To approach this issue for the Zambezi Basin in Mozambique, first it is proposed a methodological tool suitable to assess the impacts on regional development associated with the spatial distribution of rents coming from the exploitation of natural resources (point 2). In point 3 the model proposed is adjusted to the data available and calibrated for the districts of the Lower Basin of the Zambezi River in Mozambique; in Point 4 a discussion of the results is presented and some policy awareness and research suggestions are proposed.

2. Regional development model

The conceptual regional development model adopted in this paper highlights two geographical attributes of economic growth: scale and accessibility [9]. The assumption is that scale, associated with productive capacity, and access, related to the expenditure capacity, do not necessarily go with each other due to unilateral and unbalanced transferences between regions and the indirect, induced and catalytic effects they generate. Therefore, it is possible to define, not two (developed and poor) but four types of

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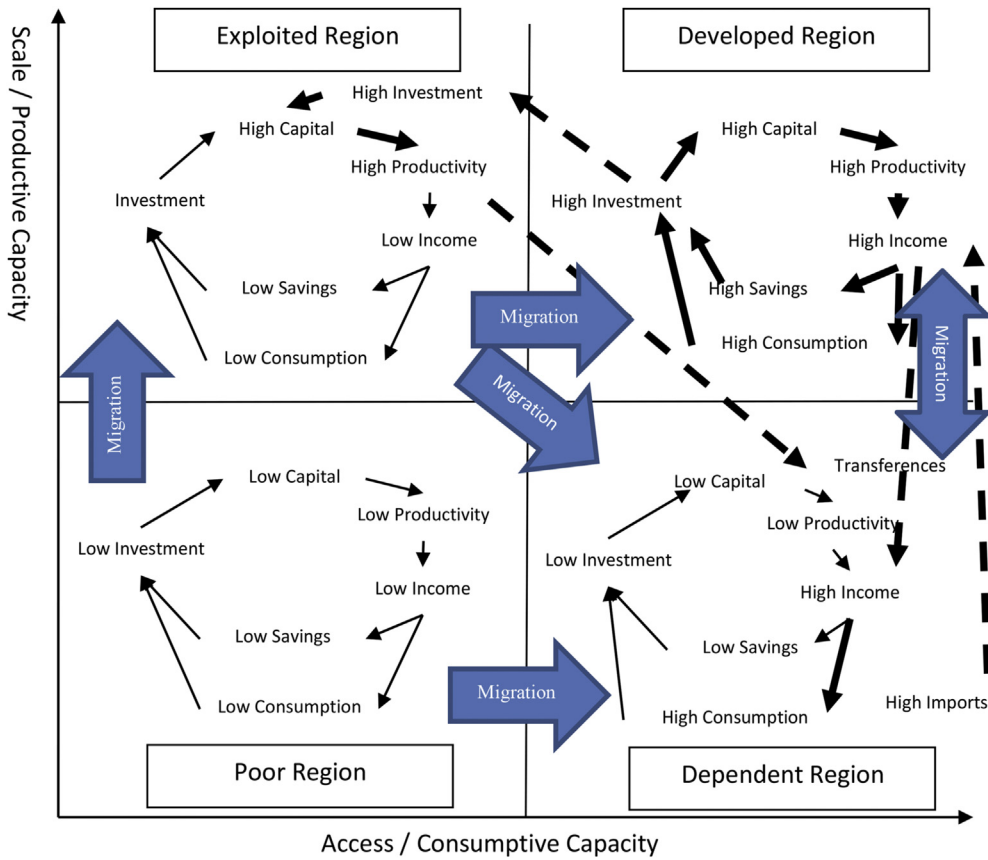


Fig. 1. Typology of regional development processes.

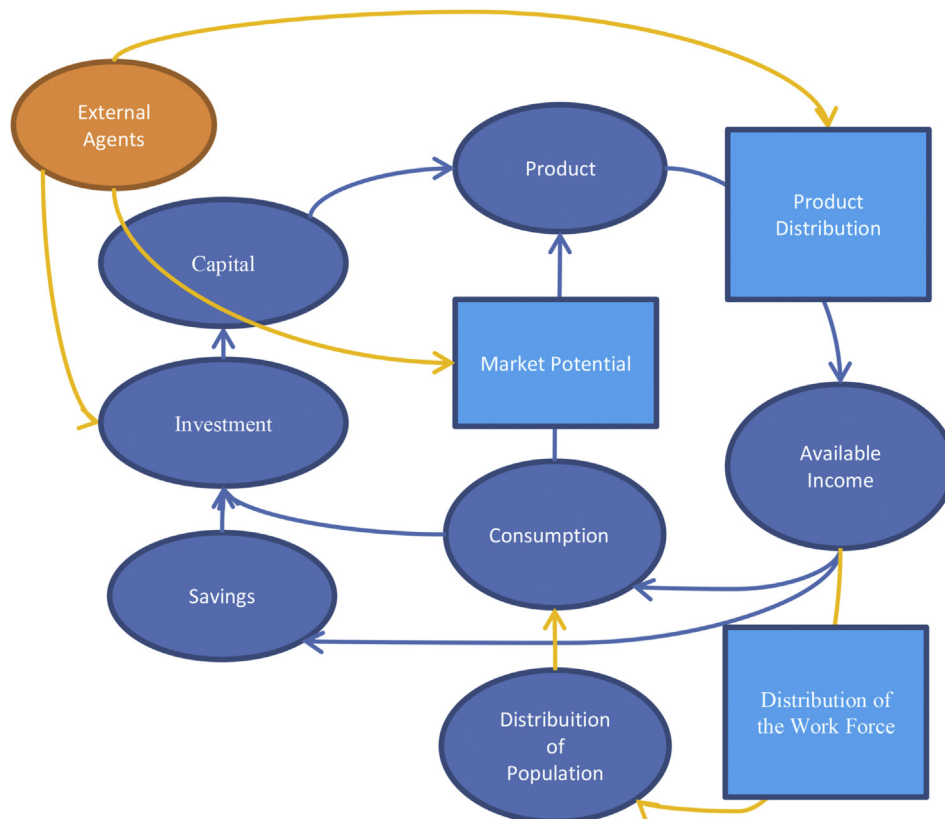


Fig. 2. Conceptual model for regional development.

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