

SPATIAL LINKAGES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

PROFESSOR D. D. AJAYI

INAUGURAL LECTURE 2025/2026 NO.: 615

ABSTRACT

This lecture demonstrates the relationship between spatial linkages, through industrial production subcontracting linkages, and regional development in addressing regional disparities. Spatial linkages refers to the interdependencies, connections, and relationships between different geographical locations, where activities in one area influences conditions in another while regional development involves the enhancement of wealth, living conditions, and future prospects in regions widely perceived as subnational entities. This lecture addresses the issue of regional disparities; the development of micro, small and medium scale industries; and the facilitation of the growth of transport systems.

The significance of production subcontracting and the related flows in the context of regional development is established. I have also shown that production subcontracting can play a significant role in the development of technology necessary for the development of micro, small and medium scale industries through the use of improved technology and increases in the performance of micro, small and medium scale industries. It has also shown the several insights on production subcontracting and the associated flows on the one hand and regional development on the other hand. There is a general increase in the volume of subcontracting linkages over time, and the complexity of these linkages which is reflected by the number of flows. In addition, there is a high

concentration of subcontracting linkages in the Lagos region, given the high concentration of industries. There are very few locations outside the Lagos region that have subcontracting linkages with the Lagos region. The significance of distance is clearly reflected in production subcontracting linkages/flows. This is so, given that linkages/flows are highly concentrated, and over short distances. The Lagos region therefore is the most critical source of the subcontracting relationships.

The significance of complementarity is very apparent as Kano, Kaduna, and Sokoto are the most significant sources beyond the Lagos region. This is explained in terms of ecological factors as the natural processes cannot provide all the explanation for the subcontracting linkages. Production subcontracting increased during the economic downturn that was precipitated by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) of the 1980s in Nigeria. The significance of political boundary is seen in my research given that the origins of the flows are localized around the southwestern part of Nigeria. The localization is a reflection of a system of relationships that is of interest to industrial geographers. It is concluded in this lecture that production subcontracting could be employed as a veritable tool for regional development through the generation of industrialization in the undeveloped regions, and in ensuring that there are no marked regional disparities in development in Nigeria.