

Transport and business improvement in the province of South-Ubangi (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

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ABSTRACT: This work highlights the transport situation in South Ubangi Province and the impact on the development of this. It is noted that the main modes of transport found in South Ubangi are roads, inland waterways, and airways. The first category is more popular, the second category is seasonal, depending on the water level, and the last category is still a luxury. In all cases, infrastructure, equipment and transport operations leave something to be desired. This has a negative impact on the growth of the company (business) in this province and indirectly, its socio-economic development pays the costs. Therefore, this research aims at assessing the realities of transport in order to help find solutions to the current business companies' problems operating in this province. The research design used is descriptive based on secondary data. The outcomes of the analysis help policy makers to work on beneficial policies for the province.

KEYWORDS: Transportation, Business, South-Ubangi, Congo.

1 INTRODUCTION

The most important aspect of tourism is the ability of tourists to travel around various attractions within destination areas [1] Thus, transport is not only considered as a basic need, but as an essential element that attracts tourists to some destinations. Transport can help to increase productivity of rural populations, and increase the development.

A Business company in its primary mission and reason of being and its quest for creating wealth is a no less negligible player in the development of a nation. Kabatu distinguishes for this purpose, five categories of conditions to arrive at the development of a nation, namely the necessary conditions, sufficient conditions, economic conditions, non-economic conditions and priority conditions [2].

Business companies as economic agents play an important role in the economy. However, it can be agreed that, in order to achieve their objective, companies capitalize greatly on transportation which allow the transfer of goods and supplies from the place of supply to the transformation processes (the enterprise), then move the production of the company to the place of consumption (the market).

In this regard, the intersection of production and consumption, transport plays a crucial role in the development of a country. To understand this importance, it must be borne in mind that the transportation market is a three-tier market: the first tier is the infrastructure, the second tier is the equipment and the third tier is the operation. Each tier of the aforementioned three tiers has its own peculiarities and require a lot of human, material, technical and financial resources [3].

Today, if we describe globalization, we see several features among which the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the growth of transport are the most remarkable. These triggers affect the wellbeing of nations including the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, for the purpose of this paper the growth of transport will be studied. The target region is the South-Ubangi Province, dominated by the agricultural enterprise [4].

The South-Ubangi Province, dominated by the agricultural activities, is a region that necessitates a well-developed transport system. However, despite the technical progress that has solved many difficulties related to the transport problem, it is clear that the latter is currently an equation difficult to solve by the business companies operating in this province.

To solve the aforementioned problem accurately, it is essential to know it better and this is only possible thanks to an adequate diagnosis. This is what this study is concerned.

2 METHODOLOGY

The present study uses a descriptive research design. According to Hejase and Hejase, to use this design, the researcher is to have a full view of the problem under study, and full knowledge of the problem’s rules and procedures so as the tasks to solve are clear and unambiguous” [5]. The research approach used in this paper was a systematic literature review of secondary reported sources that is, based on documentation and direct observation. It is carried out during the first quarter of 2017.

This method is characterized by a well-documented, replicable and transparent search process. It is driven by a theory based understanding of the phenomena of interest and improves the quality of the review process. This method is common in business management studies[6,7].

2.1 TARGET PROVINCE

The province of South Ubangi is located in the northwestern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (see Figure 1). It is between 4 ° 21 'north latitude and 3 ° 4' south latitude, 16 ° 45 'east longitude and 18 ° 50' west longitude. It has an area of 52,896 square kilometers. It is bounded:

- in the North, by the Central African Republic (CAR);
- in the north-east, by the Bosobolo massif, an extension of the Ubangi plateau;
- in the South, by swamp forests and the line separating the basins from the waters of Ngiri and Mongala;
- in the West, by the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo and the Ubangi River;
- in the East, by the North-Ubangi Province.

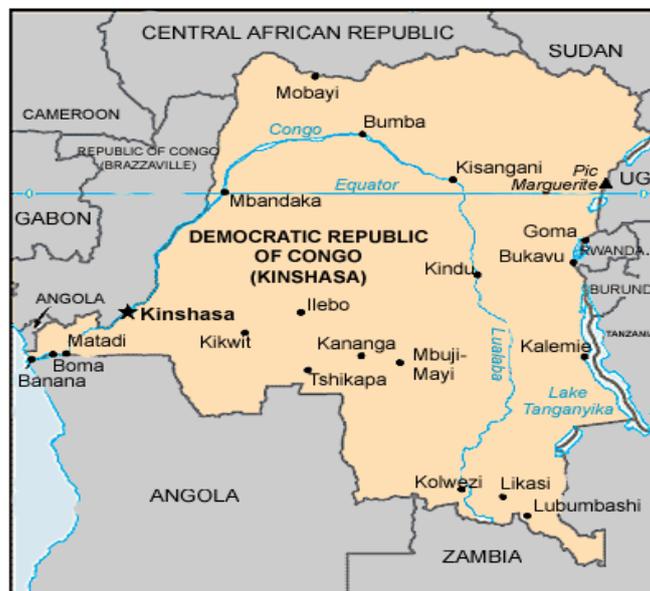


Fig. 1. DRC Geographic Map (International. Government of Canada, 2018)



Fig. 2. South Ubangi Province – Marked with a circle, [8]

3 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

3.1 TRANSPORT

The term "transport" covers phenomena as diverse as they are varied. It is sometimes a good framework (transport infrastructures), a good of production (means of transport), a good of consumption (personal car) or finally a public service from which everyone can profit, but without appropriating it (transport in common)[9].

Given this heterogeneous reality, it is wise to better understand the concept and to specify the common denominator. Transport must then be understood as "the physical movement of persons or goods from one point to another, without causing changes to the objects carried. This definition contains all the elements underlying the sector and deserves some reflection [10].

Continuing, the author says that the physical word used in the definition is very important because it differentiates the operation "transport" from "telecommunication" or other similar phenomena, transfers funds, for example. Thus, the transport involves the actual displacement of a certain quantity or persons, without making changes to the objects transported. The quantities transported can be characterized either by the number, transport of passengers, or by the weight or the volume, transport of goods. Value can also be one of the physical characteristics of the transported object. It should be noted in this respect that certain goods of low volume or weight are of great value for transport. The physical nature of the transported object also plays a large role in defining the units of measurement of the phenomenon and hence in the pricing and choice of equipment. A second point that needs attention in this definition is the relationship between transport, space and time. The displacement, according to the definition, is between an origin point and a destination point. Two notions emerge at this level, the sense of displacement and then the distance. It is an oriented movement. Indeed, the origin point and the destination point being in different economic spaces, there will be mutual and reciprocal influences between space and transport. The existence of transport influences space; while, in turn, space plays a decisive role in transport. Transport confers a rent of situation to the space and the transport benefits in return of the transformations which it conferred on the space. Meaning or direction, plays a big role in transportation. More often; going from A to B is not the same at the level of transport than going from B to A. Indeed, the structure of the roads, the elements transported to each direction considerably change the consumption as well as the efforts to provide in transport.

3.2 BUSINESS

The company is understood according to the conventional neo-classical theory as "a center of production and decision-making that is apprehended only through its relations with the market [11].

This definition implicitly or explicitly shows that the existence of the business is closely linked to transportation. In fact, in order to produce, one must obtain the necessary inputs, which are on the market. To send them to the company, we need transportation.

The flow of the company's outputs to the consumer market also requires the use of transport.

4 CASE DESCRIPTION: REALITIES OF SPOT

To ensure the movement of people and goods requires adequate infrastructure and means of transport. Thus, this analysis is done at three levels: infrastructure, equipment and operation.

4.1 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The first way of transporting goods in South Ubangi Province is terrestrial. We meet on the roads, people carrying on their heads, goods to markets.

According to the Provincial Executive Secretariat of South Ubangi[12], the road situation is as follows:

- national road: 454 km undergoing rehabilitation;
- provincial interest route: 550 km of which 55 km maintained;
- agricultural access road: 2.462 km of which 2.073 km in very advanced state of disrepair;
- Urban roads: 295 km including 25 km under rehabilitation.
- Tables 1 and 2 give a general overview of the roads in South Ubangi.

Table 1. State of South-Ubangi agricultural feeder roads

N°	Roads	Units, Kilometer	State
1	Gemena – limite Zongo	220	Medium
2	Mbari – Bwamanda – Mogalo	50	Medium
3	Gemena – Bobito – Bozene – Dongo	206	Medium
4	Gemena – Akula	115	Bad on 80 km
5	Gemena – limite Businga	60	Medium
6	Gemena – Bombula – Bosobolo	90	Bad
7	Boyabu – Libenge	19	Bad
8	Yembongo – Pongo – Mawuya – Libenge	110	Medium
9	Bozene – Kungu – Dongo	115	Bad
10	Isabe – Bozene	40	Medium
11	Kungu – Budjala	61	Bad
12	Bobito – Yakamba – Budjala	60	Medium
13	Bombakabo – Budjala – Mbako	120	Medium
14	Bumutu – limite Bosobolo	58	Medium
Total		1 324	

Source: South Ubangi Archives (13)

Table 2. State of South-Ubangi agricultural feeder roads

Provinces	Sectors	Distance of network	Length in good condition and proportion	Length in poor condition and proportion	Impracticable length and proportion
Budjala	Banza	206	NON CONNU	206 (100%)	Unkwon Unkwon Unkwon Unkwon
	Bolingo	194	72 (37,11%)	122 (62,89%)	
	Mongala	142	NON CONNU	66 (46,48%)	
	Ndolo-Liboko	112	NON CONNU	37 (33,04%)	
	Likimi	90	NON CONNU	30 (33,33%)	
	Total	744	NON CONNU	416 (61,96%)	
Gemena	Banga – Kungu	317		197 (62,15%)	120 (37,85%)
	Bowase	322	32 (9,94%)	290 (90,6%)	
	Mbari	116	56 (48,28%)	60 (51,72%)	
	Nguya	177		177 (100%)	
	Total	932	88 (9,4%)	724 (77,68%)	
Kungu	Bomboma	19,7		19,7 (100%)	
	Lua	72	53 (73,61%)	19 (26,39%)	
	Dongo	153		153 (100%)	
	Songo	80,7		80,7 5 (100%)	
	Total	325,4	53 (16,29%)	272,4 (83,71%)	
Libenge	Total	641	25 (3,9)	619 (96,10%)	

Source: South Ubangi Archives (13)

It is abnormal and unimaginable that of all the road networks in the Province under review, none are in good condition. This is the basis of the long time to market the productions of companies. This does not allow them to create enough wealth and grow. This situation requires special attention if one wants to witness the emergence of the company in this business.

It is noted that the economic junction of the province of South Ubangi with the other parts of the country and the other countries of the African continent is mainly ensured by rivers whose diets depend largely on the precipitations and because, the traffics on these streams are related to rainfall. Four times constitute the moments of navigability through the Ubangi, Mongala and Akula (14), the Ngiri, the Lua (from May to December). This reality is summarized in Table 3:

Table 3. State of the South Ubangi Waterway Network

Watercourse	Navigable distance	Period of low water	Period of flood	Airworthiness period
Ubangi	Mouth – Zongo (602 km)	January – april	April – December	April – December
Lua	Ubangi Mouth (Dongo) – Mongala (141km)	January – april	April – December	April – December
Mongala	Mouth – Businga (329 km)	January – april	April – December	April – December
Ngiri	Ubangi Mouth – Moninga (159 km)	January – april	April – December	May – December

Source: South Ubangi Archives (13)

The main ports of South Ubangi Province are Akula, Mogalo and Zongo, which play a key role in the sale of the enterprises' productions in the important consumer markets. The first two are much more focused on Kinshasa, capital of the DRC while the latter is directly opposite Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic (13).

These different ports have the following weaknesses:

- cramped location, lacking enough space to set up various activities;
- quality of the tooling to be desired, thus increasing the speed of the operations to be performed therein. Low-skilled labor, usually recruited on the basis of physical build, is the most used, if not the only one;
- poorly equipped infrastructure, unable to accommodate large boats;
- archaic handling superstructures, based on muscular strength, unable to transport large containers, unnecessarily lengthening the loading and unloading time;

- insufficient infrastructure for shopping, with little or no protection against bad weather and various types of damage (fires, etc.).

South Ubangi as a whole has two airports and five aerodromes. Libenge airport, the oldest in the country is currently at a standstill, only the one in Gemena is still operational for such a vast province. The aerodromes are Gwaka, Ngwanza to Dongo, Tandala, Bokonzi and Zongo. The state of the trails and associated facilities is poor (13).

As can be seen, transport infrastructure in this province is far from ensuring both territorial, economic and social development.

4.2 TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT

There are people on the roads carrying goods to markets on their heads.

Transport by bicycle is very popular among small traders; it is sometimes the only means of access to enclave areas. At least three agents take part in this circuit, including the customer (shopkeeper), the owner of the bike and the pedal-cyclist [10]

In recent years, there has been a remarkable presence of motorcycles in the transport circuit in South Ubangi Province (especially in the major centers, namely Gemena, Bwamanda, Bobito, Budjala, Kungu, Mogalo, Bozene, Zongo, etc.).

Motorized road vehicles remain a luxury in South Ubangi due to poor road conditions and the low presence of economic operators operating in this sector. Thus, this means of transport is extremely expensive. This significantly reduces the profit margin of companies, does not allow them to profit, create wealth and develop.

In this regard, Nagifi (2013, p. 406) states that "motorized vehicles remain the exception in South Ubangi". In 2011, the number of trucks from 7 to 12 tons circulating in South Ubangi was evaluated at 80 units, 60 of which are based in Gemena ". To this day, we must recognize that the situation has not changed much on the contrary, it has deteriorated.

Taking advantage of the dense river network, river transport is widely used by many economic operators. It uses canoes (motorized or not), whaling boats, boats that meet almost no safety standards for both people and goods.

The aircraft are those coming mainly from Kinshasa and landing only in a few places (Gemena especially) and this, three days maximum per week. In any case, it should be noted that the use of second-hand equipment, the age of which is still relatively old and old, is generally used, marks of which spare parts are scarce. This is the basis of untimely breakdowns, the shutdown of units and slowness in transactions.

This situation undoubtedly shows the difficulty of access to decent transport by the South Ubangi company a fact that prevents the province to achieve its potential growth.

4.3 EXPLOITATION

Most of the traffic is informal and provided by small independent or family carriers.

The number of major carriers is very limited, they are subsidiaries of larger groups, operating in support of their other sectors of activity. CDI-Bwamanda, the river transport and trade company in Ecuador (TFCE, Blattner-Elwyn Group, SCIBE-Congo and, more recently, the Congo-Futur group), these fleets serve mainly the ports of Akula and Mogalo Small traditional family units use the main roads (Ubangi, Mongala, Lua) as the multiple channels, which is more flexible than large boats and thus provides access to river markets or centers of higher consumption. Along the river, there are also more points of landing. Pricing fluctuates according to the distance, the type of goods, the port concerned and the shipowner. It is negatively affected by the multiple taxes payable. Cargo transport is also used. Until its closure in 2011, Hewa Bora Airways was the link between Gemena and Kinshasa, supplying the city with essential manufactured goods. In return, Gemena shipped its productions (especially livestock). A few years ago, goats were particularly popular. In 2007, an average of three to four cargo aircraft per week left Gemena for Kinshasa (World Bank 2007, p.15).

Transport in South Ubangi is a thorny problem to solve. There is no good organization of transport, everything is in the hands of the private sector who use means of edge, the main thing is to reach the destination. Such a situation is far from bringing South-Ubangi into globalization and favoring the emergence of its enterprises. This deserves special attention and big investments. The various difficulties related to transportation infrastructure, equipment and operations in this province make it expensive, making it a luxury. This justifies in part the weak performance of its companies and their growth. Another problem making exploitation difficult is the supply of petroleum products.

5 TRANSPORT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTH UBANGI PROVINCE

Being at the crossroads of production and consumption, transport plays a crucial role in the development of a company and the development of a country. To understand this importance, it must be borne in mind that the transportation market is a three-tier market: the level of infrastructure, the level of equipment and the level of operation. Indeed, in our modern world, transport is at the center of the development of socio-economic and political life. The surface of continents is a sum of contiguous geographical spaces, but individualized by soils, relief, vegetation and human occupation. These spaces are distinguished by the advantages or obstacles they present to the traffic.

Physical factors related to the natural environment often constitute constraints for the development of the transport system; while the human, economic and financial factors are decisive for its evolution. The development of transport has changed the theory on the establishment of enterprises: the problem of physical distance between production area and that of consumption arises little if the transport system is efficient, which is not the case in the Province of South-Ubangi District. Transport infrastructures are structuring elements of space. Every organization in the territory has to revolve around an efficient transport organization. Companies locate and grow easily where transportation systems are efficient. Indeed, in the logic of this research, the company must be much more oriented towards the market for which it produces in order to sell its productions. The movement of inputs from places of supply to the company as well as that of the company's productions to the market consumes a lot of transportation. Hence, without well organized, efficient and effective transportation, the company has a hard time making a profit, even if it can produce under satisfactory technical conditions.

With its three levels listed above, transport plays an important socio-economic role, namely the creation of jobs and income, the valuation of space, the easy movement of goods and people, etc. When transportation creates jobs, it pays wages to employed people, giving purchasing power to the members of the company where the company is located. With this purchasing power, the company finds outlets, continues to produce, sells, profits, finances its activities and becomes sustainable.

6 CONCLUSION

This research aimed at assessing and making an inventory of transport and its impact on the development of the company in South Ubangi Province. Using the descriptive research design, documentation techniques, and direct observation, we found that:

Transport routes are rare and the few that exist are not practical, are in a state of disrepair which has reached advanced deterioration so that the flow of products from the existing companies to the markets is not efficient and neither effective. Furthermore, the transport equipment is scarce, less efficient and outdated. In addition, the farms are privately owned, mostly in the informal sector but these are Compliant with local laws and regulations in the province.

Researchers recommend that the government create a local committee to assess the damage in the transport system in order to put in place a restructuring plan so as to help raise the potential capabilities of the province. Meanwhile, a detailed map of accessibility is to be provided to the business companies so that the transportation of goods capitalizes on transportation routes which are in a manageable state.

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