Chapter 8

Industrial and Urban Growth Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa Compared

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to compare industrial and urban growth policies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and North Africa (NA) with the aim to draw lessons and inform policy and research in the subject. The chapter advances the argument that industrial and urban growth ought to be directly related. This follows the development trajectory and urbanization trend in the Global South which was birthed and sustained by the Industrial Revolution. The case study approach has been used to develop this chapter where Africa is first divided into two broad territories, SSA and NA. Subsequently, cases are selected from Lusophone, Anglophone, and Francophone countries. The analysis considers in detail Zimbabwe, South Africa, Guinea-Bissau, Algeria, and Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter compares industrial and urban growth policies in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and North Africa (NA) with the aim to draw lessons and inform policy and research in the subject. The chapter advances the argument that industrial and urban growth ought to be directly related. The work of Christine Kessides (2006, 2007) ‘The Urban Transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities’ wields immense suggestibility to the fact that urban areas are expanding at the inexpediency of industrial growth. This is unlike the way European cities emerged, or the African cities at the time of colonization.

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in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the industry was thriving well and attracted huge numbers of populations previously residing in the rural areas. Subsequently, industrialization became the backbone of urban growth. Ironically, this is not so for Africa. There is little success to talk of when it comes to the industrial and urban growth nexus (Newman and Page, 2017). Colonial governments were mainly proactive and took it to task to industrialize the African cities. Industrial hubs were created basing on local conditions i.e. location, resources available and the population as well. In coastal cities, for example in West Africa, fisheries industries were established and cities thrived based on such. Where agriculture was viable agro-processing industries emerged and supported the local economic and population. Even areas which were difficult to develop owing to their undulating terrain, for example, Cape Town, industries such as eco-tourism were established and these somehow played an important role in supporting the local economy and subsequently urban development and growth.

Policy is best defined as what the government decides to do or not do (Dye, 2001). On the other hand, urban policy which is an appendage of public policy refers to a tool which government at local level use to create and manage functional urban spaces. In China, creative industrial policies have been implemented to spearhead sustained urban growth through the establishment of industries that support the needs of urban residents through opportunities in the creative industries. Employment opportunities are guaranteed, residents have disposal incomes which enable them to pay rates and taxes which then makes the urban system functional and efficient. Similarly, the Government of India has made strides in promoting industrial and economic development policies that are suitable for different settlements. The policy sustains industry-led growth which supports the creation of sustainable urban settlements. Industrial corridors in India have also been developed between major cities in some parts of the world. The same is true for America and Europe where industrial hubs have been established at the city and regional level in concomitant with urban development and growth.

To ensure balanced settlement systems, at least from a point of productivity, many colonial governments institutionalized laws that ensured supremacy and dominance of white industrialists in the cities and black populations in the rural areas. This is with particular reference to Southern and Central African counties including Zimbabwe and South Africa. These countries are mainly Anglophone. The Lusophone countries, for example, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau had somewhat different experiences. So were the Francophone countries, of which it remains unclear as to the industrial and urban growth policies that have subsisted. In the post-independence era, most of the countries experienced massive de-industrialization and industrial retrogression. Much of NA is in the desert hence population concentrations are already influenced by natural and biophysical qualities of the countries.

In Africa, the situation has not been so successful for one reason or the other. First, in Africa, the meaning of ‘growth’ needs to be examined closely. This then leaves a lot of questions unanswered. For example, to what extent have issues of availability of raw materials, markets, location, colonial influence, government policy, among other factors, influence industrial and urban growth policies. The issue of regions and regional disparities also influence the policies considering that regions are unique and have different natural resources endowments as well as climatic conditions (Matamanda and Chirisa, 2018). Such geo-physical conditions have a strong bearing on the industrial and urban growth policies as well. It thus becomes critical to analyze the industrial potential within the region and then factor in the urban growth trends so that sustainable and progressive policies are developed.