Chapter II
Urbanization, Knowledge and Competitiveness in Developing Economies

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ABSTRACT

The production and use of knowledge are intended to be benefiting from the economies of scale provided by urban agglomerations that often refer to universities, research centers, and businesses. The linkage between cities and knowledge is consequently considered to be the major engine for the promotion of growth and development in every economy, starting with its urban segments. The analysis conducted in this chapter has shown the existence of possibilities for a better promotion of urban livelihoods through the acceleration of adoption rates in each knowledge economy component, with special emphasis on developing economies. Furthermore, the processes of production, diffusion, and use of knowledge for urban development have to be monitored by urban executives and all city stakeholders. These are continuously invited to help accelerate the processes of knowledge production, use, and diffusion as they are directly concerned with the welfare of current and future urban populations. This emphasizes the issue of the governance of urban knowledge. These overall recommendations are based on the relationships between urbanization, knowledge, and competitiveness measures. Other drivers that are also important and related to tacit knowledge and other human abilities are not directly considered in this study. Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation have appeared to be key elements to ensure immediate and long-term benefits to both cities and their regions.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the relationship between urbanization—that is, the growth, expansion, and development of cities and the promotion of knowledge as it is produced, distributed, and used. The production and use of knowledge are intended to be benefiting from the economies of scale provided by urban agglomerations and include, most of the time, contributions of universities, research centers, and businesses. The relationship between cities and knowledge is consequently considered to be the major engine for the promotion of growth and development in every economy, starting with its urban components. Developing economies, besides their needs to enhance their competitiveness and besides creating better living conditions for their populations, need also to accelerate and develop more linkages between their urbanization processes and the creation and use of knowledge. Most of the time these conditions are achieved in developed economies where knowledge is following and supporting the urban trends. Cities in developed economies exhibit a series of signals that show living conditions that are knowledge based and that are adjusted at regular intervals to account for new discoveries and ideas.

This is not often the case in cities around the developing world. In these latter places, the most prevailing signals reveal the existence of large gaps between urbanization and the state of knowledge both at the production and usage stages. Within developing economies, increasing rates of urbanization are expected to be controlled by the flows and stocks of knowledge that are made available through a series of instruments and mechanisms located in urban areas. This is not often the case, as cities evolve and change according to government policies and communal decisions under a series of constraints that include resources, rural migration, and limited knowledge. The growth of urbanization in the developing world is mainly driven by the expansion of the urban population.

This chapter is devoted to showing how cities, particularly in the developing world, can be major sources and drivers for the spatial and temporal innovative processes for the generation and diffusion of knowledge that can enhance the creation and distribution of prosperity in these countries. The focal point of this set of means resides in creating insights for the development at the level of different cities of a framework that monitors continuously the state of knowledge attained.

The chapter illustrates urbanization trends that are taking place in the developing world. It also underlines the level of knowledge accumulation in these countries through the use of published indices. Statistical analyses are then conducted to assess the links between urbanization and knowledge, and set the stage for showing how knowledge is critical for the pursuit of development.

Within the framework of the book, this chapter aims to produce further awareness among decision makers, particularly those in charge of cities in developing economies, about the role of knowledge and its governance to create prosperity that is needed by the population.

The first section of the chapter discusses the importance of urban development in developing economies. The second section explores the importance of knowledge and competitiveness of these economies. The third section scrutinizes the relationships between knowledge, competitiveness, and urbanization in developing economies. The chapter is concluded by an overall discussion and recommendations on the urbanization, knowledge, and competitiveness measures. Additionally, future research directions are indicated at the final part of the chapter.

BACKGROUND

Urbanization is the social process whereby cities grow and societies become more urban. In the absence of detailed measures related to the knowledge of different sources of urbanization

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