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Bridging urban and rural economies in the developing world: could secondary cities be the answer?

Eyerusalem Siba
Research Fellow
Africa Growth Initiative
The Brookings Institution

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What is a secondary city?

- “An urban area generally having a population between **100,000 and 500,000**” – UN-Habitat
- “A city, whose population size falls between **10 and 50 percent of the country’s largest population**. It often assumes administrative, economic, and logistical functions.” – Dennis Rondinelli (1983)
- The term is used interchangeably with “intermediary city”, i.e. a city whose primary role is to **connect rural and urban** areas through the provision of **services and facilities** – UCLG
- Non-Primate cities?
 - » **What is Urban?** EU-OECD work on urban data harmonization for tracking progress on NUA

Why do secondary cities matter?

- **Urban primacy** is a key challenge nations face in achieving economic diversification
 - » Urban primacy leaves **secondary cities without the resources** necessary to attract industries and business to boost their economic development (UNECA, 2017).
- **Inclusive growth** and **poverty reduction**
- **Balanced regional development**
 - » **[Re] locate** industries and/or build SEZs
 - » Optimize **proximity to natural endowments**

Why don't secondary cities [agenda] excite everyone?

- Mounting urban **challenges in primate cities** to address (e.g., **informality** of labor, land and housing markets and service provision)
- Play **transitory/facilitative role** (e.g., migration route, trade hubs)
- Tough **job creation** environment (e.g., off-farm employment)
- Intermediate cities face **demographic pressures** too (AEO, AfDB-OECD, 2016)

My message

No city has zero “locational advantage” in the long-term!

The how of secondary cities development

- Certain governments have put in place strategies to promote a **balanced regional development**:
 - » In some cases, they involved **relocation**. Over the past two years, **Senegal** has been developing the city of **Diamniadio** in order to ease pressure from Dakar. In December, Senegal relocated its airport to the Diamniadio vicinity.
 - » **Rwanda** has put in place policies to **create agro-processing industries** in secondary cities (UNECA, 2017).
- **Special economic zones** have been known to be **built in** secondary cities, which then attracted a large number of workers from across the country. In **China**, for instance, they are strategically located in the **coastal region** or **near major cities** with a **history of trading** and with **access to international markets** (Zeng, 2015).

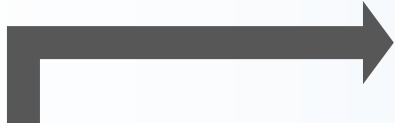
What functions do secondary cities adopt?

- Agricultural processing (Huancayo, Peru)
- Natural resource processing (Warri, Nigeria)
- Commercial, trade, and service centers (Garoua, Cameroon)
- Industry hub (Huye District, Rwanda)
- Administrative/tourism hub (Saint Louis, Senegal)
- Ports and export centers (Mombasa, Kenya)

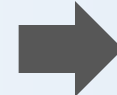
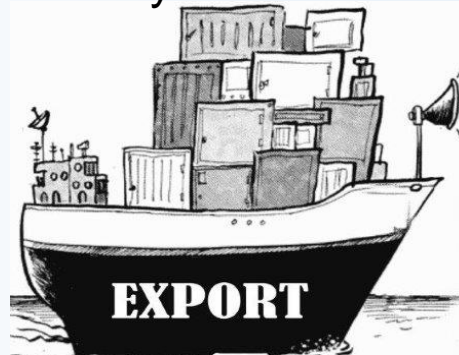
Agricultural Development, Agro-processing, and Secondary Cities

Examples from Rwanda, and
Cameroon

Scenario 2: Lack of strong secondary cities



Export to foreign country

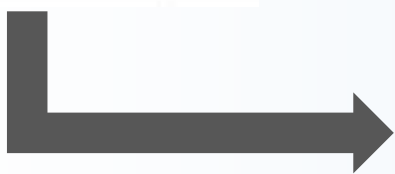


Re-import processed food for domestic consumption

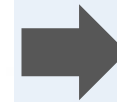


Scenario 1: Strong secondary cities

Farming in rural areas



Food processing in secondary cities

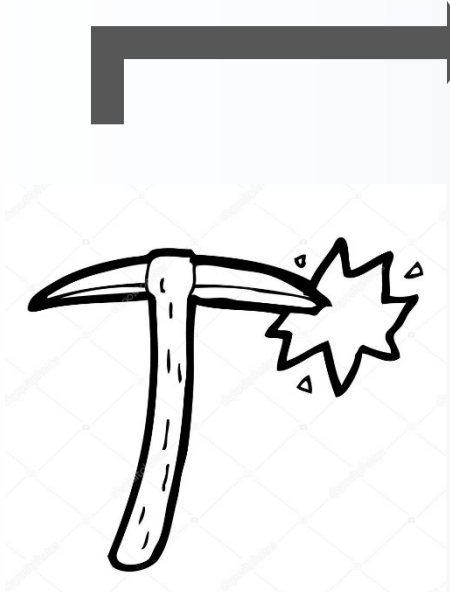


Consumption in primate and other cities

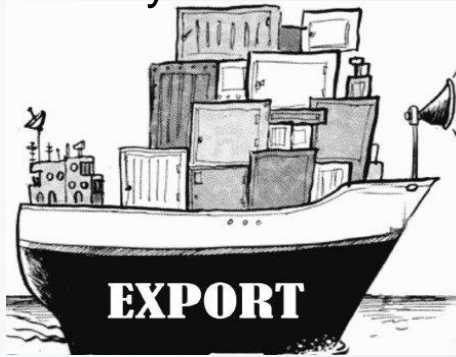
Natural Resource Processing and Secondary Cities in Africa

Examples from Zambia and
Nigeria

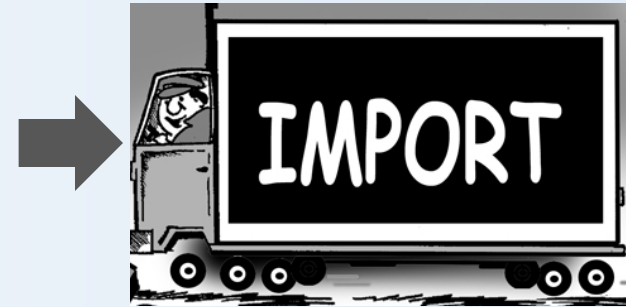
Scenario 2: Lack of strong secondary cities



Export to foreign country

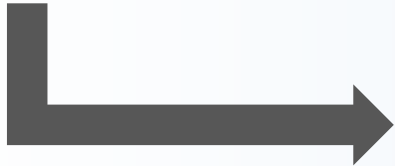


Re-import processed oil

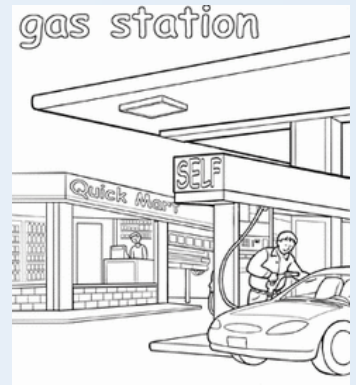


Scenario 1: Strong secondary cities

Mining and oil production



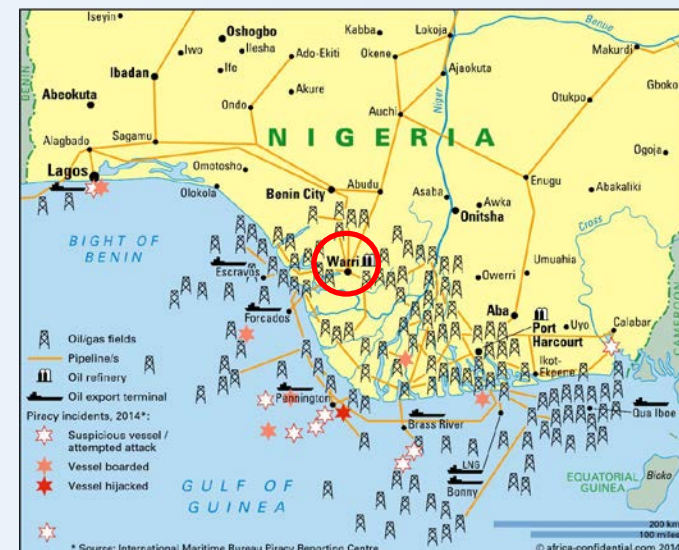
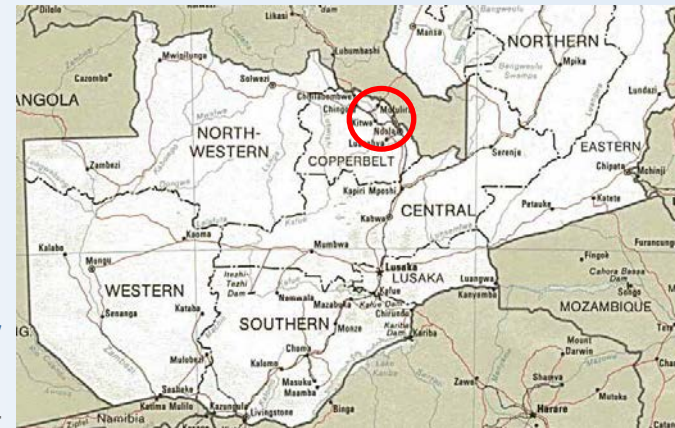
Oil and mining refinery in secondary cities



Consumption in primate and other cities

Natural resources and secondary cities in Africa

- As agricultural endowment could help in the development of secondary city that play an important role in agro-processing, natural resource endowment can play a similar role.
 - ❖ In **Zambia**, urban centers developed in **copper belt**, around mining and refining operations (e.g. **Kitwe and Ndola**). Though, with the recent decline in copper demand, the cities have been hosting a smaller share of the country's urban population (Randolph and Jain, 2016).
 - ❖ In **Nigeria**, the **city of Warri** in the in the Delta region lies in the epicenter of Nigeria's oil industry. Home to more than 500,000 people, the city has a major refinery and large oil infrastructure. The city serves as a **center for refining, processing, and other oil-related services** (Leton, 2006).



Conclusion and policy recommendations

- Secondary cities have the potential to serve as a great bridge between urban and rural areas.
- This can equally occur in Africa's **resource-exporting** countries and the countries that **export agricultural commodities**.
- Governments' role is to take into account the **natural endowment of the city** (e.g., fertile land, proximity to oil field, other vibrant cities) and build policies that support secondary cities based on their given **comparative advantage**.

No city has zero “locational advantage” in the long-term!

- **Metropolitization vs secondary cities development**
 - » Proximity to hub economies/primate cities/natural endowment (**functional areas**)
 - » Proximity to rural areas (rural roads; labor-intensive industries, **ag. value chains**)
 - » The **two can be bridged!!** (transport & trade networks)
- **Cross-border functional areas?**

Things could, of course, go wrong

- SEZs vs natural agglomeration economies (Page and Newman, Siba *et al.*)
 - » Placing industries/SEZs is not enough
 - » **Linkages (jobs) are imperative!**
 - » Strengthening **spatial development planning**
 - » Crafting **skills development strategy** tailored to the locational advantage/challenge of the city

Thank you!
Merci!

DRM-development assistance nexus

- DRM, Fiscal decentralization Vs local government support
- St. transformation Vs inclusive growth
- How can the two complement each other?
 - » **Subnational financing** for infrastructure and local capacity building?