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MNCs as Industrial and People's Economy Generators in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

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Abstract

Multinational companies' (MNCs) activities in SSA countries could generate more value to the local economy if appropriate cooperation strategies are implemented for the benefit of both sides. We have analyzed the activities of MNCs in SSA countries, their capabilities and interests, and proposed strategies for the SSA side that could create more values for both sides. For each potential business opportunity, we have proposed a relevant cooperation strategy that could generate value for both sides. We found a wide range of projects that could improve the value generated for both sides in energy, agriculture, infrastructure, food processing, cosmetics, and health products. We can develop similar projects in many other SSA countries and use similar cooperation strategies. Those models could be adapted to other developing countries. MNCs with the relevant cooperation strategies, supported by local partners in SSA countries, could generate a broader value to share for the benefit of many.

Keywords: *Agriculture, Cooperation, Cosmetics, Energy, Globalization, Minerals, MNC.*

Introduction

According to the World Bank (2018), GDP growth in Africa was 1.3% in 2016 and 2.4% in 2017, far from the peak average rate of 6.4% during 2002-08. Most of 2018's top performers are non-commodity-intensive economies (Adegoke, 2018). The list is led by Ghana (8.3%), boosted by oil and gas expansion, followed by Ethiopia (8.2%), Côte d'Ivoire (7.2%), Djibouti (7%), Senegal (6.9%), and Tanzania (6.8%).

But this favorable macroeconomic situation has little impact on most of the population, which struggles at the necessity level. Exports of agricultural products and raw materials benefit the few and increase disparity with the many, who receive less and less as their numbers grow. Peoples' economy means economic development that is population oriented, sufficient accommodation for many, less informal and more formal economy able to pay fair salaries with social rights and a larger middle class able to contribute to the improvement of the economic situation. Industrialization is mainly based on unskilled manpower and local raw materials. Its impact on economic growth is very limited.

Objectives of the study

Exports of raw materials generate revenues mainly for MNCs, few local formal firms, some workers and governments. More inequality generates a wider informal economy and more poverty. Our objective is to propose improvement of the added value to the local population by generating wider common economic interests with multinational companies (MNCs) in the local and the global market. This economic activity increases inequality between the few who receive the main share of the added value and the many who receive less and less because they are more and more numerous.

Cooperation Strategies

State authorities, businesses, and organizations could strengthen their positions in negotiating contract marketing, open incubators, cooperatives, export consortia, agglomerations, and clusters with MNCs (Bijaoui, 2016).

Contract Marketing (CM)

CM partnership insures access to supply chains with market and price stability, as well as technical assistance. Contracting firms agree to deliver goods at specified quantities, quality, and prices. Cotton and tobacco in Mozambique are sold through CM (Adjogno, 2009). In Zambia, all paprika, tobacco, and cotton is produced based on this model. In Kenya, contracted farmers produce 60% of tea and sugar, and all the country's tobacco.

Open Incubator

The Open Incubator model (Bijaoui, 2015), organizes and operates a multipurpose network between SMEs belonging to the same value chain in order to generate knowledge transfer and new common business activities upstream (inputs) and downstream (products and services). The open incubator model could be implemented, for example, in poultry, fishery, clothing, furniture, or automotive services. The board on which are represented local authorities, professional organizations, and providers of services, selects the management, which is in charge of promoting cooperation between the participants in the value chain upstream (suppliers), producers, and downstream (distributors, merchants).

Cooperative

The members of a cooperative agree upon common economic interest achieved by a common management responsible for negotiating, signing, and implementing business contracts. Finnish cooperatives have nearly 4 million memberships (the population of Finland is 5.4 million (pellevero website). The cooperative groups are most often market leaders in their respective fields. In Finland, for example, the agricultural cooperatives have a market share of 97% in milk and 80% in meat. Over 45% of daily goods are sold through consumer cooperatives, and the OP-Pohjola Group cooperative is the largest finance group in Finland.

Export Consortia

An export consortium is a voluntary alliance of firms whose objective is promoting the goods and services offered by its members. Development of a common identity is cited by member firms as the value created through a common logo, brand, and the development of common marketing operations (Antoldi, Cerrato, & Depperu, 2013). Export consortia help their member firms overcome the barriers related to their constrained managerial resources and limited experience.

Agglomerations and clusters

An agglomeration is group of businesses engaged in a similar specialization competing and/or cooperating with each other, concentrated in a common location where customers shop. A market supplying produce and other food products, a concentration of garages and automotive parts suppliers; or clothing, furniture, or housewares products, are agglomerations that are able to generate economic activity and jobs. Some of these agglomerations succeed in generating structured clusters.

Generators of Industrialization People's Economy

Projects fulfilling common economic interests generate benefits for MNCs, jobs, and improved living conditions for SSA's local populations. Herewith, based on a broad study of SSA countries, we have selected projects that have potential common economic interest between MNCs and the informal economy in SSA countries (Bijaoui, 2017).

Agriculture

Open Incubators and Export Consortia in exotic fruits

The World Bank project PCDA (Programme Compétitivité et Diversification Agricoles), with funding from the Dutch Embassy, has built a packing house for mangoes in the Plaza Bamako-Mali, near Bamako-Senou Airport, to help exporters to improve their capacities in handling and shipping mangoes (Sangho et al., 2010; Speakman & Koivisto, 2013).

The Plaza has proven effective despite its location, away from the cultivation region and the border with Côte d'Ivoire. However, the Plaza currently operates only during Mali's mango season. PCDA is looking at other exotic fruits such as papaya, that could make use of the packing house. Those products could also be from other neighboring countries.

Training has increased the capacity of mango producers, and supply chain financing through the PCDA project, local banks, and other financial institutions has worked to regain trust and interest in Malian agriculture.

WTO's EIF (Enhanced Integrated Framework) has assisted in financing to improve local mango quality through phytosanitary treatment of mango orchards; dissemination of best agricultural practices; raising awareness, disseminating information, and building capacity of the various actors in the value chain.

As part of PCDA, the Dutch firm Bakker Barendrecht teamed with five exporters operating at the Plaza to teach them how to reach European markets with their products. Bakker invests in knowledge in mango production and pays a minimum on the fruit if the exporters abide by a code of practice set forth in the contract. Results manifest in Mali's development agenda, which places a high priority on agricultural growth and diversification.

Bakker Barendrecht is part of the UNIVEG Group, a worldwide supplier of fresh produce, active in the cultivation and marketing of fruits and vegetables, flowers and plants, convenience products, and transport and logistics.

UNIVEG and other MNCs could establish an export consortium serving the Plaza location and other locations in SSA countries. The missing links are local incubators that will support the growers in order to supply exotic fruits to UNIVEG packing houses, or those of any other MNCs willing to cooperate.

Cocoa Incubator and Export Consortium

The largest increase in cocoa production is expected in Africa, up by 13% to 3.189 million tonnes, followed by a 7% rise for the Americas (up to 666,000 tonnes) (Anga 2015). Similarly, production in the Asia and Oceania regions is expected to increase by 4% to 503,000 tonnes. In terms of its share of total world production, Africa is forecast to remain by far the largest cocoa-producing region, accounting for 73% of world cocoa output in 2013/2014, with the shares of the Americas and of Asia and Oceania likely to be around 15% and 12% respectively. Ivory Coast and Ghana are the world's number one and two producers of cocoa beans, and together account for nearly 70% of the world's cocoa production (Mungai 2016).

Uganda, too, is expanding (mgafrica website 2014), its acreage under cocoa—now estimated to be about 50,000 acres, mostly in the western and central parts of the country.

Yet neither Cote d'Ivoire nor Ghana currently supports growers in order to insure inputs, quality, quantity transportation, and processing, all of which could be done by open incubators. The local organization of open incubators could negotiate agreements with MNC export consortia based on the common production of the two countries, from cocoa beans to cocoa products.

Cotton Export Consortia and clusters

World cotton production is dominated by China, India and the United States (Cottoninc 2016), but the main exporter is the United States with 10.5 million 480 lb. bales in comparison to four for Brazil and India. Cotton is vital for the survival of many low-income countries in SSA countries. In value terms, it accounts for 26.4% of Benin's exports and 58.7% of Burkina Faso's (fairtrade.org, 2015). Burkina Faso is the first African exporter with 1.2 million 480 lb. bales, followed by Mali (1 million), Côte d'Ivoire (0.7 million), Benin (0.6 million) and Cameroon (0.5 million).

As many as 100 million households are directly engaged in cotton production, and an estimated 300 million people work in the cotton sector, including those who work in ancillary services such as ginning, baling, storage, and transportation. However, nearly 80% of cotton fiber is processed into thread in Asia (intracen). In contrast, fiber transformation rates in Africa are only 5% of francophone and 43% of anglophone African cotton being processed on the continent. On average, 83% of SSA cotton is exported as lint to Asia, almost exclusively through international merchants. A West African business network improving the cotton value chain upstream (growers) and downstream (fiber transformation) could improve their competitive advantage in the global market.

Shea nuts open incubators and cluster

The shea tree (Vitellaria paradoxa) is indigenus to the savannas and dry forests of the Sudanian region (Kamara, 2011; Rousseau et al., 2014). It is found in a 5000-km – long belt that crosses West Africa Under natural conditions, the shea tree begins to bear at age 20, and full production is reached at age 40 or 50 (Sanou et al., 2004). This is a major disincentive for farmers to plant it. Grafting can make trees bear fruit younger, but it has not yet been applied on a large scale (Sanou et al., 2004) and requires plantlets that will often have to survive high livestock pressure.

West Africa currently exports between 265,000 and 445,000 tons of shea per year in nut weight equivalent (Yinug & Fetzer, 2008) accounting for 99.8% of total exports of shea. Nigeria is the leading producer and Ghana is the leading exporter. The commodity is exported to Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, North America, and Japan. In 2005, 26% of shea export was in the form of crude butter (Yinug & Fetzer, 2008), which rose to 35% in 2010 (Reynolds, 2010). The main exporters of shea butter from West Africa are 3F Foods Fats & Fertilizers, Ltd., India, IOI Loders Croklaan Group Malaysia and AAK Sweden .

The main outlet for shea is Cocoa Butter Equivalent (CBE) industries. Shea butter has similar chemical and physical properties to cocoa butter, but costs less. Shea butter is used in cosmetics by firms such as L'Oreal and L'Occitane, as it is highly concentrated in fatty acids that melt at body temperature (bettersheabutter.com). This means that it will be readily absorbed when applied to the skin. A common organization of mainly women's cooperatives active in shea production could strengthen their position in negotiations with MNCs engaged in CBE production (AAK (AarhusKarlshamn AB, Sweden; IOI Loders Croklaan, Malaysia; 3F India), CBE purchase (Nestle), or manufacturers of shea butter-based cosmetics (L'Oreal, L'Occitane) in broadening the range of raw materials and end products produced in SSA countries.

Open incubator on Energy

Local mini grid initiatives

Mini grids provide electricity to local populations by developing small-unit power based on various energy sources or based on allocation and operation of long-term regional concessions connected to the main grid. These solutions improve the daily life of millions immediately and create business opportunities for many. An open incubator based on a strategic alliance with an MNC engaged in energy production could support the upstream evolution of local businesses engaged in construction and maintenance of mini grids. Downstream, the supply of electricity will improve daily life and enable irrigation systems, greenhouses, food processing, and many craft and industrial applications in wood products, textiles, and metal processing. The applications depend on the local ecosystem and needs.

In Tanzania, over 30 renewable energy mini grids are operating (Rural Electrification Investment Prospectus, se4all.org), as they are a cost-effective electricity option for an estimated 20% of the population, or over 9 million people. Herewith three mini grid initiatives in Tanzania:

- Rift Valley Corporation (RVC) constructed the 4 MW Mwenga hydro plant with a mini grid to provide electricity to rural areas. Operational since September 2012, RVC has supplied Tanesco, the state-owned utility, via connection to the main grid; the Mufindi Tea plant, and a rural electricity network, with approximately 25,000,000 kmnbW/h of green power per annum. At present, Mwenga Hydro has 17 village transformers installed, including one for a local hospital.
- Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization **(**TaTEDO) is a Dar es Salaam-based sustainable energy development NGO with regional offices in Shinyanga and Moshi, operating in 10 regions, 30 districts, and 70 villages. TaTEDO has installed mini-grids in 16 rural communities and alongside, promotes sustainable charcoal production practices in order to reduce forest degradation and deforestation.
- JUMEME is a partnership between INENSUS, a leading German company engaged in development, technology, and consultancy services on rural mini grids; TerraProjects, an Austrian specialist in renewable energy development, and St. Augustine University of Tanzania (eeas.europa.eu, 2016). JUMEME was founded in 2014 to develop, build, own, and operate rural mini grids in Tanzania. Recently, RP Global, an Austrian developer, investor, and operator of renewable energy projects, joined JUMEME as its newest and largest shareholder.

RVC, TaTEDO, and JUMEME could create an Energy Facilities Management open incubator and propose a strategic alliance with MNCs engaged in power stations and power management such as GE or Symbion, thereby hooking up a wider range of villages, not only in Tanzania but also in other SSA countries. Villages could also be organized in consumer cooperatives in order to use power more efficiently and at a lower price than the electricity produced by mini grids.

Minerals

Africa is one the main producers of platinum, phosphates, manganese, vanadium, cobalt, aluminium, and diamonds. Most of the world's deposits of these ores lie in SSA countries. The failure of resource-based industrialization is mainly due to a deficient national learning and innovative capacity, resulting from low human capital and weak scientific infrastructure (Maloney, 2007; ANC, 2012). The answer to this challenge lies in overcoming infrastructure bottlenecks, deepening the mineral sector linkages to the region, increasing the quality of human capital and generating local technology development. Industrial zones close to mines could be one of the possibilities. The Zambia-China Economic & Trade Cooperation Zone (ZCCZ) situated close to Chambishi Copper Mine owned by the Chinese state-owned China Nonferrous Metal Mining Group (CNMC), which is also the main initiator and owner of ZCCZ, could create such synergy.

Around the SEZs the local authorities could support open incubators (Bijaoui, 2015) supported by SMEs able to be sub-contractors or customers of the MNCs inside the FEZ. The establishment of regional common markets would greatly increase the possibility of a successful resource-based development strategy. SSA countries will be less dependent on price fluctuation of raw materials and will use their economic power to attract investments and use those raw materials locally. Herewith are some examples of potential mining inter- regional clusters based on multinational strategic alliances with MNCs .

Cluster around MNC in Platinum Group Metals (PGMs)

Most of the worldwide supply of platinum and palladium and associated elements is obtained from mines in four locations (Schouwstra & Kinloch, 1999): the Bushveld Complex in South Africa, the Stillwater Complex in the US, the Great Dyke in Zimbabwe, and the Noril'sk/Talnakh Complexes in Russia. Consumer and industrial products made with PGMs include flat panel monitors, fiberglass, medical devices, hard drives, nylon, and razors. Platinum, palladium, and rhodium play a critical role in autocatalysis and pollution control in the automotive sector.

Zimbabwe's and South Africa's governments and MNCs investing in mining, such as Anglo American, could establish strategic alliances with local partners and MNCs' customers in order to generate more value locally.

Cluster around MNCs in 3TGs (tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold)

3TGs are major inputs for smartphones, laptops, and aerospace and military components, and are most significantly sourced from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region of Africa (UN, 2013). These minerals are mined by artisanal and small-scale miners whose livelihoods very much depend on these mineral supply chains. Today, these minerals finance DRC's continuous armed conflict, and thus have been labeled 'conflict minerals'.

The Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA) provides funding to develop conflict mineral-free supply chains. PPA members are companies such as Acer, Boeing, Dell, Ford, GE, HP, Microsoft, Motorola, and Toyota.

The PPA periodically offers funding opportunities for projects that support efforts to develop validated, certified, and traceable mines and supply chain routes, for gold, tin, tantalum, and tungsten in the Great Lakes Region.

Upstream and downstream clustering with relevant partnerships between MNC investors and local SME cooperatives could increase the added value of the potential cluster and generate wealth to the local population and to numerous SMEs in DRC and neighboring countries.

Cluster around MNCs in cobalt

The expanding global market for portable electronics and rechargeable batteries is driving growing demand for the extraction of cobalt, a key component in lithium-ion batteries. More than half of the world's total supply of cobalt comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

According to the DRC's own estimates, 20% of the cobalt currently exported from the DRC comes from artisanal miners in the southern part of the country. 110,000 to 150,000 artisanal miners in this region work alongside much larger industrial operations.

The cobalt value chain begins with Kolwezi miners and continues to transportation and traders in Musompo market, most of them Chinese. In turn, these traders sell the ore on to larger companies in the DRC, which

process and export it. One of the largest companies at the center of this trade is Congo Dongfang Mining International (CDM). CDM is a wholly-owned subsidiary of China-based Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Company, Ltd. (Huayou Cobalt), which sells cobalt through intermediaries to Apple, Dell, HP, Huawei, Lenovo (Motorola), LG, Microsoft, Samsung, Sony, and Vodafone, as well as vehicle manufacturers Daimler AG, Volkswagen, and the Chinese firm BYD.

Agglomerations of SMEs

Agglomerations of small businesses exist in organized and less organized locations in urban and rural areas in SSA countries. They are specialized in fruits and vegetables, food cooking, artisanal works, clothes, metal working, furniture, electronic devices or cellulars.

These agglomerations could be organized with the support of local and national authorities. Enterprises in agglomerations are more likely to buy their inputs from other enterprises within the same location. The pattern supports the hypothesis that strong buyer–seller networks operate within those agglomerations, facilitating access to external markets for outputs. Accessibility to customers is the main reason enterprises decide to locate within industrial clusters.

The open incubator model (Bijaoui, 2015) supports entrepreneurs in a determined sector and region along the whole value chain. Each firm in each agglomeration could belong to the network supported by the management of the open incubator and its experts. Common support activities such as research centres, joint purchasing of raw material and joint effort in implementing opportunities proposed by the management of the open incubator and firms in the networks could generate economic growth and the transformation of agglomerations into clusters. The role of the open incubator is to create the conditions for a deeper and wider positive cooperation—competition. The open incubator model can be initiated by a public or a private organization.

Agglomerations could be organized in a professional business network with the support of local and national authorities around MNCs that could transfer knowledge and open up global markets. Herewith are two examples:

Suame Magazine Cluster, automotive repair services, Ghana

Located in the Suame district of Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana and the center of the Ashanti region, Suame Magazine is an agglomeration with approximately 12,000 shop-owning entrepreneurs engaged in automotive repair (garages), automobile parts production, and retail services, as well as metalworking, employing an estimated 200,000 artisanal workers (Adu Gyamfy, 2017).

The Suame Magazine Industrial Development Organization (SMIDO) is an umbrella organization of all the artisan associations. SMIDO serves as the link between artisans and the private sector, academia, and government to address challenges such as new technologies, better infrastructure, and other gaps in capacity.

Collaboration among specialists is coordinated by generalist mechanics called fitters, who receive orders from vehicle owners, determine the cause of the trouble, decide who should be involved in the repair work and how much they should be paid, and collect and distribute payments by the customers. Fitters organizing the orders, machinery, and technology transfer express the will to cooperate, and create a positive environment for cooperation with MNCs engaged in automotive parts in creating a platform serving also customers in Ghana and the neighboring countries.

Arusha furniture cluster

Arusha is the third largest city in Tanzania, after Dar es Salaam and Mwanza. Owing to the rich natural resources derived from Mt. Moshi and Meru, the furniture industry in Arusha has been rapidly growing, with increase in demand not only from residential housing, but also from the hotel and construction industries. In addition, Arusha Technical College (ATC) and a Vocational Training and Service Centre (VTSC) both located in the Arusha area, provide both engineering and managerial training, and train carpenters for area industry. The existing 234 furniture workshops could be supported by an MNC such as Ikea in order to provide furniture not only to hotels and private customers in Tanzania, but also in the neighboring countries.

Conclusion

Cocoa, is transformed in chocolate but also in green pharmaceutical and cosmetic products. Research centers in cooperation with MNCs could be the starting point of a wider industrialization process for countries such as Ivory Coast and Ghana.

Cotton is an important raw material for the textiles industry. Agricultural improvement of cotton based on local research in Burkina Faso, in order to overcome future such as MGO seed provided by Monsanto, could lead to co-operation with Mali, Cameroon and Ivory Coast, the other main producers, in order to compete in the threads to textiles markets.

Mango and other exotic fruits are supplied by SSA countries to a growing global market when a small share of the added value generated along the value chain benefits the local population. Common investments in cooperation with MNCs in infrastructure and markets could ensure the supply of exotic fruits to the global market year-round. SSA governments, growers and traders could also co-operate along the value chain for the benefit of each stakeholder, including the local and international customers. Shea nuts contribute to the development of industries such as soft drinks and food, paint and chemicals, and cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

This huge potential could be implemented if the SSA countries were able to supply MNCs with the raw material under the condition of starting processing in Africa. Dams supplying hydraulic energy are a generator of development if supported by an efficient distribution system connected to homes and industries and a current maintenance service in cooperation with MNCs.

Minerals are a weakness if they create political, economic and military conflicts. Minerals are a strength if it is transformed into value for the local population. It could be the case of the pgms, cobalts, 3TGs or Mtwara mineral complex.

Agglomerations of small businesses are a current phenomenon in SSA countries in both urban and rural environments. Those entrepreneurial forces in trade of agricultural products, cooking food, food processing, furniture and metal-works could generate higher value for the entrepreneurs and the local economy if MNCs in cooperation with the local authorities organize it.

MNCs could become the main generators of development in SSA countries if the SSA governments are able to propose win-win cooperation strategies. The selection of the projects and the relevant cooperation strategy must be based on a dynamic local or international market, and on the capability of the formal and informal business sector in SSA countries to organize partnerships able and ready to cooperate with MNCs. The local consumers also could be organized into consumer cooperatives in order to improve the value created by the providers of products or services, for the benefit of both sides.

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