Structural Transformation and Development

Arvind Subramanian

Peterson Institute for International Economics and Center for Global Development

IMF Conference February 21, 2013

Three Regions, Three Sectors, Three Models, Three Outcomes??? Policy Lessons

Region	Sector	Model	Outcome
China	Manufacturing	Activism	Success
India	Services	Accident?	Ambiguous
Sub-Saharan Africa	Commodities ("rents")	Acceptance?	Ambiguous -

China

 Marriage of strong capability plus rigging incentives (horizontally, "macro-industrial policy) via mercantilism

 Policy instruments: Closed capital account + financial repression + intervention (+ Lewis + fiscal prudence)

India

- Early investments in higher education plus early import substitution
- Weak capability plus fortuitously rigged incentives (in favor of skills and skill-intensive diversification)
- Big and unintended benefit: endogenous increase in education/human capital formation
- Costs of defying comparative advantage: Noninclusiveness, pace and sustainability

Sub-Saharan Africa

Commodity- and aid-reliance

 Weak capability plus weak/perverse incentives (now also from foreign capital and from China's rise)

Policy Lessons

- Capabilities/institutions less amenable to reform
- Incentives are only real margin of maneuver
- Micro or macro-industrial policy?
- Weak capabilities forces tilt toward macro-industrial policy (MIP) and evidence supports use of MIP (Rodrik, 2008; Rajan and Subramanian, 2011)
- Instruments of MIP: Mostly negative (less aid, less foreign capital, less commodity revenues) and perceived to achieve other objectives
- Unless the IDEA takes hold that: structural change is key and on par with other objectives AND that instruments of MIP may need to privilege attaining change over others, little hope!!!