

## Industrialization Policies In West Africa

Posted by Ebow Mensah on Thursday, 1 August 2019 **Author(s):** Kwabena Nyarko Otoo

### Background to the Study

The failure of Structural Adjustment and its successor neo-liberal policies to transform the economic structure of West African economies in any significant way has become obvious. Despite modest economic growth rates, countries in the sub-region are mired in deep poverty. The manufacturing sector virtually collapsed along with the jobs that it used to provide. The few industries that were set up in the first two decades after independence have been wiped out and no new ones have emerged to take their place.

The failure to industrialize via the market approach as envisaged by the neo-liberal reforms has led to re-examination of not development strategies in general but equally importantly industrial strategies in particular. Countries in the sub-region are beginning to set up industrial policies to facilitate their industrial ambitions. The political euphoria and clamour for this could potentially affect the soundness of the policies countries are likely to choose and implement. The possibility for repeating past mistakes loom large.

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) has taken keen interest in the discourse around industrial policy and industrial development programmes in the West African sub-region. The foundation commissioned this study to provide both historical and comparative analysis of industrial policies in the sub-region. The analysis covers Ghana and Nigeria. This is intended to provide broad overview of industrial policies in the two countries and their impacts (if any) on industrial development.

Overall, the study seeks to provide guidance for the design and implementation of industrial development strategies with a heavy focus on the political context for the success or otherwise of industrial policies. It does this with the conviction that industrialization should form an important part of any development strategy that is focused on changing economic structure and alleviating poverty on a sustainable basis. The study provides overview of economic structures in West Africa (Ghana and Nigeria). It also identifies the factors that make for success or failure of industrial policies.

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