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“SEZs Go Global: Chinese industrial zones in Africa”

Abstract

This project contributes to debates over the impact of rising Chinese engagement on African industrialization through an analysis of Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Nigerian productive sector. It argues that SEZ projects—in this case those being developed by Chinese firms as large-scale FDI projects with both Chinese and Nigerian government support—are industrial policy tools structured to incentivize the insertion of exporting firms into global production networks serving international markets. However, a closer investigation into the domestic motivations for Chinese OFDI, the production environment in Nigeria and the behavior of internationalizing firms indicates that a different pattern of production is emerging in the country, one predicated on localizing production for domestic and regional markets.