

Philosophical premises for an innovated economic development in Africa

Implications for policymakers and planners

By Symphorien Ntibagirirwa
IDEE- Burundi/Rwanda

Annual BEN-Africa Conference Deloitte Conference
Mombassa-Kenya

7-8 November 2019



Philosophical premises- **Outline**

1. The issue of Africa's development in context
2. Tool: Sen's Capability's approach
3. Three problems of development to deal with
4. Philosophical premises for Africa's economic development and their respective implications
4. Conclusion



Philosophical premises- Africa's Development in context

- Doctoral dissertation
 - **Hypothesis:** Although African strategies for economic development are elaborated in Africa, their philosophical assumptions are not African because they are not based on the beliefs and values that structure Africans' ontological density.
 - **Implication:** The neglect of the beliefs and values that structure people's value systems lead to development impasse.
 - **Solution:** Elaboration of four philosophical premises that I believe should inform strategies for economic development in order to ensure that these strategies are grounded in what Africa's foundation.
 - **Approach:** The four philosophical guidelines are developed against the background of Sen's capability approach because, its foundation is the ability for people to be "all they can be and do" and, so, serves as a guide to how development could be achieved in particular context.



Philosophical premises

Sen's Capability approach

- The Capability:
 - An approach which revolutionized the way we conceive, practice and assess development.
 - The traditional approaches of development focusing GDP, Human capital: “economic development was not human-centred and that, ‘development’, was in practice, inadequately conceived and operationalized as economic growth” (Gasper, 2002, p.442).
 - In this practice, human beings could be made just means rather than the end of production (Sen, 1999, p. 293).



Philosophical premises

Sen's Capability approach

- The Capability:
 - Formulated by Amartya Sen in the late 1970s
 - Further developed by Martha Nussbaum.
 - Both Nussbaum and Sen (1993) have linked the capability approach back to
 - Aristotle's reflection on the conditions for human flourishing.
 - Adam Smith and Karl Marx who discussed the importance of **human activity and the capability to function as the determinants of well-being**.
 - Marx's political economy conceived the success of human life in terms of fulfilling the needs of human activity.
 - Marx's claim that there is a need to replace the "domination of circumstances and chances over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances".
 - Smith emphasised the need of appearing in the community without shame.



Philosophical premises

Sen's Capability approach

- The Capability:
 - The ability of people to lead the lives they value and have reason to value.
 - Two aspects which are central to capability
 - Functioning
 - Agency.



Philosophical premises

Sen's Capability approach

- The Capability: Functioning and Agency
 - Functioning”: comes from the ordinary verb “to function”. To function is to be involved in activity. For Aristotle, the well-being or the flourishing of people depends on their ability to function, that is, to be involved in activity
 - In relation to functionings, [capability] represents the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that a person can achieve. [...] a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another.
 - Capabilities are the functionings which a person has the potential to undertake.



Philosophical premises

Sen's Capability approach

- The Capability: Functioning and Agency
 - Agency: Agency is a person's capability to act. Sen talks of seeing people as agents rather than as patients of development. He refers to an agent as "someone who acts and brings change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives"
 - "realised agency" which is more generic
 - and "instrumental agency" and participatory.
 - In realised agency, one's objectives may be achieved as a result of someone or something else being the cause or the source of action as is the case in the top-down conception of development and the conception of development in terms of economic growth where the focus is on human capital.
 - Instrumental agency is participatory and requires that people themselves either bring things about by their own efforts or play an active part in some collective action (Crocker, 2008, p.153).







Philosophical premises: 4 Problems to be addressed

- Three major problems which make it difficult to ground development in Africa's value system:
 - Extroversion: Extroversion consists in not appreciating one's beliefs, values, and potentialities; thus **leading to an adoption "tout court" of foreign ideas and values** which prove to be sterile in the African milieu,
 - The conception of development as an autonomous process whose end-product is delivered to people
 - The involvement of all actors as agents in development: Development tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive



Philosophical premises: The four premises and their implications

-  From extroversion to the freedom of Africans to lead the lives they value
-  From development as an autonomous process to agency-based development
-  From development an end product delivered to people to development as the expansion of capabilities
-  Baking the cake together: from capability to an inclusive process of development



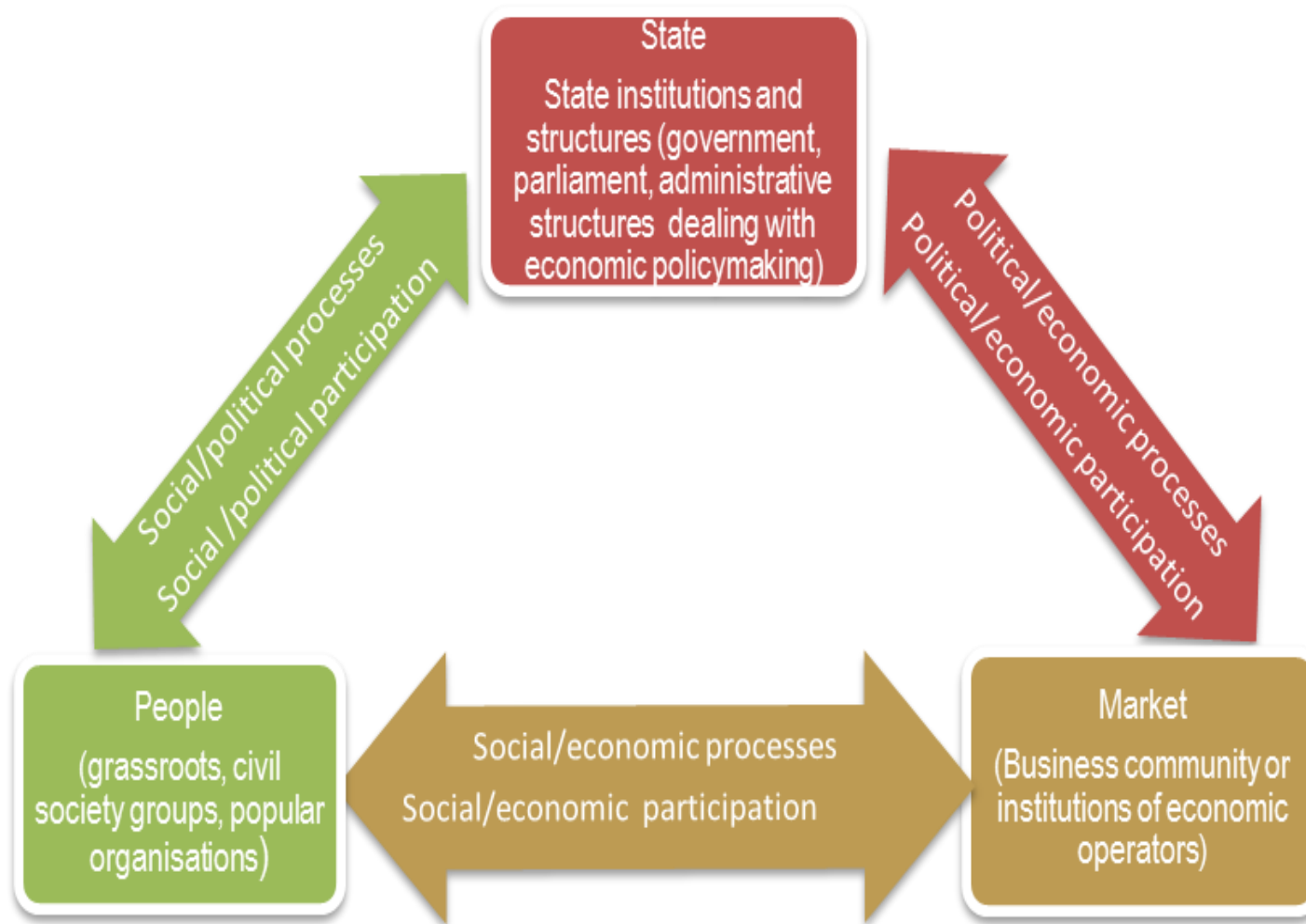
Philosophical premises: The four premises and their implications

Interaction between capabilities and the structural institutions

| | | Structural institutions | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---|---|
| | | Strong | Weak |
| Individual/collective Capabilities | Expanded | <p>A People are involved in development (mutual reinforcement between the structural institutions and the people). As a result people fully participate and realise their potential.</p> | <p>B People individually have the basics, but structural institutions do not canalise their capacities, and even block them, if not blocked they can be manipulated.</p> |
| | Decreased | <p>D The basic needs are provided but people are patients of their development (provider state). Functional participation as people could be used for the sake of development.</p> | <p>C Both the structural institutions of the society and the people are absorbed by a sentiment of powerlessness.</p> |



Philosophical premises: The four premises and their implications



Philosophical premises: The four premises and their implications

