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Khan, Haider

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Towards a Pan- African Renaissance

Haider Khan

Abstract:

This is the concluding chapter about a new non-aligned development strategy for Africa. As various African countries break away from neocolonial domination by the Global North, a Pan- African Renaissance becomes a possibility. However, it is a complex process. But starting with the expanded BRICS and various local resistance movements, the outlines of a Pan- African Renaissance can be seen today. Therefore, I argue that Africa can have some agency for pursuing a Pan- African Renaissance.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism, Strategy, BRICS expansion, Neocolonialism, Multipolarity

Throughout this book we have observed that Africa is a continent with numerous problems of development. We have argued that a new approach towards optimal solutions for these problems in Africa needs to be outlined. We have suggested specific policy agendas at the continental level within an overall strategic shift in the emerging multipolar world based on cooperation among the African countries and their partners in the Global South. We have gone into some country-specific details and suggested policy perspectives that take into account local specificities as well. Such specificities range from agriculture and extraction to industrial and service sectors covering *inter alia* productive activities, factorial and household incomes and income distributions and household incomes and well-being.

We have also dealt with crucial functional areas such as corporate governance, innovation and distribution of wealth in addition to income, to mention just a few significant exemplifying issues. Here in this concluding chapter we want to be forward looking and ask what a renaissance for Africa would look like. Of course, we can only offer the barest outline of a possible future for Africa in a short concluding chapter. But with a realistic refutation of Afro-pessimism in the substantive chapters in specific areas some broad discussion here is at last possible. Hence we focus on strategic aspects of creating a new prosperous and peaceful Africa where the social capabilities of ordinary Africans are guaranteed to be enhanced. In

keeping with realism, we also present our perspective within Geoeconomic and Geopolitical realities that are emerging in a multipolar world in the making.

This chapter covers these key future strategic problems and argues for a sound strategic horizon for African development with flexible tactics appropriate for specific time periods and definite African geography of space. We start with the critical problems related to how Africa can move beyond rent seeking towards a genuine people-oriented development. We then move into some related methodological issues and defend our approach from the perspective of causal depth and scientific realism. In a natural way, such a quest for analytical depth leads us to stress the common good for Africa and the well-being of African people.

It has been recognized for some time that uneven development under unchecked capitalism leads to harmful inequalities and polarization with violations of the common good--- particularly in Africa. In the previous chapters we have attempted deep structural explanations for maldevelopment in Africa.

Based on such an approach we now ask: what can a deep structural causal explanation for uneven development in Africa deliver on the epistemological, ontological and ethical side? To answer this set of questions for Africa, we must further ask: how are relatively deeper scientific explanations to be distinguished from superficial or shallower ones in the African case? Furthermore, what roles can scientific counterfactual analysis play in social sciences and policy making which can help overcome uneven and unequal development in Africa? For a competent, morally motivated scientific policy maker in Development Economics for Africa, it is important to avoid inflicting harm and promote the common good of African people. Related geopolitical and geoeconomic considerations lead to a further critical argument for a future non-aligned Africa in general with multi-alignments in specific circumstances.

While the above areas of critical analyses do not exhaust all issue areas for Africa, we argue that strategic steps in these areas will give African people and their leaders a fighting chance to build towards a prosperous and equitable future. This is the essence of prospects for an African renaissance in the 21st century.

Africa Beyond Rent Seeking and Towards Genuine Development as Freedom:

In the substantive chapters of this book we have presented and analyzed a number of deep structural-institutional and policy problems for Africa. African people and their leaders need to solve these problems at various levels in all sectors. The key unifying thematic problem would appear to be that of rent seeking and draining of surplus from Africa (Khan 1997, Jomo and Khan 2000 and Khan 2012). Concentration of wealth and income, class and ethnic divisions, persistent poverty and inequality are characteristic complex webs of mutually reinforcing vicious cycle linkages in Africa made possible by continuous rent seeking and draining of surplus from Africa.

More generally, these rent seeking activities also reinforce and regenerate *inter alia*, uneven development in Africa (Khan and Sonko 2020; Khan 1999, 1997; Kingdon, Sandefur and Teal 2005). The vicious cycles make uneven development an almost inevitable relentless process unless some of the countries bravely break away from neocolonial dependence. Here the external and internal relations are indeed dialectically related. Only key internal political and economic changes linking up with progressive external forces can repudiate the neocolonial relations. Only such a renewal of a commitment towards genuine African sovereignty can make the prospects for people-oriented African development a reality. As difficult as such a renewal may seem, we can argue that for Africa in the future this can happen. We mention just one out of many areas discussed in this book. Among other things, the corporate governance for sustainable development which is a challenging task in Africa can begin to happen finally under such an African renaissance. A new rebirth of African freedom as African capabilities can make this continent a powerful pole in the emerging multipolar world.

Here, the steps taken by South Africa towards creating a multipolar world via the expanded BRICS is a good beginning. But it is only a beginning. Other leading African countries must come forward and help develop a genuine agenda and plan of action for enhancing the capabilities of African people. All key areas including political, economic, ecological, social and cultural priorities should be part of this agenda for African renaissance.

Therefore, African countries at different levels of development must work together cooperatively. Accordingly, in this book we have tried to find multiple pathways to integrate useful genuine need-fulfilling markets with the key characteristics of the African Enabling Developmental States for the 21st Century that must be constructed in order to build a growing ecologically sustainable African political economy with equity in terms of capabilities. This is urgent both for theoretical clarification and for aiding the strategies of popular democratic movements in Africa. A few tentative steps have been taken in this book to serve this dual purpose. Proceeding from a critical capabilities perspective that is fully grounded in social reality of deepening structural and ecological crises of the World System, we discover that such a perspective leads to the need to include among the characteristics of the Enabling Developmental States in Africa for the 21st Century their capacity to build an ecologically sustainable egalitarian development strategy from the beginning. The specific theoretical approach we follow has been developed during the last few decades by ecological scientists and social scientists.

Our own particular version can be called Evolutionary Ecological Global Political Economy or EEGPE for short. In addition, democracy must be deepened from the beginning. For Africa in particular, a new cooperative community of African nations following their own rhythm to reach their own dynamic trajectories towards development as freedom will be possible if they cooperate regionally on the basis of equal sovereignty and mutual respect. One precondition is to pragmatically unite for a common economic strategy. For this a decolonization of the African mind is also necessary.

To this end, methodologically we have followed a critical scientific realist approach that is evolutionary. Without being naïve Social Darwinists, we apply the real insights of Darwinian selection principles (Darwin 1859, 1871, 1883; Romanes 1883, 1893; Barrett et al. 1987; Dennett 1995; Archer 1995, 1996; Bhaskar 1975; Boyd 1973, 1992; Hodgson 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; Khan et al. 2021; Khan 2020, 2022, 2023, 2021a-c, 2024, 2004a-c, 2006; 2004, 1999, 1998, 1982; Khan and Rahman 2022; Khan and Thorbecke 1988, 1989; Sen 2009, 1999, 1992; UNCTAD 2006; Wilson 1994). We have done this methodological exercise via substantive work in historically evolving societies in the African continent. In order to do this work we needed to develop some novel concepts and theoretical perspectives that have been discussed in the earlier chapters.

Causal Depth, Counterfactuals and Common Good in African Political Economy--- Poverty Reduction in the Counterfactuals via the Dual-Dual Structural Model as an Exemplar

“Had Cleopatra’s nose been shorter, the whole face of the world would have changed.” So speculated Blaise Pascal in 1669. This is an example of a counterfactual thought. Leaving aside the truth value of Pascal’s speculation, the method of counterfactuals in history has been known at least since Thucydides’s famous history. Khan (2024) shows that Thucydides’s history also contains germs of the idea of what scientific realists today call “causal depth”. Putting the idea of counterfactuals together with the scientific realist concept of causal depth helps us explore different states of the African socio-economic institutions in causally salient ways. We have demonstrated for Africa this type of scientific realist analysis in the previous chapters. In fact, the realist interpretation of randomized controlled trials which are being done in Africa now is precisely that of specifying counterfactuals in a precise enough manner in order to draw conclusions by realizing alternate ---factual and counterfactual---states of the world in specific trials. Structural models for Africa by Khan and others follow the same logic. More importantly such realism for Africa has the significant normative implications for identifying and pursuing African common good in addition to avoiding harm to the African people

As an example of avoiding harm and pursuing the common good of capabilities enhancement by reducing poverty within the dual-dual model can be mentioned. The neoliberal model claims deductively that since “free markets” lead to the most efficient and *Pareto optimal state* of the economy, there is no logical case for increasing well-being via interventionist poverty reduction policies. The counterfactuals pursued in causally deeper structural dual-dual model show at least two common good related results empirically(Khan 2006).

First, the free trade argument that tariff reduction is sufficient for poverty reduction turns out to be largely wrong. Even under the most favorable counterfactual conditions, the results do not carry through below 20 percent tariff. Furthermore, even in the quantitatively effective

range, the actual quantitative poverty reduction is miniscule. Even within that “achievement”, we find that urban poor groups actually fare worse than before. Thus a nuanced scenario analysis requires a possibility for posing detailed counterfactual conditionals in a critical scientific realist manner.

Second, the structural model shows that counterfactual experiments involving structural changes such as asset redistribution can lead to a vastly more favorable situation for the poor and an unambiguous improvement in well-being. From an ethical point of view, such an outcome can be defended either through the Rawlsian difference principle, or better yet through the socially embedded extensions of Amartya Sen’s capabilities theory.

Furthermore, we should consider the question of causal mechanisms in light of causal depth. Neoclassical theory postulates mechanisms that are mathematically consistent with optimizing agents’ calculus. However, ontologically salient causal mechanisms in any mature scientific field require more depth than just the consistency with the optimizing calculus. Among other things, there must be concrete causal pathways---diagrammable according to the principles of mathematical graph theory ---showing the elementary paths, causal loops and multiple pathways that are all causally salient. This looms as an important future task for analyzing and ultimately realizing the common good in Africa.

Therefore, for Africa in particular, causal depth and realist counterfactual thought experiments are not mere scientific arcana. In reality, these are tools of causal analysis for crucial experiments for policy formulations for avoiding the harm that unreflective neoliberalism can inflict, and indeed has inflicted on the most vulnerable groups in Africa. More broadly and positively, the approach defended here can lead to advancement of common socio-economic good leading to a real African renaissance. Such a search for discovering the common good for Africa and implementing appropriate policies including policies for building institutions to enhance African common good can be seen to be also deeply connected with the great African thinker and writer Ngugi wa Thiongo’s idea of “Remembering” in/of Africa. To recover African history and to reconnect the dismembered parts of today’s politically and economically deformed Africa through real regional cooperation

based on pan-African unity are urgent tasks for which Africa also needs to redefine its priorities in international relations. We now turn to this crucial area in the final section of our concluding chapter.

A new nonaligned Africa for genuine development:

For such a strategy to succeed, Africa should stay away from aligning with one geopolitical or geoeconomic camp or another. Indeed, given its resources, under proper regional leadership Africa can do so. India has declared a ‘multi-alignment’ strategy. Africa can pursue a similar multi-alignment that preserves the freedom of non-alignment. Essential for this to happen is African sovereignty that can preserve its independence under pressures from the great powers pushing Africa towards aligning itself with only one camp. As the African proverb famously points out, when elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled. Africa has suffered enough from this during the first cold war after WW2. Learning from that experience, wise African leaders can try to follow a different non-aligned and multi-aligned developmental trajectory in the 21st century. Within such a strategic framework, genuine human development and capabilities enhancement can indeed happen in Africa in this century.

Our critical assessment of human development and capabilities exercise in Africa includes the following areas for achieving capabilities enhancement (i) *Macroeconomic framework component*: Analysis of the evolution and nature of macroeconomic policies and their inter-relationships with trade policy and their effects on SDGs and human development; (ii) *Fiscal component*, the effects of trade reform and policies on the fiscal position of the countries and its relation with SDGs’ expenditures needs and potential constraining effect on the application of flanking policies; (iii) *Institutional component*: assessing institutional capacity and performance of trade- and finance-related institutions in particular and their effect on economic, social and political outcomes: (iv) *Dynamic effects component*, undertaking specific

studies to assess spillovers and externalities brought about by various policies, particularly trade, financial and investment policies; and; (v) *Intellectual property rights component* assessing the effects of more stringent protection of IPRs on SDGs and human development indicators. We have evaluated critically the neoliberal approach to these aspects of development and capabilities in Africa generally and with –for instance--- special case studies of Kenya and South Africa (Khan 1989, 1887, 2005, 2021a,b,c; 2020a,b;;2011).Khan and Sonko(2020) contain several relevant studies of similar nature with emphases on the financial development.

Amartya Sen’s pioneering contributions contra utilitarian welfarism and more recent extensions including the controversial listing issue have been discussed by one of the authors elsewhere as part of a partial historical background to capabilities approach.¹ We put particular emphasis on social and political aspects of capabilities both because of their general relevance and also because of their particular relevance to Africa in light of political and social upheavals, particularly in South Africa which exemplifies many of the common problems of the African countries. Of course each country and the region as a whole exemplify in their own specific ways the law of uneven development within an uneven world capitalist system. Therefore, for Africa as for other geographical regions in the Global Political Economy(GPE), there is no substitute for specific country studies and sub-national regional studies within this World Capitalist System using the framework of Evolutionary Ecological Global Political Economy(EEGPE).In the substantive chapters, we thus argue for looking at Africa as a complex system of national economies and polities where both the system and its components matter. We have developed our argument theoretically and have at least partially illustrated this approach methodologically and substantively through concrete analyses of concrete conditions within Africa .

We have emphasized experiential learning by discussing some lessons from the East Asian development experience in creating structures of learning and capabilities enhancement. However, we also have discussed the limitations of the East Asian Model and have identified further conditions for development as freedom that should be part of one’s analytical

¹See, Haider A. Khan, *Technology, Development and Democracy*, Edward Elgar, 1998, chs. 6 and 7 in particular..On Socially Embedded Intersectional Capabilities Theory, see (Khan 2021a-d) and Khan(2020,2022).

apparatus in studying the regions and countries within Africa. In our previous empirical work we have focused critically on assessment of human development and capabilities exercise in Africa in the broad areas analyzed in our book. We also have analyzed their various components concretely in order to highlight the ambiguities of the neoliberal approach and its real costs for the African economies in human capabilities terms. Out of this exercise and our further thinking on development we have extended Sen's approach described in several chapters to include both social embeddedness institutionally and historically with further emphasis on intersectionality---particularly the intersectionality of class, race/ethnicity and gender in Africa.

Our approach integrates among other things, poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) techniques, economic and technical tools of *ex-ante* and *ex-post* assessment, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies in a comprehensive analytical setting. Accordingly, the strategic features highlighted here can be concretized in empirical applications and tactical questions can be posed by identifying interested stakeholders and asking questions regarding facilitating and coordinating their participation as well as building institutional arrangements that will assure sustainability of the human development process through concrete multi-dimensional Socially Embedded Intersectional Capabilities enhancement.

We have suggested the construction and use of social accounting matrices (SAMs) for African countries, regions and for Africa as a whole to enable the policy makers to gather appropriate data and build appropriate structural models for Africa using such SAMs. This research area needs to be a task of highest priority and resources need to be mobilized to enable Africans to make quick and substantial progress in the next few years on this strategic task. Here, given that South Africa has already produced a number of SAMs covering both the national and sub-national socio-economic data in a consistent framework, there is much room for pragmatic cooperation led by this pioneering country cooperating with other African nations.

A related aspect is the need for documenting and analyzing local historical settings including the construction of sequential historical SAMs. Finally, progress towards collecting data and building a database of relevant indicators, and developing tools of monitoring and evaluation along with the development of the institutional and technical capability of stakeholders can be addressed for appropriate African capacity building. Building on other experiences of

participatory assessment of different policies, the strategic approaches we advocate, besides producing empirical analysis, can be used to engage all actors involved (government, business, labor, and civil society institutions representing different segments of the population, in particular African women) in active participation for development as genuine freedom.

Given that such genuine development is a complex social- economic- state systemic process, only many forces working together in clear and flexibly strategic and tactical alliances can get this systemic process going in the right direction. We have suggested that deepening BRICS-like alliances might be a good, flexible start. But further complexities only unfold with such a beginning. Even with the best political will all African countries---particularly those at the low level of development--- will need to mobilize internal and external resources. We have suggested some strategies for such resource mobilization in our book. Further mobilizing institutions can be built once this mobilization process gets started. But constant monitoring, evaluation and fresh thinking must be pursued continuously. Only in this way can mistakes be caught and corrected in time to minimize losses and enable all African countries to tackle the systemic problems that inevitably arise in large, nonlinear, complex systems in nature and society.

Therefore, Africa can not just follow any externally supplied model mechanically. The list of such externally supplied models includes not just the neoliberal model but also, the old East Asian Model as well. *Inter alia*, the systemic crises of accumulation and the deepening ecological crisis impose new challenges that the old East Asian Model did not address(Khan 2024a-c). African policy makers must learn from multiple crises and develop an appropriate African model of development. Our substantive chapters develop some ideas that point towards this ambitious but absolutely necessary task. We have made some modest progress towards this goal. But much more work remains to be done, particularly in areas of cooperative pan- and trans- African institution building for genuine African development.

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