

Flows of Change: Intervention and Food Security

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There have been, throughout the decades, several donor driven agricultural development models which have made their way through the African rural societies. They have been translated into projects and engaged a series of actors from international experts, state, NGOs and agricultural societies. Despite success cases, the apparent lack of success of these interventions led to a contraction of aid.

There is now an apparent renewed interest from international community in channelling aid to the agriculture sector, after the food crisis. New models (or old models re-packed?) are being discussed based on the assumed capacity of the international community bring about positive change. One of the reasons cited for failure of interventions was the lack of understanding of power relations. Despite the fact that the pessimist view of intervention very often called for an end of aid, the fact is that the international community is an established actor on the ground and is “part of the constitutional order”. Thus one question to ask is how have external forces influenced local processes and why are there unintended consequences? How are ideas of external interveners shaping social organization? What have been the responses of local communities and which kind of interactions between levels of analysis and actors have developed that brought about the change observed?

Intervention is just but one of the flows that interact with rural societies. Change in agrarian societies is linked to global, regional, national and local levels through which ideas, practices, interests, finance, goods (trade), people (migration) flow. These flows, involving different actors, ideas, practices interact with each other producing new forms of organization. Our objective is to try to understand these complex flows and the turbulences created between them at different levels in space and time. The idea of “transboundary formations” as dynamic intersections involving international, national and local forces in which international interveners are caught up could help us understand these relationships (Callaghy, 2001). Case studies will allow us to study, for specific cases, how these flows work, what are the interactions between actors, processes and forces at the local, national and international level, how are they formed and how do they operate and how have they influence the outcome and impact of specific interventions. It is also important to study “both the international processes of transformation of local societies and their forms of resistance to undesired interventions to understand la *dynamique du dedans*” (Temudo, 2005).