

Out of Bounds – From Development Intervention to Human Security as a Containment Strategy

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The expansion of the industrialisation paradigm has always been double-edged, internal and external. The submission and subsequent internal transformation of societies by processes of industrialization under different banners, progress, modernisation, globalisation etc, produces the conditions for its geographical expansion. The destruction of perceived obstacles to modernization has gained its own momentum and a quasi semi-autonomy. The ever moving boundaries of industrialisation produce frontiers which in some parts of the world operate under the name of development. African agrarian societies have suffered, in the last decades, the onslaught of the development complex, in ever closer cooperation with the military-security and the humanitarian complex which are currently, due to the generalized failing of the externally induced development, gaining the upper hand. As a result only the destructive components of external intervention seem to work. Their cumulative effects produce the conditions for the assisted self-destruction of African agrarian societies.

These changes operate on many different levels, moving the internal limits of societies as well as their external boundaries which are constitutive distinctions for societies. Different intervention formats produce different stresses on existing internal limits and external boundaries. Dislocation and displacement, forced or otherwise, subvert the external boundaries of societies, the introduction of non-productive, non-agricultural lifestyles shift and partially re-define the border-lines between the sacred and the profane, between the good and the bad, between the legitimate and the illegitimate, between dream time and social time, between production and subsistence, between the individual and the (village-) community, between individuals and society, between old and young, between the genders, as well as between different societies.

These turbulences, introduced by the externally controlled flows, not only reduce the internal functionalities of societies and their “development potential”, they put their physical survival at risk, which then triggers new interventions, such as food aid, refugee camps, etc, which increase their destructive potential.

On the ideological level, the development paradigm is already losing ground to thinly disguised, but zealously implemented containment strategies. The emerging paradigm of Human Security provides a new umbrella under which the development and humanitarian complex can join their efforts with the military-security complex, while improving conditions for the extraction of natural resources, including food and energy.