

ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT: SOME ISSUES OF CONCERN

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ABSTRACT

The desire of my students in the University for Development Studies – Ghana, for knowledge and information, and some practical guide to practitioner conduct motivated me to do this paper.

I start by giving a theoretical exposition to the concept of endogenous development and link it up with current issues of globalisation and poverty. I briefly discuss ongoing work on among European institutions and professors that suggest shifts in Europe from exogenous to endogenous development. Encouraged by such developments, I then make a case for a paradigm shift, which I call 'an African alternative' to modernisation and development – endogenous development.

I bring to light the experiences with endogenous development in two NGOs – CECIK (Ghana) and AZTREC (Zimbabwe) in order to locate theory in practice (praxis).

I conclude my write-up by providing some empirical pre-requisite for conducting endogenous development with rural communities, which demonstrates one way of conducting experimentation or testing with farmers within the context of endogenous development.

Key Words: Endogenous, exogenous, globalization, cosmovision, indigenous

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, I tried to teach the subject of Endogenous Development to final year B.Sc. Agriculture students in the University for Development Studies (UDS) in the north of Ghana. In treating

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the subject in year 2003, I noticed among the student's great interest and enthusiasm, but also bewilderment, frustrations and doubts in their young minds. It was therefore small wonder that after what I thought was a brilliant presentation of the subject, some keen students met me with the following questions, "What is this endogenous development all about? How can we differentiate this development approach from the existing ones on indigenous knowledge? How is it also different from existing participatory processes? What are the practical experiences we have with endogenous development in Ghana and in Africa? Do you yourself have any writings on them from your own work? "

I found their questions very pertinent and relevant for the entire development arena. This paper captures my answers to these questions coupled with a build-up of theoretical and practical experiences gleaned over the years for a wider audience beyond my students at UDS - Ghana. Hence, my focus here is not so much the answers to the questions my students raised but my own reflections on the concept of endogenous development.

I start with the theoretical foundations of endogenous development and conclude with practical experiences.

2.0 THEORETICAL DISCOURSES ON ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

Endogenous development implies development from within that is both biophysical and socio-cultural in nature. Although not exclusively, it draws mainly on locally available resources, local knowledge, culture and leadership, and their cosmovisions, with an openness that allows for the integration of outside knowledges and practices (Haverkort et al., 2003: 30). This form of development is more akin to African systems of agricultural productivity than most other previous paradigms. Hence, endogenous development patterns depend, but not exclusively, on locally available resources; ecology,

labour, and knowledge of an area as well as those patterns that have developed locally to link production and consumption.

Enhancing endogenous development implies building on local resource in and complementing them with appropriate external resources, maximizing local control, encouraging the dynamics of local knowledge systems, retention of benefits within the local area and ensuring equity in the sharing and use of resources. This process also implies networking, lobbying, and policy advocacy leading to policy reforms (Haverkort and Heimstra 1999;12). It is largely a self-oriented growth process, the benefits of which remains largely within the region of production.

In contrast to the above, Van der Ploeg and Saccomandi (1993) and Van der Ploeg and van Dijk (1995), in their studies on European Agriculture, have described the tenants of *exogenous development* to include comparatively high levels of transaction costs, high management costs, and less balance between transaction and transformation costs.

3.1 ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

Endogenous development aims at the local determination of the development options; local control over the development process and the retention of the benefits of development within the local area. Endogenous development takes the form of in situ conservation and development. It takes local values, local concepts and practices, (with its biophysical, socio-economic and spiritual dimensions) local resources and opportunities as the starting point of development. It however does not assume that Indigenous Knowledge (IK) will have all the answers to present day problems.

In this discourse, one takes cognisance of the fact that IK and its values may have their limitations. Its adaptability to present needs can be limited, distribution uneven and individual aptitudes to generate and accumulate the knowledge different. In traditional socie-

ties access to specialised knowledge may be limited to certain persons and its use does not necessarily benefit the community. Yet, also in these cases, the major decisions in these communities derive from traditional knowledge and values and therefore they need attention in development initiatives. The issues of equity, marginalisation, and other rights tend to water-down the significance of such a choice. However, I see these as challenges to deal with in dialogical and constructive discourse manner rather than 'throw away the child and the bath water'. Hence, I posit that the main challenges of endogenous development are to enhance the dynamics of the local knowledge systems and to identify new development niches based on the comparative advantage of the specific eco-cultural situation.

To paraphrase Haverkort et. al (2003b) endogenous development is an approach that takes place complementary to the ongoing technological and economic global processes. It has the potential to address local needs and contradictions, use local potentials, build the local capacity toward organising to take initiatives and negotiate, link local economies to international systems with optimal terms of trade and allows for the co-existence of different cultural identities. I see it as a structural approach to poverty reduction in marginal areas. Intercultural, research and policy dialogues are approaches to support endogenous development in a regional, national or global context. How can one conduct endogenous development processes in Africa?

3.2 GLOBALISATION, POVERTY AND ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

In my view, Globalisation offers opportunities to link people across the globe in order for them to exchange information, goods, and services. In the present global information system, people can inform and learn from each other, assist each other in decision-making or join forces in negotiation and or lobbying. Globalisation has contributed to fast and intensive communication and greater knowledge about different societies, cultures and ecosystems in the world. An-

other result is an increased awareness of the fragility of the earth's ecosystem, the differences in wealth and poverty and the relevance of cultural diversity.

Globalisation is purported to have contributed to overall economic growth, but this growth is not found everywhere on the globe and not all social categories have benefited from it. Many are forced to Migration compels many people to push traditional life forms to the background. Poverty is prevalent in most parts of Africa manifesting itself in the lack of purchasing power, political power, ill health, high child death ratio, low education, economic dislocation, personal violence, political activism and natural disasters. Economic growth demands space, energy and resources and puts stress on the global climate, waters, biodiversity and vegetation. The erosion of natural and biological resources goes hand in hand with diminishing cultural diversity. Many traditional societies break up and numerous customs, cultural expressions and languages eroded.

Despite global efforts to come to worldwide trade liberalisation, the international trade relations are still far from equal. Major economic blocs use export subsidies and import levies to limit free trade. One cannot speak of equal chances for most tropical countries to get access to the global economy. Production now takes place in parts of the world where favourable opportunities created through a combination of protective measures and support mechanisms (subsidies, infrastructures, technology development and extension) exist (Haverkort et. al., 2003a; 29).

In many parts of Africa, poverty is predominant and pushes many young people migrate to the towns or abroad in search for greener pastures. Privatisation of health services and liberalisation of agricultural input supply tend to make the health services and agricultural inputs services go beyond the reach of many rural people. The result of these processes is that those areas or sections of the population that want to maintain and to develop the local economy and

cultural identity further, find it increasingly difficult to achieve their goals.

Hence, endogenous development offers a paradigm shift for Africa's development. This shift, in my opinion, has a niche in endogenous development from a cosmovision perspective (Haverkort et. al 2003b; 137).

SUPPORTING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

At this point, I draw from the empirical findings of work done on endogenous development by two NGOs in Africa, namely; the Centre for Cosmovision and Indigenous Knowledge (CECIK) – Ghana (Millar, 1993) and Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Environmental Conservationists (AZTREC) – Zimbabwe (Gonese, 1999). The experiences shared here were facilitated under the auspices of the project; Comparing and Sustaining Agricultural Systems (COMPAS) of the Netherlands.

4.1 SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

From their experiences of CECIK and AZTREC, the support activities deducible as useful learning for enhancing endogenous development are as follows:

- Capacity development for identifying local resources and of ways to get access to them;
- Understanding, testing and improving local practices;
- Building on locally felt needs and values of different groups;
- Maximising local control of development;
- Enhancing the local capacity for learning and experimenting;
- Identifying new development niches based on the characteristics of each local situation;
- Optimising local resources through selective use of external resources;
- Retention of the benefits in the local area;

- Exchange experiences between different localities and cultures;
- Further understanding of systems of knowing, learning and experimenting;
- Training and capacity building for rural people, development staff and researchers.

4.3 CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

The COMPAS experience shows that in order to stimulate a structural poverty reduction an enabling environment for endogenous development is necessary. Local initiatives may not result in effective changes if the wider legal, economic or policy environment is not conducive to the results aimed at. Hence the following policy influencing and advocacy issues need to be addressed (Millar, 1999; 133) :

- Measures that secure Intellectual Property Rights are important.
- Training of future experts in the right attitude and relevant knowledge will contribute to adequate human capacity development.
- Policy supportive research and dialogues between different actors can stimulate the adjustment of policies in prices, marketing, investment in education, research and development, legislation, and the like. These can apply to sub-national, national and international policies.
- Regional planning can lead to specific activities such as integrated nutrient management at regional level to link flows of nutrients, food and biomass or to other regional programmes.
- Networking as well as regional and national lobbying would allow the creation of an enabling environment for endogenous development above the farm or community level.

Through the documenting and publication of experiences, intercultural dialogues that allow for joint learning and co-evolution of different learning paradigms become possible.

4.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ENHANCING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

Experiences of CECIK and AZTREC have shown that work with indigenous practices and knowledge as an 'out-sider' implies certain risks. These include disturbing the status-quo at community level, extracting local knowledge for purposes not in the interest of the rural people, domination of local processes by outsiders, prying too much into people's private matters, or the introduction lifestyles that are not consistent with local values. Therefore, in their work with the rural people CECIK and AZTREC have established the following code of conduct (Gonese, 1999: Millar, 1999):

- Accept the idea that local communities have indigenous knowledge systems with its own rationale and logic, and will be prepared to learn from them.
- Commitment to work in the interest of the local communities. Programmes will only be implemented after approval of the local community and its leaders.
- Accept the rules and regulations set by the local community for attending and receiving visitors, and respect the limitations set by local leaders.
- Accept and seek complementarity between external knowledge and the local knowledge systems. Avoid the domination of external over the local knowledge and value systems
- Accept the fact that in many cases new methods will have to be developed, as the conventional approaches for research and development may not be the most appropriate.
- Pay attention to the attitudinal changes that *may* be required for staff and accept that involved are students with the local people, leaders and experts as their tutors.
- Learn empathetically from the local knowledge systems, analyse it and enter into a respectful and constructive dialogue about the positive and negative aspects, the possibilities for improvement, as well as the epistemologies and paradigms.

- Accept the guidance of local leaders to ensure that the information collected will be in the interest of the community, thus respecting traditional Intellectual Property Right (IPR).
- Accept the importance of exchange of experiences within and between rural communities. Publish experiences for other audiences only after approval of the communities involved.

5.0 WORKING WITH ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

In this section, my primary task is to try to respond to the needs and questions asked by my students in the University for Development Studies. The students rightfully and legitimately asked for empirical work done in Ghana or Africa in respect of endogenous development and the new challenges posed by this paradigm. I proceed to describe my own work done in the past and ongoing as useful practical resources and learning tools for my students and other development practitioners.

In my earlier works (Millar, 1994; 1996; 2003) I demonstrate that *Empathy* is the guiding principle for re-orientation of the 'self' in order to build a trustworthy relationship with rural people and in so doing, engage in constructive dialogue. Empathy means putting oneself in the position of the other and attempting to understand and appreciate how the 'other' thinks and feels. Within this context, CE-CIK has evolved steps to conduct learning from the point of view of empathy, which is strategic in conducting endogenous development. The steps include the following:

5.1 BUILDING EMPATHETIC RELATIONSHIP WITH RURAL PEOPLE

To facilitate meaningful exchange and promoting sharing for the generating endogenous development, there will be the need to build empathetic relationships with rural people. This is possible through the following processes:

Identify the population concerned: what is the boundary of the tar-get population, their tribal name, socio-economic description and location?

Compile existing anthropological, agricultural and other relevant literature and summaries of existing information on the above. For this, it becomes necessary to consult libraries in the area. Possibly libraries in other countries must also be used. In many cases, for example, anthropological data exist more in the west than in the country they refer to.

Cultural expressions in houses, painting, sculpturing, religion can give important information.

When entering into a new community make sure to show respect and interest in their values. When already working in a community you consider efforts to redefine the existing relationships.

Agree with the population on the activities. Agree on the goals and activities to be carried out as well as on the roles of the different leaders. As much as possible make a covenant on the process and ownership of the results. Use the principle of prior informed consent and joint planning.

Agree about the methods to be used for learning about Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Institutions. Consider (a mix of) the following methods: Asking key persons about the traditional social structure and leadership; interview traditional leaders (men and wo-men), be keen to learn about their worldview and about their role in teaching and experimentation; take note of oral life histories; use village workshops, village theatre, visual presentations, and linguistic analysis; understand folk stories, creation myths, songs, customs, rituals, visual expressions in painting, architecture and sculpturing; participate in festivals, rituals and other important events. Accept that you are a learner.

Interviewees can be traditional leaders, spiritual leaders, healers, old farmers, young farmers or key persons with specific information.

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- In all cases, make sure that gender differentiation is being made.
- Make sure that the results of this process will be discussed and assessed with members of the community and that conclusions will be drawn together, taking into account gender, age and power differences in the community.
- Ensure, as much as possible, that documentation is in a form that is in line with rural traditions and can be retrieved and used by the population.

5.2 FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIMENTING WITHIN ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

Experimenting or testing is a very important component of endogenous development. Hence the need to present here a framework based on empirical findings of COMPAS partners, of which CECIK is a part, over a four-year (Millar, 1993; 2003:153).

To develop a framework for experimentation and testing, the following questions are suggested:

1. How to (re)enter the self-development process of the community and build up a good working relationship?
2. How to develop a working agenda together with the community?
3. How to determine the parameters for testing and experimenting together?
4. 'What common strategy to use to realise the common objective? And how to design the experiments?
5. How to keep track together of the process (monitoring, assessing, assisting, supporting, sharing and developing)?
6. How to judge or determine the results or products of the process, considering the three aspects of spiritual, material and social growth?
7. How to leave their process such that the community can continue the growth and self-development process (how to continue, how to up-scale, considering the spiritual, material and social equilibrium of the community)?

For the primary purpose of addressing the needs of my Students in UDS in particular and Development Practitioners in general, I proceed to deepen the understanding of the HOW to conduct experimentation from the experiences of CECIK.

1. HOW MIGHT THE PROCESS OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT BE INITIATED IN THE COMMUNITY AND USED TO BUILD UP A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP?

- If a field worker is approached by somebody from the community with the request to offer some help, it is important to find out what is it that the community wants and what can be considered good experiences so far. An appointment can be made during which all senses should be open to existing knowledge and the institutional context. Also openness and transparency about the interest in cosmovision including its spiritual aspects is needed.

- In case the process is renewing older contacts, make sure to follow-up on a previous dialogue. It is important to make clear to the community how cooperation is foreseen, also indicating the interest in cosmo-vision and its three dimension (natural world, social world and spiri-tual world).
- When possible and relevant, participation in ceremonies and festivals is desirable, thus learning about the cosmovision, indigenous institu-tions and cultural identity of the community.
- Familiarisation with the cosmovision and the culture of the area by studying previous cosmovision studies, anthropological and develop-ment studies can provide important background information.
- It is important to establish contacts with and have discussions with traditional and spiritual leaders, spirit mediums, healers and elders.

- When meetings are organised, reflect also on traditional ceremonies and rituals as performed by traditional and spiritual leaders.

2. HOW MIGHT A COMMON AGENDA BE DEVELOPED?

- Starting with positive experiences on the issues brought forward (yours and theirs).
- Consulting spiritual institutions.
- Meditation and reflection.
- Using participatory diagnostic tools.
- Carrying out visits and cross-visits.
- Having extensive dialogue with the community.
- Using local means of communication audio-visuals such as drumming, music, drama, design on houses, textiles, and art objects.
- Participating in ceremonies as a way of engaging with interest groups/ stake holders.
- Being aware of possible resistance, conflicts, and confrontation and respect limits set by the community.

3. HOW MIGHT PARAMETERS BE DETERMINED JOINTLY?

- Asking the spirit mediums about their parameters and to what extent is it possible for them to carry out and be involved in experiments.
- Identifying the successful parameters in the farmers' experiences.
- Evaluating project parameters against those of the indigenous cosmovision.
- Using a time frame that respects ritual calendars and astrological data.
- Take into account the location; respect sacred places and other qualities of the location indicated by their cosmovision.

- Take into account a resource frame that responds to local perceptions and value system.
- Incorporating socio-cultural issues such as taboos, totems, class and caste, and
- involve local authorities in decision-making and the management issues.
- Be gender sensitive and make sex and generational differentiation in experimental parameters and indicators.
- Incorporating spiritual elements as indicated by the spiritual leaders:
- respecting signs of the ancestors, indications by dreams and visions.
- Dealing both with qualitative and quantitative data.
- Developing criteria, indicators and strategies should be gradual.

4. HOW MIGHT ACTIONS BE DESIGNED?

- Using traditional institutions in the design process and if suggested include indications given by dreams, visions and intuition.
- Being open for modifications of the design during execution.
- Letting the local institutions be accountable for the design (for the whole action).
- Start from the known to the unknown.
- Evocate indigenous ways of designing and experimenting.

5. HOW MIGHT THE PROCESS BE MONITORED?

- Build the strength to monitor in the communities and traditional institutions.
- Use relevant monitoring components from tools of participatory approaches.
- Let the spirit mediums be part of the monitoring team.
- Set up community code-of-conducts and by-laws.
- Make observations and reflections also by meditation.
- Conduct participatory dialogues and use opportunities offered

by ceremonies, festivals, and other occasions as well.

- Use field notebooks and diaries, community registers, indigenous recording forms, village albums, reports and audio-visuals.

6. HOW MIGHT THE RESULT OF EXPERIMENTS BE JUDGED?

- Go back to or revisiting the parameters with all stakeholders.
- Make a comparison with project baselines and the community's baselines established at the beginning.
- Be open for intended and unexpected results and modifications of the experiments by the community.
- Have open discussions on the results: Is everybody satisfied? Can results be felt, tasted, parameters measured? Can symbols or signs indicate the results?
- Spiritual results can also express themselves in the physical world.

7. HOW MIGHT LEAVING THE COMMUNITY BE STRUCTURED ?

- A periodical follow-up with reducing intensity, engage in a social conversation on the subject of phasing-out.
- Consulting spirit mediums.
- Being sure that the 'process' is embedded in the culture, especially when you duplicate or scale-up.
- Still being part of the community, especially for festivals and ceremonies.
- Ensuring networking with traditional institutional networking throughout.
- Developing farmer-to-farmer reciprocal arrangements.
- Involving women and the youth early, looking for signals from them and asking for their commitment.
- Having various forms of documentation available locally. Leave summary behind as a point of discussion.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Endogenous development is a contrast of exogenous development. While the former is internally driven and controlled, the latter is externally driven and controlled. Endogenous development includes processes that enable local people, especially those at the grassroots and/or in rural communities, to initiate and negotiate their own

development. It taps on local and indigenous knowledges, skills and expertise to initiate change that is relevant and meaningful to the needs and aspirations of the local people. Although it draws on external support, such support is meant only to facilitate the process and not to direct and control development processes and actions. Development practitioners need, therefore, to work with local people to analyse, initiate and negotiate their own development. It is development from within.

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