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Structural Adjustment and Socio-Economic Change in Sub-Saharan Africa

Some Conceptual, Methodological and Research Issues

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This report summarises the results of work that has been carried out at the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (NAI) since 1990 on the impact of structural adjustment on the economy, state and society in Africa. It also presents a critical summary of some of the issues which have been brought to the fore by other recent publications on various aspects of the social, political and economic implications of structural adjustment implementation on the continent. The first set of studies which were undertaken at NAI (see Appendix for details) were carried out during Phase I of the institute's research programme on *The Political and Social Context of Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*. That phase of the programme was launched in October 1990 and ran for four years until October 1994. During that period, empirically-based studies were carried out in Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe aimed at capturing aspects of the structural changes associated with the implementation of market-based reforms. The field work for the studies was undertaken during the course of 1992 and 1993 and some of the results obtained are presented in the essay written by Peter Gibbon.

The second essay, by Adebayo Olukoshi, provides a review of some aspects of the adjustment literature and the shifting concerns which have dominated the research agenda on the origins, effects, and consequences of the market reform programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in Africa. Based on work which was undertaken at NAI during the first phase of the research into the adjustment process and what is known in the literature about the nature of socio-economic change in contemporary Africa, it outlines three themes, namely, *private trading networks and structures, the new political economy of land, and popular forms of social provisioning*, which, it is hoped, will help to deepen our knowledge about some of the main trends that underpin the political economy of most African countries at the present time. The three themes that are outlined constitute the core of work which is currently going on at NAI as part of the second phase of the structural adjustment research programme. That phase was launched in October 1994 and empirical studies have been commissioned from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to cover different aspects of the three research themes. The list of the projects which are being undertaken is reproduced as an appendix to this report.

Considerable controversy and contestation have attended the discourse on structural adjustment in Africa. Many of the positions which have been taken have, however, been derived from deductions which are rooted more in the subjective preferences of authors and what their analytical/abstract models tell them to expect and less in empirically-based investigations and what the reality on the ground may be. Furthermore, crucial methodological questions are often glossed over or side-stepped, with the result that conclusions often rest on shaky foundations that do not stand the test of rigorous scrutiny. It has been the ambition of the NAI research programme on the adjustment process in Africa to attempt to overcome some of these shortcomings through support for field-based studies that are informed by a rigorous methodological approach and patient data collection. It is, therefore, our hope that the work which we have been doing in this regard, some of the results of which have been published, will help to produce more meaningful insights into the dynamics of structural change in contemporary Africa.

The two essays which form the core of this report were originally written for, and presented at, the methodological seminar which was held in Harare in May 1995, in collaboration with the Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies (SARIPS/SAPES Trust), to flag off the second phase of the socio-economic component of the NAI adjustment research programme. That meeting brought together researchers whose proposals were being actively considered for inclusion in the NAI network that was being constituted and discussants who are noted for their rich contributions to the adjustment debate. The essays were presented to provide the historical background and current context for the NAI's adjustment research programme and the host of methodological and thematic issues that we have been trying to grapple with in collaboration with other researchers. The meeting also provided the occasion for the researchers to present their proposals to a wider audience and respond to questions on the methodological, empirical, and conceptual challenges arising therefrom. This report is, therefore, the main academic product from that meeting.

At this stage, we would like to extend our thanks to the numerous academic colleagues within and outside Africa who have, in one way or the other, contributed to the implementation of the NAI structural adjustment research programme either as researchers working on specific topics or as discussants of some of the research

results. Particular mention must be made, in this regard, of Yusuf Bangura, Issa Shivji, and Ibbo Mandaza who, together with Peter Gibbon, were the main discussants of the proposals presented at the Harare meeting. Thanks are also due to Ibbo Mandaza and his colleagues at the SARIPS/SAPES Trust for their collaboration and support in making the Harare seminar the success that it was. The list of researchers associated with the programme in its first and second phases is attached to this report as the Appendix. Many thanks are also due to the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), represented at the Harare meeting by Lars Johansson, which has been the main source of the external financing for the programme. The Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) has also been generous in contributing supplementary funding for aspects of our work on this programme for which we are grateful. Finally, we would like to place on record, our appreciation of the invaluable contribution of Solveig Hauser, Kajsa Övergaard, Ulrica Risso and Eva-Lena Volk who worked, at various times, as assistants on the adjustment programme. In the same vein, we would like to thank the staff of the NAI publications unit for their constant co-operation with us in the task of producing and disseminating the research results from the programme.

Peter Gibbon *Adebayo O. Olukoshi*

April, 1996.

Abbreviations

ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities (Nigeria)
CFNPP	Cornell Food and Nutrition Policy Programme
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HTA(s)	Home Town Association(s)
IFAA	Institute for African Alternatives
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
NAI	Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (Nordic Africa Institute) (formerly SIAS)
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OGIL(s)	Open General Import License(s)
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PSE(s)	Public Sector Enterprise(s)
SAF	Structural Adjustment Facility
SAL(s)	Structural Adjustment Loan(s)
SAP(s)	Structural Adjustment Programme(s)
SARIPS/SAPES	Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies/ Southern Africa Political Economy Series
SDA	Social Dimensions of Adjustment
SDRs	Special Drawing Rights
SECAL(s)	Sectoral Adjustment Loan(s)
SIAS	Scandinavian Institute of African Studies (now NAI)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSE(s)	Small-Scale Enterprise(s)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIDER	World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University

Peter Gibbon

Structural Adjustment and Structural Change in Sub-Saharan Africa: Some Provisional Conclusions

Introduction

Structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes have comprised reforms aimed at replacing systems of state economic intervention by market-based mechanisms, while at the same time correcting imbalances between national and governmental income and spending. The main architects of these policies are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). To varying extents, policies of this kind have been adopted by a majority of sub-Saharan countries since the early 1980s. Discussion about them is an academic industry in its own right (and one in which the present author has been employed since 1990).

The discussion on adjustment has been dominated by four main issues. In the early days (until about 1986), it was very much dominated by economists and by arguments over the theoretical merits and demerits of adjustment packages, and especially of their initial "pricist" bias. A second phase, focusing on economic and social outcomes in adjusting countries, was ushered in by the UNICEF *Adjustment with a Human Face* volume (Cornia, Jolly and Stewart (eds.), 1987). This discussion in turn gave rise to a third episode of mainly methodological debate, in which critics and proponents of adjustment disputed the extent to which any specific effects could be attributed to adjustment and stabilisation as such. One of the issues in evaluating adjustment outcomes which was thrown up in the course of this discussion was that of "slippage", or non-implementation of adjustment and stabilisation agreements. This, in turn, was to provide a starting-point for a fourth phase of debate, that on the politics of adjustment's implementation and non-implementation (also called the "political economy of adjustment"). Although arising in this chronological sequence, attention to each of the new issues has only partially displaced attention to existing ones: today discussion is still proceeding on all four fronts.

This essay focuses mainly on the second and third topics listed above, though not in this order. The essay first provides a general overview of methodological issues, and—in its light—then draws some general conclusions from research on social and economic issues produced as part of the first phase (1990–94) of the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet's (the Nordic Africa Institute) research programme on *The Political and Social Context of Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

An Overview of Methodological Issues

Drawing causal conclusions about adjustment (Endnote 1)

The most apparently fundamental methodological question concerning research on stabilisation and adjustment is whether it is possible to draw conclusions of a causal kind about their effects, in particular their general effects either across all or most adjusting countries or across any single one. Such conclusions have, in practice, been drawn both by critics and by proponents (the latter most notably in World Bank (1994)). It has been argued, fairly convincingly, that there are strong reasons to believe that they have not been reached validly.

The first method which has generally been used to try to draw conclusions of this kind can be called the "with or without" method. This method, most favoured by the World Bank itself, involves comparing the economic (and/or social) performance of groups of adjusting and non-adjusting countries, or sub-groups within the former category (e.g., especially "good" and "not so good" adjusters) and then drawing conclusions about adjustment as a global or continent-wide exercise. The basic problem with this method concerns the non-equivalence of the various adjustment and stabilisation packages which have been adopted and/or implemented in different countries. Although it is perfectly true that different patients have all basically been prescribed the same medicine, this has come in different forms and different dosages—and in combination with different broader patterns of patient behaviour, including taking other medicines or throwing the adjustment medicine away after the first few doses. In some countries the emphasis has been mainly on stabilisation, in others mainly on trade liberalisation, in others mainly on agricultural price or parastatal reform and in others again (e.g., Egypt) on the marketisation of agricultural input supply (in this case water). Most adjusting countries have adopted only some parts of the total array of adjustment policies, and have then only implemented parts of these. Meanwhile, they may have combined them with other policies improving, modifying or nullifying their effects. On the other hand, a lot of the policies which form part of adjustment packages have been adopted and implemented by certain countries which have not concluded any agreement with the World Bank and/or the IMF and are, therefore, not counted by the latter as "adjusting".

The World Bank report cited above, for example, attempts to distinguish six "good policy performers" from other countries in sub-Saharan Africa and to show that their economic performance is superior. On examination however, it seems that there are as many differences between the policies this group of countries adopted and implemented as there are between the group and other countries (Endnote 2). There is some overlap between the difficulties described here and those accompanying the other main method for reaching general conclusions about adjustment, namely, the "before and after" method. This method is the most popular, especially in studies of particular national adjustment experiences, since adopting it seems to require the collection of less information and simpler forms of argument. The most obvious defect of this method is that most of those employing it possess at best only imperfect information about the exact nature of the adjustment package(s) adopted and implemented. However, another more profound difficulty has been pointed out, namely that of knowing what would have happened in the absence of adjustment policies being adopted. In other words, valid conclusions about the precise effects of the implementation of a particular adjustment policy require not only a comparison between "before" and "after" but also between this "after" and another, counterfactual one. Perhaps some or even all of the effects would have happened anyway, and therefore cannot be exclusively or even mainly attributed to the adoption of the policy.

This discussion in turn broaches on a third issue thrown up by attempts to draw causal conclusions about adjustment, on either a global or national scale. This is that of the contribution of non-policy factors, or factors only indirectly related to policy, to both "before", "after", "with" and "without" situations. In sub-Saharan Africa, the most important factor in determining variance in economic performance is probably not policy at all, but weather. Well over half of total output is accounted for by rainfed agriculture using non-"modern" inputs, and therefore extremely heavily dependent on meteorological conditions. A second is population growth, with which an extension of cultivated area to more marginal lands has generally been associated. A third is the nature of international markets, and in particular the international terms of trade for the products which African countries import and export. The latter have fallen unremittingly since the mid-1970s, restricting national export earnings and import capacity and depressing incentives to produce export crops and manufactures. A fourth is the occurrence or absence/winding down of major civil conflicts. It is probably no coincidence that one of the most 'successful' African adjusters in the last decade has been Uganda, a country whose fairly obvious economic potential was crippled by serious internal conflicts for most of the period 1972–86, and which adopted an adjustment programme shortly after most of these conflicts were eventually resolved. Finally, and moving into the sphere of factors with a closer relation to adjustment, there is the issue of changes in levels of aid flows. Certain African countries, notably Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda, have seen profound changes in their level of overseas development assistance during the adjustment phase. This aid has been used mainly to increase import capacity and to rehabilitate infrastructure. Other non-adjusting countries have seen their aid frozen. Although some researchers have attempted to isolate the independent effects of increased or diminished aid flows, the difficulties in doing so are enormous.

A last pair of general problems affecting the validity of causal (and in some respects any) conclusions about adjustment is that of appropriate indicators of economic or social "performance", and of the quality and coverage of data on these indicators. Clearly, any discussion of economic performance involves considering growth rates, overall and sectoral. And it might be considered equally clear that any assessment of stabilisation must look at the three central balances of exports-imports, revenues-expenditures and savings-investments. But it is neither clear what constitutes an adequate or good growth rate, nor how narrow an imbalance may be before it is considered stable. In the former case, growth rates of four per cent, considered seriously inadequate by the World Bank in the 1960s, are now considered good; in the second case, as imbalances have proved increasingly recalcitrant to corrective efforts over the years, the international financial institutions have begun using completely different indicators of stability (e.g. import capacity). Things become even more confused once less basic indicators of economic performance are considered. At the beginning of the adjustment period, there was a lot of reference to low investment rates being a sign of the failure of the policies of the 1960s and 1970s; now the argument of the World Bank seems to be that investment levels are not a good indicator of whether adjustment policies work: supposedly, they cannot be expected to recover until the perception becomes general that adjustment policies will never be reversed! Issues of appropriate social indicators are murkier still.

Even if there was general agreement on appropriate indicators, major problems about data would remain. Some of the basic issues can be illustrated by staying with the examples of growth rates and investment. At best, these are measured only partly or indirectly. As already noted, *agriculture* accounts for a huge share of the GDP in most African countries, and in turn a large share of it is accounted for by non-marketed production. In some countries, the latter is said to correspond to about a third of total GDP. Yet this production, by its very nature, is virtually unmeasurable. The figures entered into national economic accounts are guesswork, more or less informed, and subject at regular intervals to arbitrary revision (FAO figures, on the other hand, have been based on guesswork from earlier periods and seem to have been less frequently revised, leading on some occasions to a perceived "crisis of African food crop production"!).

Data on the *informal sector* is likewise notoriously unreliable—official Kenya government figures show that there were only 38 persons in the whole country engaged in the non-formal construction industry in 1987, rising to 172 in 1990, while rural non-agricultural production in Tanzania is statistically assumed to be a fixed fraction of agricultural production, and rises and falls correspondingly. In most of the Anglophone countries at least, data on *private investment* comes only through the proxy of the level of official imports of certain intermediate goods, particularly cement (which of course in fact mainly goes into house-building). Even where apparently comprehensive data is collected, its quality is often poor due to the lame state of most government statistical services. The quality of data from surveys is usually far superior, but the resources available for basic social research in Africa mean that survey coverage is usually too narrow to substitute entirely for official statistics.

Individually, these problems do not completely rule out the possibility of making statements of a causal kind concerning adjustment, albeit ones of a cautious nature: each of the difficulties is real, but there are conventional ways of coping with some of them. Reasonably convincing hypothetical counterfactuals can be constructed, for example, as they regularly are in those branches of natural science (e.g., astronomy) which do not or cannot rely on experimental forms of demonstration. Taken together though, the difficulties are substantial.

One regular contributor to the adjustment literature, Paul Mosley (in van der Hoeven and van der Kraaij, 1994), argues that despite this, some limited causal conclusions concerning adjustment are still possible. However, the severe limitations of the "adjuster versus non-adjuster" method mean that this must be limited to particular countries, while the only slightly less severe difficulties of the "before and after" one mean that they can cover only the effects of specific adjustment policies (the examples he gives are tariff reductions, market-based credit policies, agricultural input subsidy withdrawal, and agricultural producer price changes), rather than adjustment packages generally. Such a narrowing of the range of questions asked enables greater certainty about what has actually been implemented and not cancelled out by other measures, and provides a basis for constructing reasonably convincing hypothetical counterfactuals. It also allows a more manageable discussion of the role of other intervening variables, while narrowing the breadth of survey research it would be necessary to undertake in order to substitute for unreliable government statistical service-derived data.

In response to the serious difficulties entailed by trying to generate valid causal statements about adjustment, Mosley's strategy is to "save" causal arguments by severely restricting the domain of objects which they refer to. In the process, the discussion tends to get shifted to an increasingly technical plane. This is perhaps not a bad thing, but it is worth pointing out that it is not the only possible response. The difficulties described above are not confined to studying adjustment but are, to some extent, intrinsic to social science generally and it is broadly accepted that they do not rule out other intelligent forms of discussion. The rest of this section will elaborate two of them.

Exploring the coherence of adjustment's theoretical assumptions

A long-established supplement, and sometimes alternative, to empirically establishing the effects of a given set of policy prescriptions is to examine their theoretical content. At least two sorts of questions are pertinent here. The first is whether the theory these prescriptions are based upon meets various non-empirical tests of coherence and adequacy. The most commonly applied of these concerns how convincingly the theory handles the full range of objects for which there are independent rational grounds to consider relevant, and the extent to which it offers a well-developed account of the internal nature of the given process it examines, i.e., whether it adequately demonstrates an explanatory relation between the objects it identifies. A second is whether the assumptions which it appears to make about real objects can be justified in terms of our existing knowledge about these objects.

The most recent important contribution to answering the first set of questions may be found in Finn Tarp's book, *Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment: Macroeconomic Frameworks for Analysing the Crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Most of Tarp's book is taken up by an examination of the IMF's stabilisation model, developed in the 1950s by J.J. Polak, and the World Bank's ("Revised Minimum Standard") adjustment model. The models both have the advantage of simplicity, but at the price of excluding variables of *prima facie* relevance and discarding competing assumptions on apparently arbitrary grounds. The J.J. Polak model assumes that stabilisation follows directly from (restrictive) modifications to the money demand and supply process and effectively without reference to investment, savings or growth. On the other hand, although the Revised Minimum Standard Model incorporates reference to levels of investment and savings optimal for growth, as well as to ways (external finance) of temporarily closing both this gap and the corresponding one between export earnings and import needs, it axiomatically excludes consideration of structures and processes which might stand between establishing these balances and attaining growth. Besides completely ignoring various objects which there are strong rational grounds for considering relevant, the models suffer from the absence of specifications of the actual mechanisms through which stabilisation and growth are generated through the adjustments suggested, and of any qualitative operationalisation of the notions of stabilisation and growth. They also fail to consider what other effects, beside stabilisation and growth, these adjustments may have. Tarp demonstrates that the explicit and implicit economic models on which "structuralist" accounts of African growth processes are based are, by contrast, far better developed and more coherent.

It might be argued that from the mid-1980s onward, certain of the World Bank's main publications on Africa (especially World Bank, 1989b) incorporated increasing reference to the structures and processes whose presence or absence was implicitly assumed to relate to the translation or non-translation into growth of stabilisation and higher import capacity, investment and savings levels. But instead of being incorporated directly into a revision of the economic model itself, these became incorporated as central elements of a grey area of discourse which the World Bank referred to as "political economy", a "discipline" whose main purpose appeared to be to save the model itself. The structures and processes favourable to translation were identified as functioning private sector business and voluntary organisations, plus an "enabling environment" of (de)regulation; the structures obstructing this translation were identified as the "patrimonial state", parastatals and "urban bias". While retaining this ad hoc theoretical status, these structures came to bear a greater and greater explanatory weight. Their content was only sketched in an extremely rough way, and has always mainly consisted of assumptions about their essential properties. The questions remains open of the extent to which these assumptions correspond to what is known, or becoming known, about the economic and political systems of sub-Saharan Africa. Besides providing another way of assessing pro-adjustment discourses, such an assessment would be useful in its own right. It will be undertaken later in this essay.

From adjustment as an independent variable to "adjustment situations" and structural change

A second strategy involves shifting both the empirical horizon (but not in the same direction as Mosley) and the level of methodological ambition. The empirical horizon may be shifted from attempting to study adjustment—in the sense of a determinate package of policy prescriptions—as an independent variable and "economic and social change" in general as a dependent one, to studying "adjustment situations" and possible changes in selected economic and social structures and processes. By "adjustment situation" is meant a combination of *certain* actually implemented adjustment policies with other novel independent or semi-independent variables such as terms of trade and aid flows. (By sifting these different combinations, it should be possible to identify a most common 'adjustment situation'.) The selected structures and processes which could be investigated for changes include that group of objects whose nature might be clarified through a critical examination of the "structural" categories of World Bank "political economy" (e.g., the private sector, voluntary organisations, etc.), and perhaps others too. Methodologically, this may be accompanied by shifting from attempting to establish strictly causal relations between independent and dependent variables to attempting instead to simply trace empirical associations without imputing causes.

If Mosley's proposal is open to criticism on the grounds that it shifts the object of enquiry into the narrow reaches of specific adjustment policies, that suggested here is perhaps open to the accusation that it is no longer really about adjustment at all. While the term "adjustment" is the only one found qualifying the term "situation", the possibility is not excluded that the causal role of adjustment within "adjustment situations" may be only secondary. But applying two further methodological exercises may allow such a procedure to still be a resource for more directly addressing some of the central issues in the adjustment debate.

The first of these exercises might consist of examining whether the content of the evidence (as opposed to its physical volume) suggests more than accidental associations between the actually implemented adjustment policy components of "adjustment situations" and selected structures. In this combination of policies, are there, for example, elements which could be inferred to have the status of necessary and/or sufficient conditions of the structural changes in question, i.e., could those structural changes observed have occurred *in the absence* of these policies, and is there anything in these policies which, in combination with this, could *on its own* account for these changes happening? The second might involve invoking an additional counterfactual, i.e., asking—on the basis of what is known about what happens when only particular policies from a group of policies are implemented (and assuming no change in other conditions)—what overall changes to the outcome would have been likely to have been brought about if the 'missing' policies also had been implemented?

There is no reliable general source for constructing from the implemented adjustment policy element, a picture of sub-Saharan Africa's composite "adjustment situation". *Adjustment in Africa* (World Bank, 1994), which repeatedly promises such an account, delivers instead only country-by-country rankings of degrees of proximity to or distance from a notional set of "good policies", many of which are, in fact, never spelt out and some of which are only spelt out in a proxy form which makes the whole argument circular (e.g., unspecified policies which have reduced budget deficits by a particular number of percentage points). Nonetheless, it is clear from internal World Bank and IMF documents to which the present author has had access, as well as from accounts by other authors who have enjoyed similar or more extensive access (e.g., Mosley, Harrigan and Toye, 1991), that while there are considerable differences in the principal emphases of particular "national" adjustment packages, there are some striking regularities in what has so far tended to be implemented and not implemented.

Probably the most consistently implemented adjustment and stabilisation policy has been *devaluation,* if only because it is normally a precondition of receipt of IMF loans, which are themselves normally (but not always) preconditions of World Bank ones and of balance of payments support from bilaterals. In many Anglophone African cases, the dollar has increased in value against the local currency by a factor of 40 or more as a movement towards "market" rates of exchange has occurred (in practice, toward rates reflecting the price which those engaging in capital flight are prepared to pay for forex on the parallel market).

In most cases, devaluation has been accompanied by a quasi-*liberalisation of forex distribution*. Basically, this means a change from policy/political priority-based allocations by Central Banks to government departments, companies and individuals to a mixture of allocations via queuing systems (Open General Import Licenses (OGILs), auctions open to (certain) financial institutions, and trading of forex entitlements by private exporters. While the World Bank states that this is a movement toward market-based allocation, OGIL-type mechanisms are hardly of a market type. Nor is any link present between forex supply and national earnings. In most countries, the overall volume of forex passing through these systems is mainly determined by levels of donor commodity import and/or balance-of-payments support, which has become the fastest-expanding single line of aid over the last decade.

Devaluation has usually also, but much more slowly, been accompanied by an inter-related mixture of more *restrictive credit policies* and *financial sector liberalisation*. Their implementation has often entailed a move from interest rates below prevailing rates of inflation to ones above these rates. In more recent years, public sector enterprises previously enjoying almost unlimited access to credit have seen this restricted or disappear, and more stringent criteria of credit-worthiness appear to have been imposed for most other types of borrower. Many countries have seen a growth in private sector financial institutions, but these often operate even more restrictive credit policies or confine themselves to trading in forex and/or specialising purely in foreign trade finance.

A second common area of policy change has been in the area of *state subsidy provision*, in order to address government deficits. Subsidies have almost everywhere been withdrawn on basic consumer items and on agricultural inputs. Normally, subsidies to public companies have also been heavily reduced. In state-provided social services, (additional) user charges of different kinds have generally been imposed.

A third slowly but steadily implemented area of policy has been in *external and internal trade liberalisation*. Normally, external has preceded internal liberalisation, and "strategic" areas of both have remained confined to licensed operators for prolonged periods. Theoretically, external liberalisation has been supposed to start with raw materials, capital and intermediate goods, but liberalisation of basic and sometimes luxury consumer goods has often occurred alongside this, officially or otherwise. Internal liberalisation meanwhile normally began with these goods, followed by food crops. Dealings in export crops have usually been the last to be liberalised.

Accompanying external and internal trade liberalisation has normally been the *deregulation of most branches of private enterprise*. This has generally taken the form of the deconfinement of various branches of economic activity, price decontrol and liberalisation of access to various kinds of inputs rather than a relaxation of licensing and regulations governing functional operation, although monitoring of enterprise conformity to such regulation has almost certainly slackened. Where regulations governing functional operations have been diluted or removed, this has most commonly been in the area of labour regulation (hiring and firing, wage setting).

There has been far less active implementation of the general adjustment and stabilisation agenda with reference to *privatisation, civil service reform and more general issues of public expenditure*. Most public sector enterprises (PSEs) in most countries remain under state ownership or quasi-ownership, and civil service structures and numbers remain largely unchanged—as has the overall pattern and framework of public expenditure. To a surprising degree, the latter has also remained largely constant in real terms, although if increased levels of debt service are subtracted, the picture would be very different. Even including increased expenditure on debt service, *per capita* government expenditure has generally declined.

This is not to say that parastatals and the state generally occur as features of contemporary adjustment situations in the historical forms which they took during the 1970s. The latter forms were expansionary and, on the state-provided services side at least, still generally exhibited a degree of organisational coherence. Both have been badly affected by a combination of very sharply falling real salaries and increasing uncertainty about their institutional survival. The latter stems ultimately from the stabilisation agenda, with its strong emphasis on expenditure control. But it also stems from implicit local decisions about how to handle such controls. In the case of parastatals, these generally take the form not of explicit restructuring exercises but of the transfer of deficits from central government budgets to the domestic banking sector, and subsequent curtailment of access to official credit. In the case of government institutions, the implicit decisions have been to mainly cut expenditure on non-wage recurrent items (equipment and maintenance), and to distribute the cuts across almost all activities, rather than eliminating some altogether. *Governmental effectiveness* has been reduced still further through the increasing "donorisation" of many branches of government activity, which adds to ministerial administrative burdens, makes central planning more difficult, and leads to the creaming off of the best qualified staff. The result is that in most countries, parastatals are beset by a combination of paralysis and disintegration and that the same is true, to a slightly lesser extent, of many branches of state activity.

In this context of declining administrative capacity, it is important to recall the increased role under adjustment of *hard currency balance of payments support*. Not only was this the fastest growing line of aid in the 1980s and early 1990s, but it also accounted for a large share of the substantial increases in aid which many adjusting countries received in this period. This type of aid has proved more fungible than traditional project aid both because of its directly monetary form and because specific proportions of it have been dedicated for disbursement through new, untried and poorly supervised instruments designed to support private sector development.

To these basic features of the adjustment situation which are directly related to the adoption of adjustment packages (though with varying contributions from other sources) have to be added another group of new or relatively new ones with only indirect relations to the latter, or no relation at all. First in importance in these has been declining *international terms of trade*. According to World Bank data (1994: 27), sub-Saharan Africa's barter terms of trade (in weighted 1980 US dollars) fell from 131 in 1977 to 79 in 1991 (1970–73=100); excluding the leading oil producer, Nigeria, they fell by a slightly greater amount. This compared with a 25 per cent smaller fall, from

90 in 1977 to 62 in 1991 in "twenty four other (unnamed, P.G.) developing countries" (*ibid.*) (Endnote 3). Of course, this decline hides much sharper falls in the terms of trade of traditional agricultural export crops, the promotion of whose production was a central preoccupation of the World Bank in the early 1980s.

Secondly should be noted a *multiplication of voluntary development organisations and NGOs*. This has occurred less on the basis of deregulation (although, where not already implemented, the latter tended to be recommended by the World Bank, and certain other donors—notably USAID—in the same breadth as deregulation of private economic activity) than via donors making it known that they wanted to channel increasing proportions of their resources through such organisations. The latest available estimate of NGOs' overall share of development assistance transfers dates from as long ago as 1989, and the share has almost certainly risen beyond the 12 per cent it represented in that year. Registered NGO growth in two of the countries studied as part of this research programme was from 135 (1978) to 287 (1988) in Kenya and from 163 (1990) to 224 (1993) in mainland Tanzania (Kanyinga, 1993; Kiondo, 1994).

A third relatively new phenomenon has been *political liberalisation*. While donor enthusiasm for the latter has waned since the wave of enthusiasm of 1990–91—or at least become narrowed from promotion of multiparty democracy to protection of basic human rights and promotion of a non state-owned press, factors internal to the politics of most sub-Saharan African countries have meant that they have (re-) acquired multiparty systems anyway. Although such systems have been associated with changes in government in a number of countries, they have generally not been associated with any modification in the other aspects of adjustment situations described above, particularly the complex of adjustment policies implemented. However they have been associated with a greater freedom of self-organisation for social categories to whom this had long been denied.

The main features of "adjustment situations" can perhaps be summed up as economic, political, and development organisational liberalisation. This "liberalised development" falls as short of a free market system as it does of political democracy in any meaningful sense, yet in both cases there has been a clear movement away from the central features of earlier regulative systems. "Liberalised development" may also be a good way to describe such situations because the term "liberalisation" also illuminates the current subjection of the policy-making process itself to an essentially market nexus—one furthermore in which the latter's characteristically short-term calculations prevail. Policy changes reflect donor preferences, mediated by the administrative and political ease with which they can be implemented, and by calculations about the possibilities for accumulation by the local elite which they open up or close (Endnote 4). In turn, behind this stands the disintegration of the international economic, political and ideological certainties of the post-World War II period and the remarkable fact that aid now represents over 50 per cent of official GDP in a number of African countries.

Reflecting on the Coherence of Adjustment's Empirical Assumptions

The remainder of this essay will use findings from the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet research programme (complemented by findings from other sources) to construct an alternative picture of certain of the economic and social structures and processes in Africa with which "adjustment situations" interact, and to develop an account of some trends and tendencies which these structures start exhibiting during this interaction.

A necessary preliminary to addressing these objectives is to briefly describe the research programme itself, or at least that part of it focusing on social and economic change. This consisted of eight field studies of various scales and durations, carried out in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe by local researchers, as well as a series of pilot studies by other researchers in the same countries and in Lesotho, which were not taken further. The choice of the objects of the extended studies, which were commissioned in 1991–92, followed mainly from an attempt to address debates on most of the broader, i.e., non-technical economic questions about adjustment then being discussed. Although originally intended, for various reasons it proved impossible to commission any study on export crop agriculture; this and any systematic focus on environmental issues were the key lacunas. The choice of countries was not based on any principle of sampling, and they are not claimed to be a particularly good cross-section in general economic and social terms. They do, however, capture some of the main variations in programme experiences.

Kenya was one of the first African countries to formally adopt an adjustment programme, almost fifteen years ago. However, until around 1992, the Kenya government complied only with the introduction of those policies which it would probably have introduced in the absence of an adjustment agreement. In particular, little fresh internal and external trade liberalisation was undertaken. On the other hand, throughout this period, Kenya had a more extensive private sector than its neighbours, and indeed than most African countries. Studies in Kenya were carried out in 1993–94 on grain marketing, the voluntary development sector, and on the development and political roles of various religious organisations (Ikiara, Jama and Amadi, 1995; Kanyinga, 1994 and 1995; and Ngunyi 1995). These studies provide a basis for commenting critically on the World Bank's accounts of both the structural rigidities supposedly obstructing the adjustment process (parastatals and the "patrimonial state") and on the resources which will supposedly act as adjustment's bearers (the private sector, voluntary organisations).

Between 1979 and around 1984, the Tanzanian government strongly resisted the adoption of IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment programmes. Amidst conditions of acute economic crisis, it subsequently undertook an internally-based partial liberalisation and after the retirement of Julius Nyerere from the Presidency in 1985 eventually signed agreements with its former adversaries. Over the following decade, it has adopted a wide range of adjustment measures, but until very recently generally resisted their extension to parastatals and the civil service. According to the World Bank, the economic results have been extremely encouraging and Tanzania is at the moment ranked amongst Africa's leading performers. Most independent observers are however sceptical about such claims. Studies in Tanzania were carried out in 1993–94 on the mining industry, which recorded the fastest growth rate of any sector in the period in question (Chachage, 1993 and 1995), and on the voluntary development sector, which in many parts of the country has come to virtually replace state social provision (Kiondo, 1994 and 1995). These studies provide a basis for commenting directly on some of the claimed structural resources which will act as adjustment's bearers (the private sector, voluntary organisations) and the trends and tendencies exhibited in the adjustment situations.

Zimbabwe is one of the most industrialised countries in Africa and was one of the last to enter the adjustment fold. This occurred in 1990–91 when it adopted a trade liberalisation programme. As already-present economic difficulties became steadily worse, and were reinforced by the worst drought in living memory, the programme was modified to incorporate most traditional stabilisation measures. Studies (two of them longitudinal) were carried out in 1992–95 on labour, capital and adjustment (Sachikonye, 1995), women informal sector operators (Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo, 1995) and on public health and the health sector (Bijlmakers, Basset and Sanders, 1995 and 1996). These enable commentary both on existing conceptions of structural rigidities and resources for adjustment, and on current trends and tendencies with regard to the structures discussed under these headings. They and some of the other contributions also provide much rich material for discussion of popular responses to both "adjustment situations" and some of the changes taking place during them, as well as for discussion of the nature of "civil society" in Africa. It is intended that these will be explored in another, later paper.

"Structural obstacles" to adjustment

As noted above, the World Bank and allied "political economy" identify the African state and its agencies as the principal obstruction to the rational and complete introduction of adjustment (Endnote 5). Borrowing heavily from American political science writing on Africa, the basic argument is that the African state has become, possibly ever since independence but to an increasing extent in more recent years, a machine concerned only with extending its reach in order to maintain short-term political order for the benefit of the incumbent power bloc. This it does through the centralised development and extension of patronage institutions and networks, via the disbursement of state resources. These institutions and networks are intended to consolidate the position of the elite, who in their absence would experience deep problems of legitimacy (mostly they came to power in non-democratic ways). Legitimacy derived from patronage buys a wider silence, which in turn allows the incumbent elite to drink deeply and uninterruptedly from the central trough. But it is necessarily fragile in character and the patronage networks must be regularly reconstituted. Each step in this process involves increasing resource misallocation, which in turn stalls any possibility of long-term development.

A major reason for the acceleration of this process is said to be the removal from the state of various (colonial and/or immediately post-independence era) "checks and balances", such as political pluralism and an independent judiciary. While these never eliminated patronage and corruption, they at least prevented its consolidation into a single, all-embracing system. Political pluralism, for example, was usually associated with local patrons and brokers enjoying a high degree of autonomy, which meant that patrons at more senior levels were often constrained to form alliances, concede limited forms of accountability and on this basis indirectly restrict corruption. Ultimately, the system is said to be driven by a mixture of pervasive insecurity and "rent seeking". The latter depends on the existence of "rent-generating niches" but also appears to be attributed the status of an essential feature of African politics. Adjustment is obstructed because it is perceived as a threat to rent-seeking patronage and hence the political survival of the elite.

According to this perspective, parastatals—and, above all, domestic food crop parastatals—exemplify the development of state intervention for short-term political ends. They are said to be created/maintained by African politicians to guarantee support from urban constituencies (manufacturers and workers). This, in turn, is thought to be a political priority because such constituencies have traditionally demonstrated a high capacity for organisation. Large-scale grain farmers, normally also well-organised, are said to have usually been another beneficiary. The main losers comprise small-scale food crop farmers, obliged to sell to the parastatal rather than to private traders. Centralising control over the grain trade in a way which benefits these groups (large farmers through subsidies, credit, etc.; the urban population through cheap foodstuffs) may also provide scope for the recruitment/reorganisation of brokers and clients in rural areas (providing parastatal employment, creating cooperatives to extend services to small-scale producers, etc.) or for the breaking of the influence of powerful groups of rural opponents or potential opponents (displacing their organisations with extensions of the parastatal).

The legitimacy-hungry ruling elite's fear of urban opposition is seen as simultaneously driving it toward irrational policy intervention in the sphere of industrial policy and social service provision. In industrial policy, this generates an attachment to import substituting industrialisation (ISI); this is normally in turn financed and maintained by direct and indirect (exchange rate-based) taxation of export crop producers. By protecting inefficient local producers against more efficient external ones, the population generally is further taxed through higher than necessary non-food consumer prices. While the urban population suffers alongside the rural one from some of these policies, this is more than compensated for by their acquisition of relatively well-paid and secure employment. Their real incomes are meanwhile further indirectly expanded by the public provision of the best the country has to offer in health and education services.

The studies carried out as part of the programme do not offer a general alternative to this line of argument, but they provide refutations of, or at least important correctives to, many of its elements. Kanyinga (1994, 1995) demonstrates at length that lack of broad-based legitimacy is not an intrinsic feature of African political leadership, or even of rulers or ruling elites without extensive popular bases. Rather, at least in Kenya, lack of legitimacy arose precisely through the attempt to destroy all existing political networks and replace them with new ones established *ex nihilo* (the latter incidentally paid little or no attention to the major urban constituencies). Moreover, this same attempt convincingly demonstrated the limitations of patronage politics of all varieties, both the more decentralised ones of the Kenyatta period and the much more concentrated variety which Moi strove to construct. The former, and its operators, proved to be fairly easily undermined while—at least in the areas where the former had been widespread—the latter foundered on their encounter with sources of political identity and loyalty quite separate from patronage, whose underlying strength possibly also accounted for the shallowness of the Kenyatta network. Kanyinga (*ibid.*) and Ngunyi (*ibid.*) demonstrate that these identities and loyalties comprise a series of ethnic, sub-ethnic, social class and status group affiliations, to which are linked preferences not only for purely "home area"-based political projects but also for specific kinds of political and religious "style", as well as broader worldviews. They may coexist with articulation to grand or not-so-grand patronage networks, but such articulations are not erosive of their foundations.

The Kenyan studies also provide a corrective to some aspects of the depiction of parastatals offered by World Bank-allied commentators. While sketching out the breadth and depth of their patronage functions in considerably more detail than is normally provided, Ikiara, Jama and Amadi (*ibid.*) also underline that the latter are combined with other broad political functions, as well as with certain broad economic ones. Institutions like the Kenyan National Cereals and Produce Board can indeed only function as a major patronage machine because it also comprises a dense set of institutional and legal interventions created to solve profound political and economic problems in the "national interest". As Bates' own later (1989) work acknowledges, these problems revolve around guaranteeing national food security, guaranteeing debt recovery from farmers lent government money to buy settler land, and realising economies of scale in these processes—precisely in the historical absence of a well-functioning private market. In fact, some of the apparently central "patronage" practices with which such solutions are combined—

such as the reduction of costs for bulk producers and concentrated groups of consumers—could even be seen as an emergent property of any kind of nationally-organised institutional response to these issues, and not at that a necessarily damaging one.

Whether urban populations have been politically advantaged by African governments in ways other than as side-effects of interventions carried out for other economic and political purposes is also indirectly questioned by the Zimbabwe studies. These basically repeat the conclusion of Jamal and Weeks (1993), namely that "urban bias" in terms of formal wage levels and social service provision was essentially a phenomenon of the colonial period, which—at least in the case of wage levels—has been steadily eroded during independence. Much the same would probably have happened in the case of social service provision had this not been propped up by donor funding (the grafting of donor preferences onto the colonial pattern of social service provision is even more evident when one examines intra-rural biases (Kiondo, 1994 and 1995).

Structural resources for adjustment-based growth: the "private sector"

As noted, World Bank "political economy" identifies the private sector as the first and principal structural resource for successful adjustment. Private enterprise, by virtue of its private/non-state status has essentialistically been attributed qualities such as political independence, economic rationality, efficiency, dynamism, resourcefulness, adaptability, innovatoriness and so on—the supposed qualities of more successful enterprises under competitive situations. It is assumed that only where private enterprise is forbidden or severely constrained by the state will they not be evident; as soon as such bans or constraints are lifted they will blossom.

Such assumptions are theoretically and empirically problematic, as is implicitly recognised in the current tendency in the World Bank for talk about the "enabling environment" (conceived almost entirely in terms of deregulation) to be displaced by talk about "private sector development", at least with reference to Africa and eastern Europe. Yet, if this new talk recognises that a productive private sector is often incapable of spontaneously maturing simply as a result of deregulation, it still fails to recognise what is one of the sector's predominant characteristics in these two geographical areas—the virtual inextricability of some of its major components from state/public sector activity. In Africa, eastern Europe—and perhaps other regions too—the main site of "purely" private sector activity, at least as it is envisaged by the World Bank, is amongst very small-scale and usually wholly informalised enterprises (SSEs). In the African context, enterprises of this kind are indeed sometimes the *only* private operations operating on a continuous basis in whole branches, sub-sectors or sectors of production and exchange. Even here, most are not free of some kind of connection to the state—even though this generally involves little more than owners "straddling" with state employment (at levels which, in themselves, provide no great leverage).

"Purely" private enterprise (i.e., enterprises linked to the state by no more than this form of straddling) are usually concentrated in branches of production and exchange—and/or in geographical areas—falling outside the historically-defined "strategic" product/market areas of public sector enterprise activity, or where the costs of state monopoly operation (including the costs of policing the exclusion of other operators) would be prohibitive. These branches comprise most of agriculture, almost all of fisheries, trade in fish and non-staple foodstuffs, provision of certain other "non-modern" consumer items and services, repairs, certain branches of transport, and certain branches of construction (especially private house-building and repairs). On the other hand, small-scale "purely" private enterprise has a tendency to penetrate other branches—including some previously designated as "strategic"—when economic crises and crises of state capacity make it difficult to continue exclusion.

Knowledge of this kind of enterprise is fairly sketchy but some provisional generalisations may be made. There are and have been for a very long time some larger-scale operations in Africa of a purely "private" kind, mainly in the inter-related areas of trade and transport. The most obvious examples are the long-distance trading companies of the Hausa, Koroko and certain other "northern" West African peoples, which date back to the pre-colonial era and whose presence was co-extensive with a complex infrastructure of informal credit and banking, market information, transport and porterage, agencies for forwarding and storing goods, etc. (cf. the essays by Amselle, Cohen and Hill in Meillassoux (ed.), 1971). Somali companies of a somewhat less complex structure have been operating throughout eastern and east-southern Africa in more recent periods and today control much of the long-distance road transportation of petroleum.

In the later colonial period, trading companies organised by members of non-European settler communities (Lebanese, Asians) also emerged, sometimes initially on the basis of local agency agreements with colonial governments or European companies and sometimes combined with them. These too tended to adopt similar infrastructures to those just described. Simultaneously, a smaller number of larger-scale operations emerged which were owned by members of African peoples which, unlike the Hausa, Somali, etc., never had historical trading links with the Arab world. Amongst these were trading operations in "European" fruits and vegetables by Kikuyu merchants in Kenya, but more spectacularly trade in dried fish by merchants from West African coastal communities. In the case of all these trading groups, the great bulk of the commodities traded emanated from petty commodity producers.

In the *Introduction* to his edited volume of 1971, Meillassoux wrote:

> In the end, the most important feature of this (type of) commerce—its close ties with the non-capitalist sector—will condemn it to eventual death. Kola, shea, butter, tobacco, cattle, dried and smoked fish are produced by agricultural communities, pastoralists and fishermen who exist in self-sustaining economies and only commercialise a fraction of their production. The introduction of capital in the form of loans is unimportant if not non-existent, and the social division of labour—if it exists—is based on the after-effects of slavery rather than on a wage-earning working-class...(Today) the capitalist sector is winning markets...such as fish...Traditional commerce rests on the survival of the old sectors of production and consumption which, while contributing to the characteristic style of the economy...are doomed to disappear. (pp. 79–80)

A quarter of a century later, contrary to these predictions, many of these sectors have neither suffered collapse nor been revolutionised by capitalism. At the same time it is important to note that Meillassoux severely underestimated the levels of capital, extent of division of labour and links with generalised commodity production and circulation present in these branches even in 1971. Nevertheless, he succeeded in identifying a key feature of many such large-scale trading operations, namely, their linkage to and sometimes control of small-scale forms of production. These means were, and remain, of a sponsorship-cum-"sharecropping" kind. In this respect, remarkable similarities can be detected between trading organisations dealing in precious stones and metals and sometimes sponsoring small-scale "artisanal" mining, which Chachage (1995) describes in Tanzania, those operating in both the sardine (*dagaa*) and Nile Perch fisheries on Lake Victoria (Reynolds and Greboval, 1989), those operating in the so-called "artisanal" fisheries of contemporary West Africa—not to mention southern Asia (cf., e.g., Platteau, 1989) and those controlling much of the new horticultural industry in Kenya (Dijkstras and Magori, 1995).

Many such trading companies have always operated at the fringes of legality and some (according to Parker (1995)) have operated sponsorship-cum-"sharecropping" arrangements in completely illegal fields such as trophy poaching/sale. These kinds of fringe operations, or fringe branches of legal ones, clearly can normally only be carried out with any kind of regularity if some kind of illicit state connection has been secured. More generally, it can be argued that such connections are also necessary to maintain profit levels even in legal branches of trade, through filtering or regulating entry.

Accumulation in the form of investment in medium-scale industrial operations and/or larger scale capitalised trading operations (with business premises, trucks, (sometimes refrigerated), road tankers, cold stores, warehouses, etc.) was achieved by many Lebanese companies in West Africa, Asian ones in East Africa and a few African ones, notably in Nigeria. Industrial investments of this kind seem to have been strictly a phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s however. Most African trading operations throughout the twentieth century and almost all non-African ones since the 1970s, seem to have instead followed a pattern of accumulation in which profit was partly retained as savings for distribution to sons to start their own separate enterprises, and partly invested in urban property or rural land or—mainly in the case of non-Africans—converted into forex and expatriated. Some profit was of course withheld in order to augment working capital, but usually not enough to provide a basis for large-scale accumulation (for a discussion of this pattern in Tanzania see van Donge, 1995; and Seppälä, 1995).

The "purely" or "largely" private sector in Africa is not typically or even mainly characterised by such enterprises though. The overwhelming bulk are tiny "person" or "person and a family member" operations undertaken largely for survival purposes (cf. Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo, 1995). Such enterprises have always—and perhaps especially now—faced major structural constraints blocking their expansion even to the level of classical "trading company". Contrary to some proponents of adjustment, these constraints are not mainly of a "regulative" kind. Amongst the most important are their primitive technical level, shortages of skilled labour, and continuous competition for household and enterprise resources with other household members and other income-generating activities. Also widely recognised is their difficulty in obtaining credit, although discussions on this topic frequently fail to recognise that under even semi-commercial conditions, very few such enterprises could be deemed credit-worthy.

Less discussed is the question of markets. Markets in most of the branches in which these enterprises are found comprise small concentrations of poor consumers. Demand is constrained and, given the overall situation of highly dispersed populations and poor infrastructure, the cost of moving beyond these market constraints tends to rise geometrically. There are very few or no opportunities to find (sub-contracting) markets amongst larger industrial producers, given the pattern of manufacturing development in these countries, even if the skills were available to produce goods of sufficient quality. Except in the case of schools and small hospitals, most state institutions are also too large for producers/traders of this size to gain contracts to supply. Finally, it is clear (cf. van Donge, *ibid.*, Seppälä, *ibid.*) that these enterprises also face *social* constraints on the emergence of business arrangements which, in other parts of the globe, are considered essential to enterprise reproduction, let alone expansion. These include a generalised insistence on cash only transactions and avoidance of long-term partnership arrangements.

As already implied, beyond this peasant/SSE scale of operation, the private sector mainly consists of enterprises dependent upon different degrees of *state connection*. The list of possible forms of connection is very long indeed. One very common one is a different type of "straddling" with state employment by an enterprise's actual or "real" owner(s), where the major "subsidy" from state employment is not the owners' official wages or salary but some non-wage resource. Another is state provision of capital (including land) or other subsidies, such as a transferred consumer subsidy (historically common in the case of agricultural inputs and output), subsidised and/or guaranteed credit and/or forex and tax privileges. Some enterprises may also obtain explicit profit guarantees from the state. Another form of connection is possessing contracts to supply the state with goods or services. Another is being guaranteed privileged market access, either directly through confinement and/or not licensing other operators, or indirectly through tariff and/or exchange rate policy. Another is selective non-enforcement of regulations applied to other enterprises.

Some of these forms of connection are clearly discretionary; others apply to all enterprises in a particular category. But even where the latter is the situation on paper, obtaining the benefits associated with them may still be discretionary in practice. The related but not identical extent to which a connection is *illicit* is even more obviously better seen in terms of where it falls on a continuum rather than as an either/or matter. At one end of this continuum are enterprises enjoying access to a gazetted privilege which all similar enterprises simultaneously enjoy and which any new enterprise in the branch will receive automatically; at the other end are enterprises enjoying complete immunity from strictly illegal activities such as smuggling, tax evasion and fraud/breach of contract.

State connections may also be distinguished in other important ways. One of these is the level within the state with which the connection has been made (from the lower-level functionary/policeman to government minister or above); another is the extent to which enterprise profitability relies upon state connections of various kinds—and whether they could be profitable at all without such connections. A third is the extent of operational complementarity with public sector enterprises established in the same branch.

It would be possible to draw up a matrix of types of state connection on the basis of this discussion, but probably a more useful procedure would be to outline two quite different patterns of operation of enterprises with state connections, corresponding to the possession by these enterprises of overlapping but relatively distinct bundles of connections. One such bundle will be recognisable to those familiar with the general literatures on Import Substituting Industrialisation (ISI)-type accumulation.

Corresponding to this is a type of state-connected enterprise which has been identified, *inter alia*, by Sachikonye (*ibid.*). Traditionally originating in the pre-independence period and mainly owned by non-indigenous capital, it is one which is or has been engaging in protected production or provision of services in sectors or branches where the state has decided to limit its direct involvement. It thus interlocks with state economic activity by providing a complementary extension to it. It has been heavily dependent on the state for virtually all its conditions of profitability, especially in its formative period. In this period, it received subsidies and privileged access to resources—especially on inputs and credit; state contracts; and some guarantees on the output market side. Most of these privileges were publicly gazetted and were also available to competitors or potential competitors, but access to some was secured and has been maintained more or less illicitly. These enterprises tend to be relatively stable. While their market position is guaranteed, they also have difficulty in or are normally unwilling to invest for expansion purposes. The privileges they enjoy also carry costs, for they are usually accompanied by price controls, restrictions on hiring and firing and restrictions on retaining earned forex. Managements consume much time and effort in trying to evade these restrictions. State assistance to these companies has rarely, if ever, taken forms which seem to quite common on other continents, such as assistance with regular re-equipment, research and development, labour training and export support. Especially amongst their medium- and smaller-scale variants, this type of company tends to be extremely vulnerable to reductions in effective protection.

There are also trading variants of such companies especially in West Africa, i.e., the semi-monopoly European-owned import-export houses of Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. After independence, these enjoyed guaranteed market domination in exchange for diversification into light manufacturing and insertion of state agents and some local traders at various points within their organisation (cf., Boone, 1994).

At the other end of the continuum are enterprises or operations which engage in a variety of illicit operations and which enjoy the direct participation of senior-level state agents as shareholders or commission-takers. This incorporation may lend the enterprise not only immunity from prosecution but also illicit access to direct and indirect subsidies (cheap credit and forex, "forgiveness" of repayments or of providing local currency cover, tax and import duty exemptions, etc.). Enterprise operations tend to be spread between different branches of trade and are highly fluid. They are also frequently personalised. To an ever greater degree, fixed investments, except in property, tend to be avoided and liquidity is extremely high—almost always in a forex form, in preparation for capital flight. The latter is also under constant preparation due to the probability of legal or illegal expropriation of enterprise proceeds. Non-indigenous (though not mainstream multinational) capital plays a prominent role in this form of private enterprise too, but normally only in partnership form with indigenous actors.

It should be emphasised that the boundaries between the three types of enterprise described here are very porous. "Purely private" enterprises frequently metamorphose into one or another type of operation with open or illicit state connections, or experience a more minor modification along the continuum. There are also enterprises which combine open and illicit kinds of state connection. Perhaps the clearest example are the "contractor" enterprises which multiplied during the oil boom in Nigeria, which typically enjoyed an open relation of supplying some service or commodity to the state while being protected from the consequences of faulty or short supply of the same goods, on the basis of an illicit state connection—often the same individual or individuals who had facilitated the open relationship. Another are "pseudo-industrial" enterprises such as those in Kenya described by Langdon (1987), created through open state sponsorship as local partners of multinational companies but subsequently operating on a purely commission-receiving basis (parallels exist here with the pseudo-enterprises in the south east Asian forestry sector described by Colchester (1993)). A more frequently encountered phenomenon, however, as already noted, is a combination of or a shifting between "purely private" enterprise of the larger trading company type, and operations enjoying an illicit state connection. In such cases, a number of the more unusual features of "purely private" enterprise are found in a heightened form.

Structural resources for adjustment-based provision of basic social services: the voluntary sector

As already noted, the World Bank position on "human capital development" issues has moved through a number of stages. By the early 1990s, a stress on the importance of safeguarding state expenditure in this area had returned. However, it was also implicitly argued that no significant expansion of *per capita* state expenditure could be envisaged and that the main resources for basic services would have to be found from a redistribution of existing expenditures (from tertiary to primary levels) or the mobilisation of new sorts of resources—namely, "voluntarily"-provided ones.

The proposal that voluntarily-provided resources constitute a cornerstone for future social sector development in Africa subsumes several different ideas. The first is that there is a presently underutilised space which for-profit operators could more intensively occupy to provide a superior service for those clients willing and able to pay for health and education services (either directly or through insurance schemes). The second is that many, if not most, of those who could not afford private services would be willing to pay user charges for public services—and would be very willing to pay them if they could be utilised to visibly improve the services themselves. The third is that in those branches of the basic services whose provision was causing the state system the greatest problems, the main burden of service provision could be shifted to NGOs. The latter would necessarily imply some redirection of donor resources, but the capacity of the NGO sector to expand of its own accord was also assumed. Indeed, as in the case of "private enterprise", it was felt that this would occur as a natural consequence of deregulation.

Critical observations could be made about each of these ideas, but attention will be confined to the last, which appears to have been based on a certain analysis of the role of so-called "Home Town Associations" (HTAs). These are organisations of migrants to urban areas set up to collectively channel a share of migrants' personal incomes back to the development of their home areas. In World Bank/USAID "political economy", they are seen as the core element of a "voluntary development initiative" and have been attributed the function of effectively complementing privately-funded services, from education to road-construction, throughout West Africa (Landell-Mills 1992). They are viewed positively for two further reasons too. Firstly they are said to involve a form of progressive taxation, since resources are redistributed from urban to rural areas and supposedly from the better-off to the poor. Secondly, they lead to a "thickening" of "civil society", and hence serve as an effective counterweight to the 'patrimonial state'.

Research conducted in East Africa as part of the programme (Kiondo, *ibid.*, Kanyinga, *ibid.*, Ngunyi, *ibid.*) provides a useful corrective to the generalisation of this picture throughout the continent, although of course it cannot be used to challenge its account of the nature of the voluntary sector in West Africa. In the first place, the East African equivalents of HTAs are only one player amongst many in the "voluntary development" sphere. The latter generally is numerically dominated by small, usually women-dominated "community development groups". These are overwhelmingly concerned with income-generation and their benefits are almost wholly member-confined. They are also very frequently dependent on external sources of funding, generally deriving from the state or from donors. Thus, the main "interest" actually represented in the voluntary sector here is a personal financial one, albeit expressed in a cooperative form.

Secondly, even with regard to non-state social sector provision, HTAs and their equivalents are only one player amongst many. In Tanzania for example, although this situation is changing fast (see below), the main non-state service providers in most areas have, until fairly recently, been religious organisations, as was the case in the colonial period. In Tanzania moreover, it is Islamic religious organisations operating in precisely colonial-era Christian (very traditionally charitable) ways which enjoy increasing weight amongst this category. In Kenya it is charismatic Protestant ones, operating in very similar fashions. Although meanwhile the mainstream Christian churches have moved into social interventions aimed at building local capacity for self-organisation, the nature of the interventions by the new religious organisations—like the overall physical predominance of organisation for dependent income-generation—puts a question mark against the generalisability of the "thickening of civil society". In the Kenya case, Ngunyi (*ibid.*) argues that the new charismatic organisations in fact mostly play a pro-state, explicitly subversive relation to the more politically independent sections of "civil society".

Finally, question marks also surround the issue of whether the services commonly supplied by most non-state providers are comparable in quality even to those severely deteriorating ones which state organisations now provide. In Tanzania, with the exception of a handful of long-established urban operations, private (overwhelmingly HTA-provided) secondary schools had substantially smaller proportions of qualified teachers, much higher median class sizes and higher pupil/teacher ratios than public ones (Lugalla, 1993: 211–12). Also in Tanzania, it was clear that in most for-profit health facilities, medical advice and drugs were being dispensed by primary school graduates with only a few weeks "Red Cross" training (Kiondo, *ibid.*). Apart from that provided by the mainstream religious organisations and a by few private agents serving the rich, non-state provision seems to mean provision of an inferior kind.

Structural Trends Associated with "Liberalised Development"

The procedure in what follows will be to outline the main changes during "adjustment situations" to the structures described during the earlier discussion of World Bank "political economy's" "resources for adjustment", namely the private sector and voluntary development organisations. This will be followed on a structure-by-structure basis by a discussion of whether it is possible to identify explanatory relations between these changes and the content of adjustment situa tions.

The "private sector" and "adjustment situations"

Private enterprises with a state connection mainly of the type described by Sachikonye (*ibid.*), namely an open connection of assistance with regard to subsidies, access to credit, inputs and state contracts, and implicit or explicit protection via tariff barriers, confinement policies, guarantees of market monopoly, etc., have tended to either continue to stagnate or to suffer serious decline during adjustment situations. Although in the countries examined here, evidence sometimes refers to proxies for this group of enterprises rather than directly to these enterprises themselves, it is fairly conclusive. Zimbabwean manufacturing, which was largely characterised by enterprises of this type, experienced a sharp drop in output, share of GDP and productivity during the adjustment period. Although larger Zimbabwean manufacturing companies experienced a surge in confidence and a consequent wave of new investment when adjustment was first inaugurated, even they were to be affected by this trend. In fact, some of the largest companies in the textiles and clothing subsector (e.g., Cone Textiles)—where investment was the most spectacular—were forced to close. (Altogether 87 of the 280 companies in this sector at the outset of adjustment had closed by 1994 (*Financial Gazette*, 6 October, 1994)). Similar but less spectacular declines were experienced by enterprises in the metals and metals products subsector, and in some branches of agro-industry.

In Tanzania, private formal sector industrial companies appear to be, at best, neutrally affected by adjustment. Although overall averages are dragged down by the performance of parastatals, the manufacturing output index showed a rise from 100 to 119 over the period 1985 to 1991 before falling again to 101 in 1994. Overall, capacity utilisation improved from 33 per cent in 1985 to 38 per cent in 1992, before falling substantially in the following two years. Research by Bhaduri *et al.* (1993) which examines privately-owned manufacturing in comparison with parastatals shows an overall average capacity utilisation level of 38.5 per cent for the former in 1991 and 1992, as against 30.3 per cent for the latter (cooperatively-owned enterprises were closer to the privately-owned figure).

It is not difficult to establish an explanatory link between these developments and "adjustment situations"—although it is clear that the latter are not responsible for them alone. "Adjustment situations" have witnessed the removal of most of the supports which enterprises of this kind enjoyed. As Sachikonye (1995) shows, while some new advantages were provided for them, these tended to be self-cancelling, and alternative advantages—rational even within an adjustment framework—were not provided at all.

Supports which were removed or substantially reduced comprised subsidies with regard to interest rates, utility charges and, in some cases, to consumer prices, as well as—of course—explicit (e.g., tariff) and implicit protection and various guarantees of priority to domestic market access (the latter via external and internal trade liberalisation). Stabilisation and sharper control over state expenditure simultaneously reduced the access of most such enterprises to state contracts. On the other hand, some advantages were provided by price decontrol, but this tended to be counterbalanced by increases in the costs of inputs, especially imported ones. Together with the introduction of market-based interest rates, the latter also tended to wipe out whatever advantages were gained from widened access to forex. In any case, many larger enterprises in this category had already been enjoying administratively privileged access to the latter. Another largely irrelevant new advantage was the deregulation of hiring and firing, something which many enterprises were already practising informally.

Many of these problems were implicitly anticipated by the advocates of adjustment, some of whom even relished the idea that they would promote a Darwinian process of natural selection amongst enterprises of this kind. Such thinking presupposed that there would be a maintenance of underlying demand, however. But demand, already declining prior to adjustment, was to fall even more sharply after its introduction, partly as a consequence of stabilisation and partly independently of it. The consequence has been that, following trade liberalisation, consumption of locally manufactured clothing has in most places been mainly displaced not by consumption of cheaper (and possibly more efficiently-produced) new imports, but by imported second-hand clothing.

Meanwhile, most enterprises of this kind proved to be incapable of competing in export markets. Even the minority of enterprises (mainly the largest companies) who produced goods of competitive quality at competitive prices had very little basic knowledge of export markets or marketing. There were no state interventions which would have either overcome these obstacles, or helped smaller enterprises to reach the stage where they would have confronted them.

Nevertheless, there has been a major growth not only in imports but also (although to a lesser extent) in exports in most countries during adjustment situations. There have also been some interesting changes both in the nature of the items traded, in the direction of trade and in the kinds of enterprises carrying out these operations. The companies associated with the growth of imports and exports in Tanzania, for example (where registered foreign traders increased ten-fold in the first two years of trade liberalisation (cited in

Chachage, 1993: 82) and where by 1994 there were no fewer than 177 bonded warehouses in operation) seem to have been a mixture of traditional Asian trading companies, sometimes in new guises, a few better-established African ones, and a number of completely new ones owned entirely by foreigners or in whose ownership are found both African and non-indigenous agents of various descriptions. The older established companies in question were typically ones on the borderline between "purely private" legal economic activity and activity implying a degree of illicit state connection, for example, trade in officially confined or prohibited items. The new ones are typically very small and under-capitalised operations but many follow the classic profile of establishing sponsorship-cum-"share-cropping" relations with petty commodity producers (for examples of both, see Chachage, 1995: 66–72).

The official trade in which these companies are engaged is often the so-called "non-traditional export" branch, as well as import of consumer goods. In Tanzania, prominent amongst the "non-traditional exports" in question are unprocessed natural resources such as gold/gemstones, certain marine products and tropical hardwoods. Such products are favoured for their forex-earning potential, their high value-to-weight ratios, the possibilities they provide for gaining access to export accounts, the ease with which their value/magnitude can be disguised and their already-established circulation via sponsorship-cum-sharecropping mechanisms. The latter allow very high unit profits to be made at low risk to the investor.

As indicated, the purpose of such exports, legal and illegal, is to earn hard currency either for conversion into other low-bulk high-value internationally-tradable items (one circuit with which Tanzania is linked is the bartering of local gemstones for Pakistani or Thai heroin for export to Europe), or, more commonly, to import consumer goods—particularly those for which demand became pent up during the long period of import compression (1977 until at least the mid-1980s). But the profits made on such imports do not usually depend on high demand alone. In a number of sub-Saharan countries, they primarily depend on importers' systematic avoidance of import duty and other fiscal obligations. In Tanzania for example, officially granted import duty exemptions (since 1992 almost all enjoyed by private companies) amounted to 161 per cent of actually collected duties during the first three quarters of 1994.

Meanwhile, in West Africa, trading enterprises enjoying illicit state connections have during the adjustment period almost completely displaced the formerly dominant European-owned manufacturing enterprises which historically enjoyed strong but open state support in, e.g., Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. The rising enterprises out-"competed" the European ones by subsidising their costs through importing in excess of quotas, evading duties and taxes and engaging in an extensive contraband trade—to which the authorities turned a blind eye. In Senegal, the non-European enterprises concerned were already well-established businesses owned by members of the Mouride order, already enjoying other forms of political protection. In Cote d'Ivoire, they were already-established Lebanese, Malian, Burkinabé, and Guinéen wholesalers (Boone, 1994).

A number of the central features of "adjustment situations" stand in a clear relation to this trend. First and most important is the combination of trade liberalisation, new official incentives for exports and for foreign investment and the continuous depreciation of local currencies which creates overwhelming incentives to generate forex by any means possible. Secondly, the sharp decline in state capacity experienced in "adjustment situations" has meanwhile tended to equip those enterprises with intimate higher-level state connections with the ability to take advantage both of the paralysis/ disintegration which has set in parastatals, of the increasingly fungible forms in which donor aid is provided, and of new opportunities to avoid legal obligations such as payment of open general import license/commodity import support counterpart funds, import duty and taxes of various kinds.

As noted, corresponding to these developments there have been modifications in the direction of trade. These, however, are related not to "adjustment situations" but rather to the nature of the international networks and circuits familiar to the new importer-exporters. For example, Boone (*ibid.*) shows Ivorian trade moving sharply away from direct dealings with the former colonial power and towards routes passing through neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, an increasing proportion of Tanzanian trade has become routed via the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong—provoking German withdrawal from participation in the 1995 Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair. Although the EU countries continue to account for 45 per cent of Tanzanian exports, so-called non-traditional exports and consumer goods imports are mainly routed through these new destinations. Other significant markets (either end-use or re-export) for non-traditional exports from East Africa generally are the main overseas centres of the East African Asian diaspora (cf. Dijkstra and Magori, *ibid.*).

The main trend visible amongst smaller "purely" private enterprises based on the domestic market meanwhile appears to have been one of growing differentiation. This differentiation seems to be based on the removal or alleviation of constraints on credit and some other resources for a particular range of enterprises, in the context of the emergence of certain new market opportunities. The latter group are probably less the traditional population of enterprises in the sector and more certain new entrants. The 1980s and 1990s have seen a large-scale revival (often officially approved) of entry into informal activities of the middle and upper-middle strata of formal sector employees and their family members. Entry has tended to be in the more capitalised branches of the sector, particularly those undergoing deregulation or deconfinement, like maize milling and trade, transport, and some types of natural resource extraction. Some of these same branches have seen an expansion in demand, or a segmentation of it favourable to the informal sector, due to the removal of earlier restrictions or the collapse of formalised provision (Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo, *ibid.*).

It is unclear how previously well-established larger informal enterprises engaged in branches like furniture making and metalwork have fared in the meanwhile. But it is clear that the involutionary nature of enterprise activity has increased in the lower strata of the sector, as demand falls both for low-input commodities like prepared foodstuffs and relatively high-value ones like "European" vegetables. Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (*ibid.*) report a systematic paring down of activities by operators in these branches, to enable them reduce losses on unprofitable lines and concentrate resources on more profitable ones. On the other hand, there may well have been an expansion of both consumption and trade in some relatively low-value foodstuffs lending themselves to sale in minute quantities, like dried sardine (*dagaa*, kapenta fish, etc.).

"Adjustment situations" also tend to promote differentiation along these lines through their association with "microenterprise developmentalism" (Endnote 6). Research by Kiondo (*ibid.*) indicates that, especially in rural areas, the beneficiaries of such programmes tend to be precisely persons with backgrounds in public employment, who can use resources and connections from this sphere to establish upward and downward links, with more senior government employees or local politicians in the one case and with semi-dependent clienteles in the other.

It could be argued that "microenterprise developmentalism" introduces into the realm of 'purely' private enterprises, a similar but not exactly identical distinction to that found amongst enterprises with a state connection. This distinction is between two different forms of enterprise *association*. "Microenterprise developmentalism" implies association or self-organisation in order to obtain donor resources. A different sort of association is sometimes found amongst enterprises which belonged to the older generation of larger and more established "informal" operations. In this earlier stage, enterprises frequently had to associate in order to establish and defend their right to operate at all, i.e., their right to livelihood, *against* the state. A classic example is providers of informal public transport, including the Matatu Vehicle Owners' Association in Kenya and the Emergency Taxi Owners' organisation in Harare.

Chachage's work (*ibid*.) on small-scale mining in Tanzania underlines this distinction. As indicated above, the latter, well-established and thriving activity has been regularly subjected to "downward plundering" both by gold and gemstone traders and more recently by civil servants and local officials who can manipulate regulations to acquire claims (and with it landlord status over resident miners). In the same way but on a much more extensive scale, plunder is now underway by small-scale foreign capital with an essentially parasitical state connection. In popular struggles against the latter for rights to livelihood, small-scale miners have captured associations set up by the state to organise claimholders and turned them against both the latter and the state itself.

The Voluntary Sector and "adjustment situations"

"Adjustment situations" have seen an uninterrupted further decline in social provision in most countries, even though state expenditure on the social sector may have been stabilised or in certain countries even expanded. This appears to be related to the already-noted ongoing decline in the real incomes of government employees and in the share of budgets going to equipment and maintenance. This has been accompanied by, and is directly related to, a collapse in the capacity of the local governments who are normally administratively responsible for delivery of primary social services.

At least in Tanzania (evidence from elsewhere is not available), one extremely interesting development in such situations is an increasingly comprehensive privatisation of social service provision, described at length by Kiondo (*ibid*.). The most important aspect of this trend is the extension of the role of formally voluntary development organisations over wider and wider areas of provision (beyond education to embrace roadmaking and water supply provision), and their accompanying adoption of government powers of various kinds. Principal amongst these is the levying of local taxes and cesses and the employment of civil servants. What emerges in the process is a form of "local government" in the hands of a group of non-resident "home boys" accountable only to themselves. Sometimes, privatisation in a broader sense of the word takes place, with local services being run in tandem (or partnership) with private business ventures of various kinds, and cess collection itself being turned over to private individuals.

Hometown Association-provided services like secondary education were always by their very nature available only to a minority of the population. But traditionally, only a minority of the population paid for them, namely subscribers to the hometown association itself, supplemented by fees from parents. With the "spillage" of hometown associations into more general functions, the regressiveness of the old central government education funding system is reproduced on the plane of local "voluntary" organisations. The whole population pays through taxes and cesses (in the former case often flat rate) for services which only the children of the local elite will enjoy. The latter will also pay direct, but on the basis of a commonly-provided subsidy.

This development has at least one major root in the "adjustment situation", and possibly a minor one too. Budgetary controls in the context of stabilisation have generally been associated with a search for new resources, mainly user charges (see below) but also other "untapped" local revenues. This in turn has accelerated processes of administrative decentralisation already underway in many countries. But gaining access to "untapped" local revenues has proved a difficult task, with the result that local government activities have become ever more unviable. Only where the latter can be combined with novel forms such as those described above does their provision seem to occur effectively at all. But harnessing external patrons has costs for democracy. This is ironic, for the other aspect of the "adjustment situation" relevant to this trend is actually political "democratisation" itself, which leads to greater competition between potential and actual local patrons to establish and "reward" constituencies. Even though local people who have no access to the services in question are paying for them, they still can be made to appear as something emanating from outside, whose donation incurs an obligation for political support.

More widely, this whole trend depends upon and reinforces a phenomenon whose main relation to the "adjustment situation" was that it was perhaps one of the latter's own preconditions. This phenomenon is that of the *de facto* dissolution of the secular nation state project. With some important exceptions (Ghana, Uganda) where it was made explicit that adjustment was to be regarded as the servant of the *reconstitution* of such a project, the conclusion of an adjustment agreement was a signal of the abandonment of this project. In turn, the emergent properties of "adjustment situations" mean that such projects will be difficult to resurrect. As each region and district is free to follow its own development trajectory, in keeping with its own indigenous resources and those accessed via home area civil servants whose own ethnic distribution basically reflects the geography of the colonial education system, regional differentiation will increase and national unity weaken (Endnote 7).

A number of points emerge from the foregoing discussion. One is that important social and economic changes have occurred with the advent of "adjustment situations". On the other hand, some of these changes may have already been present in a tendential form prior to adjustment. Moreover, their bearers are often already well-established local economic actors/actresses and their form frequently resembles already locally-familiar economic patterns. Furthermore, a number of the same tendencies may also be observed in countries which cannot be convincingly described as adjusting—most notably, Zaire. But these qualifications in no way diminish the fact that "adjustment situations" have made their appearance more extensive and more likely.

A Second Counterfactual

This essay concludes with a discussion of the alternative counterfactual suggested earlier: what would have happened if, instead of "adjustment situations", there had been a situation of systematic implementation of the adjustment and stabilisation agenda—or at least that agenda's current form. The three main ways in which adjusting countries have fallen short of the implementing of this agenda are not having undertaken as rapid a process of internal trade liberalisation as was intended by the donors, not having more rapidly and systematically carried out "public sector enterprise" reform, and not having reduced state expenditure to the extent and in the way expected.

More rapid internal trade liberalisation: In practice, this tends to mean that more rapid liberalisation of trade in agricultural products (particularly staple grains and export crops) would have occurred, since most other branches of internal trade were deregulated without great resistance. Ikiara, Jama and Amadi's account (*ibid.*) of the cereals chain in Kenya, which is probably generalisable at least to some other grain marketing situations, reveals that under the pre-reform system, trade was controlled in practice by one or more parastatals in open combination with some medium-to-large-scale private enterprises engaged in industrial processing (millers) and very small-scale private traders, and in illicit combination with certain other private traders using state connections to engage in arbitrage (including smuggling). It also shows, fairly clearly, that a more rapid liberalisation would have led to an extension of the role of the millers at the expense of the profitable part of parastatal activities, but not at the expense of small traders (who would probably have also expanded their role, but not greatly). The other section of private traders would have probably shifted to other branches of trade, particularly external trade, while the unprofitable part of parastatal activities would probably not have been replaced at all.

On balance, farmgate prices seem likely to have fallen and some areas to have slipped out of the marketing network. The least generalisable part of this situation is probably the role of private enterprise with an open relation to the state, namely the millers. In other (but not all) countries in the region, large-scale milling is also in parastatal hands or in the hands of private monopolies or duopolies. In both situations, liberalisation would almost certainly have seen a shrinkage of the marketing network, but with more pronouncedly anarchic consequences in the former case, since in these countries private traders are basically divided between those incapable of large-scale open activities in fully liberalised markets and those uninterested in them because potential profits are higher elsewhere. On balance, the major "gain" from an adjustment viewpoint would have been savings on state expenditure—whose benefits in terms of structural economic change are hard to demonstrate.

More rapid "public sector enterprise" reform: When donors first started talking about "public sector enterprise" (PSE) reform, they generally argued for the efficiency benefits of the private ownership/management of more or less the full range of then operational PSEs. But the paralysis and disintegrative tendencies which set in with the headlining of this reform meant that even if many PSEs had been attractive to private buyers in the first place (which is doubtful), they were rapidly to become less so. With the looting of existing PSEs proceeding at ever faster rates (often by precisely the type of informal private-public "joint enterprise" described above) comprehensive PSE reform today sooner or later implies comprehensive liquidations, rather than sales. The basic consequences of both the "sooner" and "later" version of this scenario seem likely to mirror those of internal trade liberalisation, with a shrinking of production and service-provision networks, some limited expansion by petty production and trade, and on-migration of more parasitical forms of capital to fresh pastures (carrying with it various stripped assets in the process). Imports would almost certainly also increase, assuming import capacity remained. Again there would be major savings to the exchequer, and the banking system would be relieved of bad debtors, freeing credit for other potential borrowers. On the other hand, the basic lack of commercial credit worthiness of the great bulk of the latter would limit the impact of this change.

More rapid civil service reform: Civil service reform has always been primarily discussed in terms of reducing civil service numbers (usually by the arbitrarily-selected figure of 25 per cent). Theoretically the savings could be spent on a combination of higher salaries for a few of those remaining and greater expenditure on equipment and maintenance. The likely impact of such changes on high-level corruption and government efficiency are hard to gauge, but seem unlikely to be great in the absence of a more comprehensive approach to improving professionalism. To this extent, the major impact is likely to be via the arrival of very large numbers of new entrants to the informal labour market.

Given the real nature of the structural constraints, and the current changes which the structures themselves are currently undergoing, there is little reason to suppose that "fully implemented adjustment" would contribute significantly to sustainable development. Besides some savings to government (which would themselves probably be largely used for meeting interest payments on debt), the main consequences are likely to be accelerated deindustrialisation, further disintegration of formal employment as well as contraction of some markets and types of service provision. This might be accompanied by some widened market opportunities for petty capital and one or two branches of less petty capital, plus a concentration of purely parasitical economic activity in the import-export spheres, where it is already well-entrenched.

Endnotes

1. Some of the arguments employed in the following two sub-sections are borrowed from the contributions of Philip Raikes and Knud Erik Svendsen to a recent collective work (Engberg-Pedersen, Gibbon, Raikes and Udsholt (eds.), forthcoming)
2. In any case, on examination the difference in the growth rates of the two groups turns out not to be statistically significant.
3. The World Bank still mendaciously concludes that "setting aside Nigeria, Africa's terms of trade losses resembled those in other developing countries" (1994: 27).
4. A participant in the discussions leading up to the Tanzania government's acceptance in 1987–88 that an Open General Import License should be introduced recounted to me that top on the list of items which it proposed should make up the latter's first stage were broiler chickens —whose raising was then a key strategy for small-scale accumulation amongst Tanzanian bureaucrats. Were such discussions to take place today, something a little more grand would no doubt be in the same place.
5. The following paragraphs sum up the contributions of, *inter alia*, Bates (1981), Barkan (1992), Widner (1992), Joseph (1989) and World Bank (1989b).
6. "Microenterprise developmentalism" has expanded as a donor concern in the absence of other (cheap or market-friendly) ways of promoting women's interests or alleviating poverty—both expanding focuses of donor attention over the last decade.
7. Such situations generate not just inter-regional animosities, but inter-ethnic ones within regions. Kiondo reports that in one area of Tanzania, the local development association imposed a tax on all resident civil servants. Most civil servants reside outside their "own" home areas, and this would have involved them being subject to double taxation, so they united to force a withdrawal of the proposal.

Adebayo O. Olukoshi

Extending the Frontiers of Structural Adjustment Research in Africa: Some Notes on the Objectives of Phase II of the NAI Research Programme

Introduction

Few subjects have been more closely studied and fiercely debated in post-colonial Africa as the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) devised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for the reform of the crisis-ridden economies of the continent. Initially applied in a handful of countries during the late 1970s, by the end of the decade of the 1980s, only another handful were not formally implementing the far-reaching market-based reform programmes (see tables 3 and 4). But even among the countries like Botswana, Namibia and South Africa which did not have formal adjustment programmes, economic and social policies have been heavily influenced by the market-liberalising, state-restricting and deflationary thrust of the neo-liberal economic agenda. Clearly, at no time in the history of Africa has there been so massive a broad uniformity in economic and social policy content and direction as today. This is all the more remarkable as structural adjustment has come to most countries of the continent as an external imposition backed by a host of donor conditionality and cross-conditionality clauses. The pressure on African countries to conform with the new market orthodoxy has been heightened by the fact that most regimes in both the former Soviet bloc countries and in the West have themselves embraced one variant or the other of the neo-liberal, market-liberalising agenda as Keynesian-inspired welfarist policies are severely curtailed and centralised planning is abandoned.

That structural adjustment has attracted so much controversy and debate should not be surprising. For a start, the neo-liberal thrust of the programme bears directly on the very foundation upon which much of post-1945 economic policy making and development planning in both developed and developing countries rested for a long time. For another, no aspect of life in Africa has been left untouched by the structural adjustment process; the programme has affected every economic and social sector, every group, and the entire framework for politics and governance in the way no other economic policy package has done in recent times. Furthermore, the neo-liberal model, or at least the variant of it that has been imposed on the developing countries of Africa, is premised on an ideal of the market, and of the role of the state in enabling it, the like of which has not been known in the actual experience of any country in the contemporary world. Furthermore, almost every assumption that underpins the neo-liberal structural adjustment model is contestable in economic theory—and practice. The male-bias which many (mostly feminist) commentators have noted as being integral to the design of the programme and the disadvantages which its implementation with this bias means for women have provided an additional focal point for its contestation (Dell, 1982; Basu, 1984; Green, 1986; Helleiner, 1986; Lall and Stewart, 1987; Toye, 1987, 1989; Taylor, 1988, 1989; Campbell and Loxley, 1989; Commander, 1989; ECA, 1989a, 1989b; Killick, 1986, 1989; Onimode, 1989; Thomas and Chhibber, 1989; Balasubramanyam and Lall, 1991; Colclough and Manor, 1991; Ghai, 1991; Sobahn, 1991; Afshar and Dennis, 1992; Ferreira, 1992; Tarp, 1993; Cornia and Helleiner, 1994; van der Hoeven and van der Kraaij, 1994; van der Geest, 1994; UNRISD, 1995; Lensink, 1996). Yet, in spite of this reality, and using their new-found leverage over debt-laden African countries confronted with donor conditionality, the authors and advocates of the neo-liberal model soon promoted it with single-minded zeal to the status of a new gospel truth (a new "donor regime of truth") which few countries were able or prepared to ignore. Little wonder that some commentators have decried what they describe as the "market fundamentalism" of the international financial institutions and the adverse consequences which have been associated with it.

My purpose in this essay is to present, in a summary and highly selective fashion, some of the various issues and points of research interest that have come up over the last fifteen or so years in the study of the structural adjustment process in Africa (see Endnote 1). This is done both as an exercise in critical stock-taking of some sort and as a prelude to a presentation, in outline form, of the three socio-economic themes that form the main focus of Phase II of the

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet's own current research effort. The hope is that the essay will help to broaden understanding of the background to the choice of the subjects which we have elected to focus on and of the goals which we seek to achieve in investigating the three broad socio-economic structures and processes which we have identified, namely, the development of *private trading networks and structures*, the *new political economy of land*, and emerging *popular forms of social provisioning*. A list of the studies which are being undertaken on each of the three themes in East, Southern, and West Africa is included in this report as an appendix.

It will be clear from the latter part of the essay that there are important elements of continuity between the objectives of Phase I of the programme (see Peter Gibbon's report in this volume and the publications emanating from the first phase cited in the Reference section of this monograph) and the goals that have been set out for Phase II. For example, the role of the private sector and voluntary associations as potential resources for market-based reform in Africa which was a central aspect of the work undertaken during Phase I of the programme, forms part of our further inquiry into the structures and processes of socio-economic change in Africa. So too is the impact of structural adjustment implementation on the social sector generally and health services delivery to the working poor in particular a subject of continuing interest to us, one which we have approached from a longitudinal perspective. But there are also important new concerns which have been woven into the second phase of the programme. Notable in this regard is our interest in the changing political economy of land and in emerging forms of popular social provisioning which takes us into largely uncharted terrain. Underpinning all of the studies which are being undertaken as part of Phase II of our research however, is an enduring interest to better understand the context, content, and dynamics of socio-economic and political change in contemporary Africa.

An Overview of Fifteen Years of Structural Adjustment Research in and on Africa

The roots of the African crisis

When the structural adjustment programmes first made their entry on a massive scale into Africa in the early 1980s, debates were already flourishing within and outside the continent on the nature, dimensions, and consequences of the economic problems confronting the countries of the continent. There were also on-going discussions about the efficacy of the initial policy responses, mostly state-centric, of various African governments to the dwindling fortunes of their economies. Opinion was, of course, sharply divided as to the exact roots of the crisis: while some focused on exogenous factors, including, among others, dwindling terms of trade, the two oil "shocks" of the 1970s, the narrow export base of most African countries, rising external debt, a generalised upward fluctuation in international interest rates, a confluence of adverse climatic patterns, falling levels of private foreign investments, and diminishing aid transfers, others concentrated on endogenous factors, including accumulated and steadily worsening internal policy distortions that had adverse consequences for the productive sectors generally and agricultural productivity and/or output in particular, and increasingly dysfunctional structures and processes of political patronage and "primitive" accumulation associated with the "(neo-) patrimonial" state which pitted the urban areas against the rural, curtailed the competitiveness of African economies in the international system, and obstructed the achievement of laid down developmental objectives. There were also those who concentrated on the role of the rapid population growth rate in most African countries as a key explanatory factor, especially when put in the context of economic growth rates that increasingly fell below the rate of demographic expansion. Within the broad framework of liberal economics, the search for an acceptable explanatory model was to pitch (neo-)Keynesians against monetarists/neo-liberals and structuralists against pricists. Few indeed were the analysts (Wheeler, 1984 and Tarp, 1993, for example), whether working within the framework of liberal economics or not, who attempted to establish a holistic explanatory framework that encompassed the range of endogenous and exogenous factors considered relevant to understanding the roots of decline in the economies of Africa (OAU, 1980; Bates, 1981; World Bank, 1981, 1989a, 1989b; Sandbrook, 1985, 1986, 1991; ECA, 1989a, 1989b; Jenkins, 1992; Lensink, 1996).

For more radical commentators of various (neo-)marxist hues, the crisis was but the latest evidence of the limits of neo-colonial (capitalist) development in the context of a one-sided dependence on the world market. Depending on the analytic preferences of the various authors working within this broad framework, the African crisis was seen by some as little more than an internal crisis of accumulation not dissimilar to the periodic, structural, or conjunctural crises that inhere in all capitalist systems, whether peripheral or advanced. There were, of course, commentators within the (neo-)marxist school who insisted that the location of African countries in the international division of labour as dependent, peripheral economies gave unique features to their crises which set their problems aside from those which were besetting capitalism in the centres of imperialism. For some others, the crisis was a manifestation of the outright "blockage" of development on the continent associated with the era of monopoly capital. Finally, some *dependentistas* insisted that the crisis was but the latest phase of the deepening contradictions of the "centre-periphery" relations that underly the world capitalist system. This crisis of dependence led to some discussion within the (neo-)marxist school about "crisis within crisis", the African crisis being cast as a function of the wider crisis of world capitalism on account of the latter's dependent status (Lawrence, 1986; Havnevik, 1987; Mamdani *et al.*, 1988; Mkandawire, 1988; Campbell and Loxley, 1989; Onimode, 1989, 1992; Amin, 1990; Mahjoub, 1990; Turok, 1991; IFAA, 1992; Ghai, 1991; Nyang'oro and Shaw, 1992; Cornia *et al.*, 1992).

The solutions which most of the various competing diagnoses of the African economic crisis called for were equally varied: while some made the case for measures to reverse the decline in domestic productive investment and improve foreign investment flows, others proposed measures for improving the terms of trade of African countries side by side with concerted efforts at export diversification and upgrading. Still others argued the case for more development assistance on concessionary terms and with a longer time range. The case was also presented for a drastic reduction of Africa's growing external debt burden either as a solution in its own right or as part of a wider package of reform measures. Calls were made for African countries to undertake drastic land reform, improve the linkages between agriculture and industry, step up public investment in agriculture, especially the food sector, strengthen rural financial institutions, encourage small-scale industries, invest in the national and regional infrastructure, and adopt a discriminatory interest rate regime that works to the advantage of productive (as opposed to speculative) investors. Furthermore, suggestions were made on the necessity for African countries to intensify efforts at regional economic co-operation, including the implementation of some of the points highlighted in the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action (LPA).

Proposals were also made for a rapid expansion of intra-African trade, the redressing of the structures and processes of unequal exchange between the North and the South (for example, through support for international commodity agreements and, possibly, the indexation of the prices of Third World agricultural and mineral exports to those of the manufactured goods which they import), and the promotion of a more balanced system of internal development in various African states through, *inter alia*, the encouragement of greater inter- and intra-sectoral linkages. For many radical (neo-) marxist analysts however, what Africa needed was presented as nothing short of either a complete transformation of domestic property relations or a re-definition of the continent's relations with the world market or both. This re-definition, for some analysts, included the need for the articulation of strategies for completely "opting out" of or "de-linking" from the capitalist world system. "De-linking" for several commentators involved the abandonment of the export-oriented strategy that saw Africa selling cheap raw and semi-processed goods to the world market and the embrace of a home market strategy (OAU, 1980; Carlsson, 1983; Abba *et al.*, 1985 ; ECA, 1989a, 1989b; Mahjoub, 1990; Turok, 1991; IFAA, 1992; Cornia *et al.*, 1992; Ihonvbere, 1993; Barratt Brown, 1995; Lensink, 1996).

What is remarkable about the various points of discussion on the African economic crisis among the non-neo-liberals is the fact that although many of their explanations of the sources of the problem contained sharp criticism of the performance of the public sector, few indeed were the blueprints for reform, whether inspired by some liberal thinking or by radical analyses, which called for the complete abandonment of the state interventionist model of development. Instead, the variety of proposals that dominated discussion in the early days focused on how the state sector might be reformed in order to enable it to play a more effective developmental role. Some other commentators went one step further to call for reforms in the international economic regime in a direction that would lessen the built-in disadvantages which Third World countries generally and African countries in particular suffer. In other words, most of the prescriptions that were initially tabled remained within a broad structuralist understanding of the sources of the continent's economic crisis. It was only with the presentation of the findings of the Berg Report (World Bank, 1981) and the works on the African agricultural sector of Robert Bates (1981, 1986) that the neo-liberal approach began to come to the fore as did discussion of the *fact* as opposed to the *level* and, to some extent, *form* of state involvement in the economy. So too did questions of relative prices and rural-urban terms of trade come to occupy the centre stage. This was done side by side with the significant playing up of domestic policy factors in the African crisis and the dramatic downplaying, almost to the point of total sidelining, of the external factors beyond the control of most African states. Even then, many were the students of the African political economy who bitterly contested the thrust and recommendations of the works of Berg and Bates (Helleiner, 1986; Ravenhill, 1986; Onimode, 1989; Gibbon *et al.*, 1993; Tarp, 1993; Lensink, 1996).

The vigorous contestation of the neo-liberal explanation of the sources of the African crisis notwithstanding, it soon became transformed from the status of just one of several explanatory models freely contending in the academic marketplace to an *institutional* ideology adopted by transnational financial institutions (with their all-pervasive influence on Africa) and backed by the power of the leading bilateral donors (Beckman, 1992). The high priests of the neo-liberal school were mainly economists since they produced the grand theory on which its basic tenets rest; Political Science, Sociology and the other social sciences supplied the apostles who attempted to apply the explanatory model to their own disciplinary concerns, spinning a host of mini-models that sought to capture the character of the African state and society in line with the logic of neo-liberalism. In building up their explanatory model, the earlier works of some scholars, most notable among them Ann Krueger (1974) on "rent-seeking", or what Bhagwati (1982) refers to as "directly unproductive profit seeking" (DUP), and Michael Lipton (1977) on the "urban bias" in the development process, which were seen as fitting well into the state-retrenching, market-liberalising objectives of neo-liberalism, were embraced by the World Bank, and scholars allied or sympathetic to its reform project in Africa, to extend the broad critique of the African political economy developed by Berg and Bates.

According to the neo-liberals, the economically interventionist and politically monopolistic post-colonial state was *the* bane of development in Africa. This basic position was soon to be seized upon by numerous political scientists to spin a host of mini-theories as to why the African state not only failed to fulfil the developmental objectives which it set itself at the dawn of independence in the 1960s but also presided over an inexorable march to stagnation and decline. As part of this quest, a host of adjectival appellations was devised to attempt to capture those central characteristics of the state that, allegedly, made it so hopeless an agent of development. The period from the early 1980s onwards therefore witnessed numerous publications variously describing the post-colonial African state as "rentier", "crony", "sultanist", "humpty-dumpty", "vampire" "predatory", "soft", "parasitic", "kleptocratic", "weak", "unsteady", "over-extended", "prebendal", and "lame". Underpinning these various characterisations was a common assumption about the overwhelming, all-encompassing nature of (neo-)patrimonial structures and relations in Africa, permeating, as they do, its state, economy, and society. This approach to understanding the African crisis has been extensively critiqued elsewhere (Beckman, 1988a, 1988b; Gibbon *et al.*, 1992; Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1995; Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995; Olukoshi, 1996b; Havnevik and van Arkadie, 1996) and so we need not detain ourselves here with a detailed rebuttal. Suffice it to note that the one-sided account of the nature of the state in Africa which was produced was to underpin much of the neo-liberal policy framework for economic reform on the continent.

For the neo-liberals, not only did state interventionism obstruct the development of free market relations and the private sector, it also distorted prices and undermined the competitiveness of African producers and economies. They opposed the irrationality of the state to the rationality of Africa's small producers who essentially lost out in an economic process which placed a great deal of emphasis on a system import substitution industrialisation backed by overvalued currencies, subsidised interest rates, protected domestic markets, a host of subsidies, and high tariff barriers. Where the structuralists emphasised the inadequacies of the market as a developmental agency by itself, the neo-liberals underlined the inevitable disasters associated with state interventionism and extolled the market as the sole, effective agency for rational development in Africa. In the early years of the adjustment debate, it was not unusual to hear World Bank officials repeatedly assuring their audiences in Africa about the almost magical qualities of the market. The challenge was simply to develop the will to abandon the structures of state interventionism and give free rein to the forces of the market to work their miracle. Or, to put it in the parlance of the Bank, the challenge before Africa was to get the prices right and thus allow the market to work its miracle. It was only much later, with the experience accumulated to the contrary and in the face of the recalcitrant protests of structuralists, that room started to be created in the Bank's discourse for the state to play a role in creating an "enabling environment" for the market to function.

The neo-liberals argued that the "rent-generating"/"rent-seeking" and "urban-bias" motive that inhered in the policies and institutions of the post-colonial state-led pattern of development in much of the continent worked to the benefit of a legitimacy-hungry political elite (and its largely urban-based clients) and to the detriment of the rural majority. This was an inevitable outcome of the state-led model of development given the essentially (some would say inherently) "neo-patrimonial" character of the African state. In time, practically every socio-political and economic event in Africa was reduced to sinister "rent-seeking" behaviour on the part of most (urban-based) socio-political and economic actors/actresses as the thesis acquired the status of a catch-all for explaining anything and everything that was subjectively or objectively thought to be obstructive of the prospects for market reform on the continent. Even opposition to market reforms had to be linked to the defence by all oppositional forces (vested interests as the literature describes them) of their economic rents from the existing state of affairs. Structural adjustment was thought to hold out the only promise for the eradication of rent-seeking behaviour and the inauguration of a system of market-based rationality. As time was however to show, this was a forlorn hope which betrayed a most basic misunderstanding of the workings of African countries.

Structural adjustment as a policy strategy/instrument for reform in Africa

In the light of the foregoing, it should not be surprising that when the structural adjustment model made its entry into the African discourse, apart from the criticism which was raised about the assumptions that underlay it, there was also considerable scepticism regarding its one-sided anti-statism, the idealised notions of the market that were associated with it, and the almost total uniformity of the policy components of the reform package that was applied to every distressed African country. As regards the latter issue, a popular comment in the early 1980s centred around the view that the multilateral financial institutions were bad doctors who recommended the same pill to all of their patients irrespective of their ailment or any other medicines they may have been taking (Onimode, 1989; Ghai, 1991; Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995). All over Africa, the hallmark of structural adjustment entailed massive currency devaluation; price, interest rate, payments and trade liberalisation; the imposition of credit ceilings and controls over money supply; a freeze on wages and salaries; public enterprise privatisation/commercialisation/liquidation; public expenditure reduction; the withdrawal of subsidies (real and imagined) and the introduction of cost recovery measures on a range of (mainly social) services; the reduction of the size of the civil service through staff retrenchment; and the stepping up of efforts at revenue mobilisation through, *inter alia*, the introduction/enforcement of a range of direct and indirect taxes.

The objectives which these measures were meant to achieve included the restoration of the balance of payments position of African countries, the curtailment/elimination of governmental deficit-financing as a way of managing domestic financial imbalances, the elimination of price distortions, the promotion of private sector initiative and the curbing of state intervention and involvement in the economy, the promotion of domestic savings, the attraction of fresh foreign investment inflows and the stemming of capital flight, the curtailment of inflationary pressures in the economy, the promotion of agricultural exports, the management of the external debt problems of African countries, an improvement in the overall competitiveness of African economies, and the restoration of the adjusting countries to the path of "sustainable" growth. In all, the policy instruments that were introduced to effect adjustments in the economies of crisis-ridden African countries aimed to shift the structure of incentives in the economies in favour of tradeables, that is, goods and services for which there are national and international markets, as opposed to non-tradeables. It is worth pointing out at this stage that when they first made their entry into the African policy terrain, the stabilisation and adjustment programmes were expected to be a temporary "diversion" from the "developmental "goals of the adjusting countries, including the goal of nation-building. In other words, stabilisation and adjustment were seen as temporary instruments in the long-term quest for development. But as the programmes became a permanent fixture on the policy terrain, more medium- to long-term "developmental" goals were forgotten and instruments gradually became transformed into goals.

Most of the early studies on the adjustment programme, predominantly generated by the World Bank itself, focused on the benefits that were expected to accrue from its implementation. This should not be surprising given that the Bank needed to win over to its side, as significant a part as possible of the large army of market sceptics in the policy and scholarly communities, within and outside Africa, involved in the growing debate about the African economic predicament. A spin-off from this was the massive amount of country-specific and continent-wide studies, both on sectoral and non-sectoral issues, carried out, in line with the new neo-liberal orthodoxy, on the ways in which past state-led economic policies led to the decline of African economies and how the new market orientation, especially exchange rate deregulation, price and interest rate liberalisation, and trade liberalisation would correct the problems confronting the economies (World Bank, 1981; 1989a, 1989b). It was, on the whole, the season for presenting a range of mostly exaggerated claims about the failures of pre-adjustment post-independent Africa (not a few references were made to the "wasted" years of independence) and counterposing the picture of unremitting failure thus created with extravagant claims about the promise of the magical market (Ferreira, 1992). Clearly, in most of the commentaries, politics and ideology appeared to take precedence over facts and science.

Beyond works produced with the aim of extolling the market-liberalising thrust of the adjustment programmes and the benefits that would flow from them, there were other studies which attempted to analyse the range of benefits that were likely to accrue to various groups, especially in the rural areas, on the basis of the shifts that the adjustment reforms were expected to produce. In time, pre-occupation with the construction of models of losers and winners from the adjustment process became an important pastime of many commentators, especially those who came to be grouped under the public choice approach (FAO, 1990; Bienen, 1990). In a sense, some of the early interventions in the adjustment debate took on a clearly populist tone in which support for the programme was tied, explicitly or implicitly, to a desire to improve the lot of Africa's long toiling, yet persistently neglected and marginalised rural majority. Indeed, some were to argue (Bates, 1981; Pletcher, 1986) that there was a fundamental conflict of interests between industrialists and peasants or, to put it in another way, between the urban coalition and the rural majority. The expectation was that structural adjustment, as a design, would help resolve the conflict in favour of the rural populace. The empowerment of the rural poor therefore became a key message from these studies, most of which dealt with the implications of structural adjustment for the agricultural sector.

The notion that the adjustment programmes gave or had a potential for giving voice and security to the oppressed majority has, of course, been vigorously challenged by a host of commentators as has the one-sided and rigid opposition of the urban and the rural, the state and the non-state, the public and the private and rent-seeking and market rationality in the work of many a public choice theorist. The debate on the implications of structural adjustment for the poor generally and the rural poor in particular is a big industry in its own right but much of the evidence suggests that nothing like the kind of empowerment which the authors of the programme promised has been realised (Ghai and Smith, 1987; Cornia *et al.*, 1987; Ghai, 1991; Jamal, 1991; George, 1992; Gibbon, 1992, 1995d; Gibbon *et al.*, 1993). As to the rigid dichotomisations on the basis of which the neo-liberals premise most of their conclusions, numerous studies, some of them pre-dating the adjustment years, have shown that, for most Africans, life does not proceed on the basis of such neat compartmentalisations (Cowen and Kinyanjui, 1977; Galli, 1990; Zack-Williams, 1990; Mamdani, 1991; Mustapha, 1992; Gibbon *et al.*, 1993). Equally vigorously contested is the model of winners and losers constructed on the basis of the activity lines of particular groups in a continent where straddling and multiple modes of livelihood are rife. For, the reality in much of Africa, which the excessively neat dichotomisations on the basis of which neo-liberalism rests its argument do not capture, is the predominance of grey areas in the economy where various sectors are brought together in one and the same process in the livelihood experiences /calculations of socio-economic agents (Jamal and Weeks, 1988, 1993; Gibbon *et al.*, 1992).

The social costs of structural adjustment

Within a few years of the introduction and widespread adoption of the adjustment programmes of the IMF and the World Bank, attention soon shifted to their short- and medium-term social costs. Interest was focused on this issue following the publication by UNICEF of its study which, on the basis of its concern that the market reform programme of the multilateral financial institutions was seriously threatening to roll back some of the social progress that had been recorded in post-colonial Africa, made a plea for adjustment with a "human face" (Cornia *et al.*, 1987). This prompted research into various aspects of the social consequences of the adjustment process. At one level, some of the most orthodox studies produced insisted on a line of argument that the expected economic gains from the adjustment exercise would, by and by, offset the short-term social costs of the reform programme. This was a version of the old "trickle-down" thesis; why it was expected to have more chance of being validated during the adjustment years remained unclear. However, an implicitly or explicitly stated aspect of this position was the view that the years of economic crisis had already taken their toll on the social sector well before the adjustment programme was adopted by many African governments.

The response of the World Bank to the suggestions that structural adjustment was aggravating the social situation in Africa was initially essentially defensive. In several instances, it made a plea that the causes and effects of the African crisis should not be confused with the remedy as represented by the adjustment programme. At the same time, it made some attempts to deny that the adjustment programmes had any (direct) causal relationship to increasing poverty and social decay in Africa, a position which was later to be rehashed, with only slightly more sophistication, in many of the studies produced under the Cornell Food and Nutrition Policy Programme (CFNPP) carried out with USAID financing (Sahn, 1990a, 1990b, 1991) (see Endnote 2). Bank officials and allied intellectuals also resorted to the unanswerable counterfactual position that the situation in Africa would have been worse had the adjustment programme not been introduced. This approach was however soon abandoned as the World Bank, faced with increasing all-round criticism that implied a popular rebuttal of its position, sponsored studies and projects on ways in which the social costs of adjustment could be "mitigated" without necessarily compromising what it considered to be the necessary reforms that needed to be undertaken in order to stem the decline of African economies (see Endnote 3). The Bank was to warn its critics against allowing a situation where the baby would be thrown out with the bath water in the quest for adjustment with a human face. The social dimensions of adjustment (SDA) therefore became an important theme in the discourse on economic reforms in Africa. Other researchers, largely taking their cue from this new concern with the social costs of adjustment, undertook studies on safety nets that could be constructed to "catch" the most vulnerable and prevent them from falling below the poverty datum level appropriate to their societies (World Bank, 1988, 1990, 1994; Demery and Addison, 1987; Landell-Mills, 1988; Kanbur, 1990; Hussain, 1994).

For many critics involved in the debate about the social costs of the market reforms, the fundamental question that they posed centred around the issue of whether the neo-liberal structural adjustment package, given its basic philosophical assumptions and deflationary, zero-sum market orientation, could ever be compatible with the welfare aspirations of the working and unemployed poor in Africa. For, in addition to the adverse costs of the deflationary thrust of the programme on public sector expenditure on social/welfare services, there were also the massive public sector lay-offs associated with the anti-state, public sector rationalisation component of the reforms. The position was canvassed that structural adjustment had contributed immensely to the exacerbation of the existing problems of poverty in Africa and to the creation of new levels of structural poverty on the continent. The interest expressed by the Bank in addressing the social dimensions of adjustment was, therefore, seen from this perspective as little more than an attempt to "save" the adjustment model itself rather than revise it fundamentally. For, what the Bank sought to do was largely to graft a largely under-funded, politically-motivated, and haphazardly articulated social package onto an adjustment programme whose most basic assumptions remained unaltered and whose workings ran counter to the very objectives that the social package was expected to achieve .

Several studies have been produced, covering the health and educational sectors in particular, showing a correlation between adjustment policies and deterioration in service provision and worsening problems of access to basic social services among the poor, including women and children who are classified as forming the core of the vulnerable. The studies have also underlined the essential ineffectiveness of the social dimensions packages introduced to mitigate the costs of adjustment (Elson, 1989; Adedeji *et al.*, 1990; Stewart, 1991a, 1991b; Afshar and Dennis, 1992; Ali, 1992; Onimode, 1992; Gibbon, 1992; Ihonvbere, 1993; UNRISD, 1995; Bijlmakers *et al.*, 1995; Engberg-Pedersen *et al.*, 1996). For many of the critics of the neo-liberal project in Africa, the worsening problem of poverty on the continent is not only (directly) associated with the market reform programmes promoted by the donors, it can only be seriously tackled with the fundamental revision or complete jettisoning of the adjustment model of the IMF and the World Bank (Vivian, 1994; UNRISD, 1995; Lensink, 1996). It was this position that the Cornell University poverty studies attempted, partly, to refute through micro-level projects whose methodology and conclusions are currently the focus of much contestation. Some sympathetic critics of the Bank attempted to show that the domestic terms of trade were being shifted, even if only very slowly, in favour of rural Africa to the benefit of the majority of the poor who are mostly members of rural agricultural households. As Peter Gibbon has noted in his essay in this volume, it was the debate about the social costs of adjustment that generated interest in the host of methodological issues, not least among them the question of cause and effect, surrounding structural adjustment research as it affects Africa.

Explaining and tackling the limited achievements of structural adjustment

One point of widespread criticism against the structural adjustment programme was its overall poor performance and its failure to produce tangible results even beyond the short term. This was a broad point of criticism shared by both radical and sympathetic critics of the IMF and the World Bank (Tarp, 1993; Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995; Lensink, 1996) (see Table 2). The response which this generated initially among Bank researchers was one that underlined the positive role of the programme in "stabilising" economies that were declining precipitously and which were well on the way to "collapse". A common refrain in this regard was the constant reference to the fact that, thanks to the adjustment programmes, wages and salaries of public sector employees were at least now being paid regularly; their value and purchasing power were something else. Later, the Bank and a host of scholars produced reports which located the main reason for the lacklustre performance of the programme in the absence of "commitment", political will/courage, and consistency on the part of the African governments that were carrying out the reform policies. Many of the governments allegedly adopted a "stop-go-stop" approach that undermined the efficacy of the policies. Haphazard and disconnected implementation of the programme was, in the Bank's view, a key factor in the explanation of the poor results achieved. In the parlance of the Bank, "slippage" was the bane of the quest for successful reform in Africa. Attempts were made to compare and contrast the performances of the "strong" and "weak" adjusters, with the conclusion often pointing, predictably, to the relative superiority of the former over the latter. This conclusion was to be challenged later by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) which joined the critics who argued that attention ought to be focused more on the assumptions that underlay the neo-liberal model itself for clues as to its limited achievement (ECA, 1989a, 1989b; McCleary, 1989; World Bank, 1989b, 1992a, 1994).

Still within the broad framework of the problems associated with the lacklustre performance of the adjustment programmes, a host of scholars, mostly from North America, and largely working within the public choice/"political economy" school, focused attention on a variety of issues, mostly of a political/administrative nature, which they felt were essential to the successful implementation of "painful" but "necessary" reforms in Africa. This school was mildly critical of the donor community for paying too little attention to the domestic socio-political prerequisites of successful reform. For them, as important as the issue of getting prices right was the question of getting the politics of adjustment initiation and implementation right. Many of the public choice theorists insisted, therefore, that it was important to take full cognisance of the various political interests and processes at play in any given context in addressing the issue of adjustment formulation and implementation in Africa and other parts of the developing world (Callaghy, 1989, 1990; Haggard and Kaufman, 1989, 1992; Nelson, 1989, 1990; World Bank, 1989a, 1989b; Grindle and Thomas, 1991; Widner, 1992; Bates and Krueger, 1993). Theirs was a concern with the successful political management of adjustment, a concern which was to strike a chord with the Bank at a time of growing concern within and outside the institution about the limited achievements of the market reform project. Increasingly, this genre of academic research became organically tied to the Bank's project of stable adjustment in Africa. It led to a revival of discussions about the regime type that would be best suited to adjustment implementation.

In the framework of their friendly dissatisfaction with the excessively narrow technocratic/economistic focus of the Bank in the implementation of the reform programme, the public choice theorists raised a host of issues, centring around coalition-building, which, in the view of critics, carried clear authoritarian and Machiavellian implications. For, the main focus of the public choice school was on the issue of how interest group opposition to structural adjustment could be effectively neutralised, out-manoeuvred, circumvented, or co-opted without compromising the essential neo-liberal thrust of the programme. Coupled with the "rent-seeking", "urban-bias" assumption which underlay most of the works of the public choice scholars, it was not difficult for critics to see the potentially repressive and anti-democratic implications of their explanatory and strategic models as far as the management of opposition to adjustment is concerned. Indeed, contrary to those who thought the adjustment programme held out the possibility for the emergence of a "genuine", democratising African bourgeoisie disciplined to the ways of the market (Diamond, 1988, for example), critics of the market reform project argued that it inherently bred or reinforced authoritarian structures given, *inter alia*, the political pre-conditions necessary for its implementation, the huge socio-economic costs which it exacted, and its unpopularity with a broad cross-section of people (Gibbon *et al.*, 1992; Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995). Thus, from being a theoretical approach some of whose key exponents (Haggard and Kaufman, 1989; Nelson, 1989, 1990, for example) started out questioning an earlier assumption among friends of the Bank (most notably, Deepkak Lall, (1983)) that a positive correlation existed between authoritarianism and the capacity for adjustment implementation, the public choice approach ultimately came to give respect to Machiavellianism in the implementation of the donor reform project.

One other area which attracted the interest of the public choice scholars is the politics of the timing, phasing and sequencing of programmes of economic reform. A number of case- and comparative studies were undertaken to show how these various elements of structural adjustment implementation were essential to the outcome of the reform policies that were designed. Studies were also conducted on the ways in which coalitions in support of the neo-liberal agenda in Africa could be constructed to sustain the programme of reform. In this regard, the focus of research was on the way "winners" from adjustment could be identified and organised and "losers" neutralised either through compensatory relief measures or through the political organisation of the beneficiaries of the reform process into a pro-active constituency that is able, on its own, to take on "entrenched" groups opposed to the programme. Public opinion management in support of market reforms and the merits and demerits of shock treatments in getting reform programmes started also featured in several studies.

Furthermore, the public choice school focused on issues of how technocrats carrying out reform programmes could be insulated from interest group pressure so that the reform programme can be faithfully implemented without the diluting influence of vested interests. A special area of focus on this score included the reform of African central banks to increase their technical capacity and autonomy. Examples were cited in a host of studies of the way in which the alleged independence of such central banks as the German Bundesbank from the state and society was constructed and suggestions were freely proffered on how African central banks could be reformed to initiate and defend sound monetary if not fiscal policies (Haggard and Webb, 1994). Insulation of technocrats and central bank independence were however rejected by critics of the public choice school partly because they touched directly on issues of democratic accountability and partly because they ignore the fact that autonomy is socially/politically constructed, reflecting the balance of conflicting/competing interests in a society. Increasingly, much of the output of the public choice school took on a decisively functionalist and technocratic outlook tied to policy implementation (Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995).

For its part, the World Bank, whose own research effort complemented the work of the public choice school on the administration and politics of adjustment, focused increasingly on issues of domestic "ownership" of the reform programme and how it could be brought about. At one level, this entailed discussions about the possibility of domestic constituencies emerging which could claim ownership of the programme. At another level, emphasis was placed on the development of strategies for promoting a process of "autonomous" neo-liberal policy formulation from within the adjusting countries themselves with the Bank playing a largely back-up role that would enable it to take on a lower profile. A variety of studies pointed to the advantages which domestic ownership would confer on the reform process, including the blunting of the nationalist critique of the programme as an external imposition and enhancing the prospects that the reform programmes will actually be implemented. "Capacity-building" became an integral part of the strategy for improving ownership. Related to this was the earlier effort made at reforming the civil services of the adjusting countries with a view, partly, to upgrading their performance and managerial capacity in support of economic reform and "rational" decision-making (World Bank, 1991, 1994; Dia, 1996).

Critics of the concept of ownership as articulated by the Bank have pointed, among other things, to the fact that it would not do simply to create local "clones" that would replicate the neo-liberal model without questioning the fundamental assumptions of the model itself. The adjustment policies would not be any more successful if they were formulated by locals as opposed to Bank staff if they are premised on the same neo-liberal assumptions that have created more problems than they have solved. Besides, a wide gulf separates the theory of ownership from the practice of reform implementation as the exigencies of the transnational power exercised by the multilateral institutions in the framework of conditionality/cross-conditionality and increasing donor co-ordination demand their "hands-on" involvement in the internal economic and political processes of the adjusting countries. The entire framework of the design and implementation of the adjustment programme, including the leverage acquired and exercised by the multilaterals, suggests that ownership is bound to remain the domain of the donor for a long time to come. Similarly, capacity-building in support of structural adjustment hardly addresses the basic flaws which, in the view of the radicals, are integral to the adjustment model (Beckman, 1992; Mkandawire and Olukoshi , 1995).

Research concern was also focused, especially towards the end of the 1980s, on issues of governance and the role which they could play in the success or failure of market-based economic reforms. This concern emerged in the context of the growing pressures for "democratisation" in the international system and it prompted a variety of scholars to argue that there could be no successful *perestroika* in Africa without a simultaneous process of *glasnost* that will open up the political space and expose the roots of the patron-clientelist ties that the market reform programmes were also expected, partly, to help undermine (Carter Centre, 1989; Hydén and Bratton, 1992). The World Bank itself, after some initial hesitation, partially hinged on the allegedly "non-political" nature of its mandate, devoted some of its resources to this issue, arguing that "good" governance, long overdue in Africa, was a *sine qua non* for successful economic reform. Attempts were even made to show a correlation between "good" governance and the performance of adjusting governments "successfully" implementing the reform package. As with the populist tone of the earlier discussion about the beneficial nature of the adjustment programme for the rural poor in Africa, the Bank adopted a populist language in making its case for "good" governance on the continent. It urged African governments to move towards greater accountability to their people and promote the rule of law, transparency and openness, predictability, and policy consistency in a more participatory environment that "empowers" the people and is "enabling" of market forces in order to be successful in carrying out sustainable reform (World Bank, 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992b; Landell-Mills, 1992; Landell-Mills and Serageldin, 1991; Dia, 1993, 1996; Adamolekun and Bryant, 1994; Wai, 1994).

The question which was posed in critique of the governance thesis was its failure to recognise that structural adjustment and its management were integral aspects of the problems of governance that persisted in many African countries. Many critics of the adjustment programme argued that in philosophy as in design and implementation, it inherently results in authoritarian outcomes. With the manner of its introduction in many adjusting countries hardly transparent, the programme and the conditionality and cross-conditionality clauses that were woven around it elicited accountability from governments not to their people but to multilateral donors. Increasingly, those multilateral financial institutions themselves became unaccountable although decisions which they took had severe implications for the daily lives of many people in the developing countries. In treating the issue of governance as a function of adjustment, the Bank reduced it to a technocratic/managerial issue; this way, it deliberately aimed to blunt the political thrust of agitations for more representative governments by the peoples of the adjusting countries, agitations which entailed a rejection of both authoritarianism and market-induced austerity (Beckman, 1992; Gibbon *et al.*, 1992; Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995).

The efficacy of conditionality re-considered

More recently, concern has shifted in the scholarly and policy communities to the question of the efficacy of conditionality. After over a decade and a half of structural adjustment in Africa, a host of bilateral aid agencies and researchers has recently been wondering aloud if conditionality is necessary and effective. Doubts have been raised about the efficacy of multiple, sometimes self-contradictory conditionality clauses which have failed to induce "commitment" or yield credible success stories. Furthermore, questions have arisen regarding the limits of external intervention in the internal economic and political spaces of the adjusting countries and the propriety of donor insistence on particular political and personnel preferences. In this regard, criticisms have been made of the erosion of the sovereignty of the adjusting countries by bilateral and multilateral donors. Also, the erosion of state capacity under various regimes of conditionality has been brought to the fore in the emerging discussion on this subject (Bacha, 1984; Havnevik, 1987; Avramovic, 1989; Mosley *et al.*, 1991; Olav Stokke, 1995; Havnevik and van Arkadie, 1996).

The Bank's response to the increasing critique of conditionality as an effective instrument of policy reform in Africa has basically been to argue that although it may not be totally effective, there is as yet no better alternative to it (see Endnote 4). Few governments were initially willing to initiate and faithfully implement painful reform programmes when the African economic crisis started in the course of the 1970s and early 1980s. Conditionality was a necessary and successful tool in getting governments to realise that adjustment was both necessary and inevitable. Fifteen years on however, some regimes have displayed an impressive level of commitment to the philosophy and policy thrust of the reform process while others have simply avoided or failed to develop such commitment. The Bank argues that as the millennium draws to a close, it might gradually become safer to relax conditionality for those who have shown commitment and consistency while retaining it in dealings with those that have failed to show commitment.

Indeed, the Bank's new proposal on donor "selectivity" in funding reform programmes in Africa would suggest that it thinks conditionality should be tightened for those countries that have failed to show commitment. For the Bank, in the face of diminishing resources and growing donor fatigue, there is little point in "wasting" donor funds on countries that have a track record of insufficient commitment to reform. Clearly, this represents a hardening of the Bank's attitude on the issue of conditionality. Yet, given the rapidity of turnover of the countries listed as "successful" or "committed", and given the reality that "commitment" is often uneven from year to year, varies from one adjustment stage to the other, and falters or rises in response to domestic and external socio-economic and political developments, it is clear that a strong subjective notion is bound to influence the definition and identification of countries that are defined as committed and those that are defined as uncommitted. Moreover, commitment cannot be a static thing except in the most abstract sense. In the end, commitment is likely to become a conditionality in addition to being a function of conditionality without addressing the need for some rethinking and reform of the instrument.

Structural adjustment and the paradox of deepening aid dependency

Side by side with the growing interest in conditionality, a host of studies has also recently pointed to the paradox of Africa's deepening aid dependency which the years of adjustment appear to have fuelled, or at least failed to check. It has been noted, both by sympathetic and radical critics of adjustment, that African countries have sunk deeper into aid dependency with the consequence that at best, the withdrawal of external support will result in the unsustainability of the reform process, and at worst in its collapse. This is as true, if not more so in some cases, for both the countries that are thought to be adjusting "successfully" and those which are not. It is not an accident that all of the countries that are considered to be Africa's best adjusters (Ghana and Uganda especially) are heavily dependent on both "fungible" and non-"fungible" donor resources. When "success" has depended on so massive an infusion of donor funds, the recipe for a potential catastrophe is created should donor support have to be withdrawn as it must be one day. In the framework of this discussion on donor-driven adjustment, a related debate on aid effectiveness in the context of economic reform has been mushrooming in which questions relating to the success or failure of aid in generating sustainable development and promoting genuine institutional reform has come to the fore (Riddell, 1987; Agrawal *et al.*, 1993; Havnevik and van Arkadie, 1996; Engberg-Pedersen *et al.*, 1996).

The continuing discussion on the economic consequences of adjustment

Besides the debates on the social and political/administrative implications of structural adjustment, there were also numerous studies on the economic consequences of the programme, most of them at the macro/sectoral level. Studies produced by the World Bank generally pointed to improvements that were recorded, the way it saw it, in the area of inflation, balance of payments, budgetary deficits, etc. and where progress was slow, it generally attributed this to factors that were external to the policies it was promoting (World Bank, 1994; Hussain and Faruquee, 1994). Critics of the Bank often produced studies disputing its "success" stories and pointing, in most cases, to the lacklustre results that were recorded, their fragility, and the absence of the social consensus necessary for sustaining them. Others challenged the claims of the Bank by pointing to the inflationary consequences of massive currency devaluations and increases in interest rates, the decimation of industry, the poor performance of the export sector (agricultural and non-agricultural) and the continuing strain on the balance of payments posed by adverse terms of trade and rising debt obligations.

The external debt burden carried by African countries prompted a host of researchers to explore questions related to the ways in which the absence of significant debt relief in the face of falling or stagnant foreign exchange receipts has been undermining efforts at adjustment. Indeed, the view was to gain in significance that structural adjustment and debt peonage were very closely linked given the prominence of debt service transfers from Africa during the adjustment years to Western creditor institutions and multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank. Besides, the "donorisation" of many aspects of life in the adjusting countries only contributed to worsening their overall debt burden. Some made the case for the articulation of a programme of debt securitisation/equitisation or even outright forgiveness linked to a commitment by African governments to protect the environment within their national boundaries. Many scholars produced reports suggesting that the years of crisis and adjustment have resulted in the acceleration of environmental degradation in Africa (George, 1988, 1992; Onimode, 1989; Reed, 1992; Abbott, 1993; Nafziger, 1993; Bello, 1994; George and Sabelli, 1994). Attention was also drawn to the continuing deterioration in the terms of trade of African countries and the ways in which this reality contradicted the goals of the adjustment programmes in the area of increased export earnings from increased primary commodity exports (ECA, 1989a; Barrat Brown and Tiffen, 1992; Barratt Brown, 1995).

Numerous sectorally-based studies were also carried out showing the impact of the reform programme on agriculture, mining, industry, transportation, and the services, including the banking sector. As with other aspects of structural adjustment research, sharp differences have marked the picture painted by various scholars. In general, those sympathetic to the adjustment programme have mostly taken the position that, within the overall constraints that confronted the introduction and implementation of the reform programme, some broad/modest progress has been made even if the challenges ahead are still enormous. Some have gone so far as to argue that had structural adjustment not been imposed, the African situation would have been far worse today than any difficulty which structural adjustment may have caused. In any case, the decline which many African economies suffered was so deep that merely succeeding in stemming their continued fall is a major achievement in itself. On the whole, resource utilisation has shown some improvement as have the key economic sectors and balances even if the benefits of the improvements recorded have not (yet) been more evenly distributed. In a significant number of countries, economic growth rates, averaging about four per cent, at least match or even slightly outstrip the rate of population growth and have a fair chance of rising further if "sensible" policies are maintained (see Endnote 5) (World Bank, 1994).

Critics of the adjustment process have, for their part, pointed to the contradictory elements of the neo-liberal programme whose effects have generally resulted in policy elements cancelling out each other. Pre-adjustment patterns of development in various economic sectors were severely disrupted by the market reform programme which has, however, failed to promote sustainable new processes of accumulation with the consequence that the productive sectors of the economies of African countries have been largely stagnant. The agricultural sector has shown a highly uneven performance that has not resulted in any appreciable increases in output and even productivity while the industrial sector has suffered sharp declines, posing the danger that Africa may be faced with the prospects of de-industrialisation. Foreign investment flows into the economies of African countries have been almost insignificant since the embrace of the market reforms. In some cases, the existing foreign investors, especially in the industrial sector, have actually been selling off their assets and interests and leaving the continent. The only sector that appears to show some dynamic is the services sector which has been boosted by the activities of speculators mostly playing the foreign exchanges and tourists seeking cheap vacation destinations (Andrae and Beckman, 1987; Mkandawire, 1988; Benell, 1990; Riddell, 1990; Stein, 1992; Gibbon *et al.*, 1993; Olukoshi, 1993; Valk, 1994; Sachikonye, 1995; Olukoshi, 1996a).

Structural adjustment and processes of change in Africa

Amidst the debate on the broad social, political and economic impact of the adjustment programme on Africa, some interesting attempts were made to capture the more nuanced, less evident and certainly understudied processes of socio-economic change unfolding in Africa in the context of the changing environment brought about by a changed structure of rewards and penalties associated with the efforts at neo-liberal market reform. The concern among those scholars who attempted to capture these processes was not so much with the question of whether the countries of Africa were "strong" or "weak" adjusters but with the changes in the African socio-economic—and political fabric brought about by the effort at liberalising markets and rolling back the state, however unevenly or haphazardly this was done. Early attempts in this area focused on the deepening of the process of informalisation in Africa and its implications for the long-term development of the continent. The works of Azarya (Azarya and Chazan, 1987), Bratton (1989, 1990), Chazan (1988), Lemarchand (1991), Portes *et al.* (1989), and Rothchild (Rothchild and Chazan, 1988) stand out in this area. They saw the process of informalisation as an essentially positive development which had a clear libertarian impetus and contained the seeds for Africa's democratic renewal. In this regard, the role of voluntary associations in the "thickening" of civil society has also been much discussed. Some emphasis was also placed on the role of the informal sector in absorbing workers laid off from an over-bloated public service and the prospects for its emergence as the terrain for "genuine" "private sector"-driven free market competition.

There were, however many other scholars who were less celebratory in their assessment of informalisation, the explosion in associational life, and the "revitalisation" of civil society. Bangura and Gibbon (1992), for example, have observed that the conferment of "libertarian" and "democratic" characteristics on the processes and structures of informalisation are not only deduced from a faulty identification of power and exploitation exclusively with the state and the public/formal sector, they also side-step the reality that power relations and exploitation are also found within civil society. Other commentators have also been sceptical about the informal sector's potential, drawing attention to the weakening of institutional capacity and formal domestic productive structures reinforced by the activities of many of the operatives located within it (Meagher, 1991; Obiozor *et al.*, 1994). Still others have focused on the nature of the actors in the informal sector, and the extent to which the sector is a site of accumulation or subsistence for them (Gibbon, 1995c). Studies with a policy orientation have concentrated on ways in which the informal sector could be integrated into the formal sector. The changing household gender, and generational relations that have been associated with informalisation were also studied either on their own merit or in relation to the stratification of the sector along various lines. In all, the debate has polarised between those who idealise the informal sector as the new hope for Africa and those who call for a more sober, realistic assessment of its potential merits and adverse consequences.

Related to the focus on informalisation were studies which sought to capture the dynamics of changing social processes in Africa by focusing on the emergence of the multiple survival strategies adopted by a variety of social actors in order to cope with the adverse effects on them of years of economic crisis and structural adjustment. Initially focusing on individual survival strategies that entailed a combination of diverse modes of earning additional income or meeting basic needs, the studies on this subject were eventually broadened to cover the entire spectrum of household, workplace, and community strategies for survival in a changing economic and institutional environment. The study of multiple survival strategies also led to interest in the study of the changing class structure of African countries as many groups embarked on activities that had implications for old notions about class formation and consolidation. In this regard, one of the most widely discussed issues was the demise of the old middle class of professionals who were mostly public sector employees and the emergence of a new middle class of financial and economic managers located mainly in the financial/ services sector. The implications of multiple livelihood strategies and informalisation for institutional reform in Africa also attracted some interest (Mustapha, 1992; Bangura, 1994).

Thanks to these studies, it soon became clear that the sharp dichotomisations on the basis of which Africa was previously studied and which underpinned the neo-liberal adjustment model were increasingly becoming obsolete or, at least had to be handled with greater caution. For example, the sharp dichotomisation and opposition of the urban-rural, private-public, and formal-informal stood on increasingly shaky foundations because, among other things, the distinctions that were thought to set them apart were being blurred by the fact that a growing number of social actors/actresses progressively straddled them in their struggle to cope with a rapidly changing domestic and international environment. Straddling has reinforced the multiple processes and structures of inter-dependencies which characterise urban-rural, private-public, and formal-informal relations. This reality in turn stimulated research interest in the implications of straddling for economic policy formulation and implementation as well as the institutional context for realising them.

As it pertains to the rural-urban divide that was central to the design of the adjustment programme, apart from the fact that extended household structures straddled both areas, many studies were to point to a flow of population from the rural areas to the margins of the urban centres in a manner that seemed to run in the face of the attempts of the neo-liberals to shift the domestic terms of trade in favour of the rural community through price incentives and the curtailment of the institutions of state intervention in the rural economy, namely the marketing boards which were dismantled in many adjusting countries. In many parts of the rapidly expanding urban centres of Africa, workers, academics, civil servants, etc. also took to the cultivation of food crops in order to meet household needs in the face of falling incomes. Simultaneously, the migration of people from rural farming communities into the urban centres intensified as a growing number used the off-farm season to engage in petty trading, work for a commission on the parallel currency market, carry out cross-border economic activity, or take up employment as night guards, among other things.

Adjustment and cross-border economic activity in Africa

As to the specific economic processes that were unfolding, one of the areas that attracted the most attention was the expansion of informal cross-border trade as well as the emergence or expansion of domestic parallel or "underground" markets in goods and services. Regarding the informal cross-border trade processes that were intensified by the experience of economic crisis and structural adjustment, opinion was divided regarding their value. While some saw this pattern of trade as holding some promise of genuine regional integration in Africa independent of the state, others pointed to the failure of the trade to articulate with local production structures within African countries and of thus contributing to the worsening of the crisis of decline afflicting the real sectors of the local economies. Increasingly, the items of trade carried across borders consisted of cheap imports from Asia which further undercut local production structures. Food items, especially cereals, also constituted an important part of the cross-border trade but while surpluses were created in some areas, deficits/scarcities were generated in others, thereby threatening rural household food security in a context where many farming communities often have recourse to the market to supplement their own food production. Studies on the changing gender, generational, and household relations that were associated with the "boom" in cross-border trade were also undertaken, although the insights offered were largely limited (Egg and Igué, 1993; Mahamane *et al.*, 1993; Obiozor *et al.*, 1994).

Still on cross-border activity but this time of a different kind, a small number of studies attempted to focus on the emergence and significance of international remittances in the survival strategies of rural and urban households in several African countries. The years of economic decline and structural adjustment have witnessed a massive legal and illegal flow of skilled and unskilled labour from Africa to other parts of the world, especially Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Most of these migrants, employed in lowly, intermediate, and high-paying positions depending on their legal status, qualifications, and experience, have kept links with their families back in Africa mostly through remittances that enable their relations to meet daily social and economic obligations. In some households, a disproportionate share of the resources available for the satisfaction of needs are now exclusively derived from remittances. Whilst most of the remittances are sent through informal channels, financial institutions in such countries as the

United Kingdom and Ghana have attempted to carve a profitable niche for themselves as safe conduits for the transfer of money. New power relations are being generated associated with the expansion of remittances. The migratory flows themselves are having implications for the structure of the family and the household in many African countries, prompting comparisons with the experiences of the labour reserve economies of Southern Africa that provide workers for the South African mining industry and agricultural plantations.

In all, the socio-economic changes which have been associated with the dynamics of economic crisis and structural adjustment in Africa represent the most fertile area of research into the impact of the reform process in Africa today. There is of course considerable disagreement on the relative weight which is to be placed on the different facets of the process of socio-economic change just as there is no consensus on the conclusions that are to be drawn. For while for some, the growth of community-based self help associations, for example, is indicative of a gradual "disengagement" by various actors from the state, for others, the disengagement is more apparent than real as the state remains an important, if diminished factor in the livelihood strategies of many social actors. Nor is the apparent "irrelevance" of the state to the social aspirations of the majority of the people necessarily co-terminous with an irrelevance in the construction of their strategies for survival and reproduction. Few of the social actors and actresses who have been compelled to resort to multiple survival strategies opt to abandon state sector employment and pay if it is still available to them as income from that employment is mostly regular even if it is smaller than fluctuating/seasonal incomes from other sources. Moreover, in the experience of social actors, "disengagement" from the state at certain levels often goes hand in hand with "re-engagement" with it at other levels. Thus while, without doubt the capacity of the state has certainly been undermined by the years of crisis and adjustment, so too has society been confronted by a process of social fragmentation that has had far-reaching implications for the ways in which individuals, households, and communities make their living (UNRISD, 1995; Olukoshi, 1996b). Both state and society are in a state of transition and the one remains indispensable to the other and vice versa.

Exploring Some New Issues in Structural Adjustment Research in Africa

From all of the foregoing, it is clear that the research and policy challenges of the next few years are many but they will probably centre on capturing more closely, the various, often inter-connected processes and structures of socio-economic and political change in Africa, the better to understand the new configuration of forces which years of economic decline and a decade and a half of structural adjustment have brought about. Although there is increasing recognition that beneath the facade of chaos or stagnation that prevails in Africa, the continent is undergoing profound changes, there is still considerable uncertainty as to the precise nature of these changes and still less about the problems and prospects which they pose for our conceptual/analytic frames as well as for the long-term development of the continent. Related to this are the kinds of power relations which are developing in the context of the emerging patterns of socio-economic change on the continent as well as the prospects which they hold for democratisation. The theme of the decomposition and recomposition of structures, institutions and identities in Africa is, therefore, one which needs to be researched more closely.

It is with this in mind that three broad themes—*private trading networks and structures, the Land Question, and popular forms of social provisioning*—were identified under the second phase of the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet's research programme on structural adjustment for closer study. What we seek to do is to pinpoint and explore new/changing structures and processes which have been directly associated with the years of economic crisis and the quest for structural adjustment in Africa but which are still generally understudied and are insufficiently understood. The emphasis on "new" here does not, of course, preclude a consideration of the ways in which "old" or existing structures are changing or are being "re-invented" in the context of the changing environment of incentives within which various social groups strive to make their living. In each of the three broad areas, we seek to understand the changing economic and social relations among a variety of actors/actresses and the ways in which these affect power structures in the household, the community, the wider society and the state. Let us elaborate briefly here on the kinds of questions we hope to address through a set of empirically-based studies to be carried out on each of the three sub-themes in a variety of African countries with different experiences of economic decline and structural adjustment.

Private trading networks and structures

One consequence of the attempts over the last 15 years to change the economic policy direction of African countries has been the conscious trimming down of the state and the outright discouragement of state interventionism in economic processes. The attempt to accomplish this has been done at various levels, among them, the liberalisation of markets, including the removal of price controls and food and consumer goods subsidies, the deregulation of exchange rates in the context of massive currency devaluations and the removal of most or all exchange controls, the privatisation/ liquidation/commercialisation of public enterprises, the dissolution of commodity marketing boards/the licensing of new competitors in the commodity trade, the curtailment of public expenditures, the "rationalisation" of the civil service of most African countries through massive staff lay-offs, the restriction of governmental borrowing and deficit budgeting, the reduction of governmental controls over the economy generally and foreign investment in particular, the liberalisation of trade, including the abolition of import and export licences, and the articulation of measures to promote private sector activities. These policies have been carried out in varying mixes at one point or the other in practically all of the adjusting countries of Africa. In other words, both "strong" and "weak" adjusters have implemented several of the state-retrenching, market liberalising policies built into the structural adjustment programme.

Although evidence has been adduced suggesting that the level of direct state involvement in the economies of most countries has been reducing and that the form of state participation in the development process is being altered, still very little is known about the extent to which private actors/actresses have been able to move in to occupy the space previously occupied by state actors. This is especially true for trading activities where the state sector was quite prominent in many African countries, especially after their independence from colonial rule. Given that amidst all the gloom in the African economic landscape, trading activities have generally enjoyed a boost relative to productive activities during the structural adjustment years in Africa, it is reasonable to assume that private actors/ actresses of varying sizes and different categories are emerging to profit from the wider scope created for commercial activities either for purposes of simple survival or as part of shifting accumulation strategies. The relative "boom" in trading activities is as true for domestic retail and wholesale (including inter-regional flows) as for cross-border trade. Both manufactured goods and agricultural products have featured in this trade as has the provision of services, including informal currency markets as well as licensed *bureaux de change* and private transport operations, among others.

In the light of the foregoing, we are keen to understand the process by which private trading actors may be inheriting an increasing sphere of the commercial sector of African countries, the nature of the activities which they are embarking upon, the identity of the traders, the networks which they build from the point of acquisition to the different levels of distribution, the sources of their finance, including any media of unofficial international or barter exchange, the social basis of their activities, including familial, ethnic, religious, gender, and generational networks that may be mobilised, patron-clientelist ties that are being built or which are being exploited by the traders, their organisational structures, including the formal and/or informal institutions of private traders in particular commodity areas or trading sub-sectors, the formal or informal rules devised by the traders to regulate their trading activities and to govern entry into a line of activity by newcomers, their links to formal and informal productive and financial sectors, the relationships of the traders to one another and to the state, emerging patterns of exclusive ethnic domination /monopolisation of particular lines of trade and trade-related services, the extent to which trading is a site of accumulation or a site of subsistence/multiple livelihood for different actors/actresses, the emerging trends of competition and/or cartelisation, and policy incentives that could be devised to support trading activities which are genuinely competitive and beneficial to long-term national/regional developmental aspirations, among others.

The changing political economy of land

The structural adjustment years have also been a period of spirited attempts to drastically revise the rules pertaining to the acquisition and ownership of property in general and land in particular. The aim has been to strengthen the hands of private actors/actresses as well as to deepen the role of the market in the property sector. In several countries, it has meant that rules vesting all land and ultimate land rights in the state have been or are being revised. Places where private ownership of land was discouraged as a conscious aspect of state policy have witnessed a quiet but rapid movement towards land privatisation. In places where private ownership of land was already in practice before the adoption of structural adjustment, rules are being revised to simplify the process of acquisition and strengthen the legal titles acquired by individuals and companies. Besides these, some of the dynamics associated with economic crisis and structural adjustment have generated new sources of pressure on land even as the high rate of population growth remains a persistent source of pressure. Industrialists seeking avenues for sourcing agricultural raw materials for themselves, individuals investing in land for speculative purposes or as a strategy for asset enhancement in a hyper-inflationary environment in which currency depreciation and negative real interest rates make bank savings unsafe or unattractive, touristic interests, local and foreign, stimulating a local construction boom through building activities on coastal lands or in wildlife zones, commercial farmers, new and old, seeking to carve new export or local market niches for themselves, including game farming and horticulture, governmental leaders engaging in direct land grabbing for themselves and allocating land (in place of import/export/commodity buying licences, for example) as a reward to party loyalists and clients, and real estate investors taking advantage of the deregulation of rents, are among the groups accounting for the new pressure on land in Africa.

The evidence available suggests that some of the changes in the political economy of land in structurally-adjusting Africa are market-driven while others are the specific outcome of political patronage at a time of shifting political alliances in most countries on the continent. Whether market-related or politically-motivated, there is no doubt that the dynamics of economic crisis and adjustment provide the context that shapes the deepening interest in land in Africa. To the extent that it is possible to distinguish the unfolding process from the earlier land debates that focused mostly on land acquisition and re-distribution in the settler colonies of East and Southern Africa, to that extent we can talk about an emerging "new" Land Question in Africa explicitly linked to the interplay of the responses generated among various groups by several years of economic crisis and structural adjustment. One distinct element of this "new" process seems to be the gradual breakdown of traditional tenurial systems even as market pressures, inter-mixed with changing forms of patronage politics, grow in significance. As "traditional" tenurial systems increasingly give way to multiple sources of land allocation affecting prized agricultural lands, non-agricultural mineral-laden land, and strategically located land deemed to be suitable for real estate and tourism, so too are various struggles over this resource building up within the family, the household, and the community. Litigation over land has become a prominent part of the judicial process in some countries, with members of the same family, household, or community pitted against each other in a struggle over control of the resource. Both real estate and tourism have been growth areas under economic liberalisation for a variety of reasons which need not detain us here. Not surprisingly, there is a trend towards the increasing alienation of coveted peasant and community land either through market or political pressures or both.

In the context of the changes in the political economy of land that appear to be taking place, we shall be interested in examining new structures and combinations of land allocation, the different kinds of land markets that are emerging and the nature of the agents that are behind them, the characteristics of land-buying individuals and companies and the place of land acquisition in their livelihood strategies, the process of dissolution of "traditional" land tenure systems and the restrictions posed on the workings of emerging land markets by surviving "traditional" restrictions, the interplay of market-driven and politically-motivated land allocation mechanisms, changing patterns of land distribution and emerging patterns of ownership and concentration, the changing access of marginal groups such as women and youths to land, the interplay of the market, politics, and competing ethnicities, the linkages between land and increasing incidences of ethnic conflicts in some of the fertile agricultural zones of Africa, new forms of land use, including game farming, tourism, and commercial agriculture, among others, and the implications which they have for ownership and distribution, and strategies for combining flexibility in land acquisition and ownership with the protection of the rights and interests of vulnerable groups and minorities, among others.

Popular forms of social provisioning

Finally, in the area of the social consequences of economic crisis and structural adjustment where a lot of debate has taken place, we attempt to capture elements of the processes of social change that are as yet insufficiently understood. Evidence abounds that the years of economic crisis and structural adjustment have taken a severe toll on the social sector in Africa, including the continent's social infrastructure. In addition to the cuts in social services which many governments effected as part of their pre-adjustment policies, the adjustment years resulted in the further deterioration of the social sector, including health and education, as a direct consequence of the public expenditure curbing component of the market reform programme. The deliberate targeting of the social expenditure of the state as part of the quest for adjustment was reinforced by the sharp decline in the provisioning of public sector social institutions, the collapse of staff morale amidst increasing incidences of "moonlighting", the withdrawal of subsidies, and the imposition of cost recovery measures in the context of diminishing real incomes to make a host of social services which were hitherto provided by formal state and voluntary sector institutions increasingly inaccessible and/or unattractive to certain groups.

Studies have been undertaken from different perspectives aimed at measuring the effects of structural adjustment on the African social sector. Also, as we noted earlier, attempts have been made to capture popular household survival strategies (to the extent that they are strategies) in the face of increasingly inaccessible social services. Furthermore, the role of new non-governmental organisations in the social sector and aspects of the changing roles of old-established social/religious institutions in the provision of social services have been discussed. In a number of countries, it has been shown that the collapse of public sector health and educational services has created room for private small- and medium-scale investors to move in to supply these services although only a small proportion of the population is able to afford the hefty fees that are charged by the private operators. Besides, a significant number of the private institutions are poorly equipped and staffed. Studies have also been published on the extent to which World Bank-supported programmes for the mitigation of the social costs of adjustment have remedied the decline of the social sector. The conclusion of most of the studies is that the chronic underfunding of the programmes has meant that they have made little or no impression on the declining social sector in most countries. Similarly, projects aimed at creating a safety net for vulnerable groups have generally proved inadequate to meet the challenges of growing poverty and widespread social decay. Clearly then, the crisis in the social sector of most African countries continues to deepen and the fear is now being expressed in some quarters that we may already be witnessing the reversal of some aspects of the "modernisation" process in Africa.

Our aim in studying popular forms of social provisioning is to carry existing knowledge on multiple modes of livelihood forward by undertaking parallel studies on public consumption forms and survival strategies vis-a-vis social provisioning. The main question which we seek to address can be summarised as follows: if public health, education, and other services have become inaccessible to many ordinary people, in what non-conventional ways are they seeking to satisfy their needs in these areas? In addressing this question, we will seek to examine the ways in which various groups mobilise household, family, ethnic, "traditional", and community resources in order to meet their social provisioning requirements. We shall attempt to identify the extent to which some old forms of provisioning which appeared, at one point, to be disappearing (from the urban areas at least) under the weight of post-colonial "modernisation" projects are being re-discovered, re-composed, and re-activated. In this regard, the mobilisation of "traditional" health and (religious) educational resources will be selected for particular attention. Furthermore, the changing composition and functions of urban community groups such as hometown/ethnic associations, burial societies, women's guilds, and savings clubs will be closely followed as will the expanding social role of religious institutions in the area of the provision of food, clothing, and faith healing. Attempts will also be made to identify any new forms of socio-political patronage associated with the emergence of popular social provisioning as well as the recomposition of household structures and tasks. The changing social and economic relations between urban and rural household elements of the same family units and the changing role of workplace social organisations will be captured wherever possible as will the role of urban and rural savings/ money-lending institutions and their practices. The issue of whether viable popular forms of social provisioning can be effectively supported from external sources will also be addressed.

Some Methodological and Operational Questions

In undertaking the study of the three broad themes identified for examination under the second phase of the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet's structural adjustment research programme, a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the generation of fresh empirical data through field work to be carried out over a period of not less than twelve months by a network of researchers located in various African countries. Participant observation, detailed case-studies, focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaire surveys are some of the methods by which researchers involved in the project are being encouraged to gather primary data. In all cases, more than one of these primary data collection methods is being employed. It is not primarily our concern to establish rigid causal relations even though this is possible in some instances. Rather, we hope that the studies that are being undertaken will succeed in elucidating the interaction of adjustment-related or -inspired policies with a host of other (non-adjustment) factors that are relevant to an understanding of the way in which the structure of incentives, understood as rewards and penalties, has been altered in particular contexts to produce the changes that are observed.

Central to our research approach is the assumption that no policy package, no matter how well-intentioned or -designed, is ever immune to contestation and resistance by a range of interest groups. As various groups strive to stamp their influence on governmental action, and depending on the overall balance of forces in society, so too are policies altered/diluted to accommodate the various pressures that emerge. Moreover, changing domestic and international circumstances always necessitate changes in the content of policy. Structural adjustment is not immune from this process. The central issue for us then is not so much whether the government of a particular country has been faithful in its implementation of the adjustment package but how what has been implemented has acted with other factors to alter the environment of rewards and penalties within which various groups must reproduce themselves. In addition to the range of factors that interact with adjustment-related policies, an understanding of the history of change, the capacity of groups/ communities/societies to deal with change, and the changing nature of change itself are considerations which the researchers involved in NAI's structural adjustment research programme are being encouraged to investigate as they may be relevant to their particular studies and contexts.

Hopefully, the results obtained will enable us to gain a deeper insight into the unfolding processes of socio-economic and political change associated with economic crisis and structural adjustment in Africa and the structures and actors/actresses who underpin them. The multi-country, multi-disciplinary membership of the research network which we have established (see appendix) should also enable us to gain useful comparative insights into various aspects of the socio-economic changes that have been taking place on the continent. Studies which are being carried out on various aspects of the three themes are located in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These countries represent a good mix of the crisis and adjustment experience of the last two decades in Africa. Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe served as the main case-study countries during the first phase of the NAI adjustment research programme. Three of the studies on Zimbabwe which are presently being undertaken as part of Phase II—structural adjustment and the health sector, industry and labour, and women informal sector operatives—are longitudinal in nature in the sense that the researchers undertaking them have been pursuing the same broad set of questions with the same group of respondents since 1993. In addition to the more general insights which all of the studies are expected to produce, we shall also be very keen to follow changing household, gender, generational, community, and rural-urban relations and the ways in which these feed into wider national and regional processes. Although the studies are explicitly intended to have a direct academic relevance, it is also our hope that when they are completed, we will be able to abstract useful policy recommendations from them for the benefit of those engaged in developmental work in Africa either as policy makers in African bureaucracies or as staff of development/donor agencies and non-governmental organisations involved in different capacities in Africa.

Endnotes

1. The review that is presented here does not necessarily follow any chronological order, the more so as the various issues that have dominated the debate on adjustment in Africa have tended to overlap. Also, only general arguments and trends are sketched out in this essay; for more detailed discussion of specific issues, the citations provided in the text and many others not mentioned will have to be followed up by readers. Given the diverse range of issues which have dominated the adjustment debate and the different disciplinary perspectives that have been brought to bear on them, it is not possible in a review of this nature to cover all of the important areas that might be of potential interest to the reader. In this regard, the rich literature on agriculture, industry, gender, the environment and household relations has only been touched on in passing. To some extent, this was done deliberately as several of the studies which are being supported under Phase II of the NAI structural adjustment research programme deal with these areas in a direct sense. The occasion will, therefore, still present itself for a more detailed critique of some of these aspects of the literature in the context of empirical materials collected through the studies which are presently

being undertaken. Finally, it should be noted that most of the literature referred to here deals mainly with the sub-Saharan African experience.

2. The Cornell studies were commissioned by USAID with the objective of proving that structural adjustment does not hurt the poor. Armed with this mandate, participants in the project proceeded to produce complicated models (Sarris, 1990, for example) for which data is not available in the richness and diversity necessary.
3. Thus it was that from being a programme which was allegedly tailor-made for the poor (were not informal sector operatives, rural folks involved in the production of tradeables, etc. expected to be the natural beneficiaries of its policy measures?), structural adjustment's effects on the same poor were suddenly in need of mitigation. It is a contradiction which is symptomatic of the wider problems built into the entire adjustment model. In origin, the social dimensions package was an imposition on the World Bank by smaller, mainly though not exclusively Nordic, donors concerned about the deepening social crises in the adjusting countries of the Third World. It was, in a sense, a price which these increasingly influential donors exacted for continuing financial support for the adjustment work of the Bank. But for the Bank itself, it mainly serves the political role of making it appear responsive to the concerns of its critics.
4. This section on the Bank's response to growing criticism of the efficacy of conditionality is based on notes taken by the author at a seminar in Stockholm in 1995 at which Ravi Kanbur, the new chief economist at its Africa Department, spoke about the need for "selectivity". The seminar was organised by the Swedish Foreign Ministry and it brought together senior level policy makers and academics from the Nordic countries.
5. It is not uncommon to find the celebration by the Bank and its supporters of growth rates of four per cent after years of crisis and adjustment. Indeed, a four per cent growth rate is nowadays defined as essentially "good" in much of the literature. It is worth noting here, however, that in the 1960s in Africa, such a level of growth was considered poor; rates from six to seven per cent and above were the average norm. During that same period when African economies enjoyed impressive growth rates, Indian economic planners often assumed a constant growth rate for their country of only three per cent—the so-called "Hindu rate of growth"—in making their calculations and projections. In celebrating a four per cent growth rate as "good", and as it begins to settle into our consciousness that that level is the acceptable norm to be expected from over a decade and a half of reform efforts, one hopes that it is not being suggested, even if unconsciously/unintentionally, that Africa is condemned to a "Bantu rate of growth". The point needs always to be underlined that a four per cent average growth rate will simply not do and does not provide any cause for celebration or self-congratulation, at least not at a time when "Mandarin rates of growth" are on offer!

Table 1: *Sub-Saharan Africa: Some Basic Indicators (I)*

Country	Area Thousand Sq. Km	Population (in millions) 1992	Population Growth 1980–92	Human Development Index
Benin	113	5.0	3.1	0.261
Botswana	582	1.4	3.4	0.670
Burkina Faso	274	9.5	2.6	0.203
Burundi	28	5.8	2.8	0.276
Cameroon	475	12.2	2.8	0.447
Cape Verde	4	0.4		0.474
Central African Rep.	632	3.2	2.6	0.249
Chad	1284	6.0	2.4	0.212
Comoros	2	0.5		0.331
Congo	342	2.4	3.1	0.461
Eq. Guinea	28	0.4		0.276
Ethiopia	1222	54.8	3.1	0.249
Gabon	268	1.2	3.4	0.525
Gambia	11	1.0		0.215
Ghana	239	15.8	3.2	0.382
Guinea	246	6.1	2.6	0.191
Guinea-Bissau	36	1.0	1.9	0.224
Ivory Coast	322	12.9	3.8	0.370
Kenya	580	25.7	3.6	0.434
Lesotho	30	1.9	2.7	0.476
Madagascar	587	12.4	2.9	0.396
Malawi	118	9.1	3.2	0.260
Mali	1240	9.0	2.6	0.214
Mauritania	1026	2.1	2.4	0.254
Mauritius	2	1.1	1.1	0.778
Mozambique	802	16.5	2.6	0.252
Namibia	824	1.5	3.0	0.425
Niger	1267	8.2	3.3	0.209
Nigeria	924	101.9	3.0	0.348
Rwanda	26	7.3	2.9	0.274
Senegal	197	7.8	2.9	0.322
Seychelles	0.28	0.069		0.685
Sierra Leone	72	4.4	2.4	0.209
Somalia	638	8.3	3.1	0.217
Sudan	2506	26.5	2.7	0.276
Swaziland	17	0.9		0.513
Tanzania	945	25.9	3.0	0.306
Togo	57	3.9	3.3	0.311
Uganda	236	17.5	2.6	0.272
Zaire	2345	39.8		0.341
Zambia	753	8.3	3.2	0.352
Zimbabwe	391	10.4	3.3	0.474
Africa	24274	543.0	3.0	0.395

Source: Adapted from Lensink, R (1996), pp 26–27.

Table 2 : *Sub-Saharan Africa: Some Basic Indicators (II)*

Country	Inflation 1980–92	Per Capita GNP (Growth: 1980–92)	Per Capita GNP (US Dollars 1992)
Benin	1.7	-0.7	410
Botswana	12.6	6.1	2790
Burkina Faso	3.5	1.0	300
Burundi	4.5	1.3	210
Cameroon	3.5	-1.5	820
Cape Verde	9.3	3.0	850
Central African Rep.	4.6	-1.5	410
Chad	0.9	3.4	220
Comoros	5.6	-1.3	510
Congo	0.5	-0.8	1030
Eq. Guinea			330
Ethiopia	2.8	-1.9	110
Gabon	2.3	-3.7	4450
Gambia	17.8	-0.4	370
Ghana	38.7	-0.1	450
Guinea			510
Guinea-Bissau	59.3	1.6	220
Ivory Coast	1.9	-4.7	670
Kenya	9.3	0.2	310
Lesotho	13.2	-0.5	590
Madagascar	16.4	-2.4	230
Malawi	15.1	-0.1	210
Mali	3.7	-2.7	310
Mauritania	8.3	-0.8	530
Mauritius	8.6	5.6	2700
Mozambique	38.0	-3.6	60
Namibia	12.3	-1.0	1610
Niger	1.7	-4.3	280
Nigeria	19.4	-0.4	320
Rwanda	3.6	-0.6	250
Senegal	5.2	0.1	780
Seychelles	3.3	3.2	5460
Sierra Leone	60.8	-1.4	160
Somalia	49.7		
Sudan	42.8		
Swaziland	11.8	1.6	1090
Tanzania	25.3	0.0	110
Togo	4.2	-1.8	390
Uganda			170
Zaire		-1.8	469
Zambia	48.4		1010
Zimbabwe	14.4	-0.9	570
Africa	15.6	-0.8	530

Source: Adapted from Lensink, R (1996), pp. 26–27.

Table 3: *SAF and ESAF Loans to African Countries (in millions of SDRs, to 31 December, 1994)*

Country	SAF		ESAF	
	Year Introduced	Amount	Year Introduced	Amount
Benin	1989	21.91	1993	51.89
Burkina Faso	1991	22.12	1993	48.62
Burundi	1986	29.89	1991	42.70
Central African Republic	1987	21.28		
Chad	1987	21.42		
Comoros	1991	3.15		
Equatorial Guinea	1988	12.88	1993	12.88
Ethiopia	1992	49.42		
Gambia	1986	10.86	1988	20.52
Ghana	1987	129.86	1988	388.55
Guinea	1987	40.53	1991	57.90
Guinea-Bissau	1987	5.25		
Ivory Coast			1994	333.48
Kenya	1988	99.40	1989	261.40
			1993	45.23
Lesotho	1988	10.57	1991	18.12
Madagascar	1987	46.48	1989	76.90
Malawi			1988	66.96
Mali	1988	35.56	1992	79.24
Mauritania	1986	23.73	1992	33.90
Mozambique	1987	42.70	1990	130.05
Niger	1986	21.40	1988	47.18
Rwanda	1991	30.66		
Sao Tomé e Principé	1989	2.80		
Senegal	1986	54.04	1988	144.67
			1994	130.79
Sierra Leone	1986	40.53		
	1994	27.02		
Somalia	1987	30.94		
Tanzania	1987	74.90	1991	181.90
Togo	1988	26.88	1989	46.08
			1994	65.16
Uganda	1987	69.72	1989	219.12
			1994	120.51
Zaire	1987	203.70		
Zimbabwe			1992	200.60

Source: Adapted from Lensink, R (1996), pp 65–66.

Table 4: *SALs and SECALs Extended to African Countries (Millions of U.S. Dollars, 1980–1993)*

Country	1980-1982	1983-1985	1986-1988	1989-1991	1992-1993	Total
Benin				100		100
Burkina Faso				80	28	108
Burundi			121	33	30	184
Cameroon				150		150
Centr, Afr. Rep.			85	45		130
Chad				98		98
Comoros				8		8
Congo			70			70
Ethiopia					250	250
Gabon			50			50
Gambia			17	23		40
Ghana		203	303	296	193	995
Guinea			107	20		127
Guinea-Bissau		15	15	23		53
Ivory Coast	150	250	250	330	450	1430
Kenya	70	131	172	295	201	869
Madagascar		60	301		3	364
Malawi	45	60	140	70	131	446
Mali			40	149		189
Mauritania		16	62	65	5	148
Mauritius	15	40	25			80
Mozambique			89	90	180	359
Niger			140			140
Nigeria		250	452	620		1322
Rwanda				90		90
Sao Tomé e Principé			197	10		207
Senegal	60		149	125	5	339
Sierra Leone		22			44	66
Somalia			63	70		133
Sudan	65	50				115
Tanzania	50		96	335	223	704
Togo		78	45	69		192
Uganda		70	65	225	228	588
Zaire			229			229
Zambia		110	118	237	131	596
Zimbabwe		71			300	371

Source: Adapted from Lensink, R (1996), pp. 75–76.

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