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From Survival Strategies to Transformation Strategies: Women's Needs & Structural Adjustment

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Insofar as development policymakers today pay any attention to the specificity of gender, they tend to conceptualize women as a resource for development (Moser 1989). In the context of economic crisis and structural adjustment, women are particularly valued for their ability to devise and implement survival strategies for their families, using their unpaid labor to absorb adverse effects of structural adjustment policies (Elson 1989). This chapter presents a critical evaluation of contemporary structural adjustment processes and the "survival" role that women are envisaged to play in these processes. It argues for a gender-aware approach to economic policy and to the household, and it suggests that strategies adequate to women's needs must focus beyond economic restructuring to a restructuring of the social relations constraining women. A way of moving from survival strategies to transformation strategies through the development of a *politics* of consumption is tentatively explored.

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Economic crisis is best understood as a turning point or period of transition. Antonio Gramsci described it as a situation in which the old is dead and the new is not yet born. What is dead is the long boom of the capitalist world economy—the high levels of employment creation and rapid rates of growth of national income and international trade in the capitalist and industrialized world from the early 1950s to the early 1970s. What is not yet born is a new mode of capital accumulation that leads to a return to high and stable growth rates in the world capitalist economy. We are in the middle of a period of stagnation, instability, and restructuring.[1]

Certainly the incidence of the crisis is uneven. Some parts of the capitalist world economy continue to enjoy rapid growth and high levels of employment: Sweden and Austria in Europe, for instance, and Singapore and South Korea in Asia. Other parts of the capitalist world economy have suffered absolute falls in per capita income, particularly in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Yet other countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) have recently been experiencing increased output at the same time as stagnation of employment.

Certainly the current period has seen extensive and significant changes in the organization of production (Kaplinsky 1989): the internationalization of production, the growing mobility of capital, the increasing "casualization" or "informalization" of work in the industrial countries, the use of new technologies of flexible specialization, and new ways of organizing links between different stages of production as well as the link between production and the market (Child Hill 1989; Elson 1989; Fernández-Kelly 1989).

Some people see this restructuring of production as establishing the basis for a new phase of renewed capital accumulation, often labeled the "post-fordist" phase or mode of production (Hall and Jacques 1989). However, a renewal of stable expansion of capitalist accumulation requires not just a restructuring of industrial production; it requires a restructuring of the conditions of international trade and finance. Exchange rates continue to be unstable; stock markets are volatile; international trade is a source of friction between the industrialized countries; in many countries real interest rates are at a historic high. As MacEwan and Tabb point out, "Without stability, the basis for investment is seriously undermined. Sharp fluctuations in exchange rates, trade balances, and financial movements, either directly or through their influence on government policies, are bound to generate periods of rising unemployment, inflation, and slow and unstable economic growth" (MacEwan and Tabb 1989:32). Multinational firms can restructure their own production processes, but they are powerless to restructure the international system of trade and finance.

The build-up of debt, both international debt and debt within countries, is symptomatic of the unresolved nature of the current transition. The resolution of a crisis of capitalist accumulation requires destruction before construction can properly get under way. In particular, it requires destruction of accumulated capital so as to clear the ground for new

investment. Typically in capitalist economies this is not accomplished through a planned decommissioning of capital but through bankruptcies and through mass unemployment, which destroys the previously constructed forms of workers' resistance to exploitation through trade unions. The mass unemployment facilitates an intensification of work on the part of those remaining employed in paid work and a restructuring of the organization of the labor process. This, in turn, helps to restore the profitability of investment in real assets. But investment in real assets is relatively risky, and investors are likely to prefer liquid financial assets. An overhang of financial assets is both a symptom of crisis and a barrier to successful restructuring. The piling up of debt is a way of postponing the crisis when profitability of investment in real assets is declining. The existence of a debt mountain also acts as a barrier to new real accumulation. Typically, in the past, crisis resolution has entailed the destruction of accumulated debt through defaults and financial crisis.

Today, the crisis of the international capitalist economy is a prolonged malaise rather than a sharp turning point precisely because only real capacity utilization and employment are being destroyed while the debt mountain is perpetuated. To be sure, the major banks that lent to Third World countries are making massive provisions for loss against loans to the Third World—and enjoying tax advantages in so doing—and there are plans for debt reduction through securitization (the transforming of debt into financial securities such as bonds). But the loss provisions of the banks do not imply debt forgiveness; securitization simply changes the forms of the liability of Third World countries but does not reduce the pressure upon them to generate more foreign exchange. Policy coordination between central bankers and debt management coordination by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have prevented the financial crisis that seemed imminent in 1982 (when Mexico suspended debt service) and 1987 (when stock markets crashed). The absence of a destructive financial crisis serves to stretch out the transition period rather than provide the basis for a new stable mode of capital accumulation.

A crisis of accumulation does require structural adjustment for its resolution. But what we are seeing today is a one-sided structural adjustment involving the destruction of real economic activity as well as attempts to construct new forms of production but without a corresponding destruction of financial capital and without a reconstruction of international financial systems and international financial flows.

The approach to structural adjustment embodied in IMF and World Bank programs does not get to the heart of the matter. It does not take adjustment far enough. It is based on the belief that soon, next year, maybe, or the year after, the world economy will return to "normal"—

that is, to the conditions of the 1950s and 1960s. It assumes that what is required is a piecemeal, country by country, adjustment of internal economic structures, focusing on the reallocation of real resources. The structural adjustment of the international financial system is not seriously on the agenda. It is true that some governments (for example, Japan, France, UK, Canada) have begun to make proposals for writing off official debt of poor sub-Saharan African countries and there is the Brady Plan for debt reduction, but this involves changing the form of the liabilities of Third World countries rather than wiping them out. What no government of a developed country has yet dared to place on the agenda is a structural adjustment of the private international financial system, which now dwarfs both the central banks and the IMF (Epstein 1989).

Until there is a fundamental restructuring of international debt and finance, the long drawn-out crisis is unlikely to be resolved, and high rates of growth and international trade will not be restored. Of course, some areas of the global economy will enjoy local minibooms (often through piling up of yet more debt—witness the case of the United States) and will be relatively protected from the general deterioration of production and living standards. National policies can modify the effect of deterioration of the international economic environment. But without corresponding international changes, the room for maneuver in many countries is very constrained. Conditions of economic crisis are thus likely to persist for the foreseeable future in many parts of the world, particularly in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

An economic crisis is not just a turning point for capital accumulation. It is also a turning point for a whole range of social institutions and practices. Restructuring opens up new opportunities as well as closing old opportunities. Oppressed and disadvantaged groups find that change creates conditions for new forms of struggle. Trying to resist the tide of change and to preserve precrisis social relations rarely works. A more creative approach that tries to influence the terms of restructuring, to restructure not just production but also social relations, and to create new institutions and organizations of and for oppressed and disadvantaged groups may have more chance of success.

It would be overoptimistic to expect such an approach to fully protect oppressed and disadvantaged groups from the adverse effects of a crisis. But out of the crisis may come some progressive transformation of the conditions of struggle of oppressed and disadvantaged groups and the forging of new links between them. For instance, the international restructuring of production produces new opportunities for building links between workers in different countries and for exploring the possibilities of international solidarity. In short, an economic crisis may produce new political configurations (understanding "politics" in a very

broad sense), new alliances, and new demands, with some potential for changing the terms of the social and economic restructuring necessitated by the crisis in a way that is more favorable to oppressed and disadvantaged groups. Out of the crisis of the 1930s in the United States came the New Deal; in Europe came the welfare state; and in many parts of the Third World came nationalist and liberation movements.

So, although we should painstakingly record and vigorously protest the devastating effects of the prolonged stasis in the capitalist world economy upon the oppressed and disadvantaged, we should also recall the dialectic of crisis and look for new steps being taken in challenging the conditions that perpetuate oppression and disadvantage and consider how these beginnings can be strengthened. The very poorest people, on the barest margins of survival, may be unable to do more than desperately seek to adapt to the adverse conditions through existing strategies; and even in this they may fail, as rising rates of infant mortality and child deaths testify (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987:30). But for those able to survive there may be the possibility of strategies going beyond survival to transformation of existing social relations of oppression and disadvantage.

THE HOUSEHOLD AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT POLICIES

A response to economic crisis in many Third World countries has been the introduction of structural adjustment policies as a condition for obtaining loans from the IMF and World Bank. The policies might be summarized as deflation, devaluation, decontrol, and privatization. The aim is to reduce the balance-of-payments deficit by increasing exports and reducing imports while at the same time restructuring the economy so as to move it to a new growth path. Typically this involves cuts in public expenditure, reductions in public sector employment, higher prices for food and other crops, and reduction in the role of government intervention in the economy. A key objective is to switch resources from the production of goods and services that are not *internationally* tradeable (nontradeable) to those that are *internationally* tradeable (tradeable).

Structural adjustment policies are not explicitly conceptualized in terms of the operations of households. The national budgeting process is certainly a focus of macroeconomic thinking and policymaking; but economists engaged in this know little or nothing about household budgeting processes. The designers of structural adjustment programs are explicitly concerned with the switching of resources, including labor, from the production of nontradeables to the production of tradeables. They rely on economic models in which switching resources from nontradeable to tradeable is a costless operation (Elson 1990). This reliance might be criticized as a patently unwarranted assumption totally at odds with the difficulty of reallocating real resources. But it is possible to rationalize this assumption in terms of an implicit assumption about the capacity of households to absorb real costs of reallocation with no implications for the monetary economy. A macroeconomist could argue that he[2] was justified in ignoring the costs of resource reallocation because these were absorbed by households in ways that had no repercussions for the monetary economy. In other words, an increase in unpaid labor in the household made it possible to treat the switching from one form of paid labor to another as costless. So long as households absorbed the costs of resource reallocation without any implications for the monetary variables (wages, prices, balance of payments, gross national product [GNP], etc.) then resource reallocation could be treated as costless.

Thus a macroeconomist could argue that he has no need to explicitly consider the household unless it can be shown that households are unable to absorb the costs of resource reallocation in ways that have no repercussions for the variables with which he is concerned. An argument that there are repercussions for variables of concern to the macroeconomist forms part of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) case for "adjustment with a human face." This is the argument that the extra burdens on households absorbing the costs of restructuring will have long-term repercussions for the rate of growth of GNP because of a deterioration in the quality of human resources (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987:141–142).

This is not, however, the dominant argument made by Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart for "adjustment with a human face." The emphasis is on an appeal to humanitarian values (which we may suppose to be shared by macroeconomists). The argument is that the costs of adjustment are too great—that poor households are unable to absorb them, leading to absolute declines in the living standards, including irreparable damage to children through malnutrition. It is further argued by these authors that structural adjustment policies could be redesigned so that the costs to poor households are reduced and their capacity for survival during periods of economic crisis is enhanced.

There has been some response by the World Bank to criticisms of the impact of structural adjustment programs on poor households (World Bank 1987; Addison and Demery 1986). The process of structural adjustment has been likened to "crossing the desert"—a short period of hardship preceding arrival in the land of plenty. The favorite World Bank recipe for avoiding excessive costs to poor households appears to be supplementary feeding programs and public works programs that can be added on to the existing format of structural adjustment programs. The possibility that some countries may get lost and wander round in circles

in the desert or that the boundaries of the desert may be expanding is not seriously entertained. However, it is by no means certain that conventional structural adjustment programs will lead to sustained growth. Bienefeld (1988) argues that although there are some economies that are already relatively strong and in which structural adjustment programs may, after a period of hardship, lead to a positive response, there are other, weaker, economies in which structural adjustment programs are instead likely to invoke a negative response of inflation, social conflict, and increased uncertainty. One recent, careful evaluation of World Bank structural adjustment lending for the period 1980–1987 found that, taken as a whole, the sample of countries receiving such lending did not show any significant impact from such loans on gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates; indeed such loans appeared to have adversely affected investment, though they did improve the short-run balance-of-payments position. However, there was considerable variation within the sample, and in some countries there was a positive effect on growth (Harrigan and Mosley 1989).

The World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have published a much more optimistic report, *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s,* but this has been subject to widespread criticism about its selective use of data (Economic Commission for Africa 1989a). World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs are, in fact, "high risk" programs because they increase a country's exposure to the unstable international market. They are not perceived as such by their designers because of the overoptimism that prevails in both the Bank and the Fund about the future course of the international economy, particularly about the terms of trade of Third World countries (ODI 1988). Recovery to "normal" conditions is believed to be just around the corner; and adjustment can proceed on a case-by-case basis, with ad hoc measures to protect the poor. The main measures envisaged by the World Bank for protecting the poor would also increase the dependence of the poor. The Bank would do nothing to tackle the structures of oppression and disadvantage that have put poor households at risk in the first place. Empowering the poor does not figure strongly in World Bank thinking despite some nods in the direction of land reform (Addison and Demery 1986).

But neither is empowering the poor the main focus of the alternative offered by UNICEF. The advocates of "adjustment with a human face" prefer to talk about "protecting the vulnerable." No doubt this is a far more acceptable concept to the majority of governments in both developed and developing countries. There are things to commend in the UNICEF approach, for it does emphasize that structural adjustment has an international dimension and cannot simply be achieved on a country-by-country basis. However, it supposes that more expansionary macroeconomic policies are the answer, together with better sectoral priorities and more international policy coordination. It does not situate structural adjustment within the context of global restructuring of capital accumulation.

The national dimension of adjustment is presented in the UNICEF work almost entirely in terms of improved policies from enlightened governments. As with all approaches emanating from international agencies, it is unable to explicitly confront the question of what happens if governments are not enlightened. Households are viewed in this approach as objects of policy more than potential actors in political processes through which social relations of oppression and disadvantage may be restructured. The UNICEF approach is concerned with protection, survival, and adjustment, but not with transformation. Public expenditure is to be restructured and better targeted but the social relations of the state are not discussed. The state is not problematized by "adjustment with a human face." In contrast, the state is problematized by the World Bank/IMF programs but in the wrong way, as merely a problem of the overextension of the state to be tackled by rolling back the state rather than transforming it.

"Adjustment with a human face" is a desirable goal but the strategy advocated to achieve it never really confronts the question of the relation between adjustment and the social relations of capitalism; it never addresses the question of profit. If the objective is simply the restoration of high rates of capital accumulation and growth with basically unchanged social relations of production and reproduction, then there is inevitably a destructive aspect to the restructuring necessary to secure a higher profitability of real investment. To the extent that the destruction of financial assets is blocked, there is likely to be a greater destructive impact on real assets and, hence, on the lives of the poor. If the objective is the restoration of higher growth rates and the creation of a more humane society, then this requires some degree of transformation of social relations of production and reproduction. "Adjustment with a human face" thus has to be linked with strategies for struggle as well as for survival. Indeed, struggle (demands, campaigns, institution building, mobilization) is the way from survival strategies to transformation strategies.

MALE BIAS AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT POLICIES

Structural adjustment policies, whether put forward by the World Bank and IMF or by UNICEF, are presented in a language that appears to

be gender neutral, but that masks an underlying male bias (Elson 1990). World Bank/IMF analysis of structural adjustment is couched in macroeconomic concepts such as GNP, balance of payments, tradeables and nontradeables, efficiency and productivity—all of which appear to have no gender implications. Women are not "visible" in this analysis; but then, neither are men. It is a depersonalized analysis dealing only with abstract suppliers and consumers of resources. However, this abstract analysis has a hidden agenda that covers the process of the reproduction and maintenance of human resources. This process is not explicitly included in macroeconomic thinking. Indeed, the macromodels appear to treat human resources as a nonproduced means of production like land. Of course, macroeconomists know that labor supplies are maintained and reproduced through shopping, cooking, housework, child care, and care for the sick and elderly; but they could argue that they are justified in treating labor as if it were like land and not considering the work required for its maintenance and reproduction because that work is unpaid, and hence, in their view, has no repercussions for the macroeconomic variables with which adjustment programs are concerned.

This lack of explicit consideration of unpaid labor is an example of male bias because it is women who carry most of the burden of the nonremunerated reproduction and maintenance of human resources. It is the work that is, above all else, considered as "women's work" that is excluded from consideration. Indeed, it may be argued that it is precisely because it is women's work that it is excluded; there are other forms of unpaid labor that may be undertaken by men, and, on the whole, much more effort is put into enumerating men's unpaid work and including it in GNP.

One important implication of the form of male bias that excludes the unpaid work that women do in the home is a bias in the definition of terms like "productivity" and "efficiency" that are frequently used in connection with structural adjustment. What is regarded by economists as an increase in productivity or efficiency may instead be a shifting of costs from the paid economy to the unpaid economy. Take an example from health care. Efforts to make hospitals more efficient may lead to earlier discharge of patients who still need time for convalescence. This transfers the burden of looking after them from paid hospital staff to unpaid female relatives in the home.

The male bias in the UNICEF approach is more subtle. The proponents of "adjustment with a human face" do pay considerable attention to the maintenance and reproduction of human resources. Women are visible in this approach, appearing, along with children, as a "vulnerable" group. But the social relations through which human resources are maintained and reproduced are not discussed. The discussion of adjustment at the household level (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987: Ch. 4), though an improvement over anything published so far by the World Bank or IMF, still treats the household as a unit. Here the male bias lies in not disaggregating the household to examine the different positions of women and men in the household, thus ignoring the implications of the household as a site for the subordination of women. There is now a wealth of evidence from feminist anthropological, sociological, historical, and economic studies that reveals the household as a site of tension and conflict as well as of cooperation—a site of inequality as well as mutuality (Dwyer and Bruce 1988). Here I will not review all the evidence but simply illustrate the point with an example of industrial home workers in Mexico City (Benería and Roldan 1987:122).

> The description of distribution patterns [of income within the household] makes it clear that none of the assumptions regarding the monolithic household/family are valid in our sample strictu sensu. Husbands and wives differ in the definition of the basic necessities of the family complex, their consumption priorities, the way in which income should be distributed, and the proportion to be allocated for the common fund, if there is one. We do not find, therefore, the household to be a collective entity adopting decisions on allocative patterns according to a single corporative interest; instead we find main control points, all along the allocative circuits, and it is through these mechanisms that the majority of husbands impose the basic features of the household's survival.

However, as the study also makes clear, though the women are not in control of household resources, they have the obligation and duty to manage household resources so as to feed, clothe, house, and educate the rest of the household. This responsibility for making ends meet without control over resources is a source of constant problems and anxiety for poor women. It is they who have to devise household survival strategies, but it is their husbands who control access to major resources.

These relations of male domination and female subordination that characterize the household as a social institution have enormous implications for conceptualizing household responses to structural adjustment. For instance, it cannot be assumed that households will react to structural adjustment by reducing expenditures on luxuries so as to maintain expenditures on necessities. There is evidence to show that in both developed and developing countries, through a wide spectrum of class positions and even in very poor households, men tend to maintain a personal allowance largely spent on luxuries such as alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, and socializing in beer halls and cafés (Dwyer and Bruce 1988; Hart 1989). The wife acting alone has no power to reduce house-

hold consumption of these luxuries so as to be able to afford higher food prices.

Surprising though it may seem, neglect of gender is also common in documents produced by official agencies with a specific concern for women. An example is a recent report: "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Vulnerable Groups in African Societies: Women" (African Training and Research Centre for Women 1988). This report treats women as an isolatable group and provides no analysis of the relations between women and men in the household. Lots of familiar policy recommendations are made that would indeed benefit women, were they to be introduced. Most of them require more resources to be directed to women—but there is no discussion of where these resources are to come from nor of the barriers that have prevented these policies, long advocated, from being introduced in the past. There is reluctance to face the fact that more resources for women, especially in a context of economic stagnation or decline, means fewer privileges for men. An analysis that does not say anything about male privilege and male power over women and about strategies for reducing these is ultimately biased toward men.

WOMEN'S NEEDS

An approach adequate to women's needs thus requires not simply to make women visible and call for resources to be directed to women. It requires an analysis of how male privilege and power over women can be reduced. This does not mean that calls for gender equality and the liberation of women can be expected to be effective in mobilizing demands for the majority of women around the world. Women will quite rationally focus on their immediate and pressing practical needs, especially needs for resources to ensure household survival and a better future for their children. But the fulfillment of these practical gender needs is not totally disconnected from strategic gender needs (Moser 1989). A fully satisfactory meeting of women's practical gender needs implies also some improvement in meeting women's strategic gender needs; that is, their needs for a diminution of their subordination to men, for "an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organization of society than that which exists at present, in terms of both the structure and nature of relationships between men and women" (Moser 1989:1803). The needs of women for resources of their own to discharge their duties as household managers cannot be adequately met without some reduction of women's dependence on men, some move toward greater gender equality in the control of resources.

Thus, a gender-aware approach does not neglect women's practical gender needs and focus only on women's strategic gender needs. Rather it begins from the immediate needs that women themselves express and analyzes the interconnection between those needs and strategic gender needs. The needs of poor women for more resources of their own cannot be adequately campaigned for in terms of abstract demands for equality. But there is a connection between greater resource availability for poor women and greater equality between women and men and between greater resource availability for poor women and the empowerment of women.

GENDER, THE MARKET, AND THE STATE

The market and the state are social institutions of particular relevance to the transformation of gender relations. They have been seen as institutions with the capacity to enable women to be more independent with more control over resources.

Liberals, in particular, have emphasized the beneficial effect of participation in the market for women. The market appears to treat women as individuals in their own right. If women can sell their labor or their products and get a decent cash income of their own, this lessens their economic dependence upon men, increases their economic value, and may increase their bargaining power within the household. Access to a decent income of their own tends to be highly valued by women, not only for what it buys but also for the greater dignity it brings. (Participation in the market does not, however, guarantee a decent income—a point taken up in the next section.)

However, so long as women carry the double burden of unpaid work in the reproduction and maintenance of human resources as well as paid work producing goods and services, then women are unable to compete with men in the market on equal terms. Legislation for equal pay and opportunities and diminution of "traditional" barriers to women working outside the home cannot by themselves free women from domestic burdens and expectations. Access to markets has benefits for women, but those benefits are always limited, even if markets are entirely free from gender discrimination. Benefits are limited because the reproduction and maintenance of human resources is structured by unequal gender relations and because the reproduction and maintenance of human resources cannot be directly and immediately responsive to market signals, so long as human beings are regarded as having an intrinsic and not merely instrumental value.

Women with high incomes can reduce their disadvantage in the market relative to men by buying substitutes for their own unpaid work—employing cleaners, maids, nannies, and cooks. But even this does not obliterate their disadvantage, as they still have responsibility for house-

hold management. All other women who are not in the highest income groups do not have this option and must undertake a "double day" of work.

Of course, women would be able to gain more from markets if the sexual division of labor in the household were to change, with men doing more domestic tasks. But it would be idealistic to rely on this. Exhortations to men to share more of this load do not work, as the experience of several socialist countries shows. The problem is precisely that unpaid domestic tasks are private rather than social, and because they are both unpaid and private, there is no social system of incentives, of rewards and penalties, to encourage a change. In the household, it is an individual woman confronting an individual man, and in the politics of housework, the cards are stacked in favor of the man (Mainardi 1970).

If most women are to gain from access to markets, they also need access to public sector services, such as water supplies, electricity, sanitation facilities, public transport, health care and education, which will lighten the burden of their unpaid work and enable them to acquire the skills they need to enter the market. For all but well-off women, there is a complementarity between state provision of services required for human resource development and the ability to make gains from participation in the market. For most women, the choice is not between dependence on the state and independence, but between dependence on the state and dependence on a man.

However, the state does not always operate in the interests of women. The state frequently plays a major role in perpetuating social, economic, and ideological processes that subordinate women (Agarwal 1988). Women are frequently treated as dependents of men in legal and administrative procedures rather than as persons in their own right. The state frequently upholds patriarchal family forms in which women do not have the same access to resources as men. Examples abound of public sector projects and programs that ignore the needs of women and direct resources toward men.

But the deficiencies of the state do not mean that women can rely on the market. Rather than more of the market and less of the state, which is a major feature of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programs, women have an interest in restructuring and transforming both the public sector and the private sector to make them both more responsive to women's needs and contributions as both producers and reproducers.

It is necessary to disaggregate the public sector and the private sector. In the public sector, we need to distinguish different categories of expenditure and agency: social services; transport and energy; police, legal system, and armed forces; and state-owned factories, farms, and marketing and distribution facilities—often called parastatals. Within

each category we need to examine exactly what is being supplied (primary health care or open-heart surgery, for example) and to identify who is benefiting from these activities. We need to examine the relation between producers and users of public sector goods and services. How responsive are producers to the needs of users? What mechanisms are there for users to influence the allocation of resources in the public sector? The structural adjustment required in the public sector is not so much a reduction in expenditure and costs, but a change in its priorities and in its relation to users of services, so that users have a voice in deciding priorities and forms of service.

The private sector needs disaggregating into categories: the formal sector and the informal one; foreign-owned and locally owned enterprises; large and small enterprises; those employing wage labor and those employing family labor; joint-stock companies and cooperatives; farmers, traders, manufacturers; activities directed by women and activities directed by men. If greater reliance is to be placed on private enterprise, we need to ask whose enterprise: the enterprise of the woman farming or trading on her own account or the enterprise of agribusiness and merchants with monopoly power? The enterprise of a women's cooperative or the enterprise of a multinational corporation? The mobilization of women's enterprise in activities that provide a decent income and a basis for sustained economic growth requires support from state agencies, particularly in the provision of credit and training and in services that meet children's needs and free women's time from domestic duties.

This, in turn, requires a diminution in male privilege: Resources will have to be redistributed from men to women in either relative terms (when there is growth) or absolute terms (when there is stagnation or economic decline). Restructuring to meet women's needs is thus a political issue, and some thought has to be given to the politics of this redistribution. Such redistribution in favor of a socially subordinated group is likely to be facilitated (though it cannot, of course, be guaranteed) by the emergence of democratic politics and the replacement of military dictatorships and authoritarian governments by democratically elected governments. A campaign for democratic politics is thus an important component of a strategy of restructuring the state to meet women's needs and has the advantage of being a campaign in which strategic alliances may be made and some men persuaded of the desirability of a redistribution of resources to women. There is growing recognition among activists and intellectuals in the Third World that a campaign for democratic politics is at the heart of a transformatory approach to structural adjustment (Thomas 1989; ECA 1989b). More thought needs to be given to the particular forms that political democracy

can take and the way that it is integrated with grass-roots struggle so as to ensure that democracy is not defined in male terms.

GENDER RELATIONS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Gender relations, like all other social relations, are not static. They are subject to change, particularly at moments of crisis. The current crisis is no exception: For instance, there is evidence in many parts of the Third World of a widespread rise in female participation in paid labor (Standing 1989). This is interpreted by some to be evidence of an increase in women's status (Joekes 1987). However, such rising participation rates may represent distress sales—women being forced as a last resort to work long hours for a pittance because they are desperate for cash (Elson 1988). When women's pay is very low, it has only limited impact on their bargaining position in the household (Benería and Roldán 1987). Moreover, it is essential to distinguish forms of participation in paid labor: The position of women workers in electronics factories in Singapore is quite different from that of women doing industrial homework in Mexico City. The extent to which rising rates of female participation in paid labor decompose[3] existing forms of women's subordination depends primarily on the level of remuneration that women receive and the opportunities that the organization of paid work provides for collective action of various kinds. In the case of most forms of female participation in the urban informal sector both factors seem very likely to be unfavorable. That part of the informal sector that has some autonomous capacity to grow and is not simply dependent on the formal sector tends to consist of male rather than female activities (Scott MacEwan 1990).

Collective organization may in some cases be able to overcome some of the unfavorable characteristics of informal sector employment, the outstanding example being the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India (Bhatt 1989). Collective organization is the vital ingredient that may move female participation in paid labor from a survival strategy to a transformation strategy. Rosa (1989) provides an interesting discussion of this in the context of the Sri Lankan Free Trade Zone.

Collective organization in the community for self-help is another survival strategy, much commended as an ingredient in "adjustment with a human face" (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987:96, 98–98, 103). Most of these self-help schemes seem to be women helping one another to meet their practical gender needs. They formalize the informal female support networks that women everywhere construct, but they perpetuate the idea that unpaid labor for the benefit of others is "women's work" and they construct women's role in community organizing as an extension of their domestic role (Moser 1989). Men's role in collective organization in the community is typically different: Moser reports a consistent trend in the Third World community organizations she surveyed for local political organizations to be run by men, with mainly male members, while women organized collective consumption groups. Thus, for instance, in Lima, Peru, the Junta Communal is most frequently led and controlled by men while women run community kitchens (Moser 1987). These community kitchens are celebrated by UNICEF as an innovative survival strategy, but they enable not just survival but the perpetuation of existing gender relations.

A more community-based approach to the delivery of social services is also recommended by UNICEF (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987). This may sound fine, but what it means in practice is more mobilization of the unpaid labor of women as volunteers in the provision of health care and social infrastructure. The UNICEF urban basic-services program in India actually pays the men involved in the program, as officials, but requires unpaid work of women for its implementation (Moser 1989). Such schemes, while appearing to reduce the cost of services, simply add to the burdens of women.

Some household survival strategies clearly lead to a deterioration in the position of women: One is the disintegration of households with men leaving (perhaps to seek work elsewhere). The growth of female-headed households is no sign of emancipation from male power; in a society in which women as a gender are subordinate the absence of a husband leaves most women worse off. The core of gender subordination lies in the fact that most women are unable to mobilize adequate resources (both material and in terms of social identity) except through dependence on a man. Male migration reduces the expenses of the household—but all too frequently reduces household resources by an even greater extent. The number of women-headed households relying on insufficient and unstable remittances is reported to have grown (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987). Migration, in a growing number of cases, appears to be a polite word for desertion. It is a male survival strategy rather than a female survival strategy.

FROM SURVIVAL STRATEGIES TO TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES: THE POLITICS OF CONSUMPTION

As Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart (1987) note, the existence of survival strategies may be used as an excuse for policy inaction. Our aim needs to be enabling women to move from survival strategies to transformation strategies—strategies that help to transform gender relations

by meeting both women's practical needs and their strategic gender needs.

The final section of this chapter tentatively explores some possibilities for transforming consumption relations within the household and for transforming the organization of the public sector so as to put more resources at women's disposal and enhance women's dignity, autonomy, and bargaining power. The key ingredient is collective action in a politics of consumption directed toward the empowerment of women (Moser 1989).

The community self-help groups that women construct as survival strategies might provide a springboard to transformation if they were redirected toward women's strategic gender needs as well as toward their practical gender needs. They might do this by combining the organization of collective consumption with discussion that raises questions about the undervaluing of the contribution of women's unpaid labor and the highly unequal distribution of resources within the family. Why should men have the right to spend on personal desires for drink, tobacco, and entertainment, while women struggle to make do? Women all around the world tend to complain in private to their women friends and neighbors about the extent of men's personal expenditure. A vivid account of this is given by Hoodfar (1988) for a lower-income Cairo neighborhood. "Whenever women congregated, whether in the street or in someone's home, it was usual to hear complaints about their financial problems with their husbands." These husbands were typically better dressed than their wives, in jeans or western-style shirts, regularly went out to cafes and films, and spent little time in the home; and if they did buy consumer durables, they preferred televisions and cassette recorders to washing machines and cookers. Purely private discussion of such consumption patterns tends, however, to end in resignation. As Hoodfar reports: "However, once the talks—and at times tears—were over, they said, 'Alhadoullelah (praise be to God), at least I have my children,' or 'he is not as bad as (someone with a worse reputation),' and they tried to count the positive things they possessed, such as children or health" (Hoodfar 1988:126). Transformation of the situation requires the development of a politics of gendered consumption.

One kind of consumption politics that has had an intimate connection with women's movements in many countries is the politics of alcohol consumption. Men's alcohol consumption in most countries seems to be much greater than that of women. Such consumption not only diverts income away from the needs of the household as a unit; it is also strongly associated with domestic violence against women and children. Women have frequently been prominent in campaigns for temperance and prohibition.

The absence of beer halls in resettlement areas in Zimbabwe is suggested as one significant reason for an improvement of women's position in Resettlement Areas as compared to Communal Areas (areas created as labor reserves by the colonial state) (Pankhurst and Jacobs 1988). In the Resettlement Areas men tended to redirect more of their resources into the household than they do in the Communal Areas, and part of the explanation seemed to be lack of opportunity to consume alcohol, together with social monitoring by the Resettlement Officer.

Prohibition is, of course, notoriously difficult to enforce because of the large profits to be made by breaking the law, which provides ample resources for bribing officials. Poor women in India, which officially has prohibition, have been notably active in mass mobilizations against male use of alcohol. An article in *Manushi,* an Indian feminist magazine, reported:

> On 20 November 1971, more than 10,000 women of India's most poverty stricken district, Tehri Rarhwal (annual per capita income Rs 129), staged a massive demonstration against drunkenness. Fifty-six women were arrested and jailed for picketing outside a liquor shop. The agitation continued until drunkenness was well under control in the area.(Kishwar and Vanita 1984:129)

Women in one village in Tehri Rarhwal surrounded the house of the liquor distiller, caught hold of him, and tied him to a buffalo pole. They then walked ten miles to call the police to arrest him and traveled fifty miles to give evidence against him when the court case came up.

In another campaign, in 1972 in Maharashtra state, groups of rural women from the tribal communities went around all the liquor dens in an area of 150 villages in Dhulia district and broke all the liquor pots in a protest against husbands' drinking and wife beating. Wife beating and alcoholism were apparently considerably reduced, though they did not completely disappear (Kishwar and Vanita 1984). As one woman activist put it: "Persuasion will never stop liquor drinking. Only the organized action of women can stop it."

In the early 1980s landless women in Bodhgaya carried on a campaign against drunkenness and wife beating. An activist woman reported:

> When discussions were held about the drinking problem, women said that the worst consequence was wife-beating. . . . Women had other reasons for considering men's drinking oppressive. When the men spent their earnings on liquor, the whole financial responsibility for running the household fell on the women. The men would often beat up the women to demand money for drink. (Kishwar and Vanita 1984:159)

In this campaign the strategy was to hold a village meeting to discuss why men should stop drinking and why liquor brewing should cease. Generally, direct action was only taken once a consensus was reached that liquor brewing should be stopped, when liquor pots would be broken or confiscated. As a result, in some villages liquor brewing nearly stopped, but in others it started up again because of the lucrative nature of the trade, and a fresh campaign had to be mounted. These public campaigns not only served women's practical gender needs, they also served women's strategic gender needs through the experience they provided of political mobilization and organizing, enhancing women's self-respect and capacity for autonomy.

A less dramatic form of campaign might be for increases in taxation on alcohol, cigarettes, and places of public entertainment, the proceeds to be used to improve public sector services of particular importance to women and children. As Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart note, "increases in taxes on beer and cigarettes would also allow many countries in Africa to finance a good part of the local cost of primary health care" (1987:168). In some parts of Australia, state governments have indeed imposed an additional levy on cigarettes, which is used for health and other socially beneficial programs, some specifically targeted at women (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989:100). Hart (1989) reports that in the UK in the 1940s taxes on alcohol and tobacco, consumed mainly by men, were used to finance food subsidies and public services, redistributing income from husbands to wives. There are, however, several problems in relying on the fiscal system for such distribution. For instance, there is no guarantee that extra taxes on alcohol and cigarettes will be used to finance public expenditures beneficial to women. Moreover, men may simply reduce the amount of money they transfer to their wives so as to be able to maintain their preexisting level of alcohol and tobacco consumption. There will only be a net redistribution to women if reductions in intrahousehold transfers from men to women are more than matched by increases in transfers via the public sector to women. An additional consideration is that taxes on alcohol and tobacco tend to be regressive in many countries, bearing more heavily on poor men than rich men. If class as well as gender is taken into account then increases in income and property taxes might be argued to be better ways of financing expenditure of benefit to poor women. Finally, the use of the fiscal system tends to bureaucratize the issue, making it harder to construct a politics of consumption directed to women's strategic as well as practical gender needs.

The politics of consumption is also relevant to transforming the provision of public sector services. Some of the strategies explored in the UK in defense of the public sector from the late 1970s onward might be applicable. In the late 1970s women were in the forefront of local struggles

about state provision of housing, schools, nurseries, transport, social security, and hospitals. Such campaigns included both women users of the services and women employed by the state to provide such services, with perhaps the most active campaigns directed against the closure of hospitals (Fryer 1979). In the late 1980s the socialist Greater London Council pioneered experiments in popular planning aimed at giving users a say in the provision of services provided by the council. It recommended the setting up of user committees, including representations from all relevant user groups and from those providing the service; such committees, it was suggested, should canvass opinion of a broad range of consumers through techniques like sample surveys and questionnaires in libraries and community centers. Resources were provided through a "popular planning" unit to facilitate the development of a politics of consumption of public sector services (Mackintosh and Wainwright 1987).

In the Third World, it might also be fruitful to consider the possibility of jointly organized action by women consumers of public sector services and women producers of public sector services. Structural adjustment under the auspices of IMF/World Bank programs entails a reduction in public sector employment and generally a worsening of pay and conditions for public sector employees. Greater "efficiency" of the public sector is obtained by devalorization of the labor of some employees and intensification of the labor of others. The public sector has hitherto provided one of the major sources of professional employment for women, albeit largely in the teaching and caring professions, which have been considered especially suitable for women. No comprehensive study is yet available of the impact of structural adjustment on women working in the public sector, but anecdotal evidence speaks of attempts to make women rather than men redundant because "women do not need jobs as much as men" and of women professionals (teachers, health workers, administrators) moonlighting in the informal sector because their frozen salaries no longer cover increased food costs.

A defense of the public sector against those who believe in the "magic of the market" is important for women both as users and providers of public sector services. But the public sector cannot be effectively defended in its present form: It is too vulnerable to many of the criticisms made by advocates of the market and privatization, largely because it has operated to serve the needs of public sector employees more than to serve the needs of the public. An effective defense of the public sector requires public sector employees to become more responsive to the needs of users. It is not enough to call for restructuring of public expenditure so as to direct it more effectively to those most in need. This

is unlikely to get very far unless there is also a change in the way the public sector is organized and relates to consumers.

THE CONTEXT FOR SURVIVAL AND TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

In conclusion, I should like to stress that the degree to which survival and transformation strategies can be successful depends heavily on how the overall political process functions within each country and on what happens to the international financial system. The room for maneuver open to women in need is highly constrained. Focusing on strategies at the level of the household and community is important but not at the expense of ignoring national strategies for democratizing the state and international strategies for restructuring the international financial system. The write-off of the debt of developing countries, in conjunction with the thorough-going democratization of the state in developing countries, is likely to do more to enhance the survival of poor people than any number of self-help schemes, schemes to provide training and credit for informal sector activities or supplementary feeding programs.

NOTES

I thank the participants in the Workshop on Economic Crises, Household Survival Strategies and Women's Work, Cornell University, September 1988, for their comments on the first draft of this chapter.

1. For an extensive development of this point see MacEwan and Tabb 1989.
2. I use "he" because most macroeconomists are, in fact, men. It would be an interesting exercise in the sociology of knowledge to compare the gender composition of the economists working on structural adjustment with that of anthropologists and sociologists researching the household.
3. The idea of decomposition of forms of subordination is developed at greater length in Elson and Pearson 1981.

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Disarmament, Peace and Solidarity in the Changing World Order: A Woman's Vision

Peggy Antrobus

Peggy Antrobus presents the view that women offer a special vision for development, based on their more "textured" lives caring for families in their productive and reproductive role. She suggests that a link between gender relations and war should be made in order to divert the world a way from destructiveness to responsibility and building a better world for peace.

Someone observed that men appear to have power and no responsibility while women have responsibility and no power. This exaggerated generalization of masculinity and femininity serves nevertheless to draw attention to the separation of private and public domains: the former governed by women who are given the primary responsibility for taking care of people, leaving men free to operate in the public domain, without any concern for people's well-being (e.g. IMF/ WORLD Bank-defined policies of structural adjustment which cut social services while leaving unchallenged mounting defense budgets — according to figures quoted in UNDP's 1990 Human Development report military expenditure is 104 percent of expenditures on health and education in all developing countries).

This sexual division of labour, with its rigid sex role stereotyping and separation of the private from the public, the personal from the political, the household from the economy is the basis for gender relations at all levels of human society — from the domestic to the international where it is reflected in armed conflict, as at the domestic level it is reflected in domestic violence.

This is not to say that violence or aggression is a characteristic only of the male. However, armed conflict or war is an outcome of male gender privilege which gives men the option of resolving conflict with this simplified if lethal solution.

Men make wars. The presence of women in the military, and as heads of state of war-making nations does not negate the association of the drive for power, control and domination with male violence and war — the logical extension of a male culture which emphasizes aggression, "toughness", the suppression of feelings of compassion and gentleness, and the ready option of the use of force to threaten or exact compliance.

Women do something different. Our reality is more complex: we have to balance the interests and needs of a number of individuals and groups. In this process women evolve a morality which is less simplified, more textured.

This link between our gender relations and wars should be made if we are to make any progress toward disarmament, peace and solidarity. The male preoccupation with armaments — their "toys" — and the link between this and the arms industry can only be challenged by a global movement grounded in feminism's rejection of the dichotomies which separate the power to make war from the responsibility for taking care of people. Such a movement is emerging. Strands can be traced in the Peace Movement, the Green Movement, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Women's Movement. One of the most recent of these is the network of Third World women promoting Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). This network of researchers and activists explores the linkages between the dominant world economic system and its crises in the areas of debt, food insecurity, energy and human rights abuse - in short, the degradation of human and natural environments. DAWN calls for "a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country and from the relationships among countries...where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated...and where the massive resources now used in the means of destruction will be diverted to areas where they will help to relieve oppression both inside and outside the home." (Sen & Grown, 1987 p.80)

This vision is clearly different from the current references to the changing world order: "new world order" embedded in a market-place driven by competitiveness, greed and the maximization of profits, and based on the use of force by governments willing to use their massive war machines to control the wealth or the natural resource base.

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