

ABSTRACT**Structural Adjustment Programmes:****Contemporary Manifestations of Peripheral Incorporation****Melissa Abigail Ifill**

Structural adjustment programmes have contained some of the most controversial features of the development praxis since World War 2. Despite the implementation of SAPs, the social, economic and political crises experienced by developing countries continue to worsen. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of SAPs remains constant despite their apparent inability to resolve these dilemmas.

This thesis employed the methodological framework of the world-systems perspective because it views events from a long historical perspective and determines that these prescriptions have had the effects of transforming the political and economic sphere in indebted societies so that they conform with, and reinforce the cultural norms and direction of the world economy. As a result, the economies of these states are now characterised by liberal, export oriented policies while their political systems are characterised by political democracy, which together reinforce and validate the principles of the free market. This greater incorporation of these developing societies into the world economy, instead of closing the development gap that exists between centre and peripheral countries, further perpetuates the peripheralisation of the latter and the hegemonic status of the former.

This thesis further determined that incorporation of developing states economically and politically into the world economy and their subsequent exploitation by hegemonic forces, are possible not only as a result of coercive tactics, but also because the centre has been able to secure the consent and co-operation of these states. This is achieved through the construction of a discourse (which is internalised by developing states) founded on a positivist, empiricist epistemology that presents the centre as leaders in the development project and developing states as deviants who require corrective and disciplinary measures in order to close the civilisational gap.