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Most of our literature, insofar as it touches on the instruments used for resource transfer, deals with projects.

It is regrettable that more work has not been done to illuminate the social dimensions of the new generation of instruments used for resource transfer. Twenty years ago, the project was exactly what was needed, a highly technical solution to development problems, competently handled and highly visible. Those who worked on projects could select nice neatly defined work areas and insulate their operations from a many of the vagaries of normal life.

Twenty years later on new resource transfer instruments are now finding favour. Projects alone can't do the job. Programme lending by bilateral donors, structural adjustment lending (S.A.L.), by the World Bank and the emergency fund facilities (EFF) of the International Monetary Fund, have come to the fore. These instruments transfer very large sums of money.

Large resource transfers are often based on a judgement of a country's capacity to change its policies, eliminate "bad" habits, and so on. The behaviour of consumers, workers, politicians and so on must be assessed. Assessments of a heavily indebted country's capacity to change, suggest the need to acquire broad deep knowledge of the borrowing country.

Bankers can tell when a country is pretty much alive, or close to death, but do not seem to be able to handle the stages in between. Due to the magnitude of the resources involved in these transfers, and the reform assumptions made by lenders, these new instruments must be regarded as experiments in social change. They very often involve nothing less than recognition of a need for the prediction, and production of widespread social change. So far there is little to indicate that within the aid donor community all the necessary tools exist to successfully undertake this kind of work.

It may be time to take another look at the now unfashionable social change literature of the 1950's. What is needed is an intellectual contribution for a problem that is increasing in importance. We need more socially acceptable and sensitive ways of making massive resource transfers. It is not just a question of the numbers but of the process whereby the numbers are produced, explained, negotiated, monitored and so on. In this there is a disciplinary part to be played.

From the point of view of developing countries the choice of instruments is still not good. Projects are often too narrow and special to be replicated; massive transfers are too woolly and ethnocentric to achieve behaviour change.

And there are interesting questions for research: Why is it that some poor countries only have project instruments offered them when projects work demands scarce skills which those poor countries often do not have? Why do other countries have access to massive amounts of finance without having to master the discipline of projects work?