The Effects of Structural Adjustment Liberalization on Cultural Gender Inequality as Applied to a Case study of Ghana

Angela Benishek
Carroll College, Helena, MT

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.carroll.edu/politicalsci_theses

Part of the Growth and Development Commons, International Economics Commons, International Relations Commons, Other Political Science Commons, and the Political Economy Commons

Recommended Citation
Benishek, Angela, "The Effects of Structural Adjustment Liberalization on Cultural Gender Inequality as Applied to a Case study of Ghana" (2002). Political Science and International Relations Undergraduate Theses. 39.
https://scholars.carroll.edu/politicalsci_theses/39
The Effects of Structural Adjustment Liberalization on Cultural Gender Inequality as Applied to a Case study of Ghana

This thesis is presented to the Department of Political Science in candidacy for graduation with honors

Angela M. Benishek
April 2002
This thesis has been approved for graduation with Honors in the department of Political Science.

Director: Dr. Erik Pratt.

First Reader: Professor Bethalee Wilson

Second Reader: Professor Phil Wittman

Angela Marie Benishek
Formerly we endured the war for a good long time with our usual restraint, no matter what you men did. You wouldn’t let us say ‘boo’, although nothing you did suited us. But we watched well, and though we stayed at home we’d often hear of some terribly stupid measure you’d proposed. Then, though grieving at heart, we’d smile sweetly and say, “What was passed in the Assembly today about writing on the treaty-stone?” “What’s that to you?” my husband would say. “Hold your tongue!”

And I held my tongue. —Aristophanes-

This passage from the Greek play Lysistrata, written in 487 B.C., depicts the frustration felt by the women of Athens over their powerlessness to affect the policies that directly affected them. Although this depiction of women’s role in society is dated, many would argue that it still rings eerily true today, especially in the developing world. The poverty and deprivation existing today in the developing world makes it difficult for women to prosper economically.

Structural Adjustment Programs are policies created by the International Monetary Fund to help countries repay their foreign debt by improving the overall prosperity of the country, and in so doing it is assumed the economic prosperity of women will increase as well. The theory being that as the wealth of the country increases it will automatically be translated into greater wealth for its citizens, including women. However, critics claim that SAPs have failed to help women, because of the cultural biases within these developing countries. They maintain that although SAPs are not the cause of these gender inequalities, by refusing to acknowledge, and making allowances for, these inequalities economic policies have not only failed to better the economic position of most women in the developing world, but have, in some cases, even acted to reinforce the inequities and intensify women’s burdens. Often these cultural biases show up as a result of SAP’s focus on economic liberalization and the market economy to the exclusion
of domestic work, a realm predominately occupied by women. Although this has been a popular topic of debate in recent years the question remains, is there, in fact, empirical evidence to support the claim?

A study, in the *Report of a Commonwealth Expert Group on Women and Structural Adjustment*, provides a useful framework to follow in assessing the evidence of gender bias in structural adjustment. Because the effects of SAPs are not limited to just one area of a woman’s work the “framework suggests sorting information in terms of the multiple roles women perform, i.e. as producers, household managers and mothers.”¹ By applying this framework to a case study of Ghana this thesis intends to evaluate the validity of the claim made against SAPs.

**Structural Adjustment Programs**

Structural adjustment programs, or SAPs, are designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help debt-ridden countries restructure and eventually pay off their existing foreign debt. The IMF assesses the balance of payment need of the country and determines what measures should be implemented to correct the imbalance.² The measures often include monetary loans to the impoverished country, but the loans come with conditions, and these conditions are called Structural Adjustment Programs. There are various types of SAPs; depending upon the unique circumstance of each individual country, the

---

conditions placed upon their loans may differ. Generally however, SAPs are designed to reduce inflation, ease restrictions on international trade and promote investment through liberalization.\(^3\)

Designed by the IMF as part of an economic aid package for qualifying developing countries, SAPs are meant “to encourage appropriate economic adjustment and ensure that the member’s use of IMF credit is temporary and that it will have the capacity to repay the IMF on time.”\(^4\) In order to accomplish this, SAPs attempt to move developing countries away from their emphasis on government controlled domestic markets and toward a greater focus on, and integration with, the global market. It is hoped that this increased economic liberalization will attract greater foreign investment and thus generate greater wealth within the country.

One of the most vehement criticisms leveled at structural adjustment, however, accuses SAPs of being gender biased. Are Structural Adjustment Programs as gender neutral as they claim to be, or do they inadvertently reinforce biases that are detrimental to women? The IMF maintains that SAPs are designed to improve the economic condition of countries and populations in general and that none of its policies are gender specific. The IMF also points out that SAPs are not necessarily a set of rigid and inflexible rules; conditionality varies from country to country depending on its specific needs, and of course a country’s decision to work with the IMF is entirely voluntary.\(^5\)

\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
In a recent response to its critics the IMF stated, “The challenge is to help countries stay the course of reform, provide an enabling environment for private investment, and boost growth further by pushing ahead more decisively in improving the [economic] efficiency of government . . ..” 6 The goal of the IMF is not to alienate minorities but to use proven growth-enhancing techniques to improve the quality of life for all people within the country. 7 The IMF goes on to assert that, “while data on poverty rates are limited . . . in countries for which data are available, poverty rates declined by an average of 20 percent.” 8 SAPs, by promoting economic growth through liberalization, have increased the exports and Gross National Products (GNP) of many indebted countries around the world. It is the contention of the IMF that these improvements inevitably trickle down to the poorer citizens of these countries (including women), thereby lifting them out of poverty. 9

Opponents however, are not convinced. They claim that although SAPs do tend to increase GNP and increase foreign investment, they also have had unforeseen and detrimental side effects, especially for women. What the IMF doesn’t mention, opponents contend, is that increased GNP and foreign investment do not necessarily mean an overall improvement in the economic well-being of the country’s citizens. Often it is only the richest 20 percent of the citizens that benefit from these increases while per capita income may actually

---

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
decrease, further widening the gap between the rich and the poor. According to Mel Gurtov, author of the book *Global Politics in the Human Interest*,

One large-scale study of the effects of IMF programs on Asian, African, and Latin American development in the first half of the 1980s is particularly revealing. Whereas a little more than half of the IMF-assisted countries were able to improve their balance-of-payments position, per capita growth stagnated or declined in 57 percent of the countries studied; “real” (inflation-corrected) investment by the Third World governments stagnated or declined in 60 percent of the assisted countries.¹¹

The trickle-down effect, which many IMF supporters champion, is viewed by most of the opposition as being non-materializing.¹² SAPs do not seem to be helping those people at the lowest levels of society, and may even be doing them greater harm. Often in traditional societies it is the role of women to care for the household, and when resources become scarce women must work harder to earn more or ration what little there is. A report from the Asian Pacific Development Center states, “Economic programs [SAPs] in the region [Southeast Asia] have resulted in inequalities between men and women, or reinforced existing ones despite assumptions that the programs were designed to help people in general.”¹³

One of the reasons general economic improvement under SAPs has not been able to bridge the gap between rich and poor (with the poor becoming increasingly feminized due to gender bias) has to do with the structure of the SAPs themselves.

By not taking the unique situation of women in the developing world into account SAPs have underestimated the value of women’s domestic work, and

have thus been unable to be responsive to their needs. Women do a substantial amount of work in what is called the “unrecognized economy,” work that goes largely unnoticed by the economic world. It is traditionally women in most societies who care for the household—raise the children, cook the meals, etc. But because women are not typically paid for these labors, they are not considered significant, economically speaking. In fact, this type of labor is often not even considered labor at all. “It is still the case that when you ask people what they do, you will find women saying, ‘Oh, well, I don’t work, I’m a housewife’, and men saying, ‘My wife doesn’t work, she stays home and takes care of the children.’” This mode of thinking is common throughout the world and extends into economic policy as well.

SAPs focus exclusively on the market economy and encourage women to enter the paid labor force as a way to increase their income. However, what SAPs, and consequently the IMF, do not take into account is that because of the cultural bias in these countries, husbands are not expected to help with household chores. Thus, if a woman pursues outside employment, it is often to the detriment of her family. According to Diane Elson, a professor of economics in Manchester, “By excluding consideration of domestic work both its labor and material requirements, the design of policies deflects benefits of added income opportunities away from women or else adds to their existing labor burdens.”

This results in an injurious overallocation of their time and energy, which harms

---

14 Diane Elson, “Vision (s) of alternative economics from a feminist perspective,” taken from a speech at the WIDE conference on women and alternative economics at http://www.iepala.es/wide/weng/b001_02.htm
15 Ibid.
not only the woman but also her family, upon whom she has less time and energy
to bestow. SAPs by neglecting to recognize the domestic contribution of women,
contributions that are vital to the health and overall well-being of future
generations of market participants, have not only failed to improve the economic
status of all citizens but may have actually made it more difficult for women to
develop economically by creating a climate in which cultural bias is strengthened.

The effect of SAP’s economic liberalization and its focus on the paid
economy to the exclusion of domestic work holds manifold consequences for
women.

Structural adjustment affects the nature of women’s labour force
participation, working hours and wage rates and hence their role as producers. It results in household reallocation decisions by affecting
consumer prices and subsidies and hence their role as home managers.
Finally, it affects the price and availability of social services and hence
their role as mothers. 17

Additionally, the consequences of SAP economic liberalization on women will be
examined according to their multiple roles as producers, household managers and
mothers. Then using statistical information taken from the country of Ghana the
claims made against SAPs will be evaluated based upon empirical evidence in
order to assess their validity.

17 Shahrukh Rafi Khan, Do World Bank And IMF Policies Work? (New York, NY: ST. Martin’s Press,
INC., 1999) pg. 125.
Women as Producers

Under SAP liberalization, the economies of the developing world are opened to greater international trade and foreign investment. This opening of the economy has allowed more transnational corporations (TNCs) to enter developing countries and set up factories, which in turn, has created more paid jobs for the developing world. SAPs encourage women to join the paid labor workforce to both earn money to better their own economic situation and to increase the productivity of their country.

But while SAP liberalization does bring greater foreign investment and jobs to these countries, it also brings greater exploitation. TNCs are able to generate vast amounts of wealth by moving their industries to those countries (mostly developing) where products can be manufactured at considerably lower costs due to relatively lax labor and environmental laws.\(^{18}\) Often, TNCs choose to invest in these countries because their political and legal institutions are relatively weak, which allow TNCs greater freedom to exploit the resources of the country, including its workforce.\(^{19}\) SAPs, by espousing the position of economic liberalization without restriction, has created a situation in which developing countries are made to open their markets to these large corporations, knowing they do not have the political or legal wherewithal to adequately protect their citizens.

Often women are deliberately targeted for exploitation by TNCs because of their lower status and the pre-existing gender inequalities within the society that allow women to more easily be taken advantage of. In fact, “exploitation of women as wage workers is parasitic upon their subordination as a gender.”

These corporations can and do take advantage of their workers (usually female) by paying very little in wages and benefits, instituting longer work days and forcing them to work in often unsafe conditions (See Box 1).

Box 1

It is 7:00 am in front of a ready-made garments factory in Shubra Al Kheima [Egypt]. Drovers of young women, clutching little money purses tightly in their hands are making their way through the factory gates to begin a long day’s work. “We must be at our machines at 7:30 am and work goes on to seven or eight at night. Each one of us is responsible for a specific section in the garment, such as a hem or a button, and I usually process 700 to 800 pieces per day and make between one to two piastres a piece,” explained 23-year old Fatheya.

SAPs are pushing women to work in an environment in which they experience an enormous amount of direct and indirect discrimination “including unequal pay and benefits; discrimination in tax; no guaranteed maternity benefits or job security, and disparities in medical, pension and housing subsidies, among other things.” Moreover, as SAPs continue to force developing countries into unilaterally liberalizing their economies, and tearing down previous protectionist

---


policies it becomes even easier for businesses to take advantage of weak, internal governmental controls and reinforce cultural gender bias in order to pay women less for their work and to provide them with very little benefits.

Another reason for the greater discrimination of women is that these women, have typically been driven into the job market because of their poverty (often due to higher consumer prices as a result of SAPs), and have very little power in which to change their situation.23 Because of the "... high unemployment in women’s ranks and because of their need, there is bound to be violation of the law which stipulates equal wages, social and health insurance for both genders."24 A recent study by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has stated that the number of women entering the paid labor market has substantially increased in the past ten years. However, the report goes on to warn, “the qualitative aspects of women’s employment are not as impressive as the growth in quantity.”25 Thus, “women’s lack of economic power is not simply a matter of women’s lack of participation in the market, nor is women’s economic empowerment merely a matter of encouraging women’s participation in the market.”26 Many argue that SAP’s overly simplistic answer of encouraging more women to enter the paid labor force is not a solution at all and it is actually harmful to women in that it allows them to be even more exploited.

24 Ibid.
26 Diane Elson, “Vision (s) of alternative economics from a feminist perspective,” taken from a speech at the WIDE conference on women and alternative economics at http://www.iepala.es/wide/weng/b001_02.htm
The alternative to factory work and paid labor of this kind, the alternative which more and more mothers are opting to do, is to stay at home and earn extra money by selling surplus crops, handicrafts, etc. But here too, SAP liberalization intervenes to make even this task difficult. Although, SAP liberalization indirectly harms women by introducing TNCs, SAP liberalization can also have more direct consequences for women as producers, especially in rural communities. Consider the case of agriculture.

As part of their goal to liberalize domestic markets, SAPs encourage developing countries to increase their foreign exports. But because many of these countries are not technologically advanced they are severely limited as to what they can export. Usually these countries are confined to exporting their natural resources, products whose prices have been known to oscillate wildly on the world market.\(^\text{27}\) SAPs will often provide incentives to make export crops more attractive such as, “reductions in export taxation combined with exchange rate devaluation [to] provide incentives to increase cash crop production.”\(^\text{28}\)

But often this cash-crop production is accomplished at the expense of subsistence farming. As part of their duty to the home women have traditionally been the subsistence farmers, with subsistence crops often providing the majority of the nutrients needed to maintain the good health of the family. For women, the production of cash crops, which tend to be more labor intensive than subsistence foods, means a tremendous commitment of their time, energy and labor in


addition to their already full commitments at home.\(^{29}\) It happens that because many women desperately need the extra money, they spend more time and energy on producing export crops and neglect subsistence farming. In other instances, it is the husband who engages in export farming, but because many poor landowners do not have large tracts of land it is often necessary to shift their land usage from subsistence to export farming.\(^{30}\) In either case, the nutrition of the family suffers.

An alternative to this crop substitution can be seen in many countries in Africa. Independent farmers are able to obtain the right to cultivate an area of land, which is generally owned by a tribal chief, in exchange for a portion of the crop after harvest.\(^{31}\) However, cash crops are not always the most reliable source of income; there is no income at all coming in during the period between planting and harvesting and even after harvesting, world prices may not be favorable toward the crop.\(^{32}\) As a result many men become migrant workers sending home portions of their income to their wife and children. But, “the income generated by the men is rarely enough to satisfy the daily needs of the family and home, so women’s work is first necessary and then vital as a growing share of daily consumption progressively comes to depend upon it.”\(^{33}\)

As Gurtov states in his book, “agriculture [subsistence farming], once productive enough to meet local needs and generate a surplus for export, now must be supplemented by food


\(^{31}\) Ibid. p. 45.


imports . . . Hunger is a predictable result of agricultural neglect . . ..

What accounts for this shift away from self-sufficiency and toward a greater reliance on outside aid?

Economic liberalization opens the door to the free flow of goods and services between countries. But as more high-priced foreign imports flood into a market, the overall prices of the country increase. However, these increased prices for domestic goods are often not enough to offset the cost of other goods and services. Whereas at one time the surplus of one’s subsistence crop could be sold at a reasonable price and used, perhaps, to help buy clothing or pay for the education of a child, the buying power of that same surplus crop is now significantly reduced. Thus, due to SAP liberalization opening domestic markets to more of globalization’s foreign commodities, the money that the surplus subsistence crop now brings in is not enough to offset rising everyday household costs, and such instances often force women to seek supplemental incomes.

But to complicate matters still further, even as liberalization is forcing many women into cash crop production, a number of cultural prejudices are working against them, similar to the case of factory work. To cultivate a cash crop it is actually necessary to buy seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, and usually to hire workers to help work the fields. Very few rural families, however, have the money needed to buy all of this at one time and so it becomes necessary to apply for a loan. But women in many countries are denied the full legal status needed to

---

obtain a loan. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Although both women and men small farmers have problems acquiring credit in developing countries, the situation facing women is more serious because they lack collateral. As men are the legally recognized landowners, it is they who provide the collateral. When they migrate to towns and cities, leaving women to manage the household farm, the problem is clearly compounded.

In a recent study of credit programs in Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe it was found that women received less than 10 percent of the credit awarded to small farmers and only 1 percent of the total credit given to agriculture. Ironically studies show that when a woman is granted a loan she is more likely to repay her debt than a man. Compounded with women’s lack of credit is often their diminished access to labor saving devices.

In Africa, women play the primary role in subsistence farming, although they are less involved in cash crops. Much of the international assistance and national efforts to improve agriculture in Africa have been notoriously blind to the contributions of women and have not provided them with the technical support or the tools that would enable them to increase their productivity.

Although SAP liberalization does not directly impede women’s access to credit and labor saving devices, neither do they attempt to redress the problem. Instead, SAPs create a situation, which, as in the case of the factory workers, reinforces gender inequalities and often intensifies them.

---

35 FAO, "Credit and capital are basic requisites to increase agricultural production," Gender and food Security rural economics (2001) at http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/rur-e.htm
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid
Under SAP liberalization women are encouraged to seek outside employment, however, due to cultural gender biases the work is made more difficult. SAPs create a climate in which cultural gender bias is intensified and used to the detriment of women. In export farming as well, women are encouraged to produce export crops, although this often results in a greater neglect of subsistence farming. Critics claim that the increasing number of expensive imports in the country are one of the main reasons why prices rise significantly and thus makes it increasingly necessary for women to seek outside employment either in wage labor, farming, or work in the informal sector. Unfortunately, as these women shift their time and energy toward outside employment they have less time and energy to bestow upon their families, often to their detriment.

**Women as Home Managers**

As women attempt to reallocate their time from the domestic sphere to the market economy, often because of SAP stimulated job openings and the promise of high returns for export goods, women often find that they are not able to completely substitute their domestic role for their role as a paid employee or vice versa. Often when a woman obtains outside employment her limited resources of time and energy must be diffused across both roles. In effect, she must reallocate some of her time away from the family and toward the job market. The critical

---

defect of the SAPs, many opponents claim, is that they simply do not recognize the fact that women’s time and labors are not infinite.\footnote{Karen Coelho & Michael Coffey, “Gender Impacts on Policy,” \textit{Reversing the flow-toward gender-oriented information systems in agriculture}, (June 1996) at \url{http://www.fao.org/sd/WPdirect/Wpan0007.htm}}

In most developing countries, society is strictly divided between the woman’s and the man’s sphere. The woman’s sphere often includes such labors as planting and harvesting subsistence crops, securing fuel and water for the household and caring for the family. Women have traditionally been held responsible for most, if not all, of the multitudinous tasks, which accompany common domesticity. The majority of these tasks are never easy, and they often require extensive amounts of time and labor. This is especially true for the women of the developing world.

Most women in developing countries lack the labor saving devices that women in the developed world enjoy, such as vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, and washing machines. They also do not have such comforts as indoor plumbing or central heating. Many women in the developing world must carry their family’s water home in containers from the nearest source, which can sometimes be several miles away. The women must also gather wood for the fire; this too may take a substantial amount of time, especially if one lives in a poor area where resources are scarce.
Box 2

Its 4 a.m. in the small village of Sikandernagar located in northern India. The women of the village are already awake-lighting fires and milking buffaloes. They sweep the floors, fetch the water and feed their families. They will then go out into the fields to weed crops until 5 at night—earning only a meager wage for their labors. In the evening they will forage for branches and twigs to use as fuel for their cooking fires, wild fruits and vegetables to nourish their children, and grasses to sustain the buffaloes. When they finally return home these women will cook dinner and do the evening chores before going to bed so that they may do the same thing tomorrow. These women spend twice as many hours per week working to support their families as do the men in their village. But they do not own the land on which they labor, and every year, for all their effort, they find themselves poorer and less able to provide what their families need to survive.42

Among the rural poor environmental degradation is a great threat. As the competition for resources escalates, resources such as food and fuel become increasingly scarce, and women in rural areas are forced to search further and further and expend even more of their time and precious energy to accomplish basic needs.43 (See Box 2) Yet, even as it becomes increasingly difficult for women to accomplish basic household tasks, SAP liberalization makes these chores even harder.

As discussed above, SAPs can make women’s domestic work more difficult by adding to it the extra burden of paid labor. But SAPs can also make domestic labor more laborious by removing government subsidies. As part of their focus on the global market and free trade, many SAPs require governments to end their protective policies toward domestic industries and local agriculture in

order to encourage them to become more competitive and cost effective.

However, this removal of government assistance (or subsidies) of local production has made these locally produced goods increasingly expensive to consumers. In the case of Pakistan, for example, the removal of wheat and edible oil subsidies have had especially negative affects on the poorest quarter of the country, given that these two goods make up a large amount of their caloric intake.\textsuperscript{44}

Between 1987-8 and 1992-3, the consumption of cereals for the bottom 10 percent of the population [Pakistan] declined by 10 percent. Such a decline could be expected given the decline in wheat subsidy indicated above, which translated into a more than doubling of the retail price of wheat and wheat flour.\textsuperscript{45}

SAPs in encouraging women to enter the paid labor force, often to the detriment of subsistence farming, and in removing agriculture subsidies has made it more difficult for household managers (the majority of whom are women) to obtain food for their families. As might be expected the result of this nutritional loss is worse for girls than for boys. In February of 1993, an article in the \textit{Journal of Nutrition} documented the effects of poor nutrition on young Guatemalan children. The report stated that girls are especially susceptible to malnutrition at a young age. Because boys are typically considered more valuable than girls in developing countries, when resources are scarce what little is available tends to be allocated to male children. Thus the growth rate for boys was much faster than

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. p. 128.
that of girls by 6-49% due to gender bias. Poor nutrition often makes the child (in this case girls) more susceptible to disease and more likely to have health problems and higher mortality rates.

In this way SAP liberalization has one of its most serious effects; perpetuating poverty by limiting the access of the poorest people to proper nutrition. Women tend to be the poorest members of society exactly because of this type of cultural bias. But now, because SAPs have decreased the amount of resources available to them, cultural bias has an even greater capacity to harm women. Again, SAPs have created a situation in which cultural bias and its damage done to women, is not lessened, but intensified, despite claims by the IMF that SAPs are designed to improve overall economic well-being.

SAP liberalization, in increasing consumer prices and reducing subsidies has increased domestic hardships by reducing the availability of affordable goods. This requires families to earn more money, just to meet basic needs. When money gets tight cutbacks occur in the family, and due to gender bias it is often girls who suffer the most from these cutbacks, the most serious of these being a loss of nutrition. SAPs create a situation in which cultural bias is intensified to the detriment of females.

---

Women as Mothers

Ironically just as SAP liberalization intensifies the economic hardships on women and their families, SAPs simultaneously remove many of the safety nets designed to support struggling families. According to SAPs, in order to open the domestic economy to free trade's greater wealth it is necessary to reduce public spending. According to an article published by the FAO, “SAPs focus on the reduction of public spending.... reduced government expenditures on social services such as education, health and rural infrastructure.” Many of the domestic spending plans that are being cut are those programs that mothers use to help support their families. In a study by the FAO it was found, “... cutbacks in public expenditure generated by SAPs increase the tax on women’s work by relocating many hitherto state-provided health care and child care services back to the household.” Many of these once state-run programs are now being privatized, which often means that many of these services are now more expensive and less available, and mothers must compensate for this loss of resources by placing the added burden upon themselves.

One of the most important programs, which governments have traditionally funded, is education. It is often the high cost of schooling that prevents many children from attending school. School fees have become increasingly expensive as families are required to provide more resources for their

children such as, books, uniforms, meals, and many others. For many poor families it is often only possible to send one child to school. A study by Uganada’s Women’s Network asserted that, “since government slashed support for education by half, cash-strapped parents are opting to educate sons rather than daughters. As a result, girls start school far later than boys, have consistently poorer performances and drop out earlier, often to marry.”

Another important service that is being privatized is health care. The same study stated, “Regulations and cuts in government expenditure put health care beyond the reach of many women here, as few have access to cash, forcing some to resort to expensive missionary hospitals or even traditional healers.” But with the prices of all of these services increasing it becomes increasingly difficult to afford them all, “poor parents are being forced to make impossible choices. Do you buy food and medicines for your children, or do you send them to school?”

When families are in need of money women will often join the paid labor sector to earn added income. However, this often forces these women to be away from home for long periods of time. When this happens many of the household chores fall to the eldest daughter who usually drops out of school to care for the family. An article in the Washington Post stated,

Across the developing world, girls are withdrawn from school years before boys so they can remain at home and lug water, work the fields, raise younger siblings and help with other domestic chores. By the time

52 Ibid.
girls are 10 or 12 years old, they may put in as much as an eight-hour workday, studies show.\textsuperscript{54}

Moreover, “in organizing their time and work, working women soon come to depend on their daughters either to take care of a large share of domestic chores or to help them with their businesses.”\textsuperscript{55} SAPs by intensifying cultural bias, and thereby increasing the hardship of families, often force families to take increasingly extreme measures in order to lessen their burdens. This occurrence has been documented by Bernard Schlemmer in the book, The Exploited Child.

Gradually, domestic poverty-line economics become the norm. Food consumption is the first to be rationed: there is less to eat, of a lower quality. Social interaction then suffers as the sharing of food and drink is restricted to ever tighter circles, as if it were some sort of clandestine activity. Next come cuts in spending on the home and adult healthcare. Financial hardship eventually leads to one or more children being removed from school...\textsuperscript{56}

When families reach this extreme level of poverty, a phenomenon often occurs called domestic deregulation. Schlemmer goes on to assert,

By domestic deregulation we are referring to the break-up of family units combined with the increasing fragility and destabilization of households which has been gathering pace and becoming more serious under the impact of the policies of liberalization through structural adjustment.\textsuperscript{57}

In other words, the liberalization process of SAPs is able to permeate even into social relations and can seriously affect the way in which families attempt to cope with their increased hardships.\textsuperscript{58}

One of the most detrimental ways in which families try to lessen their burden is through child labor. When the parent or parents’ income ceases to be

\textsuperscript{54} "The burden of womanhood: third world, second class,” Washington Post, 25, April 1993.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. p 75.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p 67.
enough, families will sometimes force their children into the labor market. “One crucial aspect of such poverty-line economics is that the struggling household will mobilize all able-bodied members in order to generate extra income.” Most child laborers “admit to having been driven to become child workers because they absolutely had to earn enough to provide for both their own needs and, more generally, to diversify the household’s sources of income.” Often these child workers are forced to be away from home for long periods of time with little or no interaction with their family; these children are reduced to mere commodities and the cohesion of the family begins to unravel.

According to the International Labor Organization, some 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 are working today as child laborers. In Brazil alone, nearly 30% of its small farm workforce is comprised of children under 14. Many child laborers are forced to work under hazardous conditions which often include physical, mental and sexual abuse, sometimes for as long as 16 hours a day. (See Box 3)

58 Ibid, p 71.
59 Ibid, p 75.
60 Ibid, p 76.
Box 3

The owner of a carpet factory in Uttar Pradesh [India] has escaped unscathed despite his brutal murder of a child from Bihar, and torturing many other kids who worked under him. The killing of Kari Sahini, a 13-year-old boy from Darbhanga Phulawaria village, is another example of the terrible plight of the children working in carpet industries in Uttar Pradesh. Despite shocking eyewitness accounts by fellow children before the court that factory owner Santosh Humar Mishra had killed Kari Sahini by knocking his head against the wall, the police of UP and Bihar have done nothing in two years to apprehend the culprit.

For girls, however, there is the added hazard of being forced into prostitution. Silvana Anania in an article on child labor reported, “It is estimated that over two million children around the globe will be abused by adults through prostitution, trafficking and pornography, and the majority of them will be girls.” However the number of girls involved in child labor may not be as obvious as that of boys. Much of female child labor occurs in the home or domestic sector where it is often overlooked by the formal economic sector. Girls must then suffer the double burden of both age and gender discrimination, and are more likely, especially in the developing world, in times of economic hardship to be seen as a burden or a commodity to be sold.

Often girls are not considered to be of much use outside of the domestic sphere. While a man will eventually be able to support himself and, depending on the culture, his parents in their old age, women are more likely to be seen as a

---

financial drain on her family, and in hard times being born a girl can be very
dangerous.67 (See Box 4)

Box 4

| When Rani returned home from the hospital cradling her newborn daughter, the men in the family slipped out of her mud hut while she and her mother-in-law mashed poisonous oleander seeds into a dollop of oil and forced it down the infant's throat. As soon as darkness fell, Rani crept into a nearby field and buried her baby girl in a shallow, unmarked grave next to a small stream. “I never felt any sorrow,” Rani, a farm laborer with a weather-beaten face, said through an interpreter. “There was a lot of bitterness in my heart toward the baby because the gods should have given me a son.”68 |

While infanticide is an extreme case, across the developing world girls are
generally fed less, given less health care, receive less education and are put to
work at an earlier age.69 Poverty falls hardest on young girls, because they are
unable to care for themselves and are entirely at the mercy of cultural biases, that
are often worsened by SAPs.

But how many of these claims hold true for a specific country? Although
there seems to be plenty of evidence around the world to support critics’
arguments, can they still hold up in a case study of just one country? How strong
is the case of SAP opponents that SAP liberalization does more harm than good,
especially for women? It becomes necessary then to evaluate an actual country to
determine what, if any, factors agree with the case made against SAPs. The

following case study examines the African country of Ghana. The statistics of the country will be analyzed in an attempt to discover evidence either supporting or refuting the claim of SAP opponents.

\[69\] Ibid.
Case Study: Ghana

Introduction

Ghana was chosen as the case study because of its fame in recent years as a model of successful Structural Adjustment implementation. After a long love-hate relationship with SAPs Ghana began its first serious implementation in 1983 and since then the country has continued to implement SAP policies more vigorously than almost any other country. However from the beginning, critics have argued that SAPs were too draconian, that its policies were “anti-people.” Furthermore, Ghana’s economy has increasingly been facing some serious problems.

In using Ghana as a case study, statistical evidence will be evaluated according to the framework of women as producers, household managers and mothers, to deduce where the successes and shortcomings of SAPs lie. It will also address claims made by critics, which assert that Structural Adjustment has harmful affects on people and especially on women. In the conclusion, this evidence will be reviewed and, based on these findings, suggestions will be made as to what would be an appropriate response to Structural Adjustment in the future.

A Brief history of Ghana

Europeans began arriving in Africa as early as the 1400s. But soon these isolated trading posts began to evolve into colonies. By the early nineteenth century, Britain had become the dominant controlling force of what was then called the Gold Coast. Slowly but surely, Britain began to exert its political control over the territory. Traditional chiefs were allowed to retain power at the local level, but Britain was in charge at the top.

Early manifestations of nationalism began to emerge at the turn of the century, mostly led by a small, educated, minority. After World War II however, nationalism had begun to catch on. In 1947 the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed whose sole aim was self-government. Two years later the political leader Kwame Nkrumah broke with the UGCC to form his own party, the Convention People’s Party (CPP).

Because of the CPP’s mass support the government was forced to write the constitution of 1951 that granted considerably more representation to the people. The CPP continued its quest for self-government and in February of 1959 it was able to win a two-thirds majority in the Legislative Assembly. Nkrumah was asked to become part of the government as “leader on government business,” and finally on August 3, 1956 a motion was passed granting the state independence within the British Commonwealth. But the last ties with Britain would not be cut until 1960 when a new constitution was written creating the

---

74 Ibid. p.27.
75 Ibid. p. 28.
Republic of Ghana.\textsuperscript{76} Shortly afterward, Nkrumah was elected president for life and the CPP became the official party of the state, with Nkrumah centralizing all political power within himself.\textsuperscript{77}

In 1965, Nkrumah opened discussions for the first time with the IMF. The IMF sent officials to Ghana and prescribed a regimen of drastically reduced spending, and non-inflationary borrowing.\textsuperscript{78} However, Nkrumah had built his economic policies around domestic development. A reduction in spending would mean a drop in development rates, and already Nkrumah had managed to “raise the levels of medical and educational facilities; improved the road and rail network; constructed Tema harbor . . . and build the Akosombo dam.”\textsuperscript{79} Nkrumah rejected the IMF’s aid package.

However, in 1966, due to his heavy-handedness, Nkrumah was exiled after a military coup, which resulted in the political take over of the National Liberation Council (NLC). Within three months of the NLC’s rise to power they were able to satisfy enough of the IMF’s conditions to obtain a standby credit and to reschedule their debt payment.\textsuperscript{80} Under the NLC Structural Adjustment focused on the,

\begin{itemize}
  \item reduction in overall government expenditures and the size of the deficit . . .
  \item reduction in bank credits to both the public and private sectors; wage and salary controls . . .
  \item phased liberalization of import and exchange control and removal of price controls and subsidies; devaluation of the national currency (by thirty percent against the U.S. dollar) and short-term
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. p. 30.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. p. 30
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. p.3.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid. p.3.
rescheduling of the external debt and restrictions on fresh short- and – medium term borrowing.\textsuperscript{81}

In 1969 new elections were held and Kofi Busia of the Progress Party became Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{82} Because the Progress Party had been brought to power through national elections, the government needed to maintain the support of its electorate. Thus, Busia returned to many of the economic policies used by Nkrumah in order to promote domestic development. Some of these measures included, the expulsion of non-Ghanaians and limiting of foreign involvement in Ghanaian businesses, and many in the party favored suspending the payment of the foreign debt.\textsuperscript{83} Although Busia continued to negotiate with the IMF, most of its programs were not implemented. However, by December of 1971, Busia felt he could no longer withstand IMF pressure and finally signed an agreement with the IMF. According to an article on Structural Adjustment in the West Africa Review, “Immediately, prices of basic items like sugar, rice, and milk shot up. Seventeen days later, on January 13, 1972 the government was overthrown by the military.”\textsuperscript{84} Although the coup itself was not a result of structural adjustment the coup leaders did take advantage of the people’s general dissatisfaction to make their transition into power easier.

The National Redemption Council (NRC), having taken over the government, set out in a national campaign to encourage self-reliance. The NRC promoted domestic development to the exclusion of outside foreign aid. Until

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid. p.4.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. p. 40.
1978 when another military coup swept the NRC out of office, it continued to resist IMF pressure to implement SAPs.\(^{85}\)

The Supreme Military Council (SMC II), which took over after the NRC, however, agreed to work with the IMF, presumably because they needed the money. It implemented several SAPs which included such measures as, “the devaluation of the cedi by 58 percent against the U.S. dollar, reduction of the overall planned budgetary deficit from 1.5 billion cedis to 500 million cedis, increase in coca price from 40 cedis to 80 cedis per load, and a demonetization exercise to mop up excess liquidity in the economy.”\(^{86}\) However, these SAPs were not to last long. In 1979 yet another coup brought to power the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which effectively terminated the SAPs of the SMC II.

The AFRC handed power over to a new president Hilla Limann. Limann’s administration was hesitant to negotiate new structural adjustments, fearing a possible political backlash because of the IMF’s unpopular conditionalities.\(^{87}\) Ironically, Limann was ousted from power anyway on December 31, 1981. Flt. Lt. Rawlings and the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) began a military rule in Ghana and is still head of state as of April 2002.\(^{88}\)

\(^{85}\) Ibid. p. 7.
\(^{86}\) Ibid. p. 8.
\(^{87}\) Ibid. p. 8.
\(^{88}\) Ibid. p. 8
Due to its “authoritarian political practices” the PNDC has been relatively successful in implementing SAPs without any significant political backlash. In 1982-83 Rawlings and the PNDC implemented an SAP called the Economic Recovery Program (ERP). The objectives of this program were,

- Lowering inflation through stringent fiscal, monetary, and trade policies;
- Increasing the flow of foreign exchange into Ghana and directing it to priority sectors;
- Restructuring the country’s economic institutions;
- Restoring production incentives; rehabilitating infrastructure to enhance conditions for the production and export of goods; and, finally, increasing the availability of essential consumer goods.

To accomplish these goals the government took a number of steps including improving the tax collection system, increasing privatization and reducing private corporate taxes. Even then, however, many of these measures fell under criticism for focusing on the international system and neglecting the development of those people not involved in export. However the ERP’s success in enabling Ghana to make loan repayments on time has earned Ghana a degree of fame as a model of structural adjustment success.

Beginning in the early 1990s a new round of Structural Adjustment was negotiated for Ghana. The Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility is aimed at, “accelerating growth by boosting national savings, achieving and maintaining single-digit inflation, accelerating structural reforms, and shifting the composition of fiscal expenditure in favor of health, education, and other priority sectors.”

The program also attempts to foster closer relationships with the civil societies of

---

89 Ibid. p. 8.
91 Ibid. p.145.
92 Ibid. p. 145.
each country to assuage some of the ill feelings toward SAPs in general.\textsuperscript{94}

However, criticism still abounds in Ghana as structural adjustment continues to strengthen deregulation and inflation continues to be a problem.\textsuperscript{95}

In the next section statistical evidence from Ghana will be analyzed, and where possible numbers prior to 1983 will be compared to more recent figures in hopes of determining whether women (as producers, household managers and mothers) are better or worse off now than they were before SAP implementation. However, it should be stated that the research on Ghana in this thesis is limited to secondary sources, which restricted the availability of some information and has, in some cases, made it difficult to draw clear conclusions.

\textit{Women as Producers}

Women are an essential component in caring for the family and taking care of the household. However, many have argued that since the onset of Structural Adjustment it has become harder for women to meet their families’ needs and thus it is often necessary for these women to seek outside employment.

Table 1.1 shows the overall population growth of Ghana while Table 1.2 illustrates the participation rates of women in the labor force between 1980 and 1998. Logically, the labor force in Ghana has been growing at the same rate as population growth, although, the percentage of women in the work force has remained the same since the 1980s. Table 1.2 also reveals that the percentage of

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
child laborers has decreased since 1980. (For a more detailed analysis of child labor see Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

Table 1.1 Population growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total (in millions)</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.2 Labor force participation rates by age, gender and average growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female % of labor force</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 10-14% of age group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The fact that a higher percentage of women have not entered the labor force since the 1980s seems to undermine critics’ claim that more women find it necessary to seek outside employment under SAPs. Interestingly, however, one of the goals of SAPs has been to encourage more people into the paid labor force, both men and women, but this too seems to have failed.

However, SAP critics claim that unemployment may be the problem. There are more women seeking paid labor, but due to gender bias there are few occupations which are open to them, thus many of the women who want a job are
often unable to obtain one. SAP critics go on to assert that often the jobs these women find are the SAP sponsored factory jobs of TNCs. TNCs take advantage of women’s higher unemployment rates and the country’s traditional gender biases, in order to pay women less in wages and benefits.

Table 1.3 does show a greater unemployment rate among women than men, and while the unemployment rate for men has been dropping, that of women has increased since 1987. This could be used to support the claim of SAP critics, that while SAPs do necessitate an increasing number of women to enter the labor force, very few of them are able to find employment. Table 1.4 also seems to support critics’ view that these conditions increase the likelihood of exploitation. Gender discrimination in the workplace as it is related to wages does seem to be occurring as women are being paid less for their labor and the discrepancy between men and women has only increased.

Table 1.3 also shows the breakdown of unemployment between urban and rural areas. The fact that urban unemployment has increased as rural unemployment decreased suggests the occurrence of urbanization. The rural population may have experienced an exodus of unemployed people from the rural areas to the urban areas. And although urban unemployment remains high, the unemployment rates of men have been decreasing, which seems to confirm critics’ view that due to gender bias men are more likely to be hired than women.
Table 1.3  Unemployment rate of those actively seeking employment by sector and gender (figures in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>79.50</td>
<td>89.32</td>
<td>84.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>15.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.07</td>
<td>45.63</td>
<td>42.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.93</td>
<td>54.37</td>
<td>57.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana’s Labor Market (1987-92) p. 33

Table 1.4  Average real income wages by gender in cedis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% difference between men and women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>217,586</td>
<td>160,461</td>
<td>-26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>328,656</td>
<td>222,564</td>
<td>-32.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gender, Poverty and Nonfarm employment in Ghana and Uganda, 2000 p.45

Perhaps what would be more useful than looking at the overall number of women in the work force would be to look at the types of employment women have been drawn to since the implementation of SAPs. Table 1.5 shows the employment breakdown between men and women in rural Ghana. As is to be expected the majority of the work done by both sexes is in farming. But while the participation of men in each of these sectors has risen slightly, there has been a significant shift toward self-employment among women since 1987. This shift is especially notable among married women whose participation in the self-employment sector almost doubled.

Table 1.6 depicts the amount of income women earn in each of the three sectors as a share of total income. Although women’s participation in wage
employment was steady between 1987 and 1991 their share of income decreased, which might suggest that women were being paid less in 1991 than in 1987, or perhaps, it suggests that income received from other forms of employment have increased. Although women’s participation in farming went up slightly, the wages they earned made up a smaller share of their total income. This may be accounted for in Table 1.5, which shows a significant increase in women working in the self-employed sector. However, it should be noted that no reliable evidence has been found to clearly support either theory; that women are either being paid less or that they have diversified their incomes to a greater extent.

Table 1.5 Main Occupations as a percent in rural Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gender, Poverty and Nonfarm Employment in Ghana and Uganda, 2000 pp. 43-44
### Table 1.6 Mean income shares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Gender, Poverty and Nonfarm Employment in Ghana and Uganda, 2000 p. 46*

As seen from the tables, the only sector to experience increases in income share was self-employment. Self-employment usually tends to include activities in the informal sector including, selling homemade products or trading goods, activities that are not typically considered “man’s work,” which would also explain the relatively low participation of men in the self-employment sector.

These numbers also tend to support critics’ claims that more women today, and especially women with children, are increasingly looking for extra income, with many of the married women opting to work in the informal sector in order to stay closer to home. Table 1.5 illustrates that the greatest shift toward self-employment occurred among married women, while unmarried girls and older women are more likely to work on farms. (This is also evidenced later on by female child labor rates.)

---


Although these numbers come from the rural areas of Ghana, Table 1.7 seems to indicate that it is precisely the rural areas in which most of the new jobs for women have occurred. Table 1.7 seems to indicate that there was an economic slow down between the years of 1987 and 1988. However, between the years of 1988 and 1991 there was a great change in labor participation rates. The rural areas experienced an especially large improvement, while urban labor participation leveled off. Thus, many of the new jobs opening between 1988 and 1991 occurred in rural areas, where the dominant sector, as seen in Table 1.5 is farming. It appears from the table that although both sexes increased their participation in the labor force during this time, women increased their participation at a faster rate than men, which may support the idea that more women are attempting to increase their incomes.
Table 1.7 Labor force participation rates by age group, gender and sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-16</td>
<td>43.77</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>36.72</td>
<td>30.58</td>
<td>33.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-25</td>
<td>66.26</td>
<td>46.58</td>
<td>60.26</td>
<td>58.01</td>
<td>59.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-45</td>
<td>78.18</td>
<td>71.02</td>
<td>79.81</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>75.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>76.90</td>
<td>70.84</td>
<td>78.60</td>
<td>71.73</td>
<td>74.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>61.61</td>
<td>42.64</td>
<td>66.19</td>
<td>46.63</td>
<td>56.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>44.45</td>
<td>58.23</td>
<td>53.59</td>
<td>55.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1988       |       |       |       |        |       |
| 7-16       | 32.40 | 13.48 | 28.46 | 24.29  | 26.45 |
| 17-25      | 66.49 | 48.85 | 63.04 | 57.67  | 60.14 |
| 26-45      | 80.75 | 76.76 | 86.82 | 72.81  | 79.27 |
| 46-60      | 75.46 | 75.25 | 82.59 | 69.83  | 75.39 |
| >60        | 60.72 | 50.82 | 68.00 | 49.10  | 58.35 |
| Total      | 57.87 | 47.27 | 57.70 | 51.39  | 54.33 |

| 1991       |       |       |       |        |       |
| 7-16       | 47.54 | 6.30  | 36.78 | 30.54  | 33.78 |
| 17-25      | 81.29 | 36.26 | 60.31 | 67.44  | 63.99 |
| 26-45      | 97.05 | 86.25 | 94.50 | 91.93  | 93.01 |
| 46-60      | 94.17 | 86.09 | 95.64 | 88.60  | 91.79 |
| >60        | 76.45 | 54.66 | 82.45 | 59.47  | 71.00 |
| Total      | 75.02 | 47.27 | 65.41 | 65.42  | 65.41 |

Source: Ghana’s Labor Market (1987-92)  
 p. 12

Although there was an increase in labor participation in rural areas between 1987 and 1991, most likely in the agricultural sector, it is important to know what specific crops were farmed. If the increase in labor went toward cash crops, then this would seem to support the critics’ view that export crops are being produced in greater quantities than subsistence foods. Unfortunately no data was found as to what specific crops were produced in the largest quantity during this time. Nor were any gendered nutritional studies found for Ghana to determine if girls have been more susceptible to malnutrition under SAPs.

Table 1.8 may show a shift in the type of crops that were produced between 1981 and 1997. The food production index measures the production of food that is edible and nutritious. Table 1.8 illustrates that the production of...
edible and nutritious food had almost doubled between those years. Yet the percentage of land used in crop production remained the same. This doubling of production may be due to a change in the type of crops produced; crops that are edible and nutritious.

Table 1.8 Food production index: 1989-91 = 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979-81</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-97</td>
<td>147.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, it may also be that there has been a switch to more intensive types of farming. Better seeds or fertilizers may have been able to increase agricultural production without using a greater percentage of land. What remains unclear, however, is what specific foods are considered edible and nutritious. Edible and nutritious would seem to include subsistence foods. However, it should be noted that the production of Cocoa beans (Ghana’s main export crop) has greatly increased since the 1980s as well. Table 1.9 indicates an overall rise in Cocoa export, which would account for the rise in agriculture production if Cocoa beans or other cash crops were considered edible and nutritious under the food production index.

---

**Table 1.9** Cocoa Bean Production in thousands of metric tons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Production</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: International Monetary Fund (2000) p. 12*

Under Women as Producers it was found that the labor participation rates of women have neither increased nor decreased with the implementation of SAPs. This seems to contest not only critics' claim that SAPs drive women into the workforce to be exploited, but also refutes the proclaimed success of SAP proponents who say that SAPs have empowered women economically by encouraging a greater number of women to participate in the labor force.\(^{100}\)

However, there is more evidence to substantiate critics' claim that as more women attempt to enter the workforce (due to necessity caused by SAPs) gender bias works against them, as men are more likely to be hired over women, and when women are hired they tend to be paid less. Table 1.3 depicts the unemployment levels of women rising as the rates of men decline, while Table 1.4 depicts the wage discrepancy between men and women as increasing.

Another claim made by critics with some weight behind it is the argument that women with children are especially likely to seek outside employment, but they tend to prefer working in the informal sector and selling homemade goods, so that they are able to stay close to home and care for their family. This seems to be supported in Table 1.5, which shows married women nearly doubling their
participation in self-employment or the informal sector. It is still unclear, however, whether or not critics’ claim that SAPs have promoted export crop production to the detriment of subsistence foods is accurate. Although Table 1.8 seems to indicate greater agricultural production between the years of 1979 and 1997 it does not state whether the goods are for export or domestic consumption. However, the increased population growth between 1980 and 1998 may suggest an increased need for subsistence foods. But the vague terminology of edible and nutritious provides no real concrete evidence. Table 1.9 does illustrate a steady rise in the production of Ghana’s largest export, the cocoa bean. Thus, whether or not the increased agricultural production is composed mostly of subsistence crops or cash crops cannot be determined based on this data.

Women as home managers

According to critics of Structural Adjustment women have an increasingly difficult time running their households as SAP liberalization reduces subsidies, increases imports and raises the prices of domestic goods. Thus, it is necessary for households to earn more income today than previously.

Table 2.1 illustrates the increase in the wholesale prices of some staple crops of Ghana. Since 1990 the overall prices of these foods have risen. Critics have attributed these price increases, not only in agriculture but other products as well, to decreased government spending on subsidies. However, Table 2.2 would seem to refute this argument. Government subsidies have not been cut, but have,

---

100 Carol Welch & Jason Oringer, “Structural Adjustment Programs,” *Structural Adjustment Programs*, vol. 3, No. 3 (April 1998).
in fact, substantially increased. Though, admittedly it doesn't give a clear breakdown as to whether agricultural subsidies specifically have increased.

Table 2.1 Average wholesale prices of selected agricultural commodities (in cedis per unit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of measurement</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millet 93 kg.</td>
<td>10,956</td>
<td>30,527</td>
<td>87,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava 91 kg.</td>
<td>4,274</td>
<td>9,550</td>
<td>28,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yams 100 tubers</td>
<td>30,102</td>
<td>82,219</td>
<td>239,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 Central Government Financing (in billions of cedis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies and transfers</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>320.7</td>
<td>459.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital expenditure (domestic)</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>524.1</td>
<td>759.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital expenditure (foreign)</td>
<td>111.9</td>
<td>564.8</td>
<td>1,195.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund (2000) p. 26

Although a reduction in subsidies does not seem to be the cause of the rise in prices, SAP critics' argument is correct in that families need more money today than previously in order to meet their basic food needs. This rise in consumer prices is not due solely to increased population demand (although it may be part of it). Ghana has been experiencing high inflation as seen in Table 2.3 that far surpasses expected price increases from domestic demand. Table 2.3 seems to illustrate a significant rise in inflation since 1986, however without inflation rates from intermediate years it is impossible to determine whether high inflation has been prevalent in Ghana since the 1980s.
Table 2.3  National Consumer Price Index  
(Monthly average, 1977=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall index</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothing and footwear</th>
<th>Medical and health care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>4,543.1</td>
<td>3,268.8</td>
<td>5,732.6</td>
<td>4,754.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>16,927.4</td>
<td>11,599.1</td>
<td>20,135.7</td>
<td>14,684.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>86,882.2</td>
<td>53,630.8</td>
<td>101,205.9</td>
<td>44,480.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund (2000)  
p. 21.

A second argument of critics has been that increased imports under SAPs are another cause of rising prices. Table 2.2 does seem to indicate that the government is spending a lot more on foreign products and at a much faster rate than on either subsidies or domestic expenditures. This is further evidenced in Tables 2.4 and 2.5, which show that in 1980 Ghana’s exports slightly outweighed it imports, but by 1997 money spent on imports far exceeded that received from exports.

Table 2.4  Exports of goods and services in millions of dollars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exports of goods and services in millions of dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p. 258-259

Table 2.5  Imports of goods and services in millions of dollars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imports of goods and services in millions of dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2,640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p. 258-259
Whether or not imports have caused the rise in prices in Ghana remains contested. What is clear, however, is that in 1997 Ghana was been importing more goods and services than it was exporting. Naturally, this has led to an increase in their foreign deficit. Although the deficit has fluctuated over the years, the overall amount of the debt has increased, as seen in Table 2.6. Critics claim this increase in foreign debt harms the people of Ghana the most, because governments usually increase taxes in order to pay interest on the debt. However, no evidence has been found to substantiate this claim.

*Table 2.6* Surplus or deficit in billions of cedis (adjusted for inflation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus or deficit</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>-9.9</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
<td>-8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: International Monetary Fund* (2000) p. 26

According to the numbers found under Women as Household Managers, the assertion by critics that prices rise under SAPs, making it more difficult to maintain a sustainable quality of life, seems to be supported in Tables 2.1 and 2.3. Prices have indeed risen under SAPs, with inflation having risen since 1986. Ironically, one of the stated goals of SAPs is to reduce inflation to manageable levels. But while there is evidence to support a rise in price levels, the claim that these increasing prices are due to reduced government subsidies cannot be substantiated, in fact Table 2.2 shows that there has actually been a marked
increase in funding to subsidies, though this evidence remains weak. There was also no direct link found to prove critics’ second claim that increased imports have caused higher prices, even though imports have risen substantially since 1980. In fact, according to Tables 2.4 and 2.5, money spent on imports has actually exceeded what has been brought in by exports in recent years, increasing the country’s foreign debt. Table 2.6 seems to indicate that SAP success in liberalizing Ghana’s economy somehow backfired with Ghana’s foreign deficit increased from 1991 levels. In this way critics’ claim that SAP liberalization has done more harm than good has one of its most salient expressions.

*Women as Mothers*

According to SAP critics, as domestic prices rise families find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Families must either increase their income or reduce expenditure. But because SAPs encourage governments to reduce funding to public assistance programs, when families do cut their expenditures there are few places left to assist them. Critics argue when families become this mired in poverty and the parent or parents’ income ceases to be enough, it sometimes becomes necessary for children to enter the labor force as well to bring in a much-needed income.

As was seen in Table 1.1 the percentage of children in the labor force has been decreasing in recent years. Table 1.7 shows that the percentage of children 7 to 16 who are in the work force in urban areas has decreased sharply between
1988 and 1991. But unfortunately, that same age group has seen increases in child labor in rural areas. This might suggest that the incidence of child labor is being increasingly hidden in rural areas among the agricultural and informal sectors. Since these sectors are not typically surveyed as regularly as the urban workforce, the numbers regarding substantial decreases in child labor may be overly optimistic. In fact, the number of child laborers in Ghana remains quite high and Ghana actually has a reputation as being one of the largest child slave suppliers in West Africa.  

Table 3.1 depicts the profile of a typical child laborer. As seen from the table, child labor has become a significant part of Ghana’s national economy; children perform over 5 percent of total national labor hours in the country. The majority of this child labor occurs in rural areas with a great deal of that being focused on farming. Table 3.1 suggests that boys participate in child labor more than girls do. However, the work of girls is often hidden because most of it occurs in the home. If Table 3.1 incorporated the work girls did at home it is likely that it would equal or even surpass the amount of work performed by boys outside of the home.  

Girls’ greater work hours and greater domestic responsibilities seem to evidence this.

---

Table 3.1  Typical Profile of a Child Worker in Ghana by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age: Urban</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child worker Composition: Urban</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours in the labor market per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours in household chores per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of child workers in labor force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion in total work hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labor force participation rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Trading (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Participation (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to total hours of participation nationally</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GLSS 3 1995

The hypothesis of many SAP critics is that children are pulled out of school to become laborers as participation in school becomes increasingly expensive, and as the government programs, which could help parents afford the costs are reduced. Table 3.2 shows the educational level that many child laborers obtain. The number of child laborers in Ghana with no education has risen since 1987, with the majority of child laborers having only obtained a primary education. And although the number of boys working as child laborers decreased slightly in 1991 it was still significantly higher than its 1987 level. Girls' numbers have declined since 1987, but it must be remembered that girls tend to perform a significant amount of labor in the domestic sector, which is not typically surveyed. The enrollment in school of both boys and girls decreases significantly after the primary level.
Table 3.2  Characteristics of child labor by education level and gender (Figures in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>27.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>62.83</td>
<td>61.58</td>
<td>52.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>20.32</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>18.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>53.34</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana’s Labor Market (1987-92)

The fact that an increasing number of child laborers have no education at all gives credibility to the view of many critics that child labor is occurring more often among families desperately in need of an added income, and have no money to spend even on a primary education. However, the fact that a majority of child laborers have at least a primary education, but that the drop out rate increases dramatically after the primary level, may suggest that as school becomes increasingly expensive less families are able afford it. However, it should be noted here that there could be a number of other factors also involved in the steep drop out rate after the primary level. Table 3.3 also shows that the steepest drop out rate for all children occurs after the primary level, which may be another indicator of the exodus of child laborers.

Many SAP opponents have argued that when money becomes tight, girls are the first to be taken out of school. This too is consistent with Table 3.3, which illustrates that girls are not as likely to attend school, or obtain the higher levels of
education as boys. SAP critics have often blamed the household’s lack of money to spend on education to the higher prices of goods and services in general (which they blame on SAPs). And while this does make intuitive sense there does not seem to be any concrete evidence to provide a clear connection between the two. However, on the positive side all education levels have seen an improvement in female enrollment.

Table 3.3 Enrollment and Gender Breakdown by Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>1980-81 Gender Breakdown</th>
<th>1990-91 Gender Breakdown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>766,406</td>
<td>611,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>611,328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>78,017</td>
<td>35,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>35,140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>3,098</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>607</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another criticism that has been leveled at SAP is that it has encouraged governments to reduce their domestic spending on social programs such as education and health care, which makes these services more expensive and reduces people’s access to them. But although prices of medical and health care have gone up, as seen in Table 2.2, domestic spending by the Ghanaian government on public health care programs has actually increased. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show that government expenditure on public programs including health
care and education has significantly risen. And, as has been pointed out in Table 3.2, total school enrollment has actually increased among both genders.

Table 3.4  Public Investment Program
(In millions of cedis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works and housing</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>121.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local govt. and</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund (2000) p.36

Table 3.5  Public expenditure on education as % of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund (2000) p.5

Table 3.6  Gross domestic investment as a % of GDP

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Increased government spending on public programs including education and health care (Tables 3.4 and 3.5) seems to refute the argument by critics that such investment decreases under SAPs. However, whether or not this increased
spending has resulted in increased public welfare has been hotly contested. Tables 3.7 and 3.8 seem to reflect an increased benefit to society as a greater number of people have access to sanitation and infant mortality rates have declined.

**Table 3.7**  Access to sanitation as a % of population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*pp 242-243*

**Table 3.8**  Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*pp. 242-243*

However, in a report on inequality and poverty reduction through the years of 1988-92 it was found that “poverty incidence increased by 166 percent due to worsening inequality.”

The report argued that distribution among the lower spectrum of society worsened, which accounted for a decrease in living standards of the poor. Although there was a slight increase in domestic expenditure in recent years, poverty incidence increased due to worsening inequality between rich and poor. This view is also compatible with SAP critics’ contention that

---


104 Ibid.
SAPs hit the poorer sections of society hardest and it is often the women of these households that must work harder to provide for the families; although, it must be noted that this study is somewhat limited by its relatively short time frame.

The claim of critics that the incidence of child labor has increased under SAPs could not be proven, or disproved. A number of variables contribute to the incidence of child labor making it difficult to determine whether a single variable alone, SAPs, have either significantly reduced or increased its prevalence. This claim by critics remains ambiguous. A further claim by critics that children become laborers because their family has no money to spend on the child, may be supported in Table 3.2 which shows that an increasing number of child laborers have no education at all. Table 3.3 also shows that the steepest drop out rate among children occurs after the primary level, which might suggest critics’ claim that as education becomes more expensive more children are pulled out of school and a number of these are forced into child labor. However, there are too many variables associated with school enrollment rates to say with any certainty whether or not the cost of school fees has played a primary role. And although gender bias still occurs in that girls are still less likely than boys to stay in school, Table 3.3 does show that the percentage of girls enrolled at all education levels has increased. This could point to the beginning of a general improvement trend in school enrollment under SAPs. But, again, the evidence provided is at best circumstantial and cannot be relied upon to make a clear conclusion. More concrete evidence was found, however, to refute critics’ argument that government has been spending less on social programs under SAPs. Table 3.4
illustrates that government investment in a number of social programs has increased. And Table 3.5 shows a marked increase in money given to education. Overall gross domestic investment in the country has increased since 1980, all of which undermines the claim that SAPs reduce funding to domestic improvement programs. However, whether or not this increased spending on domestic programs has actually been able to help citizens remains unclear. Evidence on both sides makes it difficult to determine which side, if either, is correct.


**Conclusion**

Because of the multitude of variables involved in economics in general it is often difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary causes. Thus, it is difficult to make a clear connection between SAPs and intensified gender bias. However, there does appear to be a thin thread of causality, which pervades the findings of the Ghanaian case study. And, though this thread is not damnable proof against SAP’s it does point to the fact that SAPs are not infallible and do have shortcomings and failures that should be addressed. However, to give SAPs their due it should be acknowledged that the time period studied, roughly 1980 to 1995, is relatively short. It is argued by many proponents that any implementation of new policies or programs is bound to be accompanied by a period of turmoil before any benefits will be seen. Thus this study is limited in terms of its comparatively short time frame.

Below is a table illustrating the findings of this study, in order to gauge the strength or weakness of critics’ claims more succinctly. Some of the key claims made by critics are evaluated based upon a rating of S for strong, W for weak and I for indeterminate.
### Table 4.1 Assessing the Critics’ Claims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is intensified gender bias in the workforce under SAPs</td>
<td>Wage discrepancy has increased between men and women. Female unemployment has increased while male unemployment has decreased.</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women find it increasingly necessary to seek outside employment under SAPs.</td>
<td>Although participation in the paid labor force has remained the same, the number of women who have entered the self-employed, informal sector has nearly doubled.</td>
<td>S-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash crops are being produced to the detriment of subsistence foods</td>
<td>The production of edible and nutritious crops has nearly doubled. But the production of the cash crop cocoa beans has increased significantly as well.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices rise under SAPs due to an increase in imports</td>
<td>The price levels in Ghana have increased since 1987. Imports doubled between 1980 and 1997.</td>
<td>S-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices rise under SAPs due to a decrease in government subsidies</td>
<td>The price levels in Ghana have increased since 1987. But government funding to subsidies has actually increased.</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The incidence of child labor increases under SAPs</td>
<td>The percentage of child laborers between 10 and 14 has decreased, as has the participation of children in the urban labor force. However, the number of children in the rural labor force has increased.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When food is scare girls are more likely to be malnourished</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reduction in government subsidies has resulted in lower school enrollment</td>
<td>Funding to subsidies has increased. Enrollment has increased among boys and girls with girls making gains at every level.</td>
<td>W-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPs increase the incidence of poverty</td>
<td>More people have access to sanitation. Infant mortality is down from 1980 levels. But studies show there is a worsening inequality between the rich and poor.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen from the chart above some of the claims made by critics are strongly supported. However, there are also claims made that have very little evidence to support them, but the largest category is made up of claims that have been found to be indeterminate.

There are often many variables involved in economic relationships, and one must be careful in distinguishing cause from correlation. However, it is the contention of this paper that although there was a great deal of ambiguity in the data and some of the claims were fairly weak, there is enough evidence to warrant a healthy skepticism about SAPs. And, while there is not enough evidence to issue a complete condemnation of SAPs, this thesis advises a close observation and critical inquiry into continuing SAP policies and implementation. (It should be noted here that the IMF has responded to critics in recent years by issuing a reformation of IMF policies in an attempt to make them more people friendly. However, whether these reforms have had their intended effects, or, as critics claim, are little more than a cosmetic makeover remains to be seen.)

Structural adjustment is a man-made creation, and just like humans, human creations tend to fallible. The poet Robert Burns once observed that “the best laid plans of mice and men often go astray.” Thus even forces as powerful and seemingly omnipotent as economics must be carefully scrutinized, because even they may contain hidden biases inherited from their creators.
Bibliography


Carol Welch and Jason Oringer, “Structural Adjustment Programs,” *Foreign Policy*, vol. No. 3 (April, 1998).


Diane Elson, “Vision(s) of alternative economics from a feminist perspective,” taken from a speech at the *WIDE conference on women and alternative economics* at http://www.iepala.es/wide/weng/b001_02.htm.


LaVerle Berry, Ghana: a country study, (Washington D.C: The Division 1995).


Mel Gurtov, Global politics in the Human Interest (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).


