



Gender issues in *Doing Business*: An analysis using case studies of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMA	Accra Metropolitan Authority
CBR	Central Business Registrar
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEGENSA	Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy
ECP	Entrepreneurship Curriculum Program
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Program
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ISSER	Institute for Statistical and Socio-Economic Research
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NBSSI	National Bureau for Small Scale Industries
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAT	Value Added Tax

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Foreword: This study is a joint project commissioned by DANIDA and BMZ.

The first part of the project (this qualitative report) was supported by DANIDA while the second part (a survey) will be supported by BMZ. Both cooperating partners own all interim and final consultancy findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The general objective of the research is to assess the relevance of World Bank's *Doing Business* style reforms for the economic participation and productivity of women in Ghana. The research project aims to provide an informed basis on which to discuss possible adjustments and revisions to improve the gender relevance of the *Doing Business* Reports and selected indicators.

The study contrasted Ghanaian tradition with five regulatory areas that the *Doing Business* covers. These are regulations concerning Starting a business, Registering property, Getting credit, Employing workers and Paying taxes. Using open-ended interviews and case studies, a total of twenty-one (21) Ghanaian women entrepreneurs were interviewed in Accra and its environs in July and August 2009. A total of fourteen (14) gender, entrepreneurship, African studies and labour experts were also interviewed in the same time frame.

Research results on regulatory and traditional filters that impact women's capacities belong to three pillars: starting a business, running a business and obtaining formal employment. Regulatory reforms making starting a business easier, cheaper and faster makes it also easier for women in Ghana to register their business. The further implementation of electronic business registration procedures could help reduce "mediation fees" which are normally paid to registration authorities. However, underlying the reforms that make starting a business easier are Ghanaian women's motivations and capacities for becoming entrepreneurs. The lack of education, need for time flexibility and lack of access to start-up capital are powerful factors shaped by traditional filters that influence women's decision to start and formalise businesses and generally put them in disadvantage against their male counterparts.

Lack of start-up capital is strongly related to access to credit, which in turn is correlated with formal property ownership. Unfortunately Ghanaians are still following traditional, rather than statutory rules when it comes to land inheritance¹ and furthermore, Ghanaian tradition concerning land inheritance contains built-in discrimination towards female land ownership. Therefore, women in Ghana rarely own formal property that they could use as a collateral to obtain start-up capital. This disadvantage is not rooted in cumbersome property registration procedures, as measured in the *Doing Business* reports, but rather in discriminatory inheritance and ownership patterns filtered by traditions.

Regulations that make it easier, cheaper and faster to obtain credit, a regulatory aspect that falls under the pillar "running a business", do not appear to have a gender-specific effect. Both men and women have difficulties in obtaining commercial credit - due to numerous requirements and high interest rates - although women tend to experience more difficulties

¹ Land could denote farmland, resources found on the land such as water sources and forests, or assets found on land such as buildings.

due to the lack of properties registered under their name. Similarly, regulations on taxation as such, do not discriminate against women. However, the study's respondents continuously experience difficulties in paying taxes, which are collected inconsistently, unsystematically and in a non-transparent manner. The taxation system remains complicated from the perspective of taxpayers and could benefit from regulatory reforms that aim to simplify and systematise the taxation process. Since women are on average less well educated than men, they tend to have more difficulties in dealing with tax regulations.

The few Ghanaian women who are qualified for formal employment face bleak prospects in the labour market due to employers' prejudices regarding young women's childbearing and domestic obligations in the first few years of obtaining formal work. Moreover, regulations impose part of the costs related to maternity on firms with the consequence that firms are reluctant to hire young women.

Overall, traditions are important determinants of women's economic participation and productivity in Ghana. The demand to reproduce heirs for the lineage and to augment family income at an early age pulls young women out of schools leaving them less qualified for formal employment. The lack of education also makes it more difficult for women to understand regulations that influence their businesses or to seek ways for obtaining information. Due to traditional inheritance practices women rarely own formal property that they could use to obtain commercial credit. Women's full potential in productivity could not be realised because both women entrepreneurs and employees are expected to perform the bulk of domestic tasks despite having responsibilities in their enterprises and employment. The combined effects of low education, need to earn income at an early age in order to support family income, few available positions in the formal job market, lack of financial capital and the need to balance work and family life contributes to an ever-growing share of women in the Ghanaian informal economy.

Research findings show that in the Ghanaian context, regulations in starting a business, paying taxes, registering property and getting credit are more or less gender neutral. Women's disadvantage in starting and running a business is rather rooted in strong traditional values that overlap with these regulations and result in a gender bias. Rigid regulations related to getting formal employment seem to work against women's employment probabilities. On top of regulatory issues, the lack of transparency of the Ghanaian taxation system, inflexibility of commercial banks and the lack of opportunities in the job market are issues that impact women but are found to be embedded in systemic problems of the national context.

Policy recommendations based on this research could be grouped into recommendations concerning (A) measures to improve the business environment of women, (B) policies that could empower women beyond the *Doing Business* and the business environment and (C) specific recommendations for improving the gender relevance of *Doing Business* indicators.

A) Policies that improve the business environment of women include reviewing how land inheritance practices and distribution of marital properties play out despite formal gender-neutral land policies, rigorous implementation of the Intestate Cessation Law, and supporting land transfers between male and female recipients. An independent review of the property-collateral-credit nexus in the context of the condition of the national banking system will shed light on women's poor credit access. In the interim the promotion of micro-finance systems could increase women's access to credit. A one-stop-shop for business registration and taxation, computerization of business registration, including the creation of telephone hotlines

and brochures that explain legal procedures in simple terms would help women understand the process and the value of registering businesses and paying taxes. Moreover, women entrepreneurs would benefit from a simpler and more transparent tax calculation procedure for small enterprises.

B) Recommendations that promote the economic empowerment of women include policies that aim to keep young girls in school, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in secondary, technical and vocation curricula and government support for training and entrepreneurship programmes that increase women's financial and business management skills. It is also worthwhile to review the implementation of government policies regarding female employment of Ghana-based firms to confirm if a bias against qualified women applicants does exist in the labour market. Two further approaches are recommended. The first approach involves creating a social security system that eases the costs related to childbearing from the firm and distributes these costs across society since childbearing is in society's general interest anyway. The second approach is to work alongside *Doing Business* prescriptions of making the formal labour market more flexible in order to allow firms to open up more positions for women.

The implementation of gender-mainstreaming in the workplace and putting up incentives for women to return to work after childbirth are simple policies that make formal employment possible and more attractive for women. Increasing social security for Ghanaians working in the informal sector is a goal that the government should strive for to support the informal workers who make a significant part of the Ghanaian economy run. Finally, using the radio as a means of highlighting women role models could erode female discrimination at all levels and encourage women that they could achieve more in economic life.

C) Recommendations that increase the gender relevance of *Doing Business* could either take the form of an incremental adjustment in the indicators to reflect gender impacts of regulatory reforms or departing from the methodological approach of *Doing Business* by supplementing *Doing Business* information with data on gender parity. Two indicators that could benefit from including a gender aspect are the "Getting credit" indicator and the "Registering property" indicator. The inclusion of a gender parity index in public and private credit registry coverage among the sub-indicators in the "Getting credit" indicator would reflect how many women are registered in public and private credit bureaus; higher values imply better registry coverage. Creating a sub-indicator under "Registering property" that measures land registration coverage on women (as % of adults) could show whether reforms are working through increased number of women that have land registered under their name. In the short run, accompanying *Doing Business* results with gender parity information, for example, male female ratio in registered businesses or in formal public-private wage employment is one way to put *Doing Business* results into better perspective.

1. Introduction

The World Bank's *Doing Business 2010* is seventh in a series of annual reports that measure and compare the quality of business regulations worldwide (World Bank, 2009). *Doing Business* investigates regulations and presents quantitative "indicators" that measure the total number of days, procedures and costs that affect various stages of a business' life. Each country's indicator values are used to assess the ease of doing business in that country, and are compared with other economies to create a ranking on the ease of doing business worldwide. Covering 183 economies, the recently released report is proof that *Doing Business*, one of the World Bank's biggest and most influential projects to date, is even gaining in scope.

The fundamental premise behind the project is seemingly straightforward; economic activity requires good rules and cumbersome business regulations stifle productive activity (World Bank 2004 and World Bank, 2009). Therefore, removing burdensome laws to enterprises will lead to improved institutional quality and create a favourable business environment for everyone. By simplifying regulation, a dynamic and level playing field for all businesses will emerge. According to the people behind *Doing Business*, regulatory reforms will benefit young workers and women the most. Higher rankings in *Doing Business* are associated with more women entrepreneurs and workers, more business registrations from women, a smaller share of the economy in the informal sector and more economic growth (World Bank, 2007).

However, conclusive empirical evidence on the potential effects of reforms in these regulatory areas on women is still lacking. Unless empirical evidence shows a link between reforming the regulatory business environment and women's economic productivity, caution should be taken in commending positive effects of reforms. This hold especially true for many African countries whose customary laws take precedence over many statutory laws, and where tradition still strongly determine the paths that women's lives should take.

The general objective of this project is to generate empirical evidence on the relevance of *Doing Business*-style regulatory reforms on women entrepreneurs and employees in a developing country context. On account of Ghana's steady commitment to reforms, good performance in the *Doing Business* reports, and deeply traditional society, the country was selected as the optimal case of study. The two main research questions that the paper attempts to answer are: 1) *How do business regulations and how do traditional factors influence female entrepreneurship and employment in Ghana?* And 2) *What follows for approaching the gender issue in the DB reports (and beyond)?* To provide an answer to the research questions, fieldwork in Accra, Ghana and its surroundings was conducted in July and August 2009. Several in-depth interviews with experts and open-ended interviews with women entrepreneurs were conducted in this time period.

The rest of the report is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly provides the reader with the analytical point of departure of the research. Section 3 presents an overview of the World Bank's *Doing Business* project, Ghana's performance according to yearly *Doing Business* reports, and the traditional patterns affecting Ghanaian women entrepreneurs and employees. Section 4 begins with a short explanation of the methodology and proceeds with a detailed examination of the important findings of this study. Section 5 presents the main conclusions as well as the policy recommendations on how to improve the gender relevance of the *Doing Business* and improve the business environment for women entrepreneurs.

2. Perspective of the study and procedure

Doing Business asserts that pay-offs involved in making administrative procedures related doing business cheaper, faster and simpler, are greater for women. In this research, we focus on five regulatory areas covered by the *Doing Business* indicators namely: Registering property, Getting credit, Starting a business, Employing workers, and Paying taxes. The claimed causalities between removing cumbersome regulations and women's economic productivity are discussed as follows.

According to the *Doing Business*, simplifying regulations related to **property registration** are especially beneficial for women. Empirical research have shown higher investments in children's health and education among women who have access to property (Beegle and Strauss, 1996 and Katz and Chamorro, 2003). Land titling is said to create a market for the rights to the resource, give value to the land and bring it into the economy (de Soto, 2000). Entrepreneurs benefit because land could be used as collateral to acquire loans to start or expand businesses. Throughout the world, women are more constrained than men in accessing finance (Buvinic and King, 2007). According to *Doing Business*, making it easier for women to **access finance** could be the simplest method to help improve women's businesses after several studies showed that the lack of financial capital is the single biggest constraint preventing women from expanding enterprises (International Labour Organization, 1998 and Ellis et al., 2007). When lenders and borrowers both have strong legal rights, the fear of legal complications coming from financial transactions gone wrong, is smaller. If governments combine strong legal rights with public availability of credit histories, women will face fewer constraints in accessing commercial credit.

Easing regulations by making it cheaper, faster and simpler to **start a business** are regulatory changes that are the most straightforward and easiest to carry out. When regulatory conditions allow easier registration of new businesses, female entrepreneurship and employment is observed to be higher (World Bank, 2007). The *Doing Business* **Employing workers** indicator recommends creating more flexible labour markets to boosts job creation and to eliminate possible biases in the hiring and promotion of female workers (ibid). High worker dismissal costs could increase the number of women in the informal economy and reduce overall female employment (Montenegro and Pagés, 2003 and Saavedra, 1998). Reforming labour laws to make them less rigid is also said to foster entrepreneurship. Countries with less rigid labour regulations have a 30% increased probability of formal business start-ups (Stel et al., 2006).

Reducing tax rates and simplifying administrative procedures in **paying taxes** is the second most popular reform among *Doing Business* indicators because making taxes cheaper is relatively uncomplicated and because elections could be won by using a "lower taxes" campaign policy (World Bank, 2006). Since women-led enterprises are said to experience more regulatory burden and harassment from public officials than enterprises headed by men (World Bank, 2008b), introducing electronic tax filing and payment is a solution that could alleviate their harassment.

However, traditional and social factors also operate on women (and their economic participation) alongside, if not on top of, regulatory business environments. Proponents of New Institutional Economics, among them, 2009 Nobel Prize winner Oliver Williamson, argue that the highest level of rules in society are formed at the social embeddedness level (see North, 1990, Williamson, 1998 and Williamson, 2000). The embeddedness level is the level where tradition, norms and social practices are formed. The institutional environment

level where laws are created – the level that *Doing Business* attempts to influence – is located *under* the social embeddedness level. Social rules permeate every aspect of the people's lives such that, although it is relatively easy to change regulations, social practices are more difficult to break down because they are deeply entrenched in the population.

Traditional factors may render regulatory reforms useless or change their intended effects. For example, the Sub Saharan African practice of land allocation because of communal membership persists up to this day, despite the implementation of statutory laws that govern land allocation. This practice is not entirely gender neutral because in communities, women's land rights are subordinate to men's based on social and cultural norms (Toulmin, 2005). Women's weak credit access from commercial banks have been traced to discriminatory treatment from bank officials despite key legislation recognizing the equal legal status of both male and female borrowers (Ellis and Cutura, 2007).

Therefore, this research intends to empirically investigate how regulation and tradition interact and set the conditions for women's participation in the economy whether as entrepreneurs or as employees. Information used to create this report were obtained from various sources including a review of literature consisting of academic and non-academic publications, expert interviews, and in-depth interviews (case studies) with both formal and informal women entrepreneurs. The case study method is best suited for this kind of research because the study is attempting to answer the *how* and *why* of the gender-regulation-tradition-entrepreneurship nexus and because we want to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events in which the subjects (entrepreneurs) found themselves in (for more details see 4.1 Methodology).

3. Background Ghana: *Doing Business*, traditions and women

The World Bank's *Doing Business* measures first and foremost the total number of days, procedures and costs involved in ten regulatory areas affecting domestic small and medium-sized enterprises. The ten regulatory areas are represented by ten indicators on topics of: Starting a business, Dealing with construction permits, Employing workers, Registering property, Getting credit, Protecting investors, Paying taxes, Trading across borders, Enforcing contracts and Closing a business.

What makes the annual reports captivating and controversial are the cross-country comparisons for each indicator and the rankings that contrast the Ease of Doing Business worldwide. Africa has been making great strides in reform: 28 economies implemented 58 reforms and three of the top ten reformers in the latest report are African (Senegal, Burkina Faso and Rwanda) (World Bank, 2009). Nevertheless, according to the *Doing Business*, despite these successes, the continent will still need to reform most of its outdated laws in several areas of business if it wants to sustain the 6% per annum average economic growth it attained in the past decade (ibid).

The pressure to reform in developing countries has never been greater as economies bid to keep up with the pace of reforms in other countries and improve their ease of business ranking in the yearly reports. Former Soviet economies have been reported to perform legal and political contortions to improve their ranking in hopes of boosting foreign investment and economic growth (Aslam, 2008). This expectation is not unfounded. It has been reported that the World Bank, Millennium Challenge Account, and the International Development Association have been using the *Doing Business* data to identify countries that most deserve

development aid, to impose conditions on its debtors and to set conditions for receiving further funding (World Bank, 2005 and Arruñada, 2007). Indeed, after eight short years, the world has caught up on the *Doing Business* fever.

However, criticism for the *Doing Business* is not missing. According to Drachenfels et al (2007) seven out of ten *Doing Business* indicators advocate for lesser regulation, discounting the central function of laws and regulations as a mechanism for facilitating economic activity and social welfare. And, although the *Doing Business* has shown the association of regulatory framework with firm performance (see Djankov et al., 2006), other research (see for example, Commander and Svejnar, 2007) have shown otherwise. The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) further emphasized that the direction of the causality between the regulatory framework and macroeconomic outcomes is difficult to isolate because many other factors tend to influence macro-level outcomes (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2008). Because the *Doing Business* fails to capture other key dimensions of a country's business climate and in the light of conflicting research with regards to the social benefits of regulatory reform, caution should be taken when asserting the advantages of regulatory reform on women. Empirical research on how *Doing Business* reforms work on women is still lacking. Working along the lines of argument of the IEG, what could be good for the individual firm may not be good for the society as a whole.

3.1 Ghana's performance in the *Doing Business*

Buoyed by the possibility of economic growth and good relations with international donors, African economies have now implemented more reforms than ever before, after lagging behind other regions in previous years (World Bank, 2009). Ghana belonged to the top reformers club for two years in a row, ranking 94th out of 175 in *Doing Business* 2007 through reforms that made it easier to register property, pay taxes and trade across borders. In *Doing Business* 2008, Ghana ranked 87th out of 178 economies, making the most progress in the reduction of days required to issue a land registration number. This resulted in a huge jump from rank 113 in this indicator in 2007 towards rank 26 in the 2008 report. In 2009 and 2010 *Doing Business* reports, Ghana did not make it among the top reformers but still achieved 87th out of 181 economies and 92nd out of 183 economies respectively. The following table shows Ghana's standing in each of the ten indicators for the past four years.

Tabelle 1 Ghana's ranking in Doing Business 2007-2010

Rank	DB 2007	DB 2008	DB 2009	DB 2010
Ease of <i>Doing Business</i>	94	87	87	92
Starting a Business	145	138	137	135
Dealing with construction permits*	83	140	142	153
Employing workers	120	138	145	133
Registering property	113	26	31	33
Getting credit	117	115	109	113
Protecting investors	33	33	38	41
Paying taxes	77	75	65	79
Trading across borders	61	61	76	83
Enforcing contracts	50	51	50	47
Closing a business	94	96	104	106

(Source: World Bank, 2007, World Bank, 2008a, World Bank, 2009)

Note: * This indicator was termed "Dealing with licenses" until 2008

Ghana's ranking has worsened in areas involving construction permits, investor protection, cross border trading and business closure. Although streamlining construction permit procedures was a popular reform among neighbouring countries in 2007/08, Ghana seemed to have stopped reforming in this area, and have slipped in the rankings.

On the other hand, compared to other countries and starting from a low level, Ghana has seen improvement along a four-year trend in starting a business. In 2006/07, the computerization of business registration procedures allowed for quicker business name search, cutting down the time necessary for the whole application process. In 2007/08, Ghana formally abolished the cumbersome requirement of having a company seal for business registration.

The country's overall performance with regard to labour market laws, property registration, credit, and taxation laws seems to be still volatile, as observed from the dips and peaks in its ranking in the past four years. Ghana belongs among countries where it is most difficult to employ workers because costs involved in firing a Ghanaian worker is equivalent to 178 weeks of her salary (World Bank, 2009). The current Value Added Tax (VAT) system was initially introduced in 1995; only to be withdrawn two months later after fierce public protests scared politicians. It took another four years before the VAT could be reintroduced to the public (World Bank, 2006).

<p>Main de jure regulations relevant for women and small business in Ghana (selected)</p> <p>Recognition of Duality of Legal Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 11(2) of the 1992 Constitution – the common law of Ghana shall comprise the rules of law generally known as the common law, the rules generally known as the doctrines of equity and the rules of customary law, including those determined by the superior court of Judicature. <p>Land and Property Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 22(2) of the 1992 Constitution – Parliament should “as soon as practicable after coming into force of this constitution, enact legislation regulating the property rights of spouses during and at dissolution of marriage” <p>Access to Credit, Finance and Collateral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ghana Trade Policy, Section 5.3 – aims to lower costs through provision of adequate and competitively prices credit to agricultural traders and producers ❖ Ghana Trade Policy, Section 4.3 – aims to ensure access to secure tenure with established title and effectively use land as collateral for finance <p>Inheritance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Intestate Cessation Law – 1985, Section 4 – where the intestate is survived by a spouse or child or both, the spouse, or child or both of them shall be entitled absolutely to the household chattels. <p>Right to Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 25(1)(a) of the 1992 Constitution – guarantees the right to equal opportunities and facilities, and with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right, basic education is to be free, compulsory and available to all. <p>Right to Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 24 of the 1992 Constitution – guarantees the right of women to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions and shall receive equal pay for equal work done. <p>Taxation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) – empowers all district assemblies to levy rates, tolls, poll tax and licenses on businesses as well as households. <p>Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ghana Investment Code, Section 12 – creating an enabling environment for agriculture, which is considered of national priority <p>Equality of Opportunities and Mainstreaming women in Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 36(6) of the 1992 Constitution – the state shall afford equality of economic opportunities to all citizens, and in particular, the State shall take all necessary steps to ensure the full integration of women into the mainstream of economic development in Ghana. <p>Equality before the Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Article 17(1) of the 1992 Constitution – All persons shall be equal before the law. Section (4) – requirement of special legislation or policies to address discriminatory socio-cultural, economic or educational imbalances in Ghanaian society. <p>International Women's Rights Conventions and Treaties Ratified by Ghana (selected)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Signed July 17, 1980, ratified without reservations January 2, 1986 ❖ International Labour Organization (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention C100. Ratified March 14, 1968 ❖ International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation. Ratified April 4, 1961 ❖ African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Optional Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa
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Abbildung 1 Selected regulations affecting women and small businesses in Ghana

(Source: Agboli, 2007)

Ghana's serious commitment to reforms to increase their competitiveness did not remain unnoticed. The country was specially mentioned by *Doing Business* 2010 as a "systematic reformer" – successfully changing laws in at least five areas covered by the *Doing Business* project over the past five years. The country is also riding on the crest of US President Obama's state visit in July 2009. Although not a strategic trading partner for the United States like Nigeria and Kenya, the purpose of the visit was to emphasise US support for Ghana's democracy and good governance and to highlight the country's commitment to the rule of law (Wallis and Dombey, 2009). Still, regulatory reforms are more pressing for Ghana than ever, to accommodate the increased economic opportunities, internationalization and growth in the country as a result of unprecedented international attention. The question remains however, whether Ghana's reforms have really created a difference among small and medium enterprises, and particularly among women, who continue to live with traditional boundaries in a quickly modernizing society.

3.2 Traditional and social patterns affecting Ghanaian women entrepreneurs and employees

In order to understand how and why Ghanaian women turn out to be entrepreneurs or employees in adulthood, one has to look closely at how their lives take shape beginning from childhood. Ghanaian girls' lives take certain paths that have an impact on the kind of lives they lead later on.

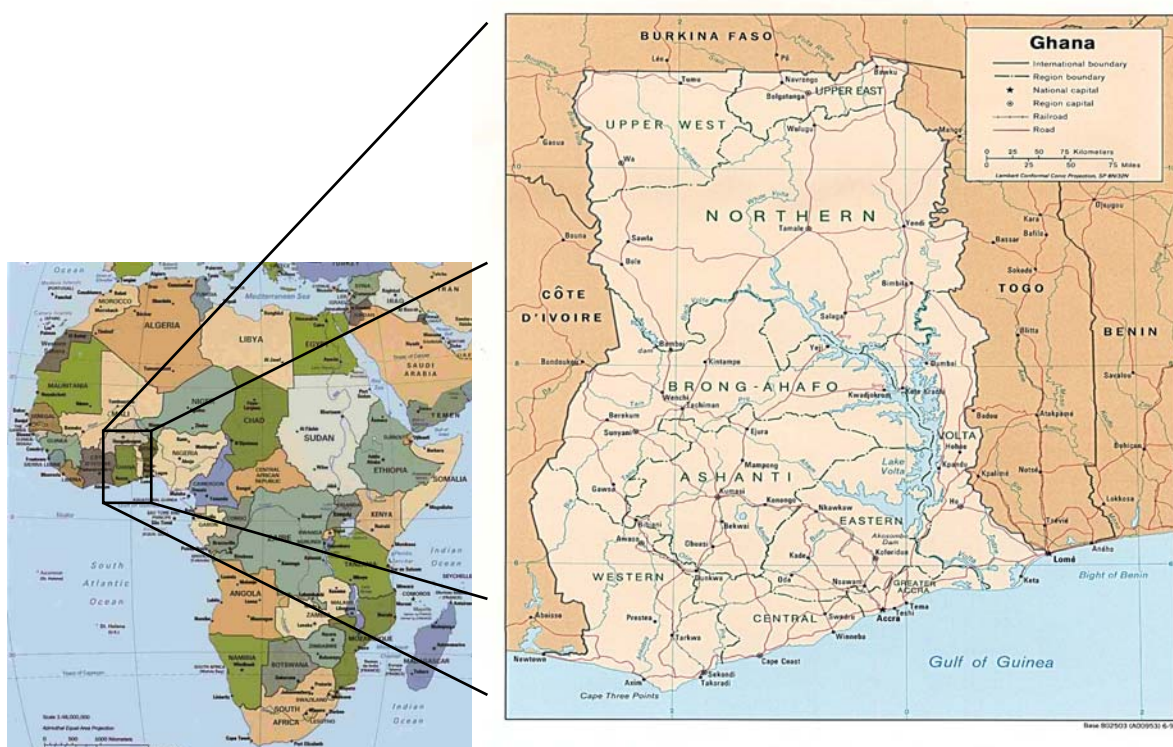


Abbildung 2 Maps of Africa and Ghana

(Source: Institute for Security Studies, <http://www.issafrica.org/>)

When a Ghanaian girl is born, she would belong to either a patrilineal or matrilineal lineage. The girls' lineage defines the rules of succession and inheritance in her family; and these rules derive from indigenous customary law. Under customary law, both men and women regardless of lineage have rights in "lineage land" although this law is more complicated in

practice (Kotey and Tsikata, 1998). Different tribes define various inheritance laws differently, even if they belong to the same lineage. For example, if a woman belongs to a matrilineal society, her lineage members are her mother and all other relations through her mother. If a land-owning person dies within a matrilineal society, a member of the lineage of the same gender as the deceased is appointed as the successor who takes control and makes decisions about the property. A woman's land inheritance probabilities are nil if she was born in a patrilineal lineage because in this type of society, males clearly take precedence over females in matters of property ownership. In practice however, for both lineage types, women's land rights still course through men who tend to hold property, under the ideology that women are not farmers, and would later marry off and leave the community. This leaves a typical Ghanaian woman with weak control over land and few to no properties under her name (ABANTU for Development, 2008).

If the typical Ghanaian girl was born before the 1980s, chances are high that she probably would not attend primary and secondary school. It was only in the mid-1980s that the government launched the "Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Program" (FCUBE), geared towards increasing rates of primary school attendance in the country. The policy was the government's response to the alarming drop in attendance in primary school in the mid-70s, despite the expansion of basic education following independence in 1957. The policy appears to be successful. As of 2007, the gender parity index in primary and secondary education was 99 and 88 respectively (UNESCO, 2009).

Although there is no significant difference in the proportion of boys and girls aged 7 to 14 attending school at this time, Tsukada and Silva (2009) noted that school-age Ghanaian girls tend to work disproportionately longer hours in doing unpaid domestic chores than boys. Girls are more likely to be child labourers and have significantly fewer hours devoted for homework and self-study. The authors contend that the neglect in human capital accumulation for girls at this age severely harms their potential for higher income later on.

The potential for increased productivity, higher incomes and consequently, stronger bargaining power, is partly made possible by higher education. Despite making basic education free, compulsory and available for all, the gender parity in tertiary education drastically falls to a mere 54 (UNESCO, 2009). Literacy rates among Ghanaian females lag behind female literacy rates of Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa. Socio-economic demands on women such as early marriage, child bearing and education or engagement in economic activities to earn money are some reasons for the huge disparity in between sexes in tertiary education (Agboli, 2007).

Early marriage is common in Ghana because a woman's ability to reproduce heirs for the lineage is highly valued in the country. Marriage among the Akan tribe for example, are preceded by betrothals, which oftentimes occur long before the girl reaches legal marriageable age² (Kuenyehia and Ofei-Aboagye, 1998). The popular notion is that Ghanaian women's reproductive labour is responsible for keeping the family bloodline alive. This belief made Ghana one of the most populous countries in Western Africa, with the total population projected to reach up to 27 million by 2020. Reasons underlying the desire to earn at an early age are usually to supplement family income in order to provide resources to sustain immediate family and relatives, to provide for children's education, to offset the high cost of living and education in Ghana, and to achieve financial independence (Dzisi, 2008). Women

² Ghana Children's Act, 1998, Act 560, section 14 (2) sets the minimum age of marriage at eighteen.

who start working after secondary school tend to enter the labour market in lower paying jobs that require little to no education, few skills, and little investments. Up to 90% of them work in the informal economy as micro-entrepreneurs and micro-retailers (Agboli, 2007). Rogerson (1996) describes these types of informal enterprise as *survivalist* enterprises. Women typically run survivalist enterprises because they are unable to secure regular wage employment or access an economic sector of their choice. Incomes from survivalist enterprises usually fall below minimum income standards and opportunities for expansion are heavily constrained. Berner et al (2008) describe survivalist entrepreneurs as those who try to increase security and smoothen consumption rather than maximise profit, and even the relatively successful ones find it difficult to accumulate capital. These women could have a strong family support system but still lack a business plan and social networks that could help them in business development (Chea, 2008). A survey of literature of Berner et al shows that the prognosis is not good: graduation from survivalist entrepreneurship into small-scale business is the exception, not the norm.

Women who stay in rural areas dominate food crop production. According the Ghana Living Standards Survey IV 1998/99 (GLSS), women carry out over 80% of food production activities and 90% of processing activities related to agricultural produce, including fish (Agboli, 2007). However, despite their significant contributions, women still have weak access to and control over land (Dowuona-Hammond, 2008).

If agricultural employment was segmented by gender, significant gender segmentation also exists within the wage employed labour force in Ghana. According to Heintz (2005), Ghanaian women primarily have access to formal employment only through wage employment in the public sector or formal self employment. Women who manage to finish secondary education tend to populate clerical and secretarial work, or work as shop assistants, hairdressers, dressmakers and maids. Those with university backgrounds tend to become nurses or teachers. Despite the success in obtaining wage employment, the types of jobs that women acquire are the types that pay less, have lower status and bleak advancement prospects (Agboli, 2007).

4. Gender issues in starting a business, running a business and getting formally employed

In this chapter, we present results of interviews with entrepreneurs and experts on the relevance of *Doing Business* style reforms for the economic participation and productivity of women in Ghana. The rest of the chapter is structured as follows: in section 4.1 the methodological approach for the data-gathering period will be shortly discussed. In section 4.2 an overview of results is presented. Details of results are discussed in section 4.3 Starting a Business, 4.4 Running a Business and 4.5 Getting Employed.

4.1 Methodology

For this research the case study method was employed. Yin (2009) describes case study as an empirical investigation of a contemporary fact that allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Case study methods are applied specially to answer the “*how*” and “*why*” in situations when the phenomenon being studied is embedded within important contextual conditions.

There were two types of respondents in the study, namely: experts and entrepreneurs. Experts were interviewed early on, with the purpose of obtaining an overview of Ghanaian women entrepreneurship and with the intention of checking local-level issues that were not included in the pre-developed interview schedules. The women entrepreneurs for the case study interviews were selected in order to cover a range of different types of enterprises (formal and informal) and sizes of businesses (micro, small and medium).

A total of 14 experts were interviewed in Accra and Tema (suburb of Accra). The experts were either officers or members of various associations that have direct and indirect links to women's entrepreneurship and employment. Among the organizations included in the survey is the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) and the Institute for Statistical and Socio-Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana. Women's entrepreneurship experts from the National Bureau for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) and EDC Consulting Limited, as well as women's rights experts from the Ark Foundation and UNIFEM Ghana were also interviewed. To shed light on labour and employment conditions of Ghanaian women, two labour experts were interviewed; one from the Accra branch of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the other is a senior lecturer from the Department of Economics in the University of Ghana in Legon.

Twenty-one case studies were made among women with different livelihood situations. These include seamstresses, grilled plantain sellers, a school owner, a licensed chemical dealer, handicraft sellers, herbal medicine manufacturer, and household-items sellers. The issues on which information was collected using the case study method were: influence of tradition in shaping women's lives, entrepreneurship strategies, obstacles to livelihoods, and women's perceptions with regard to the institutional framework affecting their businesses. To acquire greater breadth of information, open-ended interviewing method was used. The approach is best for understanding complex behaviours without imposing any *a priori* categorization on respondents (Fontana and Frey, 1994). From the twenty-one case studies, nine women were selected for further investigation. These were:

- ❖ **Georgina Adjaso** and **Joan Johnson**, two women who sell Ghanaian handicrafts locally, but are also involved in handicraft export to the United States. *Both women have at least ten handicrafts workers under continuous non-contractual employment.*
- ❖ **Rejoice Adjazoo**, a former teacher who creates and supplies *Batik* cloth to private as well as institutional customers. *Mrs. Adjazoo has three permanent workers under her employment as well as two non-paid trainees.*
- ❖ **Antonia Brookman**, a married Chemical Engineering graduate who decided to manufacture liquid detergents, air fresheners and household detergents. *Including Mrs. Brookman, there are ten formally employed workers for her detergent business.*
- ❖ **Dufie Esther**, an Accra migrant who sells oranges to lorry drivers and passengers on the street. *Mrs Esther is self-employed.*
- ❖ Two seamstresses; **Mercy Alorvi**, a young lady who recently decided to put up her own business after working under an employer for six years and **Mina Adu Fosua**, an older dressmaker who began by working for a sewing company in 1969. *Ms. Mercy Alorvi is self-employed. Mrs Adu Fosua is also self-employed, but has three non-paid trainees working for her.*

- ❖ **Augustina Coleman**, a woman who changed to selling ice water after two of her earlier businesses failed. *Mrs. Coleman is self-employed. And,*
- ❖ **Joyce Bortei**, a registered manufacturer of herbal medicines and supplements in Sakomono. *Mrs. Bortei has seasonal workers for both field and processing work, but has one permanent non-contractual employee to help her in sales.*

For most of the paper, the experiences of these nine women will be used to create a picture of the condition and situation of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs. However, for the analysis, all interviews were used. Case study findings have been contrasted and compared with results from interviews with experts, newspaper articles and other academic publications to check for validity and consistency. Such a triangulation of the information obtained allows the researcher to increase the validity and credibility of the research because of the possibility of corroborating results from various data sources (Yin, 2009).

The method used in analysing results involved explanation building and cross case synthesis. Explanation building entails developing an explanation about the case in narrative form, studying causal links and iteratively comparing the initial case with the second, third or more cases. Cross-case synthesis involves aggregating findings across a series of individual case studies and putting them in a tabular or diagrammatic form. Overall patterns give insights into whether cases share similarities, or whether subgroups sharing a common characteristic can be distinguished.

4.2 Overview of results

Traditional and regulatory factors, which are significant for starting and running a business and for getting formally employed, are presented in Figure 3.

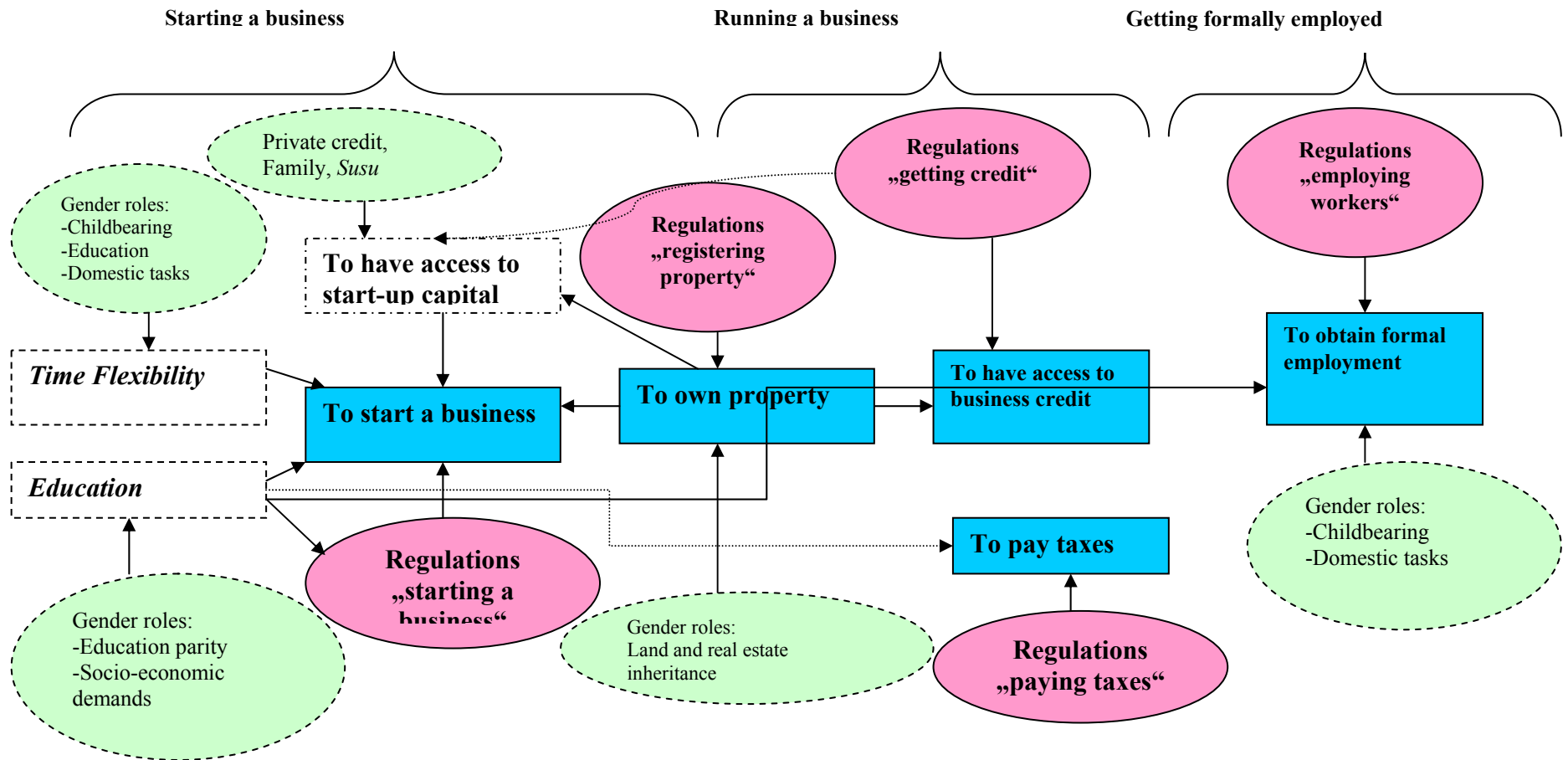


Abbildung 3 Overview of interaction of regulatory and traditional factors influencing Ghanaian women's entrepreneurship
 (Source: Author's own)

Solid rectangles in Figure 1 show women’s “capacities” that are related to doing business. These are the capacity to start a business, own property, have access to business credit, pay taxes and obtain formal employment. Important factors determining these capacities, such as time flexibility, education, and access to start-up capital are shown in dashed rectangles. Solid ellipses represent regulations that act as filters affecting women’s capacity to conduct business namely: Property registration, Getting credit, Starting a business, Employing workers and Paying taxes.

Dashed ellipses represent dimensions of tradition that act as filters of women’s capacities and at the same time as filters of factors influencing these capacities. These are: women’s traditional roles in households, parents’ preference in sending sons to school, socio-economic demands on young women, male-biased land and property inheritance practices, childbearing expectations, women’s burden of domestic tasks, and the strength and wealth of women’s networks. The solid arrows show strong support from the empirical results for the relation while dashed arrows show weaker support. The schema runs across three segments of productivity that the abovementioned regulations tend to influence, that is, starting a business, running a business and getting formally employed.

4.3 Starting a business

Both regulatory and non-regulatory (tradition) elements act as filters that influence factors that determine women’s capacity to start business. Whether women could fulfil these factors and successfully start own businesses depends on the character of these filters. In most cases, Ghanaian tradition has built-in discriminatory features against women. Ghanaian regulation on the other hand, is largely gender-neutral unless it overlaps with the filter of tradition.

4.3.1 Regulatory filters affecting starting a business

Women’s ability to start a business is directly influenced by their capacity to register the business – *filtered by the regulations pertaining to this registration procedure of starting a business*; and is indirectly influenced the their capacity to own property³ – *filtered by the regulations pertaining to the registration of property* – as well as by their capacity to get start-up capital – *filtered by the regulations regarding getting credit* (see Figure 1). In what follows the relations between these regulatory filters and the aforementioned women’s capacities are discussed.

Regulations that affect business registration have a profound impact on whether businesses will be formalised or tend to remain informal. Interviews with entrepreneurs pointed to three findings. First, when the business registration process is easier and faster, more women tend to register businesses. The cost of registration was not really an issue. Related to this is the second finding that most of the respondents with formal businesses paid an official at the business registration centre some amount to facilitate registration for them. In the conversations, this form of “mediation” was considered as a normal

³ Property could be used for the location of their business or as a collateral for getting start-up capital.

occurrence. Third, although small business whose clients demand proof of transaction clearly benefit from business registration, to micro entrepreneurs, the advantages seems to be less. For micro enterprise owners, registration only elevates the business to the radar of tax authorities.

There appears to be two fundamental levels of enterprise formality in Ghana. The first level of formality (here termed “semi-formality”) is payment with the Metropolitan Assemblies (MA) of the district where the business is located. Payment with the Metropolitan Assemblies could be done in small amounts daily (the method most appropriate and affordable for micro-entrepreneurs) or quarterly (most appropriate for small, medium and large scale entrepreneurs who need to pay bigger amounts)⁴. Collection from the Metropolitan Assemblies, however, is not regular and not consistent everywhere. Philomena Dsane of the National Bureau for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) clarified the purpose of the AMA payments. She said that AMA payments go directly to the city council. Payments to the MAs are almost always very cheap because it is mostly for micro and small enterprises operating within the city’s vicinity. Stall owners in the Makola market in Accra who want to sell in designated areas are supposed to pay the fee otherwise the AMA could rightfully confiscate the goods being sold. Those who have paid receive a sticker on their stall entrance as proof that they have paid. The money is supposed to go to cleaning and upkeep of the selling areas.

The higher level of formality (in the following termed “formality”) is registration with the Central Business Registrar located in Accra (CBR). This entails registering a unique business name and a one-time payment of a registration fee. Once a business is registered, they are eligible for paying tax to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Having a business registered at this level entails costs in terms of the registration fee and transactions costs and in terms of a higher probability of paying taxes to the IRS but also entails some advantages, like getting access to potentially attractive markets where registration is required (see the following example):

Most buyers from outside Ghana feel more comfortable when they deal with a legally registered business. You have a premise where you could be reached. You have a phone where you could be reached. In the National Association of Handicrafts Exporters we decided that if you want to join the association, you have to present company registration papers and an account for the company opened through Prudential Bank. The company sends someone to your business office to make sure that you really have one. With this kind of business (handicraft exporting) I think it pays off to officially register the business. (Georgina Adjasoo, Ghanaian handicrafts seller and exporter)

From the interviews it became clear that what entrepreneurs didn’t like about the Ghanaian business registration process is not that it was expensive, but rather, that it is very cumbersome. Registration requires many different kinds of documents from different agencies scattered all over the city. Entrepreneurs could experience foregone opportunities, losses and lags in the business when the registration procedure is lengthy.

⁴ Some micro entrepreneurs attempt to evade payment to the Accra MA or Tema MA, oftentimes resulting in a cat-and-mouse chase in the Central Accra market.

Bribing an officer who works at the Central Business Registrar to speed up the registration process is the other option. Bribery seems to be so institutionalized that it is almost considered normal. Most of the women whose businesses were relatively young mentioned paying an officer who works at the CBR to facilitate their registration processes. Entrepreneurial experts mentioned that if you pay the officer high enough, he or she would even deliver the finished documents to the entrepreneur's house. Rejoice Adjazoo, owner of Mamaree's a well-known local producer and exporter of batiks remembers:

At this time I also decided to register myself as a small company called Mamaree Textile Enterprises. It was very easy. I just went to the business registrar's office and some young man did it all for me, I just paid him money. He had all the documents ready in no time and my business was registered. (Rejoice Adjazoo, batik cloth producer)

When the Ghanaian government introduced computerized business registration in 2006/07, formalization became quicker and easier. Many entrepreneurs whose businesses were registered under the new business registration system praised the new, more efficient process.

I did not experience any problem with the new registration system. You fill up the forms, pay money and within 1-2 weeks you have your business registered. I didn't pay any bribe. (Eva Amakye, Ghanaian handicrafts seller/exporter)

Land or real estate is the most common form of collateral requested from prospective commercial bank borrowers whether for business start-up, business expansion or the purchase of materials and goods (see also 4.4.1). Moreover, an own real estate can be used as location for the business. Thus, regulations related to property ownership do not only impact women's capacity to own land but their capacity to start (and run) businesses as well. Here, two types of regulations are relevant: (i) regulations that determine the costs and time for the bureaucratic procedure of registering property measured in the *Doing Business*; (ii) and regulations aiming at equal rights for women with respect to land ownership (see Figure 1 and 4.4.1 below).

The practical nature of these regulations and their influence on women entrepreneurs could not be analysed directly within the case studies, because none of the women interviewed for the research own land registered under their name. However, this fact points at another important finding: Women rarely own property that they could use as a collateral. This is rather rooted in the traditional inheritance and intra-family ownership patterns than in regulations of the aforementioned type (i) – regulations are largely gender-neutral – and even less in the regulations of type (ii) (see also 4.4.1 below). Since the respondent sample was not representative, we cannot claim generalization of this result on statistical grounds. Nevertheless, since the women interviewed in the study were selected across very different backgrounds (formal and informal businesses, as well as a range of micro, small and medium scale enterprises), their lack of land ownership appears to be strikingly common. Studies of Akua Duncan and Brants (2004), Bortei-Doku (2002) and Duwuona-Hammond (2008) find that Ghanaian women seldom own property titles and thus corroborate this result. Their research confirms that regulations pertaining

women's access to land titling in Ghana are enough and in place, but tradition still tend to dominate land inheritance practices.

As far as regulations on getting credit are concerned, during the research no indications were found that the type of regulations measured in the *Doing Business* (pertaining to the legal protections of lenders and borrowers as well as to credit information and credit registries) had any built-in discrimination against women.

4.3.2 Tradition filters affecting starting a business

Besides the aforementioned traditional inheritance and intra-family ownership patterns that discriminate against women, the following elements filtered by traditions influence women's ability to start a (formal) profitable business: Access to (family) networks that provide credit, women's traditional roles in the family and related this the need for a part-time or flexible job, and women's access to (higher) education.

When commercial banks turn them down, Ghanaian women entrepreneurs use own savings, or turn to family, friends, and relatives for financial support to start businesses. Joan Johnson was fortunate enough to have a mother who worked as an accountant who financially supported her until her handicraft business took off. Mercy Alorvi could not depend on her parents for financial support to start her own sewing shop because she had several younger siblings whom the parents were supporting as well. She used to walk to and from work, as well as skipped meals in order to save her income from her former employer until she saved enough money to buy her own machines and cloths.

A form of microfinance that seems to be favoured by female respondents with informal enterprises is the *Susu*. The *Susu* is a traditional informal banking system in West Africa that dates back to the 16th century. The microfinance system is characterized by daily or weekly deposit collection which are safeguarded and made available to the depositors when required or to borrowers for a fee (Alabi et al., 2007). Studies on the role of *Susu* show that the system generally contributes to the development of micro and small-scale enterprises in Ghana. However, the structure and procedures within the *Susu* system favour the development of unorganized informal enterprises more than formal and organized businesses (Alabi et al., 2007).

One factor clearly influencing the decision to become an entrepreneur (whether formal, semi-formal or informal) or to get employed (see 4.5.2) is women's need for time flexibility. Because Ghanaian tradition works along biological and cultural lines, the burden of domestic responsibilities almost always lies on the woman. Employment takes time away from household chores and responsibilities; hence Ghanaian women prefer to engage in an economic activity that does not compromise their traditional role at home. This could partly explain the high incidence of informality among women in the country according to Dr. William Baah Boateng, labour expert from the University of Ghana. Although informal entrepreneurship or self-employment allows women the flexibility that they need to cope with their roles as wife/mother/daughter and entrepreneur, incomes

from informal activities are extremely variable and social security is low. This fact does not seem to deter any of the informal entrepreneurs who were interviewed.

Education is one of the strongest factors affecting women's capacity to start profitable businesses and their propensity for formalization. All entrepreneurs that were interviewed whose businesses were formally registered had minimum education starting at the secondary level. Many had university degrees that were helpful or related to their current businesses. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs who had informal businesses had educations up to the secondary or vocational level. In particular, women with small enterprises who are on the brink of formalization finished secondary or vocational training while women with micro enterprises reached up to basic school, or did not have any education at all.

Although the Ghanaian government has now created laws that allow equal access to primary education for boys and girls, the ultimate decision of sending a child to school still lies on the parents. Dr. Elisabeth Asante of the Institute for Statistical and Socio-Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana in Legon said that it is common for educated parents to send all their children to school, regardless of gender. Boys' education is preferred however, when the parents themselves are not educated.

When girls do go to school, they tend to leave after secondary education due to early marriage or early engagement in economic activities (Agboli, 2007). Early marriage is common in Ghana because a woman's ability to reproduce heirs for the lineage is highly valued in the country. The desire to earn income early is intended for supplementing family income, sustaining immediate family and relatives, providing for children's education, offsetting the high cost of living and education, and for achieving financial independence (Dzisi, 2008).

4.4 Running a business

When a business, whether formal or informal, is running, the female entrepreneur is confronted with a whole new set of obstacles that could have regulatory or traditional roots. The most pertinent among these obstacles for the women interviewed in the research were accessing credit to expand the business – which is strongly related to property ownership – and the capacity to pay taxes.

4.4.1 Regulatory filters affecting running a business

As already mentioned above, obtaining credit from commercial banks in Ghana appears to be difficult for both men and women. This research shows that the problem with access to finance is systemic rather than directly gender specific. The banking system appears to be not functional for small enterprises and is marked by high interest rates, rigorous loan requirements and a low willingness to take risks. The reasons underlying this phenomenon are beyond the scope of the study. What is known however, is the fact that because commercial banks commonly accept property as collateral, women find it more difficult than men to take out loans: because, tradition plays a fundamental role in the

way in which land rights are determined, many women do not own property that can be used as collateral (Hampel-Milagrosa, 2008b).

None of the women entrepreneurs who were interviewed for the research own property that was registered to their name and this made it more difficult for them to obtain credit from commercial banks. This leads women to seek out other forms of financing, such as private credit facilities, own savings, family, and friends as well as the traditional *Susu*. Joyce Bortei, an herbal medicine manufacturer in Sakomono tried to borrow money from the bank after having her business registered, only to be turned down due to lack of collateral.

I thought after registering [the business] it would be easy to get a loan, but I could still not go for a loan. I didn't have a bank account with the bank yet, and even if I did, I didn't have collateral. Everything, even the car I drive is named under my husband. So I started banking with a small private credit facility [formal]. I started contributing small money, and after a while I am entitled to borrow 500 GHCD already. I didn't go to a commercial bank anymore. (Joyce Bortei, herbal medicine and supplements manufacturer)

Antonia Brookman, a formal detergent manufacturer in Tema suspect that banks make it intentionally impossible for female borrowers to acquire loans by requesting for properties which women do not possess.

I tried a number of times to apply for a loan but didn't get even a quarter. They [banks] tell me to bring collateral that I can't provide. For example, last year I wanted to borrow 3000GHCD because I wanted to import detergent chemicals from Holland. They told me to bring a Toyota Prado as collateral, which of course I don't have. Even if I had it, half a Toyota Prado is much more value than the 3000 GHCD which I want to borrow. They make it intentionally hard, asking you for impossible collateral, so that you cannot borrow money. One time they asked for land and I don't even have land. Sometimes they ask for buildings as collateral as well. (Antonia Brookman, detergent manufacturer)

Taxation is another aspect in *Doing Business* that Ghana seems to have problems to improve. Interviews from respondents showed that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is one of the most misunderstood government agencies in the country. None of the formal entrepreneurs covered in the study totally understood the process by which their business taxes were calculated. All of the respondents who owned a formally registered business complained about the lack of transparency and uncertainty that comes with dealing with the IRS. Georgina Adjasoo, a handicrafts shop owner and exporter relates:

Taxation in Ghana is very tricky. I'm still not sure how taxes get calculated. Sometimes we go for one year without any export sales and we still get taxed. I open my post office box and there will be a letter from the Internal Revenue Service saying we owe them 500 GHCD even if I might not have earned that money in the previous year. We normally don't ask because we don't know whom to ask. They don't have hotlines here for those kinds of stuff. (Georgina Adjasoo, Ghanaian handicrafts seller/exporter)

Although tax authorities are not forthcoming with clarifications, many tax payers nonetheless appreciate the fact that business-owners are allowed 18 days to submit a complaint contesting the value of the business tax, in case they feel it does not justify past

incomes. However, some formal entrepreneurs who were interviewed who went to personally inquire about taxes reported being overwhelmed by the figures and terminologies that were used to explain how their taxes were computed.

According to the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Ghanaian Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), several women who were surveyed in their 2007 study complained of lack of tax information and unpublicized rule and rate changes from the IRS as challenges to their business operations (Agboli, 2007). In the same study, several women also complained of arbitrary treatment from tax officials but this was not reported by any of the respondents we interviewed. Businesswomen that were interviewed for this research clarified they received the same kind of treatment with the IRS as everybody else. From this research, it appears that taxation, similar to finance, is more of a systemic problem rather than a gender-specific one. Nevertheless, it is plausible that women, due to their on average lower educational achievements, experience more problems than men in dealing with the cumbersome and intransparent procedures for paying taxes in Ghana.

4.4.2 Traditional filters affecting running a business

Although women have often been described as soft targets (Ellis and Cutura, 2007 and World Bank, 2007), women entrepreneurs who were interviewed for this research did not specifically mention experiencing discriminatory treatment from government authorities. However, some experienced being treated unfairly by customers, clients and colleagues due to their gender. Faustie Agbeme who owns a small store in Ama Saman where she sells household items and food experienced having customers who did not pay for items. Augustina Coleman, an iced water seller in Lom Nava refused to file legal action against her friend's son, after discovering that he stole her jewelries that resulted in huge financial loss for her jewellery business. Freda Mensah, a school owner in Asofaa, the suburbs of Accra, has experienced parents pulling their children out of school after not paying their children's school fees. This leaves her with huge debts and unpaid school workers.

Of all women interviewed, it was Antonia Brookman's experience of being discriminated because of her gender that stood out. She relates two instances when her being a woman proved to be a hindrance in her business.

There were only two instances when I felt discriminated because of my womanhood. The first time was when I was meeting with a client who was praising my product, saying it was good and he liked it a lot. He said he would like to talk to the owner of the company. I said I am the owner of the company, and he said he does not buy from women. So he didn't make the order at all. The second time was when we were going for a contract with a hospital. The purchasing officer was praising the product, had the initial payment check and contract ready for us. When he learned that I was the business owner, he refused to make the contract; he said he would rather give the contract to a male. I am a female and my husband will feed me, so I don't need the money. The male business owner however, is the head of the family and will need the money more than me. He said women just need to be cool and not go up and down doing business. So in the end the contract was awarded to the male

opponent, not to me. Because of this experience, every time there is contract bidding, my husband goes to those events and acts as the company owner. (Antonia Brookman, detergent manufacturer)

4.5 Getting formal employment

Women's participation in the formal labour market in Ghana is influenced by labour regulations and the fulfilment of their domestic responsibilities.

4.5.1 Regulatory filters in getting formal employment

The lack of job opportunities in the public and private sector in general makes it exceedingly difficult for the few young women who manage to have a university education to obtain formal employment. Furthermore, less women get the opportunity to participate in all types of formal employment not because of the lack of laws protecting women workers – there are “more than enough” Ghanaian laws that are supportive of Ghanaian women's employment – but rather because of regulations that impose additional costs on firms – which makes it unattractive for them to hire women:

Ghanaian constitution and Ghanaian laws have special provisions for women that ensure gender equality. The laws that we have are more than enough but enforcement is the question. Remember that employers are profit maximizers. A woman employer will not hire other women who are fresh graduates (around 23 years old) because you could expect that the woman employee to get married and have kid within four years after graduation. Because the Ghanaian government has laws that support childbearing women, and this translates into costs for the firm, the woman employer would rather hire a male graduate than the female graduate in order to avoid these costs. We have to put measures in place that avoids such a situation in order to effectively reduce the 90% of Ghanaian women who are in the informal sector. (Dr. William Baah Boateng)

According to interviews with two Ghanaian labour experts, there actually seems to be overregulation of the formal labour market that makes it especially difficult for women in childbearing age to enter it⁵. A look into Ghanaian Labour Laws shows regulatory protection for both pregnant women and mothers. For example, Article 56 (Protection of pregnant women) of the Labour Act of 2003 (Act 651), states that an employer can not assign a pregnant women outside of her place of residence after the fourth month of pregnancy if the midwife deems it detrimental to the pregnant woman's health. The pregnant woman could file a written complaint to the Labour Commission against any firm that contravenes this provision.

Article 57 (Maternity, annual and sick leave) of the Labour Act states that an employee who gives birth is entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and other benefits that accrue to the mother at this time. The mother is entitled to extended maternity leave if the birth was abnormal (caesarean birth), in the case of twin births, and in case of illness due to birthing process. Nursing mothers are allowed to interrupt work for an hour during her working hours to nurse her baby. This interruption is considered working time and the

⁵ Furthermore, according to Dr. William Baah Boateng, employment mobility in Ghana's formal labour market is relatively low because of strong and active labour unions that keenly safeguard workers rights.

firm shall pay for it accordingly. The employer is not allowed to engage a female employee whose child is less than eight months old in overtime work and could not dismiss a woman who has been absent from work based on accrued maternity leaves.

Clearly, one underlying problem with Ghanaian labour market regulation is that firms have to shoulder part of these costs of “childbearing”. As profit maximizers, firms would naturally tend to avoid bearing these costs, partly explaining the reluctance to hire women of childbearing age in their ranks. Thus, in the line of the *Doing Business* thought, it appears that Ghanaian women could benefit from relaxing labour regulations by reducing the costs related to maternity to be borne by firms and, in general, by increasing job mobility through more flexible regulations⁶. Alternatively, the costs of childbearing could be borne by the social security system, since childbearing is in the interest of the whole society. Therefore, women in Ghana could also benefit when the social security system would be expanded in this sense.

4.5.2 Traditional filters affecting getting employment

Patrice A. Caesar-Sowah, National Project Officer in charge Youth Employment and Women’s Entrepreneurship of the International Labour Organization’ (ILO) Decent Work Country Programme in Ghana argues that although education is a strong determinant of women’s success as an employee or as a formal entrepreneur, tradition still has strong influence on getting employment. He said that Ghanaian men would like to be the “head” of the nucleus family and most men believe that when their wives are empowered financially (through formal employment), women may not respect them as husbands anymore. He said that Ghanaian men need to feel in command at all times and fear that if the wife earns more than him, society would see him as not in charge of his household.

The burden of domestic tasks rests upon the woman as mentioned earlier, and this is also a factor influencing their formal employment. Susan Langmangne, a former programme manager for the crisis centre, legal centre and shelter for abused women at the Ark Foundation in Accra explains that Ghanaian culture has strongly defined roles for men and women. Men are tasked to be breadwinners and heads of families while women are supposed to submit and obey their husbands, cook, take care of the children, wash clothes and clean the house. These tasks are performed not only for the nuclear family but also for the extended family, particularly when one member of the extended family is sick. The women should make *it* work [the household and her responsibilities], either by working longer hours or looking for household help. This was reflected in the interviews we conducted. Although labour is cheap in Ghana, for some women entrepreneurs, striking a balance between work and business have been a problem.

⁶ Ghana’s performance in the *Doing Business* in the area of employing workers is volatile. The country has slipped from rank 120 to 135 between 2007 and 2009, and went back to rank 133 in DB 2010. The current firing costs to firms is equivalent to 178 weeks of the workers’ salary.

To sum it all up, regulatory filters influencing starting and running a business by themselves are more or less gender neutral. This appears to be different for labour regulation which – absent a proper social security system that bears labour-related costs of childbearing and absent a change in the conviction of society that these “costs” have to be borne by the families, particularly by the women – seems to deter employers from formally hiring young women.

Traditional filters that influence or overlap with regulatory filters tend to lead towards gender discrimination. For example, regulations concerning property ownership clearly contradict traditional male-biased inheritance practices. This conflict impacts two other capacities and regulatory areas: women’s capacity to start a business and to have access to credit. Some problems are rather systemic than gender specific. For example, the non-transparency of the Ghanaian taxation system, inflexibility of commercial banks and the lack of opportunities in the job market all tend to influence women’s economic productivity but appear to be enclosed in wider structural problems.

5. Policy conclusions and recommendations

This paper investigated how business regulations and tradition influence female entrepreneurship and employment in Ghana. The research assessed the relevance of World Bank’s *Doing Business* style reforms for the economic participation and productivity of Ghanaian women in order to provide an informed basis on which to discuss possible adjustments and revisions to improve the gender relevance of the *Doing Business* Reports and selected indicators. The following section shows the main conclusions of the research, as well as policy recommendations that aim to improve the business environment of women, empower women in general in order to participate on an equal basis in the economy, and improve the gender relevance of *Doing Business* indicators.

5.1 Main conclusions

The results show that regulation and tradition both play a significant role in filtering women’s capacities to participate productively in the economy. It is not easy to clearly sort out the influence of regulatory filters and the influence of the filters of traditions on women, since they tend to overlap. In a somewhat simplifying way we can state that regulations as such in the areas of starting a business, registering property, getting credit and paying taxes are more or less gender neutral (this is different in the case of employing workers where the current regulations, absent a proper social security system, seem to work as a barrier for young women who want to enter the formal labour market, see above). However, filters of tradition work simultaneously with regulations on women’s capacities necessary to participate in economic activities. In general, they have built-in a discriminatory effect on women as summarized in what follows:

With regard to property registration, despite the passing of laws specifying equality in land and property ownership rights, male preference in inheritance and titling practices continue to be followed. This devoid women of legal property that they could use as collateral later on when applying for loans from commercial banks.

In general, access to commercial credit is difficult in Ghana, for formal and informal entrepreneurs as well as for men and women. However, the lack of registered land and property under women's names makes access to finance more difficult for them because land is the most common form of accepted collateral in the country. Therefore, owning titled property is decisive and since women seldom own titled land they are clearly disadvantaged in getting credit. This situation is less about cumbersome property registration regulations, and more about the consequence of tradition that gives men preference over women in matters of property.

The demand to reproduce heirs for the lineage and to augment family income at an early age pulls young women out of schools leaving them less qualified for formal employment. The lack of education also makes it more difficult for women to understand regulations that influence their businesses or to seek ways for obtaining information. The few women who are educationally qualified for wage employment would have difficulties finding jobs not only because labour regulations deter employers from hiring young women but also because there are fewer jobs available in the market and because society sees families and particularly women as being responsible for bearing the costs of childbearing. Women's full potential in productivity could not be realised because both women entrepreneurs and employees are expected to perform the bulk of domestic tasks despite having responsibilities in their enterprises and employment. The combined effects of low education, desire to earn income at an early age, few available positions in the formal job market, lack of financial capital and the need to balance work and family life leads to an ever-growing share of women in the Ghanaian informal economy.

Several policy recommendations, which could be implemented in the short- and long term, could be drawn from the results. These are presented in the Table 2 below and are discussed more thoroughly in the succeeding paragraphs.

Tabelle 2 Policy recommendations to mitigate regulatory and traditional impediments to Ghanaian women entrepreneurs and employees' productivity

Problem	Short term Policy recommendation	Long term Policy Recommendation	Expected Impact
Lack of property under the woman's name	Review land inheritance practices against government regulation covering land ownership	Enforce Intestate Cessation Law in the whole country	More women owners of titled land, availability of collateral for women borrowers.
	Review laws covering ownership of marital properties	Encourage fathers and husbands to share or give titled land to wife and daughters	
Lack of access to financial capital	Provide microfinance to formal and informal entrepreneurs through government and non-government organizations using loaning methods that have proven high repayment rates	Revamp the financial and banking system to make credit more accessible to women	Increased access to much needed capital for both informal and formal women entrepreneurs
Low female literacy on business regulations that matter for them	Create one stop shop for business regulation information		Increased women's literacy on business regulations.
Taxation system is largely misunderstood	Create hotlines where taxpayers could ask for clarification and information regarding taxation	Devise standardised, transparent and consistent system for tax calculations	Increased women's literacy on taxation process.
Lack of women's skills and low education	Create training programmes that increase or improve women's income earning skills	Create programmes that aim to keep young women in school and those that highlight the importance of education	Increased number of high skilled and educated women who could participate productively in society.
	Create training programmes on financial and business management		
Many entrepreneurs who could formalise prefer to remain informal	Implement electronic business registration systems in whole country	Focus on creating transparency in the registration system to reduce opportunities for bribery	Increased business registrations from women entrepreneurs through a legitimate registration process.
Female survivalist micro-entrepreneurs dominate informal economy	Creation of a comprehensive social security system for the informal sector		Increased security for micro entrepreneurs in case of sickness, accidents, bankruptcy and death.
Low female participation in wage employment in both public and private sectors	Review how Ghanaian laws protecting women are translated and implemented at the firm level	Expand social security system to assume costs of childbearing since it is in the interest of society.	Increased female participation in the formal labour force.
	Review labour laws, and in the spirit of Doing Business, adapt regulations in order to reduce costs related to maternity to be borne by firms and to increase job mobility.		
	Provision of child care facilities for urban mothers	Adopt gender mainstreaming in the workplace	
Negative social perception of "empowered women"	Nationwide radio programme on female role models	Programme that brings successful women back to villages to speak in schools or important social gathering	Social acceptance of women's socio-economic potential without fear of Ghanaian tradition being forgotten or disrespected.

(Source: Author's own)

5.2 General recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations regarding reforms of the business environment

The lack of land and property possession among Ghanaian women despite the implementation of laws that provide for possibility to own land under their name is an indication of how tradition could effectively filter out regulation. Although intuition dictates that traditional land inheritance practices that favour males are stronger in rural areas, none of the entrepreneurs interviewed for the research owned property under their name despite their varying economic, ethnic and social backgrounds. This shows that the issue is a significant one, affecting all types of women across the country. A review should be conducted of how land inheritance practices play out despite the formal land policies that do not discriminate between genders. Similarly, a review of how marital properties are distributed between husband and wife in the light of Ghanaian laws governing the division of marital property would show policymakers whether the law is effective or not. In the long term, the government could begin by seriously enforcing the Intestate Cessation Law in the whole country. Results of interviews imply that despite the noble intentions, what is supposed to happen based on policy is not what is happening on field. Serious implementation of the law will require the cooperation of ethnic chiefs, local courts, and from national to local levels of government. At the same time, policies that support gift transfers of registered land between male to female family members is one way to work around formidable male-biased inheritance customs. It is important for the land to be legally registered under the female recipients' names later on.

Although access to land and access to credit are inextricably linked, the government should look into the issue of women's lack of financial capital separately. Although women's lack of collateral tends to create more barriers for them in acquiring loans from commercial banks (as compared to men), the problem appears to be systemic. Numerous requirements, excessive interest rates, inflexibility of commercial banks and a high risk aversion are issues of the national banking system that need to be addressed as a whole, when considering women's poor access to credit.

In the short term, micro financing seems to be the alternative for many micro-small-and-medium scale entrepreneurs. Worldwide, government-owned microfinance institutions tended to have a poor reputation but the system enforced by the National Bureau for Small Scale Industries in Ghana (NBSSI) appear to succeed in terms of business triumph and repayment rates⁷. In the long run, the whole Ghanaian banking system should be revamped in the direction of reducing collateral requirements, reducing paper work required for loans, reducing interest rates and expanding target clients. This would make commercial credit more available for all.

To increase female entrepreneurs' knowledge of business laws that matter, a one-stop-shop and hotline service could be established. The one-stop-shop caters to both male and female entrepreneurs but have policies and trained personnel that respond to women-specific business issues. This is a relatively easy and quick solution to the legal illiteracy issue that many businesswomen suffer from.

⁷ NBSSI Tema branch reported over 90% business success and over 90% repayment rates of Tema-based entrepreneurs who availed of business loans from NBSSI. Microfinance, however, represents only a minor fraction of services offered by the Bureau.

Taxation appeared to be one area of business regulation that affects, yet confuses most people. It is also a regulatory area that could tremendously benefit from reforms that simplify the taxation procedure. A one-stop-shop for business information could incorporate a special section that deals exclusively with questions regarding taxation. The IRS could also benefit if they produce leaflets and brochures that explain, in layman's terms, the whole taxation process. A long-term solution to alleviate taxpayers' confusion regarding the complexity of taxation is for the tax authorities to devise a transparent and consistent system of tax calculations. Similar to other countries, categories of tax payments should be standardised and applicable to people belonging to a certain income level group. This recommendation is much in line with the *Doing Business* approach in the sense of reducing the administrative burden for firms when paying taxes.

In the long run, formalisation of women-owned business should be the ultimate goal for the government and for entrepreneurs. To further increase the rate of business registration, electronic business registration systems should be updated and improved, and linked throughout the country. The government could focus on increasing transparency and trust in the registration system and on registration authorities alike. Since entrepreneurs perceive bribery as a normal phenomenon, the government should focus on measures that reduce opportunities for women to offer bribes and for authorities to accept them.

5.2.2 Recommendations for policies promoting economic empowerment of women and business formalization

The study points to the strong need for programmes and policies that target the empowerment of women in Ghana. Policies that keep girls and women in school and support the higher education of young women may in fact be the most effective way to create a level playing field for all, rather than focusing on reforming the regulatory business environment alone. The Ghanaian government could also benefit from introducing entrepreneurship education to secondary, technical and vocational schools similar to Mozambique's Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme (ECP) which was a cooperative project between UNIDO and the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Culture (see Altenburg and Drachenfels, 2008). In the short run, the government could support entrepreneurship training programmes that increase the financial and business management skills for women starting their own enterprises at an early age.

Focusing on women's education could also lead to an increase in their participation in wage employment in both public and private sectors. Education however, is just one side of the coin. The dismal participation of women in the formal labour market is also partly due to discriminatory barriers-to-entry to qualified women employees since firms anticipate future costs of having too many employees availing of maternity benefits. The Ghanaian government, together with the help of donors, could conduct a comprehensive review on the effects of Ghanaian laws protecting women employees at the firm level to find out if this is a contributory factor to their low formal labour market participation. Two approaches could be taken to further increase women's participation in the formal labour market. One solution could be distributing the associated costs of childbearing across broader parts of society since childbearing is of the interest of society anyway. Creating a social security system that partially removes the costs associated with having children from firms and from women could also promote a change of mindset among firms in this respect. The second approach deals with the inflexibility of the Ghanaian worker dismissal system and its consequences to women employees. The state could benefit from *Doing Business* prescriptions by simplifying

labour regulation and adapting it to the Ghanaian context. When Ghanaian-based firms find it less costly to dismiss workers, they would not be hesitant to hire more employees, including women.

Policy changes that help urban Ghanaian women who are employed in the formal labour market involve rigorously encouraging firms to adopt gender-mainstreaming in the workplace, to encourage more women to work in the formal sector, return to work after childbirth, and generally make formal sector an attractive employment possibility for qualified females.

That the Ghanaian economy will remain a mostly informal economy for quite some time is a fact that the state has to accept and deal with. In the short run, socio-economic programmes and policies that specifically lessen the negative consequences of belonging to the informal sector are needed. The financial, health, and social insecurity related to informal work should be addressed by creating a social system that goes beyond retirement and disability benefits offered by current social security schemes. The social security system for informal workers could also include provisions for maternal protection, in relevant aspects similar to the system suggested for formal wage employed women workers.

Finally, women role models who managed to “get out of the mould” are few and far in between in Ghana. The government could make use of the radio as a cheap tool for highlighting *other* socio-economic options for women apart from early motherhood and informal trade. Since radio is the most widespread form of media in Ghana, the government could sponsor a show that tells the life stories of accomplished and empowered women to send the message that it is possible to fulfil a woman’s potential without sacrificing her tradition and forgetting her roots. In the long term, a project that brings back accomplished women to their villages to render motivational speeches in schools and village gatherings is also a cheap but easy way to encourage women to look beyond the social norm. Bringing empowered women back to their own villages to set an example to younger generations could erode female discrimination at the rural level where it is strongest, and encourage young women to achieve more in life.

5.3 Approaching Gender Issue in *Doing Business*

Recommendations in this area fall into two types; recommendations that propose incremental adjustments in the *Doing Business* indicators and recommendations that create a new indicator or supplement *Doing Business* results with information on gender parity on areas covered by the project.

Based on case study results of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs, two indicators in the *Doing Business* critically need to incorporate a gender dimension in order to actually create an impact on women. The Getting credit indicator measures the strength of legal rights of lenders and borrowers, the degree to which credit information is shared, as well as the degree to which the population is included in the public and private credit registry. The actual table is lifted from the *Doing Business* report (World Bank, 2009) and shown in Figure 4 below.

TABLE 14.6

What does getting credit measure?**Strength of legal rights index (0–10)**

- Protection of rights of borrowers and lenders through collateral and bankruptcy laws
- Security interest is a nonpossessory one in movable assets

Depth of credit information index (0–6)

- Scope and accessibility of credit information distributed by public and private credit registries
- Quality of data distributed by public and private credit registries

Public credit registry coverage (% of adults)

- Number of individuals and firms listed in a public credit registry as percentage of adult population

Private credit bureau coverage (% of adults)

- Number of individuals and firms listed in a private credit bureau as percentage of adult population

Source: *Doing Business* database.

Abbildung 4 Getting credit sub-indicators

(Source: *Doing Business* 2010)

The gender dimension could be incorporated in the second set of indicators that reflect the coverage of credit information in public and private credit registries. These two indicators show the total number of individuals (as % of adult population) who are listed in credit registries in the country. A possible change in the indicator is to disaggregate data collected in this index, based on gender, instead of using total adult percentage. The new index could be in the form of gender parity index in public and private credit registry coverage or women as percentage of total adults.

The new Getting credit indicator would then be able to show how many women are actually registered in public and private credit bureaus. Higher gender parity or higher women as % of total adults who are registered in the credit bureaus equate to better registry coverage and better overall Getting credit score.

The indicator Registering property measures the costs, time and procedures required to buy a property from one owner and transfer it to the new owner's name until such that the land's documents allow the new owner to use it as collateral in the bank. The indicator calculates the total number of procedures, calendar days and cost (as % of property value) required to complete each procedure. The actual table from the *Doing Business* (World Bank, 2009) is presented below.

TABLE 14.5

What does registering property measure?

Procedures to legally transfer title on immovable property (number)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preregistration (for example, checking for liens, notarizing sales agreement, paying property transfer taxes) • Registration in the economy's largest business city • Postregistration (for example, filing title with municipality)
Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not include time spent gathering information • Each procedure starts on a separate day • Procedure completed once final document is received • No prior contact with officials
Cost required to complete each procedure (% of property value)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official costs only, no bribes • No value added or capital gains taxes included

Source: *Doing Business* database.

Abbildung 5 Registering property sub-indicators

(Source: *Doing Business* 2010)

To deal with male-biased inheritance practices, creating a sub-indicator measuring “*Land registration coverage on women*” (as % of adults) is one possibility. Higher values (meaning more women as percent of total adults have land registered under their name) equate to a higher score and imply a more gender-balanced land registration rate.

Similar to countrywide policy change that the project recommends, the *Doing Business* could also benefit from reforming itself. To ensure that women benefit from reforms in the regulatory business environment, the project could try adding new indicators that capture gender realities or attempt to improve methodologies that actually include women’s perspective. This recommendation is supported by earlier work that shows how male-biased inheritance systems significantly negatively influence women’s land and commercial bank access, adult economic activity rates and formal wage employment (Hampel-Milagrosa, 2009) and follows the methodology of another paper that suggested the creation of an independent gender indicator to increase gender sensitivity of the *Doing Business* approach (see Hampel-Milagrosa, 2008a). This research confirms that gender discrimination is deeply entrenched in traditions, and traditions tend to have primacy over regulations in this regard. Therefore a separate indicator that measures how regulations make business easier, faster and cheaper for women is more critical than ever.

Since indicators take years to develop, in the short term, a more careful interpretation of *Doing Business* results and rankings could be made by accompanying reports with measures of gender parity on areas of business where this is applicable. For example, interpreting *Doing Business* results against indicators showing patrilineal inheritance systems or restrictions to women’s public mobility could serve as context information on the gender dimension of doing business in the developing world (see Hampel-Milagrosa, 2009). Another option is to examine *Doing Business* rankings alongside indicators of gender parity in relevant areas that it attempts to influence. For example, researchers and policy makers could start analyzing rankings in Starting a business with gender parities in nationally registered entrepreneurs; or looking at Employing workers rankings alongside gender parities in formal public-private wage employment.

These approaches do not require immediate adjustments in the *Doing Business* approach but put rankings and each country's efforts in reforms in a more gender sensitive light.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Earlier sections of this paper have already mentioned possible areas for research, which were not covered by this study. For example, property ownership among women has been a critical discussion point with entrepreneurs all throughout the study. The lack of property effects starting a business, and business continuation for all women interviewed, despite government efforts to increase women's right to legally acquire landholdings. It appears that the government laws supporting female property ownership are in place but these are not effective, or are not implemented. Therefore, studies that would specifically look into the interaction of traditional land inheritance practices in rural areas (including marital property distribution), and how this result in women's land ownership (or lack thereof), despite the explicit regulation covering this area, is highly recommended.

The lack of credit access for women is another issue that needs further clarification. However to deviate from traditional gender-perspectives in collateral-credit access nexus, it is recommended that a study that analyses the whole financial system, that traces where gender discrimination in access to finance starts to take root should be conducted. Looking at the rigidity of the Ghanaian banking system, the government would greatly benefit from concrete suggestions on how to open up the rigid financial system and make credit more accessible to everyone.

Similarly, a comprehensive review of Ghanaian women's participation in the formal labour market, in the context of how companies react to employment laws to avoid additional costs imposed on firms is needed. The possibility of a wider social security system that eases the costs of childbearing for all concerned, should be investigated, parallel to looking at which labour market laws could be further simplified to increase worker flexibility.

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