



NEW FIGURES OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA

*DAKAR'S WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS BETWEEN THE GLOBAL
AND THE LOCAL*



Abdul-Aziz Dembélé, PhD Student in Sociology

University of Rennes 2, France

Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Research in Societal Innovations (LiRIS)

COMMUNICATION PLAN

I- Women's Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa: Literature Review

II- Research Approach

III- Research methodology

III- Research results

IV- Discussion and Conclusion

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SUB-SAHARIAN AFRICA: LITERATURE REVIEW (1/2)

Women's economic activity in sub-Saharan Africa

- **48,7 %**, women employment rate in sub-Saharan Africa (OIT, 2016);
- One of the highest level in the world(Charmes, 2005);
- The vast majority(60 %) are employed in **agriculture** (OIT, 2016);
- In urban areas, the « **informal** » **economy** is the main source of employment for women(Locoh, 2013; OIT, 2016).
- **Entrepreneurial skills** (Sylvanus, 2006) of women in sub-Saharan Africa

Two dominant figures of women's entrepreneurship in Africanist literature

- Figures of « **success** » (Banéga et Warnier, 2001): The **Nana Benz in the printed textile trade**(Cordonnier, 1987; Bony, 2008; Coquery-Vidrovitch, [1994] 2012).
- Figures of « **survival** » or « de la débrouille » (Kane and Chroqui, 2021): **informal traders** and the « silent revolution » (Locoh, 1996)

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SUB-SAHARIAN AFRICA: LITERATURE REVIEW (2/2)

« *New figures* » of Women's Entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa

- **Nina Sylvanus (2008, 2009):** *Les Nanettes, reorienting trade networks toward Asia and competition with the Nana Benz.*
- **Thérèse Locoh (2013):** *Progress in women education and their exclusion from job market drive entrepreneurship.*
- **Comi Toulabor (2012):** *Nana Benz daughters and granddaughters characterized by educational capital (studies in Europe) and a new business ethos.*
- **Charlotte Vampo (2021):** *Highly-educated women entrepreneurs in the formal sector.*
- **Ulrike Schuerkens (2023):** *Women entrepreneurs from the middle and upper classes, situated between the global and the local, and demonstrating an individualistic ethic (individual responsibility and action).*

RESEARCH APPROACH

- *As an extension of the work just mentioned, the approach consisted in considering entrepreneurship as an object of sociological investigation that can be analyzed from a **comprehensive approach***
- *Entrepreneurial activity is considered a **social activity** in the Weberian sense, i.e. an activity that takes place within a **context** and whose development relates to **the individual**, but also to the **behaviour of others**.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Field survey:** Two (2) months (July and August 2023) in Dakar, Senegal, as part of **ManaGlobal project**. A project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 823744
- **Exploratory survey** of public, private and associative organizations dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship, with the methodological presupposition that these actors are better placed to identify women entrepreneurs who meet the research criteria.
- **"Snowball"** method from the first contacts
- Social networks (**LinkedIn**), other local informants.

RESEARCH RESULTS (1/3)

Categories	Forename	Age	Study level	Place of graduation	Company creation date	Company statute	Number of employees
Returning Migrant Entrepreneurs	Mariama T.	34	University	France/Canada	2013	Formal	15
	N'Deye N.	36	University	France	2021	Formal	5
	Siny S.	31	University	France/Canada	2021	Formal	7
Expatriate Women Entrepreneurs	Aicha D.	35	University	France/Canada	2021	Formal	1
	Sabrina C.	40	University	France	2020	Formal	5
“Ordinary” Women Entrepreneurs	Aissatou L.	33	University	Senegal	2020	Formal	15
	Fatou D.	37	Secondary	Senegal	2015	In the process of being formalized	0
	Kalista S.	42	University	Senegal	2019	Formal	15
	Yandé T.	37	University	Senegal	2020	Formal	4
Student Entrepreneurs	Betty K.	24	University	Senegal	2020	Formal	0
	Cathy D.	29	University	Senegal	2022	Formal	0
Women Entrepreneurs in the Pandemic	Awa D.	37	University	Canada/ United States	2021	Formal	5
	Jeanne S.	33	University	France	2021	Formal	0
	Latifa D.	28	University	Senegal	2020	Formal	3
	Sina G.	32	University	Senegal	2021	Formal	0

« I saw that there was a **market opportunity** in the baby food sector. I had the professional skills and experience in the field [...]; there were also local resources that were not being exploited and I said to myself why not transform them and offer a local product » (Siny)

« This famous growing middle class is a reality. We saw leisure activities developing, and that's what clicked for us. We also had a few Senegalese people around us in France who were looking **to move back home**, so my husband and I started talking about it. And we saw that French companies based in Senegal had adopted a new policy of hiring Senegalese from the diaspora. We jumped on the bandwagon, and within two years it was done deal. All we had to do was to find a job so that we could pay the bills, because we've got children after all, and then we had few things to sort out in France. Once everything was validated, well, we quit our jobs. We kept the house we had to see what it would be like when we got back. » (Sabrina)

« In Senegal, when you get married, they say it's the husband who has to take care of everything [...] With my husband, **it was starting to be hard to make a living and there was no one to help us.** » (Fatou)

« I expected to have my qualifications and a very good salary, a very good job, a car, that's what I honestly expected. But things have changed. In the beginning, our parents told us that we had to work, that we had to learn, that we had to go to school and get good grades to get a job. But nowadays that doesn't guarantee you a job, or a good salary [...], **things aren't like they used to be.** » (Cathy)

« I was a teacher in a private American school in Dakar. [...] **With the COVID**, we had to give online courses. They gave us a huge workload, but the pay wasn't worthwhile or enough to cover my expenses. When I came back from France, I had projects, and I took this job to be able to finance them. But I was earning so little that I didn't even have enough to save. There was no interest, so **I said to myself, now's the time.** » (Sina)

RESEARCH RESULTS (2/3)

Resources in the act of entrepreneurship

- ***Economic resources:*** *savings, love money, salaries*
- ***Cognitive resources:*** *The ability to "learn how to learn." "Documenting yourself", "Researching", "learning as you go", etc.*
- ***Social environment:*** *Belonging to or participation in social spaces that value entrepreneurial activity; Training in support structures (incubators, accelerators); networking.*
- ***The Institutional Environment:*** *Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Women and Youth (DER/FJ)*

RESEARCH RESULTS (3/3)

An entrepreneurial subjectivity?

- *Positive assessment of entrepreneurial activity: personal fulfilment and financial autonomy*
- *Entrepreneurship experienced as a way to have **a grip on the world**: "value creation", "social impact", "contribution to development"*
- *Entrepreneurship associated with notions such as "**resilience**", "**perseverance**", "**courage**", "**self-sacrifice**"*
- *Entrepreneurship is expressed as a form of **distinction** from the many: "**Not everyone can be an entrepreneur**"*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION (1/2)

- *The research has made it possible to account for the **subjective meaning** that some Dakar women entrepreneurs give to their activities as well as the modalities of their development.*
- *The research highlights the **multidimensional** nature of entrepreneurial commitment: affirmation of personal dispositions, individual or family aspirations, discovery of business opportunities, economic constraints.*
- *The entrepreneurship of these women takes place in a **broader context**: transnational migration, increased empowerment of women in the household economy, the tightening of conditions of access to employment for young people, the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- *Contribution to the literature on women's entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa.*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION (2/2)

- “Student entrepreneur” show the *link between higher education and business creation*
- Profiles of some “ordinaries entrepreneurs” and “pandemic entrepreneur” shed the light on **the link between professional experiences and business creation**
- “expatriate entrepreneur” prompt reflection on **the entrepreneurial return of African diaspora**
- With the “returnee entrepreneur” we can **see how the return of student migrants can lead to business creation.**

*In the African context, entrepreneurship is now championed by policymakers and funders as a key factor for development, illustrated by several entrepreneurship policies and projects. What these categories suggest is the need to **a shift from “entrepreneurship policies” toward a “political economy” favorable to entrepreneurship:***

- *Policies on education and access to higher education*
- *Policies to improve employment access for women and youth*
- *Incentives for the return of student and diasporic migrants*



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**

REFERENCES

- BANÉGAS, Richard et WARNIER, Jean-Pierre, 2001. Nouvelles figures de la réussite et du pouvoir. *Politique africaine* [en ligne]. 2001. Vol. 82, n° 2, pp. 5-23. DOI 10.3917/polaf.082.0005. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-africaine-2001-2-page-5.htm>Cairn.info
- BLANCHET, Alain et GOTMAN, Anne, 2017. *L'entretien*. 2e éd., nouv. prés., suite du tirage. Paris : A. Colin. ISBN 978-2-200-60191-1.
- BONI, S. Tanella, 2008. *Que vivent les femmes d'Afrique?* Paris : Panama. Cyclo. ISBN 978-2-7557-0142-5. HQ1787 .B66 2008
- CHARMES, Jacques, 2005. Femmes africaines, activités économiques et travail : de l'invisibilité à la reconnaissance. *Revue Tiers Monde* [en ligne]. 2005. Vol. 182, n° 2, pp. 255-279. [Consulté le 3 mars 2024]. DOI 10.3917/rtn.182.0255. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-tiers-monde-2005-2-page-255.htm>
- COQUERY-VIDROVITCH, Catherine, 2012. *Les Africaines: histoire des femmes d'Afrique subsaharienne du XIXe au XXe siècle*. Paris : la Découverte. La Découverte-poche. ISBN 978-2-7071-7545-8. 305.409 67
- CORDONNIER, Rita, 1987. *Femmes africaines et commerce: les revendeuses de tissu de la ville de Lomé, Togo*. Paris : L'Harmattan. Collection Villes et entreprises. ISBN 978-2-85802-901-3. HD6070.2.T6 C67 1987
- KANE, Néné et CHROQUI, Razane (éd.), 2021. *L'entrepreneuriat féminin en Afrique, entre bricolage et survie*. Paris : l'Harmattan. Études africaines. ISBN 978-2-343-23826-5. 338.040 82
- LOCOH, Thérèse, 1996. Changements de rôles masculins et féminins dans la crise: la révolution silencieuse. In : *Crise et population en Afrique. Crises économiques, programmes d'ajustement et dynamiques démographiques*. Paris : Les Etudes du CEPED. pp. 445-470.
- LOCOH, Thérèse, 2013. Genre et marché du travail en Afrique subsaharienne. In : *Travail et genre dans le monde* [en ligne]. Paris : La Découverte. pp. 171-181. Hors collection Sciences Humaines. [Consulté le 4 mars 2024]. ISBN 978-2-7071-7456-7. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/travail-et-genre-dans-le-monde--9782707174567-p-171.htm>
- NOY, Chaim, 2008. Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* [en ligne]. octobre 2008. Vol. 11, n° 4, pp. 327-344. [Consulté le 15 mars 2024]. DOI 10.1080/13645570701401305. Disponible à l'adresse : <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13645570701401305>

REFERENCES

OIT, 2016. *Les femmes au travail. Tendances 2016*. Résumé analytique. Genève : Organisation Internationale du Travail.

SCHUERKENS, Ulrike, 2023a. Les étudiant.e.s-entrepreneur.e.s: Apprentissage professionnel, entre études et entreprises. In : SCHUERKENS, Ulrike (éd.), *Entreprises, entrepreneurs et travail au Sénégal*. Paris : l'Harmattan. pp. 289-311. Études africaines. ISBN 978-2-14-035482-3. 338.040 96668

SCHUERKENS, Ulrike (éd.), 2023b. *Entreprises, entrepreneurs et travail au Sénégal*. Paris : L'Harmattan. Études africaines. Série Sociologie. ISBN 978-2-14-035482-3. HD2346.S4 E58 2023

SCHUERKENS, Ulrike, 2023c. Les femmes entrepreneures au Sénégal et le contexte géographique plus large de l'Afrique et de l'Europe. In : SCHUERKENS, Ulrike (éd.), *Entreprises, entrepreneurs et travail au Sénégal*. Paris : l'Harmattan. pp. 312-335. Études africaines. ISBN 978-2-14-035482-3. 338.040 96668

SHAPERO, Albert et SOKOL, Lisa, 1982. The social dimensions of entrepreneurship. In : KENT, Calvin, SEXTON, Donald et VESPER, Karl (éd.), *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship* [en ligne]. Engelwood Cliffs : Prentice Hall. pp. 72-90. [Consulté le 6 mars 2024]. Disponible à l'adresse : https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1497759

SYLVANUS, Nina, 2006. L'habileté entrepreneuriale des Nana Benz du Togo: *Africultures* [en ligne]. 1 décembre 2006. Vol. n° 69, n° 4, pp. 179-184. [Consulté le 5 mars 2024]. DOI 10.3917/afcul.069.0179. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-africultures-2006-4-page-179.htm?ref=doi>

SYLVANUS, Nina, 2008. Rethinking « Free-Trade » Practices in Contemporary Togo: Women Entrepreneurs in the Global Textile Trade. In : SCHUERKENS, Ulrike (éd.), *Globalization and transformations of local socioeconomic practices*. New York : Routledge. pp. 174-191. Routledge advances in sociology, 34. ISBN 978-0-415-96090-8. HF1359 .G5843 2008

TOULABOR, Comi, 2012. Les Nana Benz de Lomé. Mutations d'une bourgeoisie compradore, entre heur et décadence. *Afrique contemporaine* [en ligne]. 2012. Vol. 244, n° 4, pp. 69-80. DOI 10.3917/afco.244.0069. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-afrique-contemporaine-2012-4-page-69.htm>Cairn.info

VAMPO, Charlotte, 2021. Des Nana Benz aux cheffes d'entreprise contemporaines à Lomé, au Togo: L'entrepreneuriat dit « moderne » en question. *Revue internationale des études du développement* [en ligne]. 25 mars 2021. Vol. N° 245, n° 1, pp. 145-169. [Consulté le 23 juillet 2023]. DOI 10.3917/ried.245.0145. Disponible à l'adresse : <https://cairn.info/revue-internationale-des-etudes-du-developpement-2021-1-page-145.htm?ref=doi>

WEBER, Max, 2008. *Economie et société. Les catégories de la sociologie*. Paris : Plon. Économie et société, 1. ISBN 978-2-266-13244-2.