

## The Reality of Women's Entrepreneurship Practices: an exploratory study- The case of Algeria

واقع الممارسة النسائية للمقاولة: دراسة استكشافية حالة الجزائر

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### Abstract

### ملخص

The present study seeks to analyze the reality of women's practices regarding entrepreneurship in Algerian society. In Algeria, as in all other countries, entrepreneurship is the practice of rational and purposeful activities in order to attain defined and precise goals. However, the form and boundaries of this activity vary according to gender, making it impossible to disentangle gender identity from the nature of the ensuing activities. As a result, women's entrepreneurship becomes a social, political, and economic practice with various stakes, as well as aims and standards that differ from male norms in the same industry.

**Keywords :** women's entrepreneurship; practice; local community.

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتشخيص واقع الممارسة النسائية للمقاولة في المجتمع الجزائري، فالمقاولة في الجزائر وعلى غرار كل البلدان هي ممارسة فعل عقلائي هادف بغية تحقيق أهداف واضحة ومحددة، لكن هذه الممارسة تختلف طبيعتها وحدودها باختلاف الجنس، ويصبح من الصعب فصل الهوية الجنسية عن طبيعة الممارسات الناتجة، لذلك تصبح ممارسة المرأة للمقاولة ممارسة اجتماعية وسياسية واقتصادية متعددة الرهانات، وبأهداف ومعايير تختلف عن المعايير الذكورية في نفس المجال.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مقاولة نسائية؛ ممارسة؛ مجتمع محلي.

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## 1- Introduction

Women entrepreneurship in Algeria still plays the role of “La minorité invisible” as it is called by Abdellatif Rabbah (Rebah, 2007), even after years of research, in which the share of women practising self-employment as a whole, not just enterprise, according to the Bureau's statistics The National Commercial Register, and the National Office of Statistics 7% (*Ministère Du Commerce Algérie*, 2016; *ONS: Office National Des Statistiques*, 2017), a number if we compare it with the field left to males creates a kind of regret about the reality of women entrepreneurs in Algeria, but if we compare it with the share of women entrepreneurs in France or the European Cooperation Area, for example (Bernard et al., 2013; Minniti, 2009), Researchers noticed some resemblance to the reality of the problem, which is a worldwide instance of patriarchal desire to control the joints of entrepreneurial labour and its patriarchal structure, erecting glass ceilings and reinforcing patriarchal rules. To assess the usefulness and success of this life.

Tackling the issue of women's entrepreneurship in the world in general, and in Algeria in particular, without invoking the influence of social references, is a mistake in my approach that refers to the generalization of the economic understanding of a sociological issue, and by sociology, we mean all that guarantees the principle of unity between what is political, social, economic, and even psychological, In bringing meaning and its extensions and uniqueness to the economic, self-representations, and cultural factors, in addition to the role of government institutions that practice support programs for many purposes, one of which may be supporting the existence of women's entrepreneurship as a transient demand for a basic demand that is the continuation of legitimacy by reducing the tension accompanying the increase in the idle labour force.

Women's entrepreneurship can only be viewed in the context of the existing framing conditions in these societies, which serve as frames of reference, and the participation of women in organizing enterprise projects is subject to numerous interactions and negotiations at the social level in order to become almost independent of male dominance and domestic work, in addition to the type of state policy as a framework. All of these factors may be important for the development of private projects, as well as

understanding the opportunities and limitations of entrepreneurial activity in Algeria, and "Chiburenko" emphasizes that understanding the factors framing entrepreneurship in each country will contribute greatly to bridging the gaps and great differences between countries, which leads to the development of entrepreneurship. (Chepurenko, 2015, p. 48).

As a result, researchers will attempt to tackle this issue through this scientific study by posing the following question:

***What is the reality of women's entrepreneurship practices in Algeria? How can these practices be understood in light of their connection to local social, economic and political structures?***

## **2- Research Methodology**

In this study, researchers worked on an investigation based on thorough observation of the field of women's entrepreneurship in the local community in Algeria's Djelfa region, which we supported with unintentional open exploratory interviews, as well as an in-depth critical review of selected literature, in order to bring the theoretical and conceptual framework of entrepreneurship in general and women entrepreneurship in particular up to date. We used a qualitative analytical method in particular.

## **3- The Theoretical Background of the Study**

According to Shane and Venkataraman, the definition of entrepreneurship is perhaps the most difficult obstacle to establishing a conceptual framework for the field (Kheiri et al., 2021, p. 205), and most academic researchers in the field of business agree that there is currently no uniform acceptance of the definition of "entrepreneur." ", which has been drawn to several disciplines with idiomatic features of different intents, and with criteria that fit the conceptual space of the real from its real connotations, which generated many conceptual presentations, built around the representations of the beholder of the perspective, fundamentally different from each other according to different points of view, and the association of business with necessary concepts and conventions such as free work, contracting event, ability to create, authority, freedom, adaptation, and action, all These conventions adhere to and express the limits of the social context, so the entrepreneurial act acquires a state of exclusivity, complexity and structure, which makes us face a dilemma for defining the word "contractor", which calls for a retreat from the certainty

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of understanding, and the beginning of the question about What is "contracting"? Who is the "contractor"?

### *3-1- Theoretical foundations and definition of concepts*

Definitions are the foundation of excellent science (Bygrave & Hofer, 1992, p. 13), and it may seem easy to start with topic definitions, but presenting the topic of entrepreneurship academically may lead to a compromise on this axiom, and most researchers in the field agree that there is currently no single accepted definition For the “entrepreneur” may be accepted uniformly and unequivocally in the research literature on entrepreneurship, choosing an appropriate basis for identifying and understanding the ethos of entrepreneurship creates a challenge for researchers and academics have given that there are a number of schools of thought, which look at the concept from fundamentally different perspectives (Kruger, 2004, p. 13).

During the last decade, we have witnessed a renaissance of entrepreneurial thought in economics, with contemporary theories of entrepreneurship based on the great contributions of the entrepreneur Schumpeter (1911-1934), who emphasized the importance of innovative entrepreneurs as the main tool for moving the economy forward from a state of constant equilibrium, based on the integrative capacity of the economy. On the same line of thought, they did not acquire any kind of commodity, nor did they create any original means of production, but used the means of production differently and more advantageously, they made new combinations, is the "contractor" profit (Braunerhjelm, 2010, p. 7).

For instance, Schumpeter viewed ‘opportunity’ as being outside the scope of entrepreneurship. Rather, it is the identification and exploitation of these opportunities that characterize entrepreneurs, that is, exploiting an opportunity in a certain way is an innovation in itself, also in this respect, Schumpeter's original ideas about entrepreneurship were a great influence on the next generation of researchers in the enterprise, and Schumpeter did not view entrepreneurs as addressees of risk, although he did not reject the idea completely, and he was aware that innovation contained elements of risk for the entrepreneur, but primarily that task was attributed to the capitalists who Finance contracting projects.

Following that, a decade later, Knight (1921) proposed that the entrepreneur's role is "as someone who transforms uncertainty into a calculated risk", thus completing Schumpeter's model by including cognitive abilities as an explanation for entrepreneurial activity. Next, Kerzner (1973, 1996, 1997) defined The concept of the entrepreneur as someone who moves the economy toward equilibrium (in contrast to Schumpeter), by making use of the possibilities of control (Braunerhjelm, 2010, pp. 7–8).

***NB:***

In the present study, researchers have exceeded the axiom of the definition of women's entrepreneurship, as it is all the previous definitions provided that the doer is a woman, while the most important thing for us in the matter of women's entrepreneurship is what will be mentioned in the upcoming analysis.

***3-2- Entrepreneurship as a field of knowledge***

Entrepreneurial research is described as the study of the "how, who, and what" repercussions of prospects for future products and services that are identified, evaluated, and exploited, in connection to "who," "what," and "how." Thurik and Wennekers (1999) propose a selective definition of the entrepreneur, which has become accepted Increasingly, according to them, the entrepreneur is "an innovator, perceiving and creating new opportunities, operating under uncertainty, bringing products to market, deciding on the spot, form and use of resources, managing his business and competing with others for market share"(Braunerhjelm, 2010, p. 8), and this definition appears to be linked to the contributions referenced above.

The conception of entrepreneurship has coincided with the development of the field's knowledge and academic field, as it was common that little was known about the knowledge structure of entrepreneurship as a scientific field, and there may be a variety of reasons for this lack of attention to the academic aspects of entrepreneurship, one of the main reasons that entrepreneurship did not appear as a field. According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, my science is the "mandate" to explain the phenomena "for it." (Landström & Harirchi, 2018, p. 01), furthermore, both Landström & Harirchi use a model developed by Humbrick & Shane (2008), where they suggest that emerging areas of research follow a process

of institutionalization that goes through three overlapping stages: (1) field differentiation from existing fields, (2) resource mobilization to ensure intentional density of scholars, and control over needed resources, and (3) building legitimacy in The eyes of the academic institution.

### ***3-3- Women's Entrepreneurship and Analytical Paradigm***

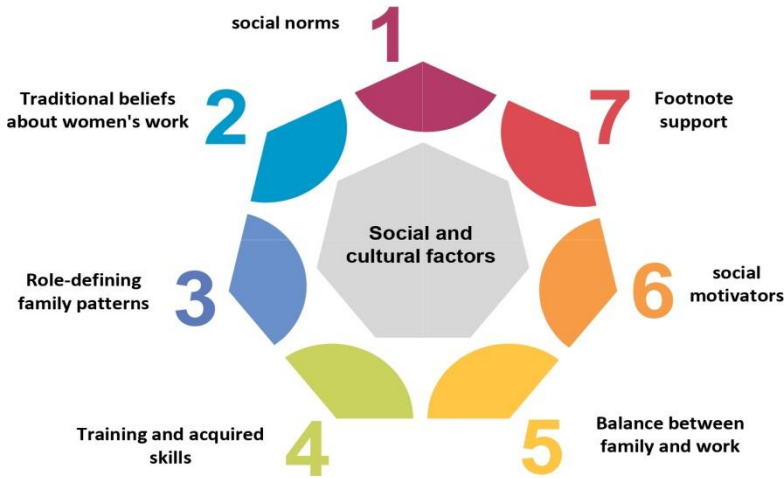
The prevailing belief that the market is "open to all" is belied by reality, and on this basis "Birley" (1989) validates that the main difference between male and female entrepreneurs is the options for entering the market, that there is an urgent need to study hidden factors such as culture, adaptation, and experiences, and that he proposed a new theory related to the cultural situation and the prevailing culture (Birley, 1988), and this analytical model may be considered The most appropriate models that can be relied upon in diagnosing the social reality of women entrepreneurs in the local community.

## **4- Results of the Study**

The fundamental conclusion drawn from the research on women's entrepreneurship is that social and cultural contexts must be considered impediments. Women's limitations in the workplace are generally related to their social, cultural, and even economic environments. Values, beliefs, norms, and the educational system are all crucial components for the creation, or absence, of projects. As a result, cultural components are critical for the creation of entrepreneurial impulses, and the firm appears as a producer as well as a cultural and social product of a certain setting.

Therefore, it is clear that this specificity makes the study of women's entrepreneurship a contextual topic, closely related to the social and cultural factors of each country, where Robert Patorell and Zahra Araste (2006) (Paturel & Arasti, 2006) identify a number of factors to study the key environment of entrepreneurship, and according to them, environmental factors such as norms differ Social, customs, political systems and economic variables from one country to another or from one region to another, and these social and cultural factors can be summarized as follows:

### ***Figure 1: Socio-cultural factors shaping the context of women entrepreneurs***



**Source:** Kheiri, N., & Heairia, A. (2021). Social engineering to feminize the entrepreneurial action in the relationship of social structures to women's practice of entrepreneurship in the local community. *AFKAR wa AFFAK*, 9(4), 147–162.

The woman entrepreneur seeks a framing reference scenario in light of the complexity of social and cultural aspects that make up the setting. As photographed by Joseph Schumpeter, the woman's entrepreneurial activity in the local community that absorbs and develops this culture becomes a social-cultural practice before it becomes a functional practice, having various dimensions and not limited to the economic dimension.

Regardless of political changes such as the United States' Title IX of the Civil Rights Act (1972), which became international, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), women and men still do not have equal opportunities for education, employment, success, advancement, and satisfaction, because most people are unaware of implicit biases and how they work to prevent women from achieving their goals. In this regard, the reason why women do not move beyond a certain level in the company is not as simple as we assume (Isaac et al., 2012, p. 80), however, according to Vagenson (1993) it is a problem that requires understanding how opportunities for women to reach senior positions are the result of the interaction between a group of elements at different levels

and not an isolated event. Differences in access to positions of responsibility depend not only on differences in experiences between men and women but also on Organizational characteristics and public order that can lead to discrimination (GUEDJALI, 2019, pp. 188–189).

## **5- Discussion of the results**

The noteworthy issue in women's contracting practice is their inability to include the act as one of its initial conditions, which is not a flaw in and of itself, but it is a problem that also exists at the male level, where some parties work to create practices under the guise of contracting in order to create a margin of economic action directed more towards achieving a political goal than an economic goal. The primary conditions of business that are agreed upon by most of the pioneers of this science are freedom, power, decision-making ability, practice in light of uncertainty, ability and even the search for risk, and sensitivity to opportunities and ability. On exploiting them, all these conditions are crucial to defining or forming a consensual conceptual framework, and the current role of social science researchers specializing in entrepreneurship is to break out of the abstraction and into the 'daring' state of this consensual definitional framework, 'in order to develop appropriate methods adapted to local culture and the environment, for the Algerian social and economic situation' (Ghiat, 2015, p. 25).

Based on the aforementioned, we can make an analytical contribution based on the reality of the exploratory study, as well as through an in-depth critical reading of many studies and theses theoretical and empirical, to diagnose the reality of women entrepreneurs, and in this regard, we emphasize a very important point, which is the content of our study, which is that trying to understand the reality of women entrepreneurs, and diagnosing its dimensions, must necessarily proceed from understanding the contextual frames of reference, which are formed from fixed and recurring structures. In all cultures, but with the relative effects of each structure, these structures can be limited to the social structure, the economic structure, and the political structure, and can be presented as follows:

### ***5-1- Social structure***



The study of entrepreneurial women centered on the fact that a woman entrepreneur's life is not only practical, but also always tied to her family, particularly her children. Entrepreneur women face in their work, through a careful and extensive study of the large number of studies that dealt with this topic, as they considered that the division of life between the practical private and the social public within families or within the anticipatory context of their role, is an assumption that is taken for granted and is indisputable in most of the studies which were reviewed by it, but the problem that arises at this level is that what is considered within the "family" and "private" framework is seen as a binding individual responsibility for women, and thus the enterprise becomes an additional burden on the stereotyped practices and actions within the family or the context, and stems from This problem arises from the common expectation of husbands that the working wife must deal with housekeeping and child responsibilities in addition to work responsibilities, and to illustrate this, Cox, Moore, and Van Oken, (1984) presented a study of public husbands Lane in *Small Business*, summarized the sum of possible problems into six major areas of potential trouble for couples:

(1) conflict caused by restricted mobility at work; (2) excessive demands on time and energy on each pair; (3) inability to separate professional and personal problems; (4) role conflicts; (5) the competitive tendencies of the spouses; and (6) bring home-related work problems (Ahl, 2002, p. 146).

based on this, the issue that women entrepreneurs face at the level of social reference is the tension that exists between their personal lives and their professional endeavours, which becomes a form of conflicting roles, "so participation in one role becomes more difficult because of participation in the other role" (Stoner, 1990, p. 30), Therefore, the entrepreneur woman, through her practice of contracting, makes rational choices from the point of view of the dominant role in her life, which is mostly the family role, which constitutes for her a basic orientation towards meeting her natural and justified expectations.

On the other hand, we noted that women chose to contract because it is "flexible work" that allows them to satisfy the demands of their family roles. As women entrepreneurs, in the face of environmental constraints, do not develop confrontational behaviours, but rather prefer adaptation and

consensual arrangements” (Hammache, 2020, pp. 281–282) Freedom is an escape from work.” Other researchers have gone further by equating self-employment with the idea of before hard work (Szaban & Skrzek-Lubasińska, 2018, pp. 90–91).

### *5-2- Economic Structure*

Rentier argues that Algeria relies on a public sector employment policy in order to adapt unemployment to regulated unemployment, and thus build a model of an unproductive economy to justify the distribution of hydrocarbon wealth on the basis of positions, and not in exchange for real production, and therefore the social support for these employment policies contributed to creating a general tendency towards the preference of public employment, especially for the educated and university graduates, which led to an aversion to self-employment for this category, i.e. the educated, which contributed to the creation of a special model for self-employment and entrepreneurship obligated to contain the uneducated category, and this is a deep problem resulting as an unhealthy presentation of the model of the Economist in Algeria.

Another issue arises when discussing financing for women entrepreneurs, as it is difficult to find clear official statistics or to determine the time period during which women were able to access self-employment with their own money, and most studies and data provided by official authorities in Algeria indicate that the existence of women entrepreneurs has reached a maximum of 7% in the last twenty years, and that this shy female presence is due to a number of factors (Onsaj, Ongam, Kanak ... etc.), where women did not depend on entering the business through personal initiative with their money in kind, or even money that can be obtained through bank loans outside the national empowerment programs, which are subject to conditions and controls, the most important of which is the necessity to return the loan with interest Although the empowerment programs set some binding conditions, they have always worked to perpetuate the policy of social support and the distribution of rents, and every new political program promises not to be held accountable and to clear debts, which made one of the conditions for contracting These practices negate the “absence” of the condition of risk, by which we mean risking money in order to take

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advantage of opportunities. The risk-taking place here is a risk of public money in order to perpetuate a political program.

On the same line of thought, even the volume of loans directed to individuals is insufficient to create real businesses that are firmly rooted in the economic structure, because the absence of real money stemming from self-sourced and bearing all possible risks, contributed to the creation of a type of entrepreneurs - women and men - who do not evoke the existential dimension of them as actors with a purpose. Rather, as opportunists who had the opportunity to benefit from state support that is not bound by penalty or punishment in order to achieve social ends, such as buying a house or marriage, or buying a car with loan money, according to “Maxfield Sylvia” the political programs to empower contractors, which include tax exemptions, and loan programs Government-backed, programs in which the government guarantees loans, maybe non-sexist, but at the same time they are unhelpful macro-level programs for change, and too small to influence the overall scope of the enterprise (Maxfield, 2007), so the presence of women is almost exclusive. In the area of government support programs, it is a strong presence in a weak and fragile area, not for women but for government programs.

### ***5-3- The political structure***

When we claim that the state's political initiatives in favor of women's entrepreneurship helped a lot to create this sector, we're making a toxic argument, because it implies that free women's labor in Algeria is the result of political will, not women's will, which is a triumph for politics. Then it's not for ladies. Even at the political level in Algeria, we observe that women are viewed as a vulnerable enterprise that requires the male will to succeed. “Women in business often reproduce or reinforce gender norms while introducing new forms of subjugation and oppression.” This argument for women’s entrepreneurship acquires a presence enshrined across multiple levels of developmental governance—global, regional and local, and is even rooted in neoliberal rationalism, which is influenced by local influences of gender and culture. Religion and its influence (Ennis, 2019, p. 367).

Crystal Innes adds that the logic of authoritarian economics has always framed women as subjects that need to be liberated by market forces, meaning that the injection of women into the private sector through

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entrepreneurship directed by political programs is the creation of secondary entities, or second-class actors in order to fabricate legitimacy on feminist state narratives, becoming part of the government's strategy to legitimize liberal credentials in international opinion.

Women were not recognized as economic and social actors until after the 1975 Mexico City Conference, when the Approach Approach (IFD) was introduced, with the goal of integrating women into the productive process by encouraging their participation in development projects and developing specific projects for women to improve their living conditions. The gender theory in pushing the issue of women's entrepreneurship to the scene and defending it strongly, considering that they appeared synonymous in time, the criterion for women's success at that time was the ability to empower them in their society through the emergence of their role at work, and entrepreneurship was one of the most important modern activities that can meet the rising feminist ambition.

Following that, the Arab constitutions, as well as Algeria, have taken a number of measures to keep pace with these agreements, as equality between women and men has been declared in terms of rights and duties, and there is no law prohibiting women from working or owning businesses, however, "the business environment, especially self-employment, is still a severe field." Sensitivity to gender issues, which made women enjoy a large share of undeclared restrictions and limits, which hinder their economic participation, and thus make their contribution small compared to males" (Hattab, 2011).

These obstacles may vary by location, even within a single nation or region, but one thing is certain: the difficulties that women confront in the sphere of free women's labour through entrepreneurship are gender-structured. Even at the level of funding, we do not find much support From the family to empower women, they always think that women are not qualified to run large projects, so families do not invest in qualified women for entrepreneurship, and even banks set criteria for exclusion, and informal networks of financing remain networks governed by male representations and exclusionary attitudes for women, and this leads to exclusion and exclusion from activities Large and real, women entrepreneurship remains confined to government support programs (Onsaj, Angam, Kanak), which

has led to a stagnation in the ability to acquire the experience and skills necessary for expansion and continuity, which ultimately leads to the transformation of women's enterprise projects into a simple household work that is compatible with With male frames of reference, at the functional level.

## 6- Conclusion

In the end, it can be emphasized that women's entrepreneurship according to "Kheiri and Heairia" (Kheiri & Herairia, 2021, pp. 159–160) a feminine field in terms of the actor, extending from another field, the enterprise with the holistic criterion of action, but the difference is that women are more closely linked to cultural frames of reference and practice than males. The enterprise's responsibility is to evoke the atmosphere of these frameworks and to frequently embody the common culture's expectations. The enterprise for it is "a cultural position compatible with the frames of reference, and the woman is trapped in the male standard of value to judge the effectiveness of the action in the social context, as the intensification of male standards on the entrepreneurial work was one of the exclusion methods, and even the success of women in achieving these standards is not as easy as males find, and feminist theories have worked to support feminine access to the enterprise, while the "liberal feminist" theory emphasizes the inevitability of equality in order to access, there have been major revisions by pioneers.

"On an epistemological level, social feminism interprets this concept in accordance with the requirements of justice from the perspective of difference, which imposes the inevitability of reviewing the criterion of value and judgment on value, as well as the form of work by linking it to type, and imposes the inevitability of reviewing the criterion of value and judgment on value, and imposes the inevitability of reviewing the criterion of value and judgment on value, Due to the intricacies of gender entrepreneurship, it is vital to consider gender variations in business practice, as well as the legal and social frameworks that assist women entrepreneurs.

The woman entrepreneur is a product of her culture, which makes her business a social act compatible with the cultural requirements essential

to develop normative conformity with the general context, which is society, and the private context, which is her family.

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