



***Women on the Labor Market: Gender Constraints to Female
Entrepreneurship in North Africa, Case of Algeria***

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Abstract

The research aims to identify the different forms of discrimination and above all to explain the familiness and the change in preferences operated based on experiences of discrimination, which hinder the empowerment of women in North Africa. It used a “snowball” method for the survey and succeeded in establishing statistical limits alternately reflecting that women's preferences were strategic behaviors oriented towards sectoral activities not favorable to men in order to reduce the influence of female discrimination. Likewise, the use of informal social capital largely predisposes strategic behaviors and managerial decisions specific to women's businesses to escape differentiation. For their applicability, the results obtained should serve as a positive basis for a new public policy to combat gender discrimination in this area.

Key words: Female Discrimination, Female Work, Empowerment, Familiness, Social Capital, Preferences, North Africa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Algeria, unemployment peaked to reach at 28.9% among young people, including young women during the 2000s (National Statistics Office, NSO, 2021). In the context of North Africa, this seems excessive and constitutes is of great concern to the political leaders of the time. The State has therefore made the strategic choice to create instruments to support the entrepreneurship of young and old, in order to fight against unemployment, precariousness, social exclusion and above all gender obstacles to self-employment.

The various instruments installed for this purpose are the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ), the National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC), the National Microcredit Management Agency (ANGEM), and the National Development Agency investment (ANDI) (Belmihoub & Alilat, 2016). Entrepreneurship is then considered as a lever for creating wealth and jobs, and obviously a solution to the worrying situation of unemployment and worse treatment suffered by women on labor and employment market.

A few years later, nationally, the unemployment rate fell to 11.4%; broken down by gender, it is 9.1% among men and 20.4% among women (ONS, 2019) and among young people aged 20-39 it stands at 19.93% (ONS, 2021). In the category of entrepreneurship, the female gender represents only 6% of the total business leaders and 7.66% of the total traders (CNRC, 2016). In a global comparison, there are between 31% and 38% of female business leaders, but in the MENA "East and North Africa" countries (literally, "Middle East and North Africa), they do not represent only 13% or 15% of self-employed workers (International Labour Office, ILO (2023; 2017 & 2016) and World Bank, 2015 & 2013 cited by CAWTAR, 2017).

1.1. Background of the study and justification

The article rekindles the debate on an important idea related to the role of women in the Maghreb. Because inequalities between men and women as one of the major constraints to economic progress and human development in the region persist until now. Additionally, almost constant challenges and setbacks occur in North Africa. All this indicates the relevance and necessity of the continuity of debates of several aspects of gender in the region (Bouchakour et al., 2018).

He is particularly interested in the economic and social obstacles that women encounter in entrepreneurship, especially in three wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila. However, the work was limited to a "FEMSOL1617 Project" initiated by the Center for Research in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD), which involved 15 wilayas. CREAD designed and implemented the project because of the economic and social consequences arising from the discrimination of women in the labor market and a "choice on which the survival and future of all humanity surely depends" (Giuliani, 2019; Chassonnery-Zaïgouche, 2012).

Gender discrimination, which is accompanied by unemployment among young people, university graduates and especially women, appears to be a serious universal threat and in Algeria, because of several facts. On the one hand, it leads to social, psychological, and physical problems for the victims. Indeed, the unemployed find themselves physically weakened by the lack of physical and/or intellectual activity, a frequent rhythm linked to their profession and the lack healthy and balanced diet, consequently weakening the health of the individual (Define Business Terms, 2023).

The psychological and social effects of unemployment affect morale and health. Social integration becomes a problem and the social appearances cultivated by any society lead to leading a solitary and camouflaged life. Stress, dissatisfaction, and

depression quickly take hold of the unemployed with serious consequences against which the main defense is the recovery of self-confidence. On the microeconomic level, the non-satisfaction of basic needs appears quickly and provokes painful for unemployed. On the macroeconomic level, the State is challenged, because a high proportion of unemployed firstly constitutes a threat for the government in place in relation to its economic policy and its electoral promise (Ghiat, 2014).

Then, with high unemployment rate (in comparison with the situation of full employment on the labor market having a rate the rate $\leq 5\%$) the national economy functions poorly and the creation of wealth, its redistribution, and the collection of taxes for the State budget are concerns. Furthermore, a public health problem is emerging and care of the unemployed is insufficient. All its consequences contribute to increasing the public debt. The economic literature structures research on the problem, for example, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth with the possibility of suppressing unemployment and human capital costs to eliminate unemployment (Adeleke & Bola, 2022; Giuliani, 2019; Mankiw, 2018).

Other areas of research are the rigidity of the Labor Code, the mismatch between supply and demand and the reduction of working hours to eliminate unemployment. Finally, there is the contradictory nature of the economic effectiveness of discrimination as well as positive and normative discrimination, which would harm the competitiveness of companies by resorting to gender discrimination (Giuliani, 2019).

1.2. Research problem on barriers to entrepreneurship in Algeria

Not only is the high level of unemployment a pressing concern, but it is also coupled with the gender one; this is why the situation seems widely complex. In other words, in addition to the categories of problems common to both women and men, others are especially consecutive to women on the labor market. Other than the low

numbers, women entrepreneurs in Algeria face concerns or obstacles that make their economic activities difficult (OECD, 2011). Proulx (2018) divided them into four main distinct categories: personal constraints, external funding difficulties, lack of support or recognition, and low integration of women in business networks.

Despite the accumulation of the human capital exceeding that of men for years, women have been hampered in their professional careers. Sometimes, they manage to get around these series of obstacles by giving their preferences to a few categories of jobs or activities. Their preferences, however, seem to be both the result and the inability to deal with discriminatory behavior in the professional world. This corresponds to real difficulties that must be resolved to obtain an outcome that affects the collective well-being and development that the economic literature has considered in terms of gender gaps on the labor market (Azmat & Petrongolo, 2014).

1.2.1. Question and sub-question one

This raises the question: which sectoral activities base preferences for overcoming obstacles to female entrepreneurship on the local labor market?

Moreover, the sub-question 1: Is it possible that women's preferences based on categories of discrimination strongly modify the discriminatory gaps against them on the labor market in their favor?

Therefore, the general objective of the study consists of the identification of the different types of obstacles, and above all, the explanation of the change in preferences in the face of experiences of discrimination, which block the entrepreneurial path of women. The achievement and applicability of the conclusions involves measuring the gaps between women and men on the labor market, notably involving self-employability. The difference between the two categories of gender magnitudes generates actions by public authorities to overcome the distinct series of

difficulties encountered by women in order to strengthen their entrepreneurial capacities, their possibilities to act and achieve their well-being and to involve in this way in the development of the country.

1.2.2. Specific objective

This leads to the specific objective, which is to explain the experience of obstacles to female entrepreneurship changing preferences according to economic sectors finally to cease gender discrimination by applying the results. The explanatory measure then concerns:

- ❖ The actual entrepreneurial behavior of women in the study area based on the preferred activity categories by evaluating them.
- ❖ The assessment of the main obstacles that cross their path towards self-employability and in the operationalization of their businesses.
- ❖ Prevent and raise awareness among individuals of the economic, social, and psychological consequences of female discrimination on the labor market by propelling agents and the national economy onto a new path of development and well-being of humanity.

Ultimately, the project of CREAD and the specific objective of this study will serve as a normative basis for building recommendations to combat gender discrimination in the chosen regions, or even in the country.

1.2.3. Research hypotheses

There are two interdependent ones: Female preferences are strategic behaviors orienting towards sectoral activities not favorable to men to reduce the influence of female discrimination. The use of informal social capital widely predisposes the strategic behaviors and managerial decisions specific to women's businesses to escape gender differentiation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

First, it should be noted that economic discrimination is widely shared today. This is common in and by developed wage labor societies as well as in developing countries.

2.1. Definition of the main concepts and literature review

When we address the difficulties experienced by women, we cannot ignore gender discrimination on the job market. According to Azmat and Pétrongo (2014), this problem is considered to fall under three economic theories: the theory of discrimination on the labor market, that of preferences on the labor market and the theory of the productivity gap on the job market. The theory of preferences is favored in the present study, because it leads to a better explanation of the phenomenon on the labor market of the identified area.

2.1.1. Economic preferences in and by the wage society

Referring to preferences to economically determine the behavior of the female gender on the labor market, which introduces differentiation, economists often integrate motivation, habit, quality, pleasure, well-being, but also the places of residence of women entrepreneurs who are not separated from their cultural heritage. Evoking Mankiw (2018) referred to by Azizi & Atchemdi (2022), the most obvious determinant of labor demand is the taste for things. If a woman appreciates the services, by linking them to the household chores started earlier in her household, she naturally opts more for remunerative services in the tertiary sector.

Sometimes, preferences are considered exogenous to the proper functioning of the market, when it concerns, for example, the effect of social pressure on demand or the self-employability of women. In this work, among economists, the preferences of

women entrepreneurs are not explained, because they emanate from historical forces, notably cultural, religious, and psychological forces, which go beyond the field of economics. On the other hand, economists examine what happens when preferences change (Mankiw (2018) cited by Azizi & Atchemdi (2022)). In all cases, the study attempts to discover how preferences change across economic sectors in which it is possible for women to act by engaging in activities that generate income and have impact on well-being.

2.1.2. Economic discrimination in and by wage society

It is important to return here to the meaning of economic discrimination. “Economic discrimination, or discrimination based on economic status, is discrimination, that is, unequal treatment of something or someone, based on economic factors. Employment, salary, or prices may be among these factors. Simply put, economic discrimination is the act of discriminating against an individual, especially woman, on the basis of one or more economic factors. Salaries, origin or social minorities, culture, employment as well as prices may be some of the factors that give rise to such discrimination” (Define Business Terms, 2023).

Research carried out in the field makes it possible to distinguish recurring forms of economic discrimination throughout the world. Frequent forms are unequal hiring practices: the employer chooses to hire an employee for the sole reason that he or she was born in the country, refusing other more interesting but foreign profiles. Pay discrimination: It is widespread and causes the existing pay gap between men and women. This is discrimination motivated by the person’s gender, which ultimately manifests itself in asymmetrical salaries for the same work. Another example is paying less to individuals because they are women, because they are of the foreign feminine gender or because they belong to a certain minority (Define Business Terms, 2023; Azmat & Petrongolo, 2014).

Apart from these, other forms of economic discrimination are discrimination based on availability and access (inability to acquire a certain good or obtain a service for the simple fact of non-authorization for reasons such as gender or minority status. Price discrimination or tariff (charging different prices for the same good) and discrimination in services (for example, Latin American citizens in the United States have had their mortgages refused because they were from Latin America (Define Business Terms, 2023; Azmat & Pétrongo, 2014).

2.1.3. The theory of familiness and that of social capital

Generally, “familiness, introduced by Habbershon & Williams (1999), refers to “the unique resources available to a business based on mutual exchange mechanisms consisting of family, family members, and economic activity”. Additionally, familiness or family effect refers to the attributes that the family brings to the company that affects its performance. In other words, this concept refers to the human capital and other rare and unique resources that family members, often the closest ones, bring to the successful functioning of the family business (Vallejo-Martos et al., 2016 cited by Binwa et al., 2020).

The operational questions of familiness in the emergence of female entrepreneurship in a context of female discrimination have not yet been addressed, even in the case of small and medium-sized family businesses disconnected from the stock market. Exploratory in this sense, the approach developed admits that the operationalization of a construct is subsequent to its precise experience.

Often familiness is supplemented by the theory of social capital, making it possible to correct its identified limits, by the characterization of its interactions, their analysis, and their management unlike the approach of Habbershon & Williams (1999), briefly descriptive and less manipulable, and evasive. Social capital is the set

of resources that individuals, here women, can obtain by knowing other people, by belonging to a social network with them, or simply by being known to them and benefiting good reputation (Baron & Markman, 2000). A certain number of definitions have been considered, but they have in common that the benevolence that others feel towards an actor can be a source of value, or more explicitly, the social resources linked to relationships can be used for purposes economic purposes (Biggart & Castanias, 2001 cited by Arrègle et al., 2004; Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988).

Thus, familiness is now distinguished as “the fruitful interweaving of the two social capitals of the family business, namely that of the family and that of the company, which can be at the origin of numerous competitive advantages frequently attributed to the family businesses” (Arrègle et al., 2004). Economic actors can thus benefit from their membership in social networks (Portes, 1998). The idea of social capital covers the structure and content of an actor's social relationships (Adler & Kwon, 2002); in other words, the network of relationships but also the volume of capital of different types that it allows to use by proxy.

For an actor to benefit from social capital, three conditions must be met: (i) he must have the possibility to participate in social transactions (connections to social networks); (ii) members of social capital must be motivated to act effectively in favor of the actor; and (iii) they must have the capacity to do so (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Furthermore, the beneficial effects of the social network are generally divided into three non-categories: information and research, coercion-attraction, and influence (Biggart & Castanias, 2001; Adler & Kwon, 2002) mentioned by Arrègle et al (2004).

2.2. Choice of area and methods of measuring female discrimination

Among the 15 wilayas initially included in the project, this study focused only on three listed above based on a prior spatial distribution. They presented a quasi-

natural (steppe region), cultural and economic homogeneity. Concerning the methods, a qualitative survey was carried out with an interview guide among women business leaders.

Faced with the refusal to obtain a list of women entrepreneurs established on their own account or registered in the National Center of the Trade Register (CNRC) and at the level of the various entrepreneurship support agencies, the names of women entrepreneurs were provided. In this case, the study opted for non-probability sampling, with “Snowball” sorting. We have achieved this “when we know a few individuals in the target population through whom we can contact others. It is therefore the individuals from the studied population who contributed to constituting the sample. We proceed in this way when the environment is little known or when it is relatively closed” (Angers, 1997).

The women entrepreneurs surveyed were therefore 49 in number, or respectively 17 women in Djelfa, 16 in Laghouat and 16 women in M’sila. Each independent worker was subjected to the same in-depth interview guide, the main themes of which cover her entrepreneurial pathways, her motivations as well as the obstacles encountered. The surveys began in March 2021 and ended in September 2022 in the three wilayas (appendix 1).

As for the explanation of the change in the preferences of women facing discrimination on the labor market, it was translated into terms of statistical indicators (per centage and volume) to be more explicit and concise. Indeed, through these stochastic quantities, research has succeeded in drawing statistical boundaries reflecting, in turn, the real entrepreneurial behavior of women in the regions according to of preferred activity categories, the main obstacles blocking their personal pathways.

Throughout the choice of the study area and the methods of measuring female discrimination, many difficulties were encountered. The first was the extremely rare aptitude for self-employment of women in the steppe highlands. This has also led to the expansion of the study area, leading to another handicap that of immensity of the territory covered with the increase in research time and distances traveled. The various refusals opposed by the ad hoc systems and those of certain women entrepreneurs did not facilitate the research. The results obtained should, despite all these rigorous and convincing constraints, serve as a positive basis for a new policy in this area.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1. Characterization of women entrepreneurs

At this first level, the characterization of women entrepreneurs is descriptive in nature. However, it is important to understand the demonstration based on the field experiences of the women.

3.1.1. Age and family situation of women entrepreneurs

There are more women in the 41-50 age group, where their proportion reaches 60.61%, and only 10.20% of women are between 20 and 30 years old, with an average of 12.25 and a standard deviation of 6.08 (women entrepreneurs). Regarding the marital status of women, married promoters represent 57.14% of all women surveyed, and are the most numerous. In Laghouat, 11 women are married, in Djelfa 8 women and in M'sila 9 women are married, with an average of 16.33 and a standard deviation of 10.12 (marital status) (tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Share of women in each age group and status

Share of women in each age group			Marital status of women		
Age group	3 wilayas	Share of women	Marital status	Number of women	Share of women
20-30	5	10.20%	Single	10	20.40%
31-40	19	38.78%	Brides (Married)	28	57.15%
41-50	15	30.62%	Divorced	11	22.45%
51 and over	10	20.40%	Total	49	100%
Total	49	100%			

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of female entrepreneurship in the three wilayas

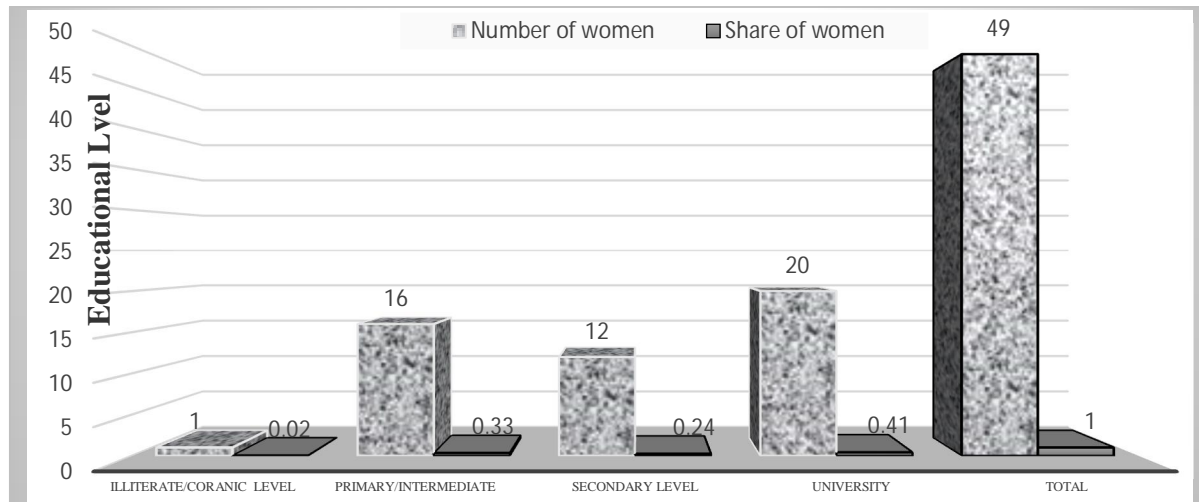
Stochastic quantities	Women entrepreneurs	Marital status
Number of observations	4	3
Minimum	5.00	10.00
Maximum	19.00	28.00
Median	12.50	11.00
Average	12.25	16.33
Variance (n-1)	36.92	102.33
Standard deviation (n-1)	6.08	10.12

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

3.1.2. Level of education of women

The proportion of women entrepreneurs with a university education reaches 41% of the total. Women with primary/intermediate and secondary education represent 33% and 24% of the total, respectively. On the other hand, very few women are illiterate (fig. 1). Of the 49 women surveyed, 39% had also received vocational training (sewing, farming, weaving, etc.).

Fig. 1. Educational level of women entrepreneurs in the region



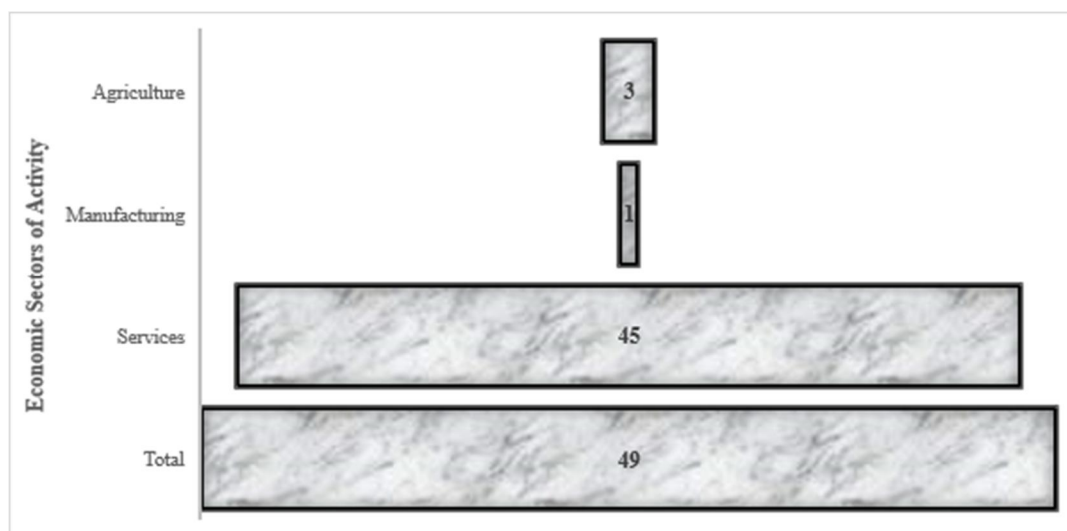
Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

3.2. Experiences of women entrepreneurs in the field

3.2.1. Women's experience of sectoral preferences

The majority of women entrepreneurs work in the service sector. Indeed, fig. 2 shows that 45 women, or 91.83% of the total, entered the tertiary economic sector. Agriculture and manufacturing are poorly represented in the group: 6.12% and 2.04% respectively.

Fig. 2. Women's preferences for business sector



Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

3.2.2. Motivation of women through preferential strategic behaviors

Exactly 51% of women embarked on the entrepreneurial adventure out of necessity, or because of unemployment or the need for money. However, they all testify that entrepreneurship allowed them to assert themselves. In this case, they first looked for paid employment. On the other hand, 49% of surveyed women took advantage of an opportunity suggested by an acquaintance. They therefore turned directly to self-employment (table 3). It is mainly women entrepreneurs living in Laghouat who launched into entrepreneurship out of opportunity and self-affirmation: 15 women out of 16 interviewed in Laghouat. Some left their paid employment, while others did not even look for paid employment. In Djelfa and M'sila, even if it was necessity and unemployment that pushed women into entrepreneurship, they attest that it allowed them to assert themselves in the society and within their families.

Table 3. Motivational preferences in female entrepreneurship

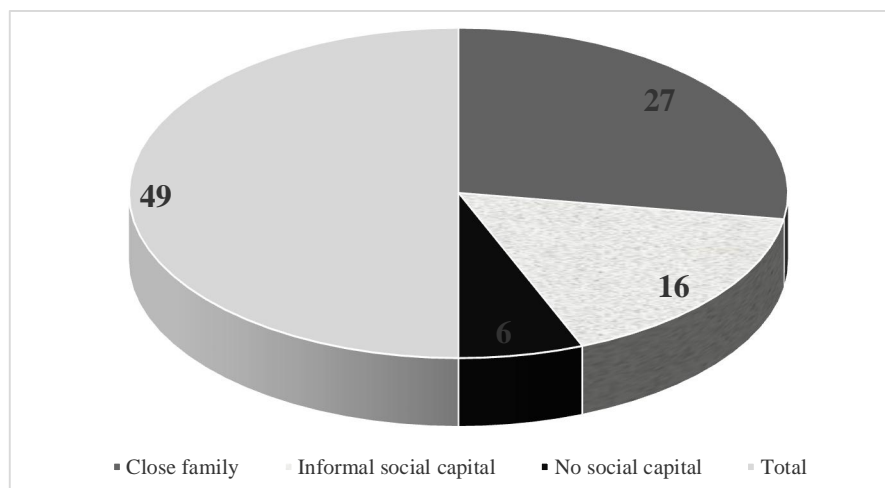
Motivations	Women entrepreneurs	Share of women
Necessity/Unemployment/Need for money/Self-assertion	25	51 %
Opportunity/Affirmation of self	24	49 %
Total	49	100 %

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

3.2.3. The contribution of familiness and the predispositions of women

Among all the women surveyed, a family environment had influenced 55% of them; either their fathers, brothers, mothers, or sisters were already involved in business or entrepreneurship. For 33% of women, it was the environment of friends and/or neighbors, i.e., informal social capital that influenced their entrepreneurial path (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Familiness and membership in an Informal Social Capital



Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

3.2.4. Discrimination experienced by women entrepreneurs in and by the salaried society in the area

i. family and personal social difficulties

The most important personal family constraints are those linked to household chores: women entrepreneurs are often divided between caring for young children, household chores and entrepreneurial activities: 30.61% of women suffer from this (table 4). For 26.53% of women, it is the jealousy from their husbands or brothers, or the difficulties on the part of their sons. Some have divorced or separated because of jealousy, especially when the profession is traditionally male, such as driving schools. Among the women surveyed, 8.16% of them experienced insinuations from their neighbors about the loans acquired from ANSEJ, because these were "not in conformity with religious practices"; some women were violently threatened and incited to close, for example, the coffee shops. Other difficulties stem from the family's apprehension about the entrepreneurial activity they had chosen, which was still little known at the time in the region (table 4).

Table 4. Personal, family, and social obstacles for women

Types of constraints	Yes	Per cent
Personal, family responsibilities (sometimes young children stayed in the workshops)	15	30.61
Brothers opposed to business/Jealousy of Husband/Problems with son + threats at coffee shops + Sexual harassment by public administration	13	26.53
Family apprehension when launching the business: difficulty doing business in the area, loan not in according with religion	4	8.16

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

ii. Administrative constraints

In other circumstances, 18, 36% of women have experienced administrative delays and bureaucracy (multiple and restrictive procedures). Women often complained that request for approval sometimes went unanswered or took a long time. Some requests took a year or more to be approved¹. Corruption, a recurring administrative scourge, was mentioned by 14.28% of those questioned. Some women even invoked God in their experiences, feeling powerless in the face of discriminatory blockages, "institutionalized corruption² " and the silence of the environment³ (Table 5).

Free applicants who can take their driving test through the Transport Department Service do not register with driving schools. Indeed, the wilaya transport authority accepts applications from candidates for DA 5,000 per application, a practice subject to a quota that the authority must not exceed; often, the legal quota is exceeded.

iii. Difficulties in accessing financing.

¹ The woman principal of a primary school received authorization to open a school at the same time as the Minister of Education was passing by, even though the application had been submitted than a year ago and the school was already in operation. The authorities concerned favored the opening of the school run by a man. This man is well known to the educational community, because he was formerly the principal of a public school.

² In the driving school sector.

³ Omerta: a silence kept because the subject is compromising or taboo. The corporation suffers from corruption, which is reflected in the prices asked of candidates: DA 28,000, including a baghchiche for the examiners.

This difficulty concerns 8.16% of women entrepreneurs: the seed loan requested was refused or reduced by third⁴. As a result, women sought funding through familiness, particularly informal networks: family, friends, etc. 6.12% of women incur expenses related to rent⁵. Among the women surveyed, 4.08% of the women suffered from cronyism during bid solicited.

Professional women architects have raised this problem. Applications submitted to the supervisory authorities are often rejected. If, exceptionally, the project proposed by the architectural firm is retained and the file accepted, the architects deplore the difficulty that exists between the project manager "woman architect" and the project owner "contractor"⁶. 4.08 % of women (dairy cattle and poultry) who have embarked on an agricultural activity encounter particular difficulties in the profession. The fellah card is only granted if the farmer has a property title or lease⁷. Faced with this economic discrimination in and by salaried company in the study area, their strategic preference was to re-register their businesses under their husbands' names who owns agricultural land. A poultry breeder recalls the multiple trips required by the Djelfa Regional Agricultural Mutual Fund (CRMA)⁸ (table 5).

⁴ In Laghouat, two women saw their loans reduced from DA 10 million to DA 6 million for plastic recycling, and from DA 8 million to DA 4 million for a nursery/ nursery school. In M'sila, a woman had her loan refused by the CNAC. She had to join forces to launch her business. In Djelfa, ANSEJ refused a loan extension to a woman who had already repaid the first loan. The extension loan was intended to finance an agricultural technic to be introduced in the training school.

⁵ Some women claim that the APC has empty shop/commercial area, but officials refuse to give them up.

⁶ A clause in the law favors young architects by offering them projects in public administration. Problem identified by the two women architects: slow construction on site by the client.

⁷ The Fellah card is necessary for the farmer to sell milk to the Soumam agri-food company and to buy cattle feed from the Interprofessional Agricultural Cereals Office (OAIC).

⁸ The poultry farmer has problems with the Djelfa Regional Agricultural Mutual Fund (CRMA). Every 15 days, she has to declare the sick and/or dead hens in order to be reimbursed. She did not do so, because she had to take care of purchasing animal feed, marketing products, family expenses, etc.

Table 5. Administrative constraints

Types of constraints	Yes	Rate (%)
Administrative slowness/ Bureaucracy/Complexity of procedures	9	18.36
Difficult accessing to financing	4	8.16
Special problems associated with agricultural projects	2	4.08
Unorganized profession (driving school)	3	6.12
Cronyism during tenders/Lack of information when launching calls for tenders/ and slowness of projects on site	2	4.08
Administration corruption	7	14.28
Existence of empty premises in the wilaya not granted to women/ Broken promise for a store/commercial area	3	6.12

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

iv. Constraints linked to suppliers

In the survey sample, 8.16% of the women entrepreneurs encountered difficulties with their suppliers. These included delays of up to 06 months in the supply of animals, the granting of sick animals that died on arrival at the farm⁹, difficulties in supplying animal feed¹⁰, the supply of subjects that not in accordance with the request¹¹, of the acquisition of the defective equipment.

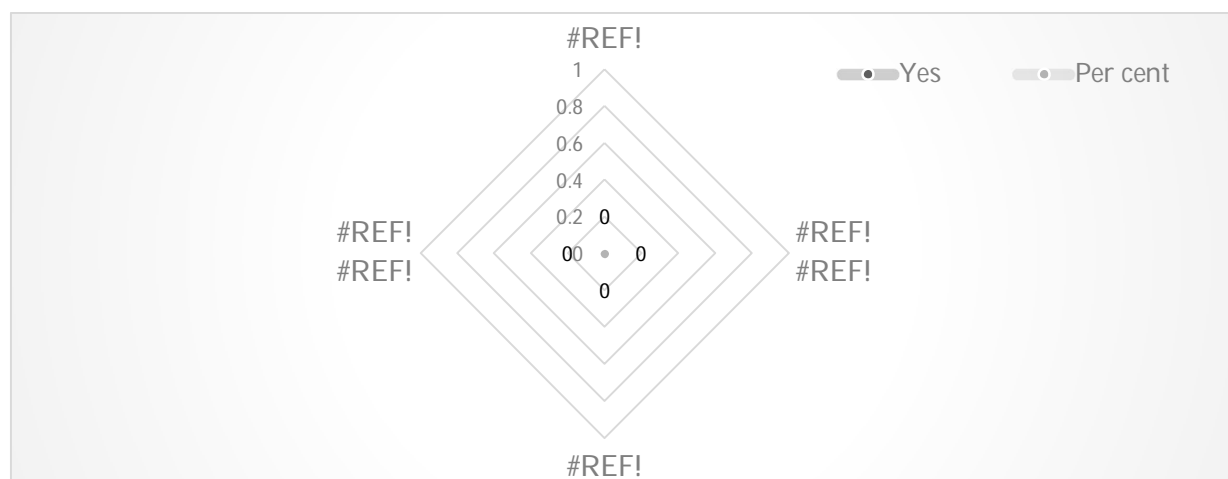
The female entrepreneur in the plastic recycling sector is struggling to recover her 20% quota at the plastic recycling depot in the municipality of Laghouat. When she asks the factory director for her quota, he gives her plastic raw material of defective quality, because he prefers companies from other wilayas (fig. 4).

⁹ The farmer lost a pregnant cow that the supplier would neither reimburse nor replace. With the ANSEJ and the bank's inspection visit, he was forced to replace it, but he wanted the cow back. The farmer refused.

¹⁰ The farmer had to go to the capital of the wilaya of Djelfa to speak personally to the director of the OAIC in order to obtain her quota of livestock feed.

¹¹ The poultry farmer received 12-week-old hens at the non-productive stage, instead of the regulated 18 weeks. Therefore, she must feed them until they reach breeding age, i.e., 18 weeks.

Fig. 4. Forms of constraints imposed by suppliers



Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

v. Difficulties to access to the market

Difficulties in accessing access the local market were revealed by 16.32% of women entrepreneurs, who encountered problems in marketing the products of their economic entities. Furthermore, with machines costing DA 240,000 each, women are unable to obtain contracts with companies and public institutions to sell their products¹². The seamstresses do not have any information during calls for tenders launched by public administrations. In addition, unfair competition is a difficulty noted by 20.40% of women. A poultry farmer has difficulty marketing her egg production on the local market, the monopoly being held by a Wholesaler with an unformal network with very marked effects¹³. The plastic recycling company, which represents 2.04% of all respondents, is having trouble in sourcing raw materials from the domestic market. Despite its inferior quality, the plastic raw material is offered at an expensive price of DA200/kg to female customers¹⁴ (table 6).

¹² A single tailor was able to obtain a contract worth DA 200,000, thanks to a network of personal acquaintances.

¹³ The wholesaler sets relatively low prices, because he supplies egg producers in the north of the country.

¹⁴ The plastic produced by Sonatrach and that imported from Saudi Arabia cost the same price: DA 200 /kg. The raw material is expensive.

Table 6. Difficulties of access to the market

Types of constraints: informal networking	Yes	Per cent	Comments
Low sales. Difficulty accessing the market and obtaining a contract with a local government or company	8	16.32	The other seamstresses from home and seem content to survive on their small sales
Unfair competition: lower prices for certain entrepreneurs + high cost of raw materials	10	20.40	The female entrepreneur talks about plastic, whose import price is the same as that of the Algerian product: DA 200/kg
Architects respond to the invitation for bids	2	4.08	This is the problem of architects who fail to access the market, even though they respond to and comply with calls for tenders

Source: Survey results in the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila, 2022

4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERIENCES

4.1. Determinants of women's preferences for certain sectoral activities

Women's preferences for sectoral activities that are unfavorable to men have enable them to reduce the influence of female discrimination. The majority of women entrepreneurs had ideas and entrepreneurial models through their familiness, either through their family (55%) (parents, brothers, and sisters), or in informal networks made up of neighbors and friends (33% of women surveyed).

Obstacles to female entrepreneurship are classified among the serious forms of economic gender discrimination in and by the salaried society of the wilayas of Djelfa, Laghouat and M'sila and actually occur there, like what is happening elsewhere formulated by ILO (2023; 2017; 2016) ; Mankiw (2018); Proulx (2018) and OECD (2011). This also gives reason to CREAD to have taken the initiative to achieve practical results.

The first rigorous observation that emerges from the empirical results is that familiness, particularly social capital, is very useful to women opting for

entrepreneurship in the region. Social capital is, however, entirely informal in the three wilayas covered by the survey. This is clearly the source of many of the competitive advantages over men commonly attributed to women's enterprises in avoiding or overcoming companies and operating constraints, particularly in the service sector (Adeleke & Bola, 2022).

This stated tendency to find women entrepreneurs in service activities, for which they have an exaggerated taste (preferences), is both national and global. Indeed, the study carried out by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011) in Algeria shows that the sectoral distribution, which represents more than 45.1% of business activities, is focused on the consumption-oriented sector, while 37.2% of productive units are concentrated in processing activities and 12.3% in service activities. Furthermore, women's projects financed by ANSEJ number 37,189, with 49% of business plans concentrated in services and 7% in agriculture (Statistical Information Bulletin, 2017).

Globally, while the United States is at the forefront of female entrepreneurship, the Report on Women-Owned Business, (2014) estimates that the fastest growth in the number of women-owned businesses over of the last 12 years has been recorded in educational services (+ 128%), administration and cleaning services (+60%), arts/entertainment/recreation (+47%), and health care and social assistance (+ 44%). Despite this, no advanced or middle-income country has reduced this gap to less than 7 percentage points (Ostry et al., 2018).

Motivation, an element of female preferences, is one of the strategic behavioral factors to circumvent market obstacles. This natural state often pushes women to embark on entrepreneurship out of necessity, rather than opportunity (GEM, 2011). However, women's preferences are to some extent the consequence of a lack of

perfect substitution in the labor market, despite the increasing proportion of women in the labor force, which leads women to favor the preference determinant. Indeed, as long as the hiring a woman in place of a man in the active population. In other words, the total number of men and women present on the labor market, does not change anything in this active population, gender diversity has no interest: men and women are perceived, from an economic point of view, as a perfectly substitutable production factor (Ostry et al., 2018).

Sometimes, the information circulating on the local market does not reach them, because their familiness does not have this specific resource, or because their informal networking is lacking. In particular, the victims who suffer the most from economic discrimination in their independent activity seem to be those who lack the family influence or recognition and are poorly integrated into the informal business networks of their environment. In any case, they do not meet all the conditions required to derive preferential benefits from their social capital (ILO, 2023; Adeleke & Bola, 2022; Mankiw, 2018; Adler & Kwon, 2002).

4.2. Use informal social capital to escape gender differentiation

Regarding women's personal, family, and social barriers, self-employability, consistent income, and well-being protected them from economic discrimination in and by the wage society. However, this economic and social success sometimes does not exclude the effect of social gravity and place of residence on the demand or independent employability of women. In this particular case, many researches have noted these forms of difficulties, linked to the patriarchal system and local mentalities (Medouni et al., 2016; Ghat 2014; Chellouf, 2009; Taya, 2008).

Social constraints and stereotypes are often cited as the main difficulties by researchers. This is the even lower status granted to women in Algerian and Muslim

society in general (Dif and Sellami cited by Ouchalal (2016). On a national scale, a study carried out by Ghiat (2014) in the wilaya of Oran reports of sexual harassment at work. In the Maghreb, Tunisian women entrepreneurs are not immune to these difficulties. They also face social pressures, linked to the perception of the role they play in their society (ILO, 2023; 2017; 2016).

Family responsibilities are a constraint experienced by many women. At a national level, the findings highlight that many women suffer from work overload resulting from the double working day: domestic responsibility and entrepreneurial activity (Ghiat, 2014; Remaoun & Rahou, 2008). This led Belmihoub & Alilat (2016) to suggest, "material constraints must be lifted with the development of with the development of social childcare services (creches, nursery schools, school canteens, school transport and mobility of disabled people). Algeria being a signatory to the Charter, which recognizes the right of women to be freed from domestic tasks and family responsibilities, it can only undertake reforms in this direction".

In this particular case of forms of administrative and economic discrimination, (access to the market, to financing or loans, discriminatory prices in the country, this also affects women entrepreneurs. "Barriers to female entrepreneurship include bureaucratic formalities, tax burdens, difficulties in accessing training, financing and integration into entrepreneurial networks, heavy and complicated administrative services" (Tahir-Metaiche, 2014). Tunisian and Moroccan women experience problems similar to those of Algerian women (ILO, 2023; 2017; 2016). As for Algerian women, market access, and unfair competition constitute a problem for many Tunisian and Moroccan women entrepreneurs.

A study carried out by the ILO (2023) points to "difficulties in integrating into the value chain, linked in particular to a lack of outlets and sometimes to unfair

competition". According to another research, "access to markets appears to be the biggest challenge facing women entrepreneurs, especially those looking to grow their businesses: around 56% of respondents cite new markets as a major challenge, followed by access to capital" (CAWTAR, 2017).

According to Ostry et al. (2018), the elasticity of substitution between women and men in production is low; in other words, increasing the number of women on the workforce is expected to bring greater economic gains than an equivalent increase in the number of men. Therefore, the persistence of gender discrimination reduces productivity, increases the cost of production, does not sufficiently increase the wealth created; because each gender brings different skills and visions, and has a different behavior when it comes to risk, quality, and collaboration. Where there is a reduction in gender inequality, productivity gains cannot be attributed solely to better efficiency (or gains in total factor productivity) but are partly explained by the gradual increase of the number of women in the active labor force. Furthermore, increased productivity between the genders leads to higher male earnings, resulting in a reciprocal benefit.

True entrepreneurial behavior based on preferences and familiness does not exempt women today from engaging in traditionally male activities: ambulance services, coffee/tea shops, vocational training schools, plastic recycling businesses, auto-schools, etc. However, some entrepreneurial activities are more difficult for women in certain salaried societies, such as agriculture: cattle and poultry breeding, or even industry such as plastic recycling, where the problems are particular. Many women entrepreneurs are aware of the need for a professional women's organization and a formal network to better face, overcome difficulties, and have organized themselves within the National Forum of Young Entrepreneurs (FNJE). Despite these

difficulties, women entrepreneurs remain determined to work for themselves in all economic sectors, as a key factor for success and positive economic and social transformation (ILO, 2023; CAWTAR, 2017)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study on discrimination against women on the labor market, made it possible to characterize the women entrepreneurs in the three wilayas of Laghouat, Djelfa and M'sila. And above all, it explained, using quantitative indicators, the experience of recurring forms of obstacles to female entrepreneurship and how familiarity, networking and preferences change depending on the economic sectors in which it is possible that women to act by engaging in income-generating and functionings.

First of all, economic interpretation of the results is that female human capital is progressing, including the level of education achieved (41% university level), and that the status of married women (57.14%) does not necessarily constitute a handicap to female entrepreneurship in the region. In the same way, women and those with children are less and less advanced in age (31-40 years with 38.77%) to start businesses; this implies that age, children, and their education no longer prevent women from working despite the persistence of the obstacles associated with it.

Other results, such as the emergence of two categories of women entrepreneurs: that who started because of unemployment, non-satisfaction of basic needs or the need for money (51% of the total) and that who are launched by opportunity and self-affirmation (49%), go in the same direction, and suggest better prospects for equilibrium in the labor market.

Then, severe and recurrent forms of economic gender discrimination in and by the wage society persist in the three wilayas, but the specificities are identified at the social level. Way, both either reduce productivity, or increase the cost of production.

Finally, women entrepreneurs adopted the strategic reaction behavior of neoclassical preferences and familiness coupled with social capital as well as informal networking to avoid or reduce gender discrimination against them, detrimental to perfect substitution in the labor market. They succeed, in their own way, in increasing production and productivity, increasing men's incomes, and reducing inequalities, with the conviction that gender-based constraints constitute a historical, social, and cultural heritage that cannot remain unchanged (Adeleke & Bola, 2022).

Ultimately, these are corrections to be made when discussing the applicability of the results of this analysis. However, for greater interest, it would be interesting to delve deeper into whether these female gender experiences in entrepreneurship provide an impetus to the number of female businesses, significant wealth creation as well as closing the gap of income.

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Appendix 1

The Questionary on Gender Constraints to Female Entrepreneurship: Femsol1617 Project

The survey concerns women entrepreneurs who have succeeded in their business projects, preferably established for more than 5 years.

I. Identifying elements	
1. City :.....	4. Age :.....
2. Urban/sparse/rural area :....	5. Sector of Economic activity :.....
3. Creation date :....	6. Number of employees :.....

II. Other questions

7. Can you describe the path that led you to become a business manager (school or training, motivation, family predisposition, etc.?)

8. What administrative problems did you encountered? Each time, ask her how she solved the problem and what her expectations are.

9. What are any admin issues you encountered? Likewise, ask her how she solved the problem and what her expectations are.

10. What are all the constraints related to the product or service you offer. Ask her each time how she solved the problem and what her expectations are. (Customers, suppliers, employees, marketing, market, etc.)

11. Do you have anything else to add regarding the problems, obstacles, and constraints you have encountered? Summaries in other languages.