



Original Research Article

Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-demographic Profile and Specific Characteristics of Nigerian and Nigerian Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Yopougon (Côte d'Ivoire)

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Abstract: The socio-economic development of Côte d'Ivoire thanks to the coffee-cocoa pairing in the 1980s led to an increase in the flow of immigrants throughout the country. Unfortunately, this economic and social growth could not be sustained over a long period. The economic crisis that hit the country was immediately accompanied by austerity policies steered by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The immediate consequence of the country's economic constraints has been the destructuring of the labour market, particularly in terms of supply and demand. As a result, the majority of immigrant populations are affected in the same way as nationals by the precariousness of their jobs. Faced with this "unexpected" situation, private or individual initiatives have been taken by immigrant populations to escape and also to seize existing opportunities. Yopougon, Abidjan's largest commune, has seen its commercial spaces "invaded" by Nigerians who have set up micro-businesses. The aim of this article is to establish the socio-demographic profile of 150 immigrant entrepreneurs based in commercial spaces and to identify the specific characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurship in these communities in Yopougon. The study shows that the majority of entrepreneurs are creators from scratch, aged 40 and over, and that this type of entrepreneurship is male-dominated. It should be noted that economic activities are segmented by field and by ethnic group, with the majority of players being Islamic. The location of the economic activity obeys various logics without forgetting that the experiential factor plays an important role in the choice of entrepreneurship as a professional career for Nigerian and Nigerian immigrants.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, immigrant, profile, Nigerian.

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time, Côte d'Ivoire has been one of the most popular destinations for nationals of several West African countries and beyond. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire is home to around 22% of the country's immigrant population (RGPH, 2021). After independence, the economic and social situation deteriorated following the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), leading to the disorganisation of the labour markets and the general insecurity of the population. It should be noted that the difficult socio-economic conditions forced the Ivorian government to take measures as early as 1967 to protect

jobs in the public sector, i.e. the adoption of the policy of "ivoirisation" of executives. Through a dedicated ministry, this policy was designed to "retrocede" to native Ivorians the managerial and executive positions held by foreigners or non-Africans. Kobena Antoine (2021) describes this situation when he says that "the direct consequence of this situation of generalised disintegration of Ivorian society is that many workers, particularly immigrant workers, are unemployed and the industrial fabric, which had previously provided many jobs for the population as a whole, is weakened". Faced with these different contexts, which put immigrants at a disadvantage to some extent, many of them have begun to opt for an entrepreneurial career in

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order to integrate into the socio-professional world of commerce in almost all the communes of Abidjan, the country's economic capital. The creation of Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) in the informal economic environment bears witness to the vitality of this sector, with a strong hold by some immigrants on informal activities in the commercial areas of Yopougon.

Moreover, from 14% in 1980, informal activities rose to 28.4% in 2002 (MEF, 2007), demonstrating the importance of these activities in the general economy of Côte d'Ivoire, with 91.1% of the working population. On the other hand, it should be noted that "the employment rate in this sector is unevenly distributed among the populations living in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2009, for example, the employment rate among Ivorians was 86.1%, compared with 89.4% among immigrants. This disparity is also reflected in the unemployment rate, which from 1995 to 2008 was 2.8% among immigrants, compared with 7.3% among natives" (Antoine, 2021). This situation makes it possible to grasp the important role of these immigrant players in the informal economy in Côte d'Ivoire, and particularly in Yopougon, where several commercial spaces are occupied and various areas of activity are held by immigrants. In fact, Yopougon, one of the two communes with an industrial zone that offers a pool of skilled and unskilled jobs to nationals and immigrants, should be able to accommodate the majority of the immigrant population. Although this employment pool does exist, the majority of working Nigerians and Nigerians living in Yopougon are opting for an entrepreneurial career to find employment in the commune's main commercial areas. According to the AGEPE/Observatoire de l'emploi (2006) in Côte d'Ivoire, the employment rate among Ivorians fell from 90.5% to 86.1% between 1998 and 2002, compared with 91.6% to 89.4% for immigrants over the same period (Antoine, 2021).

From these observations a question guides this article, namely: what is the socio-demographic profile and the specific characteristics of these Nigerian and Nigerian entrepreneur-traders operating in the various commercial spaces of Yopougon? In fact, our approach in this article is to use a descriptive approach to reconstruct, on the basis of the characteristics of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs, the specific characteristics of these actors who have chosen entrepreneurship as a socio-professional career in the largest commune in Côte d'Ivoire.

METHODOLOGY

The study on the socio-demographic profile and specificities of immigrant entrepreneurship of Nigerians and Nigerians took place in Yopougon in the twenty-two (22) main commercial spaces where their microenterprises are located. It should be noted that the majority of the results come from our doctoral thesis in

2021. Three (03) key moments made up this stage, namely data collection, processing and analysis.

Data collection

The study focused on immigrant entrepreneurs in the commercial sector, who numbered one hundred and fifty (150) in total, including sixty-two (62) Nigerians and eighty-two (82) Nigerians identified in the twenty-two (22) main commercial areas of Yopougon. Given that the study used a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative), some of the managers of these groups and commercial spaces were chosen to answer questions about the rationale for recruiting and setting up businesses, the social resources mobilised, etc. Most of the research carried out on immigrant entrepreneurship has used a qualitative approach, whereas our study, which combines a quantitative and qualitative approach, aims to grasp this reality with a view to describing the entrepreneurial specificities of these Nigerian and Nigerian immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire.

It should be noted that the inclusion criteria for entrepreneurs included: having at least two (02) microenterprises, having worked at least two (02) as a manager and owner, and paying their Public Domain Occupation Tax (ODP) to the Yopougon town hall. The stratified random sampling technique was used to constitute the study sample, with semi-structured interviews and questionnaires as the means of data collection, using an interview grid and questionnaire as the collection tools. The semi-structured interviews were addressed to entrepreneurs who had more than two (02) years of experience in the field, i.e. 13 immigrant entrepreneur-traders. Table 1 below presents the results of the sample in relation to the different areas of activity of the immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed.

Data processing and analysis

Data processing was based on two types of data, qualitative and quantitative. For the quantitative data, we developed an input mask for collecting responses after the actual survey. This stage was preceded by a phase of coding the textual responses to the questionnaire. But before this phase there was a pre-test to correct and adjust the items and variables. The Sphinx V5 software was used to build the input mask and collect the survey responses. For the qualitative data, we transcribed all the interviews recorded by Dictaphone before organising them by question and coding the different responses or regularities that emerged after analysis. Content analysis of the textual data revealed themes that were analysed. Themes were selected and certain verbatims linked to these units of meaning were used to interpret the social meaning given by the interviewees.

RESULTS

Typical profile of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Yopougon Categorisation of entrepreneur-traders by type of activity

Table 1: Summary of respondents by area of activity and ethnic group

The entrepreneur's field of activity	Nigéria	Niger	Total
Building materials	0,0% (0)	25,6% (21)	14,0% (21)
Furnishings	0,0% (0)	12,2% (10)	6,7% (10)
Food	4,4% (3)	8,5% (7)	6,7% (10)
User equipment	4,4% (3)	8,5% (7)	6,7% (10)
Car rental and sales	5,9% (4)	0,0% (0)	2,7% (4)
Clothing and beauty products	17,6% (12)	12,2% (10)	14,7% (22)
Hardware equipment	27,9% (19)	12,2% (10)	19,3% (29)
Domestic appliances	14,7% (10)	3,7% (3)	8,7% (13)
Car parts	14,7% (10)	0,0% (0)	6,7% (10)
Electronics	7,4% (5)	7,3% (6)	7,3% (11)
Personal services	2,9% (2)	9,8% (8)	6,7% (10)
Total	100% (68)	100% (82)	100% (150)

Source: Survey data extracted from Doctoral thesis Kobena Antoine 2021

The distribution of immigrant entrepreneurs by type of activity shows the fragmentation of the commercial activities of these communities within the various commercial areas of Yopougon. It can be seen that Nigerian entrepreneurs are heavily involved in activities such as the building materials trade (25.6%), furniture (12.5%), the foodstuffs trade and user

equipment (8.5%). As for Nigerian entrepreneurs, the hardware trade (27.9%) and the sale of clothing and beauty products (17.6%) are the preferred activities of this community in the commune of Yopougon.

Status of the entrepreneur in relation to the act of entrepreneurship

Table 2: Breakdown of entrepreneurial status in relation to the act of entrepreneurship

Contractor status	No. of quotes	Frequencies
Creator (Ex nihilo)	133	88,7%
Buyer	5	3,3%
Heir	12	8,0%
Total Cit.	150	100%

Source: Survey data taken from Doctoral thesis Kobena 2018

From this result, it emerges that 88.70%, i.e. a total of 133 entrepreneur-commercial businesses, were created ex nihilo in Yopougon, while only 3.3%, i.e. 5 entrepreneurs (buyers) out of 150, took over commercial activities with a view to expanding or investing in an area that they thought had potential. Compared with business buyers, the heirs, who numbered 12, or 8% of the sample, are fairly important players in the business. The majority of these entrepreneurs are people who have taken over the business of one of their parents for various reasons. These include the old age of the first-time entrepreneur, the departure of some to their country of origin, or the death of the entrepreneur's parent. As a result, the player decides to ensure the continuity of the family business.

Immigrant entrepreneurship among Nigerians and Nigerians: a highly masculinised practice

Out of 150 respondents, 137 (91.3%) were men, while only 13 (8.7%) were women, mainly concentrated among entrepreneurs from Nigeria. Of the 82 Nigerian respondents, 100% were men. However,

when we compare the countries of origin, we see that male entrepreneurs represent 91% of the Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant respondents. In fact, the presence of a large number of men (137/150) in commercial entrepreneurship is a social reality that is strongly correlated with the image of women in the societies of origin of these two communities.

As Mohamed, 42, from Niger (entrepreneur and woodworker) points out:

"We men have to go out, we even have to. Because it's the man who has to look after his wife and children. But if she goes out, who's going to look after the children and my parents, who are old? So she stays and I (the boy) come and get money for everyone; that's what the woman has to do".

This analysis of the low representation of women among entrepreneurs is justified in the same vein by Jacob, 47, Nigerian (entrepreneur in the car parts trade, Christian):

"Women can't get up on their own and come to adventure. And they can't do the kind of work we're

doing here, because... you have to know the networks. But the woman is there to help the man and not to set up a shop to sell, otherwise who's going to look after the children and the house. For us, igbos are the man's job to find the money for the whole family"

From these comments, we can see that in these two immigrant communities, social norms and cultural considerations strongly influence the entry of migrants into a sector of activity that the "male" players consider to be dedicated to male project leaders.

Level of education and country of origin of Nigerian entrepreneurs-traders

Education and experience form what is known as cultural capital (Light, 1994; cited by Sylvie Paré,

2000). The level of education of entrepreneurs makes it possible to measure or relate this variable and its influence on the ability of actors to create their own businesses in the areas of experience of these actors. In the context of immigrant entrepreneurship, the cross-analysis between the level of education and the country of origin of the entrepreneurs highlights the difference between the two types of actors in their propensity to create businesses in the trade sector in the economic environment of Yopougon. The level of education of entrepreneurs makes it possible to measure or relate this variable and its influence on the ability of actors to create their own businesses in the areas of experience of these actors.

Table 3: Level of education of Nigerian and Nigerian merchant-entrepreneurs

What is your level of education?/Entrepreneur's country of origin (Owner)	Nigéria	Niger	Total
Not studied	7,4% (5)	69,5% (57)	41,3% (62)
Primary	13,2% (9)	18,3% (15)	16,0% (24)
Secondary	58,8% (40)	0,0% (0)	26,7% (40)
Superior	8,8% (6)	0,0% (0)	4,0% (6)
Professional Training	10,3% (7)	1,2% (1)	5,3% (8)
Koranic school	1,5% (1)	11,0% (9)	6,7% (10)
Total	100% (68)	100% (82)	100% (150)

Source: Survey data taken from Doctoral thesis Kobena 2018

Table 4: Breakdown of entrepreneurs by gender and country of origin

Gender of respondent/Country of origin of entrepreneur (Owner)	Nigéria	Niger	Total
Men	36,7% (55)	54,7% (82)	91,3% (137)
Women	8,7% (13)	0,0% (0)	8,7% (13)
Total	45,3% (68)	54,7% (82)	100% (150)

Source: Survey data from our thesis April 2018

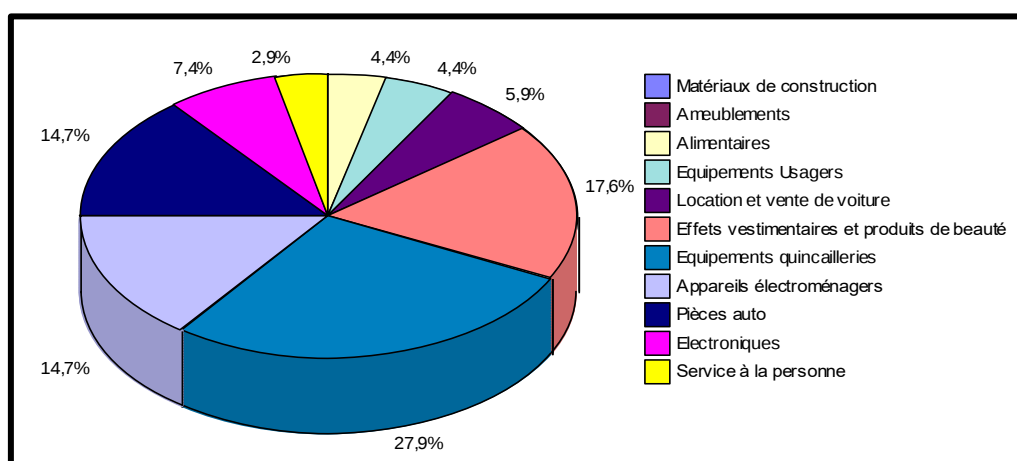


Figure 1: Breakdown of Nigerian entrepreneurs by business activity

Source : Survey data from our Thesis April 2018

Matériaux de construction : Building materials

Ameublements : Furnishings

Alimentaires : Food

Equipements Usagers : User equipment

Location et vente de voiture : Car rental and sales

Effets vestimentaires et produits de beauté : Clothing and beauty products

Equipements quincailleries : Hardware equipment

Appareils électroniques : Electronic devices

Pièces auto : Car parts

Electroniques : Electronics

Service à la personne : Personal services

What is the level of education of the immigrant entrepreneur? This was the question posed with a view to seeing how this variable might or might not influence the autonomous job creation activities of these two communities. The various responses recorded in the table above reveal the following analyses. Unlike Nigerian entrepreneurs, who have a high level of secondary education, i.e. 58.80% (40/68) of respondents, Nigerian entrepreneurs are numerous, i.e. 69.5% (57/82) of respondents. This distribution of traders is strongly correlated with the level or rate of education in the migrants' various countries. Furthermore, compared with Niger, Nigeria has a high net school enrolment rate of 57.6% over the period 2008-2011 according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and a literacy rate of 66.70% in 2015¹ compared with 49.27% for Niger in the same year². Thus, the level of education of immigrants is dependent on the pre-migratory education of the majority of entrepreneur respondents. In addition, the level of education seems to influence the choice of field of activity of the future business entrepreneur, although it is not the only factor.

Specific features of entrepreneurship among Nigerians and Nigerian traders in yopougon **Highly masculine commercial entrepreneurial activities**

The socio-economic activities of Nigerian immigrants in the commercial space of Yopougon highlight a fairly visible social reality. In fact, according to the results of the survey carried out among this category of the population, there is a strong masculinisation of commercial activities among immigrant entrepreneurs. The following results bear this out. Out of a population of 150 respondents, only 13 (8.7%) were women, compared with 137 (91.3%) who were men. Moreover, there are no women among the Nigerian entrepreneur-traders.

This segregation of immigrant entrepreneurs is not necessarily unique to Côte d'Ivoire or Yopougon. Studies such as the one conducted by Gilles Roy³ among a number of self-employed people in Canada have already explained this social reality. In a study conducted by Roy involving 250 entrepreneurs in various fields of activity, it emerged that 63% of those surveyed were men, while only 37% were women. This over-representation of men in the socio-economic activities of immigrants is linked to or explained by pre-

migration or migration conditions. In fact, for these two immigrant communities (Nigerian and Nigerian women), men are overrated in relation to women in terms of their ability to succeed in economic ventures. As a result, the male immigrant is a resource for the family that must be sent on an adventure, as he is more fortunate and has more skills than the woman. What's more, some male migrants use their ethnic or community social networks to be able to immigrate to their chosen host country, but the majority of women in these immigrant communities don't have any of these, so they see this as an obstacle to immigration, and therefore to entrepreneurship in a migratory context. In addition, most of the immigrant women we met during our surveys arrived in Côte d'Ivoire as part of a family reunification scheme, so the majority of them are employees of their husbands, who are business owners. Some women who own commercial businesses are heirs to the commercial enterprises of their deceased husbands. This quasi-monopolistic occupation of commercial activities by men stems from the low level of immigration of women from these two communities within West Africa. But this monopolisation of immigrant entrepreneurship by men in commercial activities in Yopougon is one of the essential characteristics of this type of entrepreneurship engendered by South-South immigration.

Occupation of economic activities by ethnic groups

The socio-economic activity of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrants in the commercial space of Yopougon reveals a specialisation or monopolistic occupation by these communities. In fact, the division of activities by ethnic groups is the consequence of an imitation of the social referents by the new immigrants of the so-called first generation immigrants. Thus, graphs (1&2). Figure (1) on the distribution of Nigerian entrepreneur-traders according to activity shows the following trends: 27.9% of entrepreneur respondents set up businesses in the hardware trade, compared with 17.6% in the clothing and beauty products trade and 14.7% in the car parts and household appliances trade. These results, gathered from the respondents, highlight a sort of specialisation of this immigrant group in the hardware equipment trade.

As for Niger's entrepreneurs, the breakdown according to economic activities reveals a social reality that should be explained on the basis of the results below. At the end of our investigations, the following results emerge: 25.6% set up their businesses in the building materials trade against 12.2% respectively in the furniture, hardware, clothing and beauty products sectors. An analysis of these graphs (1&2) shows that Nigerians have specialised in the building materials trade (25.6%) and that Nigerians are more inclined to set up businesses in the hardware equipment trade (17.6% of the total of 68 Nigerians).

¹ These demographic data are taken from www.Populationdata.net, consulted on 21 June 2019

² Results of a study conducted by the Directorate of Statistics of the Ministry of Primary Education of Niger in collaboration with UNICEF on Basic Education and Literacy Statistics; Yearbook 2015-2016

³ Gilles Roy (2018). Diagnostic sur le travail autonome : causes, motivations, problèmes. *Cahier de Recherche* n° 98-08.

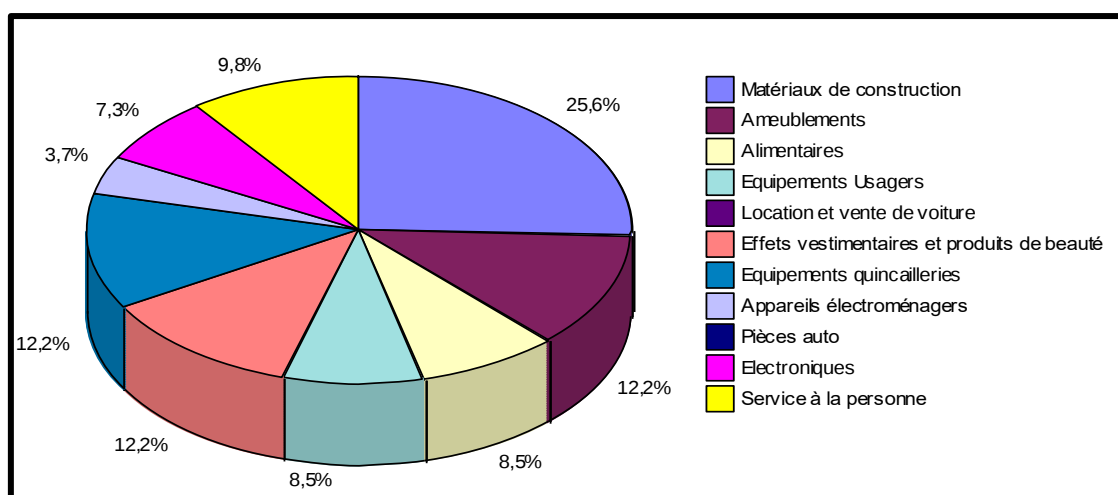


Figure 2: Répartition des entrepreneurs Nigériens en fonction des activités commerciales

Source : Données d'enquête de notre Thèse Avril 2018

In fact, the interactive explanatory model developed by Waldinger et al (1990) provides a better understanding of this reality, as immigrant minority groups exploit niches left vacant by indigenous players and colonised by their co-ethnics in order to integrate economically. The various immigrants then imitate their colleagues, in the sense that the latter have resources in the areas or sectors of activity in which the first migrants already operate and master. Moreover, as justified by the theory of "middleman minorities", the position of Nigerian entrepreneurs in the building materials trade makes it possible to understand that the integration of these entrepreneur-traders can be explained by the ease of access and exit in this area of activity. In addition, the economic structure places these immigrant entrepreneurs or intermediary minorities in a position that places them between consumers and producers. In this position, they offer the opportunity and the ethnic or community resources to integrate new immigrant players into what constitutes an ethnic economic enclave or niche. This situation is made possible because they master the various facets of the

commercial activities in which they are involved and have the vital resources needed to carry out these commercial activities.

Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in Yopougon: highly Islamicized

Immigrant entrepreneurship in Côte d'Ivoire is highly Islamised. The results we obtained from our respondents support this observation. Thus, 68.70% (103) of respondents (Nigerians and Nigerians) are Muslims compared with 31.30% (47) who are Christians (Catholic, Protestant and Revivalist). These different proportions highlight the fact that the commercial environment of immigrants is heavily occupied by a predominantly Muslim population. But taken individually by country of origin, the Nigerians surveyed are all Muslims, i.e. the 82 (100%) respondents in our sample. Of the 68 Nigerians in our sample, 44.10% (30) were Protestant Christians, compared with 30.90% (21) Muslims, 16.2% (11) Catholics and 8.80% (06) Christians from the Revival Movement.

Table 5: Distribution of entrepreneurs by religion

What is your religion?/Country of origin of the entrepreneur (Owner)	Nigéria	Niger	Total
Muslim woman	30,9% (21)	100% (82)	68,7% (103)
Catholic	16,2% (11)	0,0% (0)	07,3% (11)
Protestant	44,1% (30)	0,0% (0)	20,0% (30)
Wake-up movement	08,8% (6)	0,0% (0)	04,0% (6)
Total	100% (68)	100% (82)	100% (150)

Source: Survey data from our Thesis April 2018

The results of this investigation show two major trends between the two categories of immigrant entrepreneurs. Looking at the two communities, it emerges that the majority of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs are highly Islamised, whereas there are more Christian Nigerian entrepreneurs. Taken individually or by community, therefore, the proportion of Muslim entrepreneurs is much higher than that of

Christian entrepreneurs. Moreover, when these two communities are combined, the Islamic religion is dominant among the entrepreneur-traders in Yopougon. This state of affairs shows the particularity or influence of this religion in the commercial activities of immigrant entrepreneurs. This influence of Muslim entrepreneurs is linked to certain socio-cultural conditions related to the country of origin of the

entrepreneur-traders. According to some entrepreneur-traders, Mahamoud, aged 41, a Nigerian trader at Meubles au Sable in Yopougon :

"We come from Muslim countries and all the mums and dads back home are Muslims, so we who come here are Muslims. And we Muslims say that the work is very, very good. So also, our former fathers are shopkeepers, so we've taken their jobs."

The majority of these entrepreneurial players come from countries where 98% of the population is Muslim, so as natives of that country they transpose their religious culture to the host country, notably Côte d'Ivoire. Nigerians are made up of two main ethnic groups (Igbos and Haoussa), and their religious culture is linked to the region they come from. Those from the south are predominantly Christian, while those from the north are Muslim. So the ethnic group to which they belong makes it possible to categorise them on the job market through their activities. Mike, 35, a Nigerian car parts trader in Gabriel Gare, Yopougon, said:

"We come from the south in the state of Benue, so everyone there is 90% Christian, so I'm a Christian, and back home we're told that a man will eat by the sweat of his brow, so we encourage each of our parents to set up his own business."

In the same vein, 37-year-old Badamus, a Nigerian hardware trader from Yopougon Siporex, said: *"I'm originally from Osunn State, and everyone there is Muslim, so we too have taken our parents' religion and behaviour with us, which is why we also trade like them"*.

The various pieces of information provided by these entrepreneurs corroborate the Islamic nature of the immigrant entrepreneurship of Nigerians in Yopougon. In reality, this strong Islamisation of the commercial space in Yopougon is partly due to the strong presence of communities whose countries or regions of origin are highly Islamised. This Islamisation of commercial entrepreneurship is the expression of a strong representation of Muslim communities that have come to settle in the urban area of Yopougon. Moreover, the presence of a large number of Muslims also raises questions about the impact of religious values on the entrepreneurial spirit of immigrants in general, and Nigerians in particular.

Use of various social ties by Nigerian immigrants in their entrepreneurial initiatives in Yopougon

One of the most visible features of immigrant entrepreneurs is the employment and involvement of co-ethnics or relatives in the management and development of business activities. Brenner et al (1990) confirm this trend on the basis of a study carried out among the Bamilékés of Cameroon. For these authors, the use of family and ethnic or social networks is a recurrent reality among African entrepreneurs and makes it possible to involve one's entourage in the

creation of the business either by helping to obtain the initial capital, or by participating directly in the implementation of the activity by being taken on as an employee. Asunción and Péroud (2007) highlighted almost the same results based on their analysis of Filipino entrepreneurial traders. On this subject, they consider that: "most traders rely on the unpaid help of family members whose work is considered to be part of the family's obligations; this is also a business imperative because hiring employees from outside the family would be too costly". This situation clearly demonstrates the predominant role of the family and ethnic dimensions in immigrant entrepreneurship. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of the types of relationship that exist between entrepreneurs and their employees. To the question of what types of social networks are exploited in the development of business activities?

The following proportions correspond to the distribution of responses. Thus, the majority, i.e. 45.3% of immigrant entrepreneurs, said that they worked with relatives in their businesses. We would point out that, for these immigrants, the notion of relative includes the wife, nephews and cousins. In reality, the massive involvement of the family network in immigrant trade serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, this cheap and sometimes underpaid workforce helps to offset the costs of recruiting outsiders, and on the other, it helps to train future immigrant entrepreneurs and provide employment for their relatives. The challenge of this entrepreneurial behaviour is also to work with people in whom the entrepreneur has confidence and who accept fairly difficult working conditions or unspecified working hours. With 28.3% of respondents being co-ethnic employees, this group includes people from the same ethnic group as the employer. In this category, it should be noted that recruitment is carried out through social networks, in particular friends, children of co-ethnics who have remained in the country of origin and, to a certain extent, protégés⁴ of a former mentor. The recruitment of coethnic employees or extra-familial⁵ labour is a strategy that Nigerian trader-entrepreneurs use in relation to Nigerian entrepreneurs.

⁴ Protégé: This is a person who is under the responsibility of another with a view to providing him or her with education, training and socio-economic integration. This practice is also known as "confiage", because in some cases the people to be trained are children whose parents entrust them to a third party to provide them with the rudiments of an activity. In return for the training and education, the person entrusted is obliged to accept all treatment from their new "parent". This practice is widespread among Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs.

⁵Op cit

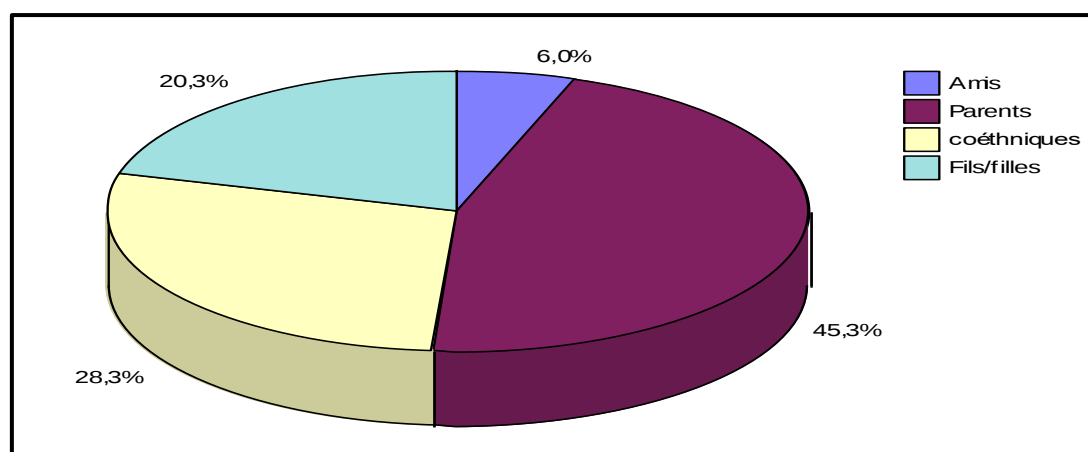


Figure 3: Typology of relations between immigrant entrepreneurs and shop employees in Yopougon

Source: Survey data from our thesis April 2018

Amis : Friends

Parents : Parents

Co-ethniques : Kinship :

Fils/Fille : Son/Daughter

For Nigerian and Nigerian traders, the biological children (sons/daughters) of immigrant entrepreneurs are potential employees who contribute to the smooth running of commercial activities in the Yopougon economic area. In fact, their involvement in entrepreneurial activity has a dual function. Firstly, it helps to train children in entrepreneurial activity by teaching them the skills and rules needed to run a business properly, and as such, the parental business is a school for children. Secondly, recruiting the biological child into the business is a strategy for reducing the social costs that external recruitment may entail, and is therefore part of what Alexander Nicholls calls the family workforce. In this respect, we should emphasise with Zalc, Claire (2001, cited by Nicholls, 2012) that 'ties of acquaintance play [...] a driving role in the exercise of commercial and craft activity; they take several forms: couple, kinship network or common origin'. Speaking of the family dimension of business activity, we agree that the deployment of the entrepreneur's activities or actions relies to a large extent on the creator's nuclear family, hence the employment of close family members. Apart from the two aspects mentioned above, it should be recognised that setting up a business also means creating jobs for co-ethnics and relatives, not forgetting the nuclear family, which plays a central role in this strategy.

Friends who are recruited as employees represent only 6% of the sample. It should be noted that the employment of a friend as a worker in an immigrant business is linked to the cultural capital and the relationship of trust that these two people have with each other. In almost all cases, the recruitment of a friend in a business meets two major objectives,

including the socio-economic integration of the employee-friend, who is sometimes unemployed, or a strategy for training the future employee-entrepreneur to master the various facets of the business in question. In short, the choice of a relative, friend, children/daughters or co-ethnics responds to a logic of social control of the entrepreneur and a desire to control the commercial hazards that could arise in the implementation of its activities. In this way, the choice of a person in his immediate environment helps to consolidate his power of control over his business and also over the players involved in developing his business.

Setting up business activities in co-ethnic economic areas: strategic issues for immigrant entrepreneurs

Consideration of the rationale behind the choice of location for immigrant business enterprises helps us to understand what is at stake in this behaviour. What's more, the choice of business location is coloured by the different trajectories of the entrepreneur. On this subject, Claire Zalc (2001) believes that "the study of the urban integration of small foreign entrepreneurs helps to explain how foreigners spread out in the city, in line with the different stages of their migratory journey and their economic itinerary". We agree with Claire Zalc that migratory routes, professional itineraries, social networks and the discovery of economic opportunities all play a part in determining how immigrants set up commercial businesses.

The analysis of the problem of the choice of the place of installation of the Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant businesses in the Ivorian context precisely, is based on the following variables: Existence of coethnic trade of the entrepreneur; the proximity of the bus station, the existence of commercial district and the presence of activities in connection with the commercial products of the entrepreneurs.

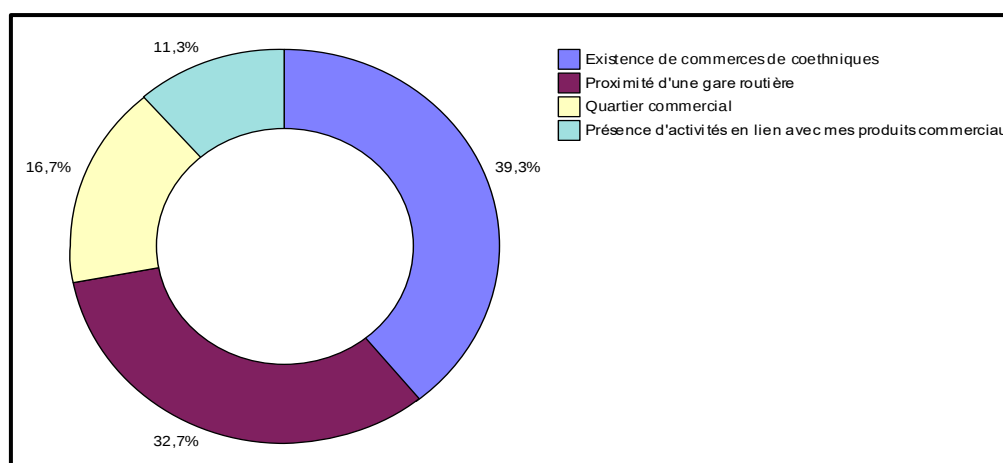


Figure 4: Impact of co-ethnicity on the choice of commercial space by immigrant entrepreneurs in Yopougon

Source: Survey data from our thesis April 2018

The results of Figure 6 on the reasons for choosing the location of commercial enterprises allow us to make the following comments. For 39.3% of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs, they chose to set up in a commercial space because of the existence of co-ethnic or community businesses in the chosen area of activity. This concentration of commercial activities is a response to the logic of taking advantage of the solidarity built up between immigrant entrepreneurial traders and newcomers who come to set up in this economic area, which is sometimes colonised by co-ethnics. What's more, being part of an economic environment with players whose strategies and customer relations you are familiar with enables the new business creator to benefit from the relationships built up by the commercial networks he or she was able to develop during his or her training as an employee. Choosing to set up business with their co-ethnics is a strategy for the immigrant entrepreneur to continue to benefit from the commercial guidelines and practices of their mentor or family carer who introduced them to the commercial activity in question. In the case of 32.7% of immigrant entrepreneurs, they believe they have chosen to set up their business near bus stations. In Yopougon, the main bus stations are at Siporex, Yopougon Sable and Gabriel Gare. A number of immigrant businesses can be seen around these different bus stations, and therefore concentrate the majority of immigrant entrepreneurs' commercial activities. This concentration of businesses is part of a desire to attract a large number of customers, since most customers choose these locations to obtain services or make purchases. The concentration of immigrant entrepreneurs' commercial activities around bus stations is, after all, a response to a purely economic rationale or challenge, by capturing a large number of customers.

In addition, 16.7% of Nigerians and Nigerian entrepreneurs choose to locate their businesses in neighbourhoods with a high level of commercial

activity. For immigrant entrepreneurs, adopting this strategy means taking advantage of the existing customer base to establish their business. Immigrant entrepreneurs who set up in a commercial district have a psychological advantage in terms of the smooth running and development of their business activities. In a short space of time, this will enable them to build up a customer portfolio that other immigrant traders who have chosen other commercial areas will not have. In reality, the commercial districts are made up of commercial spaces such as the markets in the various sub-districts and the edges of the main roads, where commercial activities are sometimes concentrated. Only 11.3% of immigrant entrepreneurs in the Yopougon economic area have chosen to set up in areas where there are activities related to their commercial products. The majority of these activities are in the building trade, such as trade in building materials, personal services and trade in user equipment. This approach to choosing a location is a strategy that makes it possible to offer an efficient service to a close-knit clientele, thereby reducing the costs associated with transporting commercial products.

The choice of business sector is conditioned by the immigrant entrepreneur's professional background

The choice of business sector is a key factor in the development and success of the entrepreneur's business start-up project. In fact, choosing a field of activity precedes any investment by the entrepreneur, particularly the Nigerian entrepreneur in Yopougon. So for entrepreneurs from these two communities, there are a number of issues to consider when setting up their businesses. Security issues, profit-seeking or taking advantage of an opportunity seem to guide those involved in immigrant trade in Yopougon. The logics adopted by immigrant entrepreneurs in their choice of business activity include: imitation of the mentor or family helpers/co-ethnics, partial innovation and total innovation.

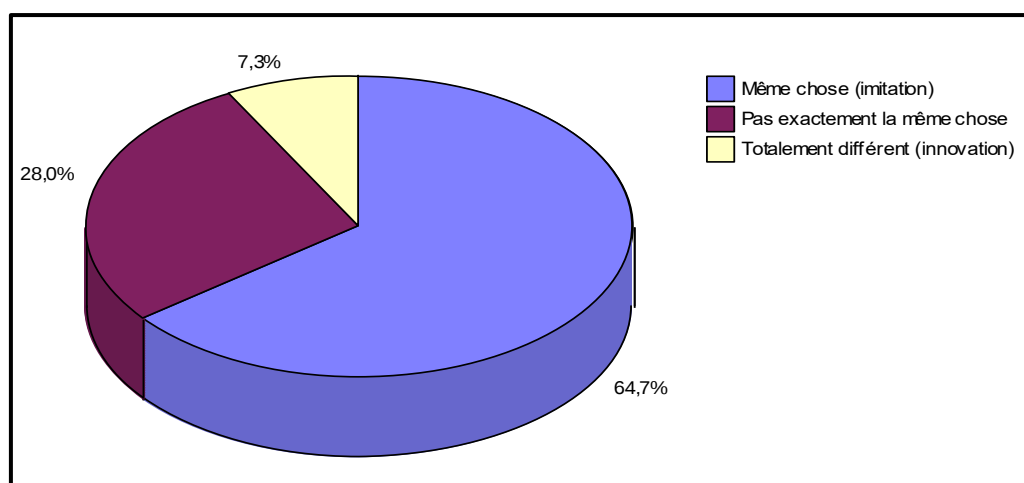


Figure 5 : Immigrant entrepreneurs' choice between previous activity and area of business creation

Source : Données d'enquête de notre Thèse Avril 2018

Même chose (imitation) : Same thing (imitation)

Pas exactement la même chose : Not exactly the same

Totalement différent (innovation) : Totally different (innovation)

Looking at the results in Figure 5, we have three main observations. 64% of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs set up their commercial enterprises in the same commercial sector or the same activity as the one in which they had already been active. This imitation strategy has a dual significance. On the one hand, setting up a business in a sector in which we have experience helps the entrepreneur to face up to the uncertainties that setting up a business could give rise to, in particular the risk as to the profitability of the activity and the lack of mastery of the commercial environment. On the other hand, by entering the same economic sector as their mentor, they are proving to their mentor that their field of activity is valued and that the resources (i.e. human capital and social resources) will be properly exploited by the new entrepreneur. In addition, 28% of immigrant entrepreneurs have set up their businesses by combining activities in the commercial field, where they have experience as an apprentice or as a commercial employee, with a new economic activity that seems important for attracting other financial resources and of which they have a perfect knowledge of how it works. Adopting this kind of entrepreneurial behaviour allows traders to capitalise on their know-how by continuing in the same area of business and taking advantage of an economic activity outside their basic commercial knowledge. This latter strategy allows them to explore new economic niches created by the expression of new needs by the host company.

Finally, 7% of Nigerian and Nigerian entrepreneurs have set up business ventures in a sector completely different from the one in which they have experience. In reality, this strategy, which could be described as radical for immigrant entrepreneurs,

mainly concerns young immigrant entrepreneurs aged between 30 and 35. Moreover, this approach reflects a desire on the part of immigrants to exploit new opportunities outside the traditional sectors invested in by the majority of business entrepreneurs. For some immigrant entrepreneur-traders in Yopougon, these are areas of activity such as trade in mobile phones, household electrical appliances and the sale of car spare parts.

The strategy of immigrant entrepreneurs to exploit sectors of activity other than those traditionally occupied by most of their co-ethnics or communities is, according to Robichaud, citing (Brenner et al, 1992; Waldinger et al, 1990), due to the fact that "many immigrant entrepreneurs, becoming aware of the limited potential of the market... choose to expand their activities by using the skills and experience acquired in the ethnic market". We agree with him when he says that the choice of sector of activity based on this strategy is the consequence of "the abandonment of certain markets or those poorly served by members of the host society" because new opportunities call for new services and these services require new skills to exploit them. To sum up, it should be noted that the immigrant entrepreneur's stance or strategy with regard to the choice of business sector or activity is based on his past experience, the existence of opportunities and the reduced potential of an economic niche colonised by his co-ethnic entrepreneurs

DISCUSSION

Immigrant entrepreneurship in Côte d'Ivoire, and particularly that of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrants, differs greatly from entrepreneurs in other countries. The question of the relationship between a high level of education and the propensity of immigrants to be entrepreneurs (A.L.E.X.I.S Boutique, 2005) is a social reality that the results of our study call into question because the majority of these microentrepreneurs are individuals who have no level

of education. Moreover, unlike Nigerian entrepreneurs, the majority of Nigerian entrepreneurs have no level of education, and this is correlated with the socio-economic and educational conditions in immigrants' countries of origin. As for the entrepreneur's creation status, the results of our study are in line with the conclusions drawn on this situation by A.L.E.X.I.S (op.cit). In reality, their status as immigrants, often as new arrivals, means that they are obliged to be creators or, at the very least, takeovers, but in a small proportion. Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship is a highly masculinised practice in Yopougon, as the results of the study attest. This situation is linked to the fact that, in these communities, men are the main breadwinners for their families, and also because the proportion of male immigrants is much higher than that of female immigrants. Most of them end up in Côte d'Ivoire when the family reunites with their entrepreneur husbands in Yopougon.

The use of social resources in the microenterprise development process is a social reality that this study has helped to highlight. Madoui Mohammed (2017) has also shown that enterprise is the expression of "family solidarity" among immigrants, and this situation corresponds well with the results of our study. Indeed, the social disadvantages encountered in the host society force immigrants to call on ethnic, community and kinship resources to gain access to the labour and employment market (Toulouse and Brenner, 1990). The development and maintenance of Nigerian and Nigerian entrepreneur-businesses also rely on these resources at various levels of the process of implementing entrepreneurial initiatives. In reality, the professional integration of immigrant entrepreneurs depends on the social or ethnic resources provided by the community of origin of the potential entrepreneur, and in this respect our results concur with those of Toulouse and Brenner, 1988, quoted by Robichaud (1999) on the resources mobilised in immigrant entrepreneurship when they say that "the success of an ethnic group will depend on the resources provided by the community".

CONCLUSION

The entrepreneurship of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrants remains one of the least researched areas in the Ivorian scientific community. This situation can be explained by the fact that the migration issue has long been used in the political arena, where social tensions and military crises have crystallised. This incursion into immigrant entrepreneurship in Yopougon enables us, through this descriptive study, to grasp the characteristics and specificities of Nigerian and Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs established in the various commercial spaces. It emerges from this study that the majority of immigrant entrepreneurs are creators-ex nihilo and without any level of education, contrary to what most would describe. It should also be noted that the characteristics of Nigerian and Nigerian

entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire are relatively linked to the socio-demographic realities of these people in their countries of origin. In other words, the social realities in the entrepreneurs' countries of origin structure their professional behaviour or choice of professional career.

The specific nature of immigrant entrepreneurship among Nigerians and Nigerians is linked to the typology of entrepreneurship, because immigrant status necessarily leads to different professional integration practices from those used by native populations. The particular entrepreneurial categories of Nigerians and Nigerians depend on the status of the individuals within the host society. This social reality has also been described by Denis Robichaud (2002), in particular the question of the mobilisation of family, ethnic or community social ties in the micro-business development process. We note that these specificities also constitute the comparative advantages that these players mobilise in the process of developing their commercial activity.

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