HAL open science

United We (Net)work: An Analysis of Nigerian Women's clubs

Sara Panata

▶ To cite this version:

Sara Panata. United We (Net)work: An Analysis of Nigerian Women's clubs. [Research Report] IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series 77, IFRA-Nigeria. 2019, pp.1-36. hal-03313368v1

HAL Id: hal-03313368

https://hal.science/hal-03313368v1

Submitted on 7 Sep 2021 (v1), last revised 17 Dec 2021 (v2)

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Sara
PANATA

UNITED WE (NET)WORK: AN ONLINE AND OFFLINE ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN WOMEN'S CLUBS

IFRA-NIGERIA WORKING PAPERS SERIES, N°58 02/03/2019

This Research is part of the European Project PACKING (Protection of Migrants and Asylum seekers, especially Children and Women coming from Nigeria and victims of trafficking), conducted from 2017 and 2019, both in Nigeria and in France.

PACKING Project is **co-funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) of the European Union** and is coordinated by the NGO ECPAT France.

The general objective of the project is that rights of Migrants are promoted and respected and migrants are protected from trafficking in Human beings.

This publication was elaborated with the support of European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of ECPAT France and the partners of the project and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

UNITED WE (NET)WORK: AN ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN WOMEN'S CLUBS[1]

Sara PANATA

1. Introduction

> "En Afrique, il n'y a pas de système bancaire, il n'y a pas de système de bourse, il n'y a pas de système de crédit […] vous n'avez pas de moyens de vous en sortir […]
> (La tontine) c'était la vocation de ce groupe (les *Authentic Sisters Club of France*). Pour les membres, la tontine est importante car le système bancaire est faillant."
>
> "On à faire à « des gens qui ont été conditionnées dès l'enfance » à quitter leur pays."[2]

In the fifteen-day trial of the Authentic Sisters Club of France (ASCF) – a Nigerian women's club accused of procuring and trafficking of Nigerian girls from Edo State to France – Nigeria is depicted by the defense speeches as a no-rule and no-state country where women's clubs come into existence in order to carry out the role of economic operators[3]. They would, then, provide an informal economic system in a country where the formal economic setting could not offer sustainable economic solutions. According to these arguments, this type of clubs would eventually assist girls and women, with, in the background, the idea that they developed, from their childhood, the will to leave this failed country for a great future in Europe.

These "cultural elements"[4] provided by the defense are of limited impact considering the "exceptional seriousness"[5] of the accusations that, according to the President of the criminal

---

[1] A special thank goes to Aurélie Jeannerod, the association Aux Captives La Liberation and Elodie Apard, director of IFRA, for the precious time dedicated to fruitful exchanges on the topic.
All the name of the interviewees and of the clubs studied have been changed in order to preserve the anonymity. For the same reason a list of the associations studied is not provided.
[2] I quote some arguments of the defence expressed during the trial of the Authentic Sisters Club of France, on the 29th of June 2018.
[3] For additional information on this trial, see: https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/05/want-freedom-back-get-life-says-victim-nigeria-france-traffickers/ ; https://www.renate-europe.net/11-years-prison-authentic-sisters-nigerian-pimps-france/ accessed on the 1st of June 2018.
[4] I quote Isabelle Prévost-Desprez words.
[5] *Idem*.

court, Isabelle Prévost-Desprez, "violate the fundamental principles of the French Republic"[6]. Ten "*Madams*"[7] of the ASCF are consequently condemned to prison with sentences between three and eleven years for aggravated procuring and human trafficking. Several among them are moreover punished with extradition from the French territory and heavy fines. Five men, linked to the women's illegal activity, are condemned as well.

Given the results of the ASCF's trial, it is particularly important to go back generally to the history of women's organizations in Nigeria and particularly to the development of women's clubs of the same type as ASCF, in order to shade light on their peculiar acting modes, as well as their context of emergence and development.

Instead of employing "cultural arguments" or assumption linked to an ambiguous "African tradition" (Ranger 2012), that are far from mirroring the working principles of these women's groups, this paper aims to provide an analysis of women's clubs, on the model of the Authentic Sisters Club of France, through a comparison with other women's organizations active in the south of the country and with contribution's clubs.

A historical glance at the women's organizations and women's clubs in Nigeria

The first documented women's associations in Nigeria date back to the beginning of the twentieth century, despite the fact that several scholars underline that women's associations with economic purposes were present in the country long before the colonial period (Awe 1977; Amadiume 2000). These pre-colonial associations gathered together market women with the objective to preserve their economic interests and to improve their profits (Mba 1982; Denzer 1998). The palette of women's organizations become more complex after the colonial encounter. On the one hand, associations of the first generation of educated and Christianized women were formed in the early twentieth century and in the southern part of the country. They had recreational purposes (to organize leisure activities for women and girls, such as the "Ladies Recreation Club of Lagos"); hygienic and sanitary aims (encouraging sanitation in the city or distributing medicines, like the well-known "Lagos Ladies League" founded by Mrs Charlotte Obasa and Mrs M.E. Johnson, who administered quinine to children to combat infant mortality); or educational and moral goals (with actions towards the community and its moral education with special attention to girls, as the "Ladies' Progressive Club of Lagos" or the "Lagos Ladies League") (Mba 1982; Johnson-Odim 1982; Awe (ed.) 1992). As several studies

[6] *Idem*.

[7] Siegel and Blanck define them, "female offenders who play a central role, lead criminal organizations and coordinate human trafficking activities" (2010, 440).

of other African countries testify, the newly formed class of elite women that emerges at the beginning of the twentieth century – educated and Christianized – felt invested of a social duty – imbued with the Christian doctrine of charity – towards women and girls from less advantaged social classes (Goerg 1997). On the other hand, in 1920, market women formed a formal organization, the "Lagos Market Women's Association", under the leadership of Mrs. Alimotu Pelewura (Somotan 2018). They were acting for the economic well-being of the market women and for the valorization of their economic interests. Already well addressed in the existing literature, these early century's networks – mostly based in Lagos because of the peculiar cultural and socio-political ebullition of the city – also advanced political claims (Johnson-Odim 1982; Mba 1982; Awe (ed.) 1992). From the 1940's onwards, women's associations became an omnipresent social actor in southern Nigeria (Awe 1988). Indeed, the negotiations around political and socio-economical rights for colonial subjects in Nigeria in the 1940's and then the negotiations for independence in the second half of the 1950's, did not leave women indifferent (Johnson-Odim et Mba 1997; Panata 2016b). They began to associate according to a gender criterion, coming together around common interests, not only economical or recreative but also social and political (Mba 1982; Panata 2016c). From this period onwards, despite the constant changes of Nigeria's political and economic situation, women had always found their ways to associate themselves in organizations of women for women interests.

In 1957, an umbrella organization was founded in Ibadan. Its objective was to bring together different women's organizations of the South of the country in order to represent women with one voice when necessary (for example in international meetings that Nigerian women wanted to attend) and to better organise the women's activities in the country. This new association, initially called Council of Women's Societies (CWS), changed its name in 1960, immediately after independence, to become the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) as prescribed by the international rules on women's national organizations. The headquarter was then moved to Lagos and the Council embraced the objective to gather together the women's associations from the whole country. It was articulated in four sections, one for each region (the country was divided in regions at that time (Falola et Heaton 2008)), plus one section for the Federal Territory of Lagos. Each section was headed by a president and divided in local branches, each composed of several women's associations. At the head of the Council, there was a National Executive, with a National President.

From the 1960s onwards, new types of women's organizations, differently denominated as organizations, societies, associations, unions or guilds, have been created to adapt to diverse economic and political contingencies (Abdullah 1995; Mama 1995; Ojewusi 1996; Imam

1997). The 1990s constituted a pic in the creation of women's organizations because of the international interest in programs on women promoted especially after the Third World Conference on Women organized by the United Nation in Nairobi in 1985. Several international donors promoted the creation of new organizations for women and as result, plenty of them were created all around the country. The great majority were registered under the umbrella of the National Council of Women's Societies. Still nowadays, women's organizations register under the NCWS. There is no legal obligation to affiliate to the Council but the widespread idea that women's organizations are obliged to do so because of the difficulties they can encounter (for example to hold meetings or to have a bank account) if there are not formally recognized by this body, nowadays strongly linked to the Nigerian government (Imam 1997). However, some women's organizations, intentionally declare their independence from the Council. This is the case for example of the former Women In Nigeria organization, founded in 1982, that did not want to be affiliated to the Council, considered too government-orientated (*Ibid.*; Iweriebor 1997) or the case of the Federation of Nigerian Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) that considers the Council too Christian in its orientation.

Some of these Nigerian women's associations have been exported in migratory contexts or new associations have been founded to represent the specific women interests abroad, namely in Europe. All these different kinds of organizations reflect in their structures and objectives the socio-political context and environment in which they were born. Their objectives are multiples: social, economic, political and recreational. The common factor of all these collective networks is the fact that they represent the interests of women in the community and try to improve the women's place in the society.

Starting from the 1990s, new kinds of women's groups – defining themselves as "women's clubs" – emerged in Benin as well as in Europe. They gradually became more active in different social networks, posting links, photographs and videos of their meetings or their *hostings.*[8] Many of those clubs' members seem to be involved in human trafficking for sexual exploitation, as the trial of the Authentic Sisters Club of France showcases.

---

[8] An *hosting* is a monthly meeting of the club. Pat Iziegmbe Omoregie (2019) describes the hosting as "a very important event that takes place among clubs members in Benin [City]. For some leaders of these clubs, hosting is an avenue for club members to know the home of each member. […] Hosting is when each member of a club takes their turn to host or welcome other members to his or her home for a celebration. In some clubs, there are specific things the hostess must provide for members of the club during the hosting ceremony. In most cases, the hosting takes place in the home of the hostess. But however, there are cases where hosting takes place in a particular restaurant or in the house of the president of the club. In most scenarios, it is usually a monthly event."

In spite of the variety of these women's organizations it is still possible to trace common trends in between women's organizations, under the umbrella of the NCWS, and to distinguish them from the women's clubs.

Interviews and nethnography as entry-points to study Nigerian women's clubs

Different kinds of sources have been used for this analysis. First of all, archival materials collected along the years of a Ph.D. research on the history of women's movements are at the core of the study[9]. A list of archival sites and documents available in each site has been further provided (Appendix 1). Oral semi-directive interviews of clubs' members conducted in Benin City (Appendix 2, 3) have also helped building up the analysis. Moreover, several primary printed sources, namely books written by primary actors, have shaped the reflexion on this topic (Appendix 4).

All these sources have been interwoven alongside a one-year online observation using a "nethnographic" methodology to collect data in the social space. The term "nethnography" is made out of the fusion of the terms "network" and "ethnography". Firstly employed by Kozinets in 1998, this word aims to define a research methodology employed to study virtual environments and the behaviours of social individuals within online platforms (Kozinets 1998). It is then employed to define an ethnographic research on an online community.

"Our social worlds are going digital. As a consequence, social scientists around the world are finding that to understand society they must follow people's social activities and encounters onto the Internet" stated Kozinets (2013, p. 1). This statement proves to be particularly relevant for the proposed research: the wide use of Internet, especially social networks, by these women's clubs showcases the necessity to study social online activities and behaviours of these virtual communities to better understand these social actors. Even if there is, within online communities, self-representation and "staging" of one's personality that can be far away from the real one, the "digital-self" – due to the exponential use of the Net – is becoming a fully-fledged facet of the individual personality that needs to be studied for deeper understanding the "self". Moreover, Sayarh affirms that in these virtual communities, communication and self-representation are not submitted to the rules of external environments. This creates a community that follows different norms and different behaviours, free from the domination of

[9] Sara Panata "Women's mouvements, gender dynamics and circulations of feminisms (1940s-1990s)", University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne under the supervision of Professor Anne Hugon.

external rules, which creates space for a counterculture (Sayarh 2013, p. 228). In the frame of this research, the social communities recreated in social networks seem to follow norms and behaviours that are not fully in lines with those of the host countries (e.g. spray money's practise, ostentation of money and gold, etc.). The netnography permits to study norms regulating the behaviours of these social communities. Moreover, this methodology allows to observe the practises of social groups in the well specified Web context, monitoring the online interactions between people without stepping-in (*Ibid.*, p. 231). An unobtrusive method seems the most successful one in such a sensitive subject.

Using two social networks mostly used by a selected number of women's clubs, namely Facebook and YouTube, the club's rules of thumb were observed, particularly in the videos and pictures posted on social media. The selection of women's clubs on the Web started with the ASCF although their Facebook page was not active since the arrest of its members, in 2015. I have then looked for the social pages of the women's clubs interviewed in Benin as well as their European homonyms, even if the women I interviewed in Benin City do not confirm the existence of foreigner branches of their clubs. I discovered that women's clubs based in Benin do not have social accounts and do not publish videos on YouTube. On the contrary, some of their homonyms abroad have social profiles and data.
First, I selected, from Facebook, all the French-based clubs. Then, I looked for clubs with the same denominations in other European countries. Finally, I looked for these groups, or groups with the same name but based in different locations, on YouTube. The general criteria in selecting these groups was to get those displaying a significant amount of data in different European countries.

In these two social networks, different types of data are available. On the one hand, the social data produced by YouTube are just videos that can be analysed through various methods. First, I used a multimodal interactional analysis defined as "a methodological framework that allows the analyst to integrate the verbal with the nonverbal, and to integrate these with material objects and the environment as they are being used by individual acting and interacting in the [social] world." (Norris 2012, p. 1). This interpretative framework allows to take into consideration both the social actors and the cultural tools they are mobilizing. In addition, three different forms of interactions can occur on videos analysis and they were consequently considered (Giglietto, Rossi et Bennato 2012, p. 49):

- the audience interactions, measurable using parameters like exposure (how many times a video or a channel is viewed);
- the social interactions (number or type of comments, likes etc.)
- and finally, for YouTube video especially, the platform interactions: all metadata linked to the video inserted while uploading (title, date, tags etc.).

On the other hand, Facebook provides different kinds of social data, such as posted links and personal status, photographs and videos. The posted links were not extremely relevant because very few groups post regularly and their walls are mainly used by other actors to post personal information or advertisements. More relevant, were the pictures of the clubs I studied employing a transversal analysis aimed at considering one or more elements present in a set of images (Gervereau 2004, p. 34). This allowed me to analyse possible recurrent paths among the pictures. Then I followed a vertical approach aimed at focusing the attention on each image to consider the composition of the photographs, the ways of striking poses, the dress code and their signification in the context of which the pictures were captured. The possible connection between local esthetical norms and international ones has been traced in order to understand how these women want to be represented and what is the message they want to pass, within their culture and/or within the culture of the host country.

The final goal of all these observations – together with the mentioned sources and the interviews – was the deep study of the acting modes of these groups in order to trace a general *modus operandi* that is peculiar to them and distinct from other women's organizations or contribution associations of women studied all long my Ph.D. thesis.

2. United we work: some guidelines of understanding for Nigeria women's clubs

The names and the (non) affiliation question

A good starting point in the description of these women's networks is their nomenclature. All the studied groups in this analysis are using the term "Club", to which is attached an adjective that expresses unity, strength, religious attachment or wealth (*"Golden Ladies Club", "Glorious Mothers Club", "Blessed Women Club"*[10]), which is quite peculiar – even though not exclusive – of these lately studied groups. The current list of women's organizations

[10] These names do not correspond to existing clubs but are provided here for the purpose of illustration.

composing the National Council of Women's Societies (Appendix 7) together with evidences from the 1940s onwards, showcase that the majority of women's groups of different characteristics tend to define themselves as "organization", "association", "union", "society" "council" and "federation" and partially explain, through the name of the group, their objectives or their role in the society (for example "Young Women's Christian Association" or the "National Association of Women Journalists"[11]).

Moreover, Edo women's groups with different goals were part of the National Council of Women's Societies (Appendix 8). Equally, the archives of the Federation of Nigerian Women's Organizations – another and concurrent umbrella organization founded in Abeokuta in 1953 but no more in existence – showcase the active presence of Edo women's groups of different characteristics (social groups as well as market women's organizations and professional organizations). Nowadays, the NCWS remains the only umbrella organization in the country but none of the clubs studied here are part of it[12].

How to become a member: the foundation and entrance process

As all the interviewees from women's clubs in Benin City explain, these clubs of women are self-help groups. To enter the club, the members have to pay an entrance fee that can vary from a club to another. This is a basic characteristic of all the studied women's groups in southern Nigeria. With this entrance fee, an annual fee is to be deposit and renewed each year. Normally, these amounts of money are used within the group – whether they are women's political parties, women « non-political » organizations, religious associations, economic cooperatives of women or professional bodies – for the association and its activities.

The women's clubs studied here also demand as an additional entrance fee a bottle of Baileys – the so-called "alcohol of women" that must be offered to members. The presence of liquor can also be seen in almost all the women *hostings* and meetings publicized on social networks. In some clubs, described as particularly wealthy, also a bag of rice or other gifts are required.[13]

The creation of a club seems to be always the initiative of the President who – together with a group of women – decides to fund a club of self-help among a group of already connected women. If a new member wants to enter the club, she has to be introduced or she will go through an "observation period". Baba E. explains:

---

[11] These two organizations exist until date.
[12] Iterview with Mrs J., Baba E., P. R.
[13] Interview with M. N.

> "**Baba E.:** *If you are not introduced by someone, the club members will appoint someone, we will watch out at you for six months. We will put three men on you, they will watch out at you.* […] *We want to be sure of her behaviors* […] *The potential member should avoid to fight, to drink, to misbehave in their marriage. We want people that cannot spoil you. You know, we don't have a secrecy policy in the club so we have to be careful.*"[14]

In every clubs, the admission is submitted to the economic status of the members. If you want to enter a club you have to be able to pay the entrance and the annual fees but also monthly contributions (called *osusu* or *esusu* contributions) and levies for general parties but also burials, weddings or naming ceremonies of the members. It is cogent to note that the entrance and annual fees are different from contributions. Pat Iziegmbe Omoregie (2019) explains:

> "Osusu contribution occurs when a group of friends or people come together and agree on a particular amount to pay either weekly or monthly. They gather this money together and give it to one person in the group this week or month. By the next month, they also gather the same amount of money to another person in the group. Thus, every member of the group benefit from the contribution before it ends and they can begin another one."[15]

This economically restricted access is not a common characteristic of other Nigerian women's groups where women can affiliate just by paying their entrance fees, the annual fee and adopting the constitution of the association. In addition, in some associations, the entrance fees are defined in accordance with the women's income in order to give access to the association to different profiles of women. Moreover, the majority of Nigerian women's association tend to propose "group affiliations". Women's groups can then affiliate to a new group with their association, paying an association fee. This seems to not be possible in Benin City clubs' network where – in spite of the circulation of members from one club to another – *hostings* are not open to other clubs.

<u>The hierarchical and life-long structure of the clubs</u>

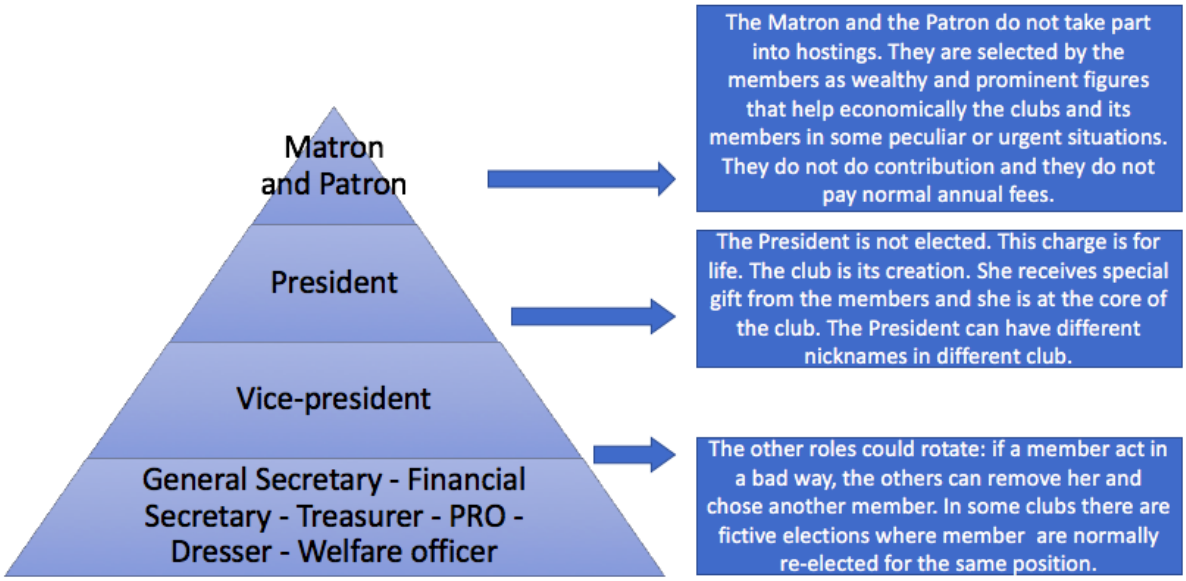
Each club has a rigid structure, following the *modus operandi* of the majority of Nigerian women's groups, always organized in a hierarchical setting. In the chart below, the main

---

[14] Interview with Baba E., president of one of the organization. This organization is quite peculiar because the president is a man. He is the only man of the organization though, except from the Patron who is passed away.
[15] This economic activity of the club is further explained.

positions in the clubs studied are represented. Peculiar to these clubs is the fact that the roles are life-roles. This is an atypical setting compared to "classic" Nigerian women's associations. In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, associations of different goals orbited around a prominent woman who organized the activities of the association (for example Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti for the Federation of Nigerian Women's Organisations or Mrs Elizabeth Adekogbe for the Women Movement (Johnson-Odim et Mba 1997; Panata 2016b)). If the central role of one personality has left place for organizations with a collective leadership from the 1960s onwards, even before the independence there were regular elections for the different positions to cover, at least every 5 years.

In the cases studied here, the President and the Vice-President are life positions. In many clubs, the other positions do no rotate neither. Sometimes however, clubs' members who misbehave can be removed, but the process in which this is done is not transparent.[16]



General organizational chart of women's clubs

The Matron and Patron are above the President. They are not strictly implicated in the life of the association. They are kind of *Deus ex machina*, who intervene to financially help when members of the club need them.[17] They are selected for their wealth and power and celebrated as powerful figures. Mrs J., Matron of five different clubs, explains very well the "work" of a Matron:

[16] Interview with Mrs J. and Baba E.
[17] Interview with M. N. and Mrs J.

"Mrs J: *If they [the members] have any problems, they have to come to you [the Matron]. You have to give them money. And you host them. Sometimes I host them here. They don't pay fees for hosting, they don't pay nothing. I just host them, they will eat, they will drink. And for the anniversary the Matron goes there [to the anniversary meeting] and donates money to the club.*

Do you help them if they have club issues or personal issues?
Mrs J: *I help them if they have personal problems.*

And for example what kind of problem?
Mrs J: *That's what personal problem is: they come here, they ask for money. I give them. If some of their daughters get married and they need money, I will give them. If they have issues, I will give them money. You cannot refuse. That's the work of a matron. And sometime for anniversaries you sit with them.*

How did you become the matron of all these different clubs?
Mrs J: *They called me. They come and they invite me. They put a person that is well to do, a person that will attend them well."*[18]

Baba E. also adds some information about the role of a Matron and a Patron:

"What is the role of the Matron in the club?
Baba E.: *The Matron is the mother of the Club.*

Which are her duties?
Baba E.: *She is in charge of anything that is above me [the President]. These women [the members] have problems you know. I will call her [the Matron] and she will take in charge everything. There are times she uses her money to help us.*

Does she help you also on personal issues?
Baba E.: *Yes, it is on personal issues that she helps us.*

And who is your patron, and what is his role in the club?

[18] Interview with Mrs. J.

> **Baba E.:** *Our patron is dead now. He died one year ago. He was Kingsley Edegbe*[19]*. […] We want to wait 3 or 4 years before having another one to show him respect."*[20]

The Matron and Patron are then seen as the "economic parents" of the club. Matrons and Patrons are present in several Nigerian women's associations, they are celebrated in the various groups and they are considered as figures that deserve respect for their position in the community. They can help the association economically to organise events but they will not act in case of personal issues of their members as money suppliers. Moreover, in a very peculiar way, the Matrons of the Edo women's clubs are federated in a club of Matrons; where women have to be Matrons themselves to be members. The life President of this "Club of Matrons" is Mrs F., owner of the Hotel F. and well-known as one of the biggest "Madam" in Benin City.[21]

The Presidents are the core of the associations. They are particularly celebrated by the members and they receive (or received) special gifts, as Mrs J., president of a club explains:

> *"Now we don't do it anymore because of the difficult times but once we did gifts, like fans, fridges for the President… wrappers… but we have stopped."*[22]

The role of the President is to organise meetings, *hostings* and to generally manage the club properly. Being the President of a club also gives a recognised social influence and allows to create relations and networks as Mrs J. and M. N. attest:

> ***"As a president of the club, how do you describe your duties?***
> **Mrs J.:** *I give them money, I assist them, I spray a lot of money for them! Yes! Sometimes I spray 25.000 [Nairas]; sometimes 15.000… And I help them a lot. Any problem they have they come to me. If a member comes, she has an issue with her land, I dress up, I put gele, I take one of my car and I go with them. Yes! I follow them there to solve the problems. If I am not available I will tell them to come later. I will*

---

[19] Enadeghe Kingsley Edegbe is described in Ellis as follow: "The chief suspect in the whole people-smuggling ring was one Enadeghe Kingley Edegbe, born on 10 August 1964 in Benin City […]. Egedbe was the owner of a massive house in his home town [located in the same road of Mrs J.' house] and ran a travel agency as cover for his pimping activities. When he was arrested in Nigeria in October 2007, Edegbe had in possession material for coaching girls for the sex business, wigs, and other tools of his trade. Several girls interviewed by the police in connection with the business had Edegbe's phone number stored in their phones." (Ellis, 2016: 18).
[20] Interview with Baba E.
[21] Discussions with researchers based in Benin City, April 2017.
[22] Interview with Mrs. J.

give them an appointment but I will go with them. I help them. Especially if they have financial problems. In this case I will just give them the money they need. No need to move around. In this case it's easier I just drop the money.

And Ma, could you refuse to help if you have other personal financial engagements or problems?
Mrs J.: *No! I will help them na! Just if I am not around, I will tell to come back."*[23]

"Could you kindly describe your duties as president of the club?
M.N.*: As a President my duty is anywhere we go, they will give me the respect as a chairlady who form the club.*

Ma, why did you form up to three clubs instead of a big one?
M.N.*: I need relationships."*[24]

On social networks, the Presidents are particularly celebrated with pictures and comments on their physical appearance or appreciations of their wealth status and their personal achievements. "Corrosive President", "Mummy 4 life", "Super beautiful presido"[25]: the clubs' President emerges, sometimes in a contradictory way, as maternal and beautiful, strong and feared.

The Matrons, the Patrons and the Vice-Presidents are also strongly celebrated. We can notice from the Facebook pictures of the clubs that if the President and the Vice-President are of the same age group, the Matron and the Patron generally look older. In their portraits it is possible to observe that they are often snapped with dollars (even if they live and have their parties in Europe where euro is used). They showcase their wealthy position also with gold, jewellery (rings, necklaces, hearings, etc.) and with laces materials. Laces material are expensive contemporary fabrics, used in Nigeria for official or important occasions.

Being a simple member of a club is also linked to the importance of networking, developing relationships and being influential within the community. This is the reason why women affiliate to several clubs, even if, economically speaking, it can be very demanding. Being member of a club is a bet of influence, network and social acknowledgment.

---

[23] Interview with Mrs J.
[24] Interview with M. N.
[25] I quote here some comments of Presidents' pictures founded on the Facebook pages of some women's clubs.

Goals and objectives: contributions and economic support

The clubs are created as self-help networks. Every relation within the club is economical. Actually, there is not only an entrance fee but also a monthly contribution to pay. This is at the core of the club, even if the Presidents tend to present their clubs as social clubs with social roles or as humanitarian organizations:

> ***"What are the objectives of the club?***
> **Mrs J.:** *First of all, the first objective is to help the less privileged. Yes, to help the less privileged in the community. For example, when we did our anniversary, we put money together and we gave them to an orphanage. And also to help each other. For example, if you are a member, when you lost your father or your mother, you gather the club's members in your house. They do donations for you. Normally, for any burial, the members have to donate 5.500 Naira. 5.500 Naira par each member to give to the burial. Again the objective is to help the less privileges. Every year we went to church, we pray.*
>
> **M. N.:** *We want to gather ourselves: if I seat here, how can I meet my friends? I don't meet anybody. We want to seat together, as friends. […] And we also assist each other during burials and weddings. It is 4.000 for burial.*
>
> **P. R.**: *The objective is to help to one and another more. We help in term of mutual help to each other in problematic situations.*
>
> **Baba E**.: *Up and down we faint and fight for each other. We help people to have a piece of land, add another land, finish to build the house in the land. We don't want the money to go anyhow."*[26]

The structures and the *modus operandi*, partially illustrated above, suggest that these clubs are more contribution's clubs than social clubs with social purposes or friend's clubs for mutual help. They are in these aspects very different from the large majority of Nigerian women's social organizations, were this economic aspect is secondary or absent (Women in Nigeria (ed.) 1985; Ojewusi 1996). In whatever way the Presidents describe the club, they all recognise the central role of the monthly contributions, that they call *osusu* (or *esusu* in other parts of the country).

> *"We do monthly contributions. We pay different amount of contribution. Some pay 10.000 Naira for example, some pay 20.000,*

[26] Interviews with Mrs. J, P.R., M.N, and Baba E.

some pay 50.000. If you pay 10.000 you will carry 1 million. Everybody will contribute. Then we will have a total amount of around 2 million Naira. If you have pay 5.000 you will carry only once not every month. When you contribute 100.000 you will carry 1 million. The minimum to pay is 5.000 Naira."[27]

"Every 10 months we do a new contribution with new members who can start then to contribute. If you don't contribute at this moment you are out of the contribution. You can contribute 25.000; 50.000; 75.000 Naira, you chose your contribution and you maintain it for ten months."[28]

"We pay 27.000 Naira par month. Out of this 27.000, 25000 will return to me. Each month, we give the money to one member."[29]

"There are different groups (of contribution) The lower is 2.000; the average one is 3.500; the highest one is 5.500. Every 2-2 weeks we collect money and the contribution end after 8 or 9 months. Some people will also pay 11.000 and they will collect the double."[30]

In these contribution modalities, clubs can be assimilated to the *esusu* groups or contribution's clubs, studied by Bascom in the yoruba space (in South-West Nigeria)[31]. He puts together different definitions of *esusu* groups (or groups that made *esusu* contributions):

"Esusu is a universal custom for clubbing together of a number of persons for monetary aid. A fixed sum agreed upon is given by each at a fixed time (usually every week) and place, under a president; the total amount is paid over to each member in rotation. This enables a poor man to do something worth-while where a lump sum is required. There are laws regulating this system."

"A club organized for the purpose of assisting members in money matters."

"There is a certain society called *Esusu*. This society deals with monetary matters only, and it helps its members to save and raise money thus: (a) Every member shall pay a certain fixed sum of money regularly at a fixed time (say every fifth or ninth day). And one of the

[27] Interview with Mrs J.
[28] Inverview with M. N.
[29] Interview with P. R.
[30] Interview with Baba E.
[31] It is important to notice that several yoruba institutions are also present in the Edo space.

> subscribing members shall take the total amount thus subscribed for his or her own personal use. The next subscription shall be taken by another member; this shall so continue rotationally until every member has taken." (Bascom 1952)

Women's clubs studied here, with this centrality on money and contribution, seem very close to the *esusu* clubs described by Bascom. An important point to underline though is that this contribution groups are not a compulsory alternative to the banking system. Nigeria banking system is well developed and microfinance banking is also present for the neediest clients. That is not to say that the economic situation of the average Nigerians is brilliant and positive but just to stress that members of the clubs studied could have access to different types of loans in different banks. It is important to underline that these contributions clubs – present in a lot of African countries (Mayoukou 1994; Bouilly 2017) – are a parallel credit system that people could privilege if they quickly need a large amount to spend, free from interests. However, if these clubs could be defined as wealthy women's contribution's clubs with high amounts of contributions, they do not follow another characteristic that Bascom underlines for *esusu* clubs:

> "Actually the *esusu* differs from a club in that many *esusu* groups hold no meetings and that the members frequently are not known to one another. Even the head of the *esusu* group may not know who all the members are." (Bascom 1952)

As we showcased before, this is not the case of these women's clubs that do their contributions during monthly *hostings* precisely structured as all the interviewees attest:

> *"We pay when we do the hosting. We do it each time in a member house, the member is the host. The host takes care of the food, the other members pays the fees of 5,500. It is every last Saturday of the month. Because we are 42 now, we go to different members' house each time so now it's your turn each 3 years. I did my own in September. […] For a hosting we will be well dressed. First of all, a big gele. […] Then, the person who host prepares different kind of food. She prepares pounded yam, amala, starch with all sort of soup, black soup, egusi, buka and meat, pomo, chicken, beef. Also jollof rice with chicken on top. And the drinks. You have to eat and drink well well. Then when you go home, everybody is entitled to a pack of rice in a plastic bag. You take it home with drinks and gift. […] During the hosting, first of all, we read the agenda. Then if there are new members, the person who bring the new member introduces her and we read the rules and regulations. You eat after and you dance. You spray the owner of the house."*[32]

[32] Interview with Mrs J.

> *"We do the hosting each month, on the 4th Sunday of the month. At the beginning we do the hosting in members' houses but then we decided to stop, it was too complicated to go and come back from the houses of some members who live very far. So now, according to the President we hold the meetings in her house. The member who host will cook and bring the food and the drinks there. […] We deliberate on different matters, we deliberate and then we rise prayers, we sing to God. We also celebrate everyone year. The first Sunday of the year, normally on January, we also do a thanksgiving, a big party to thank God for our progress."*[33]

> *"The hosting is a meeting we do in the day we are contributing. The person who is carrying the contribution is the one who cook in her house. She can cook whatever she likes, she can cook rice, plantain, we don't ask, it is everything you want. If it is a normal meeting there is a place we meet. It is not in a personal member house. It is a place of the association, it is very near, just a little farer in this street."*[34]

These *hostings* are occasions to gather together, to discuss the agenda of the club and to do contributions. For some clubs, *hostings* are done in rotation, each month in a member's house, who is then in charge of organizing and cooking. The members pay a fee for the hosting and they spray money to the woman who host them. This practice consists in placing bank notes on the head of persons or to throw notes in the air during celebrations. It happens a lot during weddings for example, naming ceremonies or parties. For the club studied, the hosts could sometimes place so much notes on someone's head that a member of the family is required to collect the notes with a box or a plastic bag.

Hostings are exclusively for club's members and a dress code is required. To strength the unity of the club's members, they always wear *aṣọ-ẹbí*: clothes done with the same fabrics that the members of the club commission for an occasion to showcase their unity. This is a characteristic of different women's organizations in Nigeria (Panata 2016a). Some groups based in Europe also have shirts with the motto of the association. Indeed, the European-based clubs have a motto stressing the characteristics of the club. Often, the motto expresses the beauty or the wealthiness of the members. To have a motto is a common feature of women's groups even if normally the motto stresses the social role of the association. Both the European-based and the

---

[33] Interview with P. R.
[34] Interview with M. N.

Edo-based clubs also have a refrain called by the President or by one of the members and repeated by the others, another common characteristic with other women's groups in Nigeria.

A part from the *hostings*, there are bigger annual parties of the clubs, open to other clubs. These give members the occasion to collect big amount of money through "spraying". At some point during the party, members of the club dressed in *aṣọ-ẹbí*, line up and parade while dancing. Members from other clubs or friends come then to spray big amounts of money. Club members also participate in each other's weddings, naming ceremonies or burials, raising money for all these different events. Finally they also attend other public ceremonies, showcasing wealth with their dressing code. For example, a Matrons' club in England, attended a Boxing Day event wearing a very rich *aṣọ-ẹbí* with white embroideries, using a fan decorated with beads and feathers and marked "Matron life", as to stress the fancy and gorgeous life style of these Matrons.
Being a member of these clubs gives women a social status and a position recognized and celebrated by other members of the community. This position also gives them a strong network of self-help.

The fact that the circulation of money is at the core of these clubs is confirmed by the system of withdrawing from a club. When a woman is a member, she can stay in the club and enjoy the privileged help of the others, but if she finds herself in a difficult situation that leads her to withdraw from the club, she has to give all the money back, as described by Mrs J:

> ***"And if you have to withdraw from the club what do you have to do?***
> **Mrs J.:** *If the members didn't give nothing to you, you can just go. If they gave something to you, you return the money and you go.*
>
> ***Do you mean the money of the monthly contribution?***
> **Mrs J.:** *I mean every money. If the members gave you money for the marriage of your daughter for example, or for a burial, you have to return them. When they bring the money to you for your daughter marriage, we will count it down and they will keep the receipt of the money they gave you. When you drop the club, you have to return the money.*
>
> ***Even the money that people spray for you?***
> **Mrs J.:** *If it is an amount you decided in the club [before the event], you have to return it. After you spray, someone collect the money. They come to you, we count the money with the members and we write it*

> *down. When you don't go to the club [when you drop], you have to return the money. If you say "I'm fed up, I want to believe in God", you return the money. If I come I spray money there, they will not count this spray. But each event you will pay 5.500 Naira some 3.000 some 2.500. You pay 5000 for marriages, 6000 for burials. All this money go back to the club and we will share it between the members."*[35]

To sum up, contrary to *esusu* groups destined by Bascom, the women's clubs studied here have a collective sociability linked to the group. They do not only do *hostings* to collect contributions but they also do thanksgiving parties to celebrate the association once a year. They help each other in difficult economic situations, even outside the contribution's system. Far from been based on sentiments of charity and help, the motor of these clubs is the raise of money.
In these clubs, like in the described *esusu* groups, there is a contribution's dimension but there is, in addition, a strong communitarian dimension, confirmed by the audio-visual materials analyzed. This communitarian dimension is similar to the one of women's social associations but it focuses on the economical profit of its members and not on the socio-economic improvement of women in the society. United these women work and cooperate, but only for the economic progress of the club's members.

3. United we network: an international community of women's clubs

In the previous section I described women's clubs general characteristics, crossing observations on women's clubs in Benin City and women's clubs in Europe. I will now linger on the relations between these clubs and on the relations among the different Europe-based clubs.

From Benin to Europe: the relations between Benin-based and Europe-based clubs

Clubs' members interviewed in Benin City stressed the absence of branches of their clubs in Europe, though they also confirmed the presence of members abroad and the fact that a lot of members travel regularly. These members abroad pay contributions and other fees for events and parties as local members and they are represented in the meetings by family members. They collect their own contribution through international bank transfers.

> **"M.N.:** *In our club we are only women, 30 women. Some are abroad in Europe or even in America. Even if they are abroad they are like the other members, they have to pay the registration and the contributions.*

[35] Interview with Mrs J.

Where are the members of the club from?
M.N.: *We are Benin. Some are abroad. Some travelled back from other country but all us are Benin.*

If the members are abroad, how can you give them the money from contributions when is their turn?
M.N.: *When it is their time to collect money they give us their account number and we will pay to their account."*

"Do you have members abroad or are these branches of the Benin-based association?
Mrs J.: *No, we have members abroad not branches. We have four members in Canada, several in Italy, in Germany, in US. A lot of us were in Italy before. They wanted to start a branch in Italy, we discussed about it but we then decided that it couldn't work. I am talking of those who were in Italy before that are here now.*

Ma, with your members abroad, how do you do with the contributions?
Mrs J.: *They pay contributions. At every meeting there is someone who represent them. We gave the person the money to withdraw them to the member".*

"In your club, do you have branches or members abroad?
P. R.: *We met there. We decided to fund the association there. I mean all of us, we travelled and come back and when we come back we funded the club but we… most of us, we met there.*

Is this one of the criteria to be a member of the club? I mean the fact to have travelled abroad.
P. R.: *We have members who travelled and came back and few that did not travel. They come to represent their relatives that are abroad. For example, we have daughters of members who are actually abroad."*[36]

Baba E. also underlines the fact that members abroad pay higher contributions and fees.

"You mentioned a Development Fee before. Could you explain it to me?

[36] Interviews with M. N., Mrs J., P. R.

> **Baba E**.: *Each year you have to pay 25.000 Naira or 5.000 Naira if you are abroad for the Development Fee. You can also pay monthly but at the end you have to pay 2500 or 5000 Naira.*
>
> ***Do you have a lot of members abroad?***
> **Baba E**.: *Yes, we have several of them abroad. We have two in Italy, one in Belgium, one in London, one in France… I think she moved now but she was in France. The ones in Italy, they tried to create a Branch of the organization but it didn't work.*
>
> ***Why do you tax more the members who live abroad?***
> **Baba E**.: *Ah Ah [laughing]. If you are there, you don't give time to come to the meetings, to seat each 2-2 weeks and to discuss affairs. You don't have to come to inform the club. So you will pay more."*[37]

Some of the Europe-based clubs have the same names than the Edo-based associations. But it may be just a retake of some elements by Europe-based women clubs. In fact, there is clearly an age difference between members of Edo clubs – who belong to the same age group – and members of European clubs – who, as well, belong all to the same age group. The Edo women's interviewed are about 10 or 20 years older (in their fifties) than the women of the European clubs (in their thirties). It could be difficult for younger women to belong to the same clubs than older women and contribute with the same amount of money. Moreover, in the videos of parties organised abroad, the names of the members of the clubs and their roles are often declaimed out loud. Equally, Matrons, Patrons and friends who help the club, as well as guest clubs, are often presented by the master of ceremony. There is never any (open or audible) reference to Edo women's clubs during these parties. All these elements lead to the hypothesis that the Europe-based clubs are younger women's clubs which follow exactly the patterns of older women's clubs based in Benin City but are not necessarily linked to them by membership.

A widespread network of women's Europe-based clubs

On another level, the Europe-based clubs have clear connections among themselves. First of all, they formed a network of friends on Facebook. Clubs are friends to each other but their members individually are also Facebook friends of several groups. If it does not show a physic connection, surely the clubs are aware of the existence of each other. Moreover, several clubs also meet in special occasions like anniversaries.

---

[37] Interview with Baba E.

In several pictures of the clubs it is possible to see different groups' members together. Also YouTube videos testified of the connections in between women's clubs in Europe. For example, in a fancy party organized by a Europe-based club, the master of ceremony calls one by one the different members of the guest clubs invited for the occasion: clubs from the Netherlands, France, and Belgium. All these different clubs are organized in tables placed in a round shape. All the tables have signs with the name of the club. In the middle is the dance floor. Every group has its own *aṣọ-ẹbí*, distinguishing itself from the others. When the club is called, its members go to the dance floor and dance with the club hosting the party. Members open their purses and spray large amounts of dollars on members of the hosting club. At the end of the celebration, plastic bags full of dollars are put on the ground to collect the notes. This is very different from other women's organizations in Nigeria. Money spraying is a widespread practice but it remains symbolic in other women's associations because they have a social role in the community and tend to showcase their position though remaining sober.

This and other videos also show the recognition of women's social position. Clubs' members are celebrated not only by other women's club but also by other important personalities of the community (pastors, politicians, businessmen, etc.) The essence of these gatherings is to collect money but also and in particular to showcase the wealth of the members. The richness of members is showed off in all possible ways. The manners and the way they collect money does not matter. They are rich, they show their wealth and they are consequently celebrated.

Conclusions

With this analysis that brings together interviews with Edo-based clubs, observations of the Europe-based clubs and a wider study of women's socio-economical, professional and religious organizations, I wanted firstly to demonstrate the existence of Edo women's clubs, based in Europe or in Benin, which share common characteristics. Their rules of thumbs are different from the other Nigerian women's associations that are active in the country since the 1940s. Even if it is difficult to have a holistic view on these movements, some common characteristics can be identified. First of all, they have social or political objectives that aim to foster the position of women in a particular sector of society. They work to improve women's positions in a peculiar profession (like all the professional or trade organizations) or to foster women's access to political positions or to social facilities. In doing so, they operate for the improvement of a peculiar category of women. They then raise money to finance their objectives. There is no personal gain in taking part of these women's groups if not that, with an improvement of

situation the women are fighting for, the members can as well better their individual situation. Women's groups have a pyramidal organization, but the charges rotate among members. The Edo clubs, such as the Authentic Sisters Club of France, have a purely economic objective. Women take part to the club to enhance their economic position, to raise great amounts of money to invest in their personal projects and to create a network. The cult of personality is very strong, the president is seen as a pivotal figure as she/he carries all the responsibilities of the club. Being part of a club means to be a member of an economic community that is feared and respected for the economic resources the club is able to raise. This economic aspect is at the core of the women's clubs and it makes the real difference with other women's associations in the country. However, these women's clubs are also inspired by contribution's groups – often non gendered – or *esusu*. But they have a group dimension that is absent in *esusu* group. Club members form a strong network. Linked by an economic constraint, they become members of an economic family: they know each other, they dress alike, they party together; they are a collective institution. This does not mean that they are friendly with each other, as the exclusion methods showcase. They fear each other but they need each other so they linger on a feared respect to build their network. I have emphasized a general and comparative analysis of women's clubs – in Europe and Benin City –, *esusu* and women's organizations in order to propose a guideline of understanding of these groups. The study of each clubs' *modus operandi* – that will be proposed by my colleague Pat Omoregie[38] – will give more elements to understand individually those clubs and their peculiar characteristics.

Finally, I wanted to underline the existence of an internationally-spread and very well-organized network of Nigerian women's clubs. These clubs' glue is the sharing of money, overtly publicized and promoted on their online platforms.

[38] In the frame of Packing project, Pat Iziegmbe Omoregie conducted a study on Women's Clubs in Benin, focused on *hostings* habits and social behaviors of members. Her research report is available on IFRA-Nigeria website: ifra-nigeria.org.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Archival materials

Institutional Archives		
	Types of documents	**Place**
Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC)	Press files on: - Papers presented at the safe Motherhood Conference, Nigeria 1990 (September 11-23) - Women in history - Women's Organisation	University of Ibadan
NCWS Archives	Reports of meetings and seminars, constitutions of different women societies	Victoria Island

Private Archives		
	Types of documents	**Place**
Ogunsheye Foundation	Reports of meetings and seminars, constitutions of different women's societies	Bodija, Ibadan,
Mrs Adekogbe's personal papers	Reports of meetings and seminars, constitutions of different women's societies, press cuttings on different topic related to women's issues	Bodija, Ibadan
Mrs Ighodalo Personal Papers	Reports of meeting and seminars, constitutions of different women's societies	Bodija, Ibadan

Appendix 2: Table of informants in Benin City, April 2017

ID code	Interview date	Language of interview	Category of actors (e.g. Priest, trader, business woman…)
Mrs J.	25 and 27 April 2017	English, italian	Business woman; President of one clubs, Matron of four different clubs, Member of six different clubs, Married with the current president of a men's club.
P. R.	25 April 2017	English, Italian, Edo	Business woman; Member of one club, Ex member of five clubs Divorced from an Italian business man, in possession then of a double passport, a Nigerian and an Italian.
M. N.	26 April 2017	Pidgin English, Edo	Business woman; President of three clubs Member of three clubs Matron of two clubs
Baba E.	27 April 2017	English, Pidgin english	Business man; President of one club.

Appendix 3: Table of the circulation of the interviewees in different associations

This table aims to showcase the multiple affiliations of the interviewees with different organizations based in Benin City.

HL	TD		AC	VL	DL	OL	HHM	SC	JI	CM	LM	Big Twelve	PL	EL	A	OWL
	Matron Mrs J	Patron Kingsley (ł)[39]	Matron Mrs J	Matron Mrs J	Matron Mrs J	Matron Mrs J								Matron M N		Matron M N
Pres Mrs J	Pres Baba E							Pres M N	Pres M N		Pres Mrs F:[40]	Pres Mrs J husband Before Kingsley (ł)			Pres M N	
							Member Mrs J	Member Mrs J	Member Mrs J	Member Mrs J	Member M N		Member M N			
										Member P. R	Ex Member Mrs J					
										Member M N						

[39] Note 11.

[40] Owner of the Hotel F. and broadly known as one of the biggest Madam in Benin City.

Appendix 4: Primary printed sources on Nigeria women's organizations

Anyaegbu Linda Stephanie, *Nigerian Women and the Beijing Platform for Action: a Pro-active Analysis*, Ibadan, Pat-Mag Press Ltd, 1997.

Chas-Oniah Josephine, *The legal rights of widows*, Enugu, Nationl Council of Women's Societies, Anambra State Branch, 1990.

Constitutional Rights Project et Friedrich-Naumann Foundation (eds.), *Eliminating Discrimination Against Women: the Report of a Conference*, Lagos, Constitutional Rights Project, 1995.

El-Solh Camillia Fawzi et Mabro Judy (eds.), *Muslim women's choices: religious belief and social reality*, English ed., Providence, Berg (coll. « Cross-cultural perspectives on women »), 1994.

Emeagwali Gloria (ed.), *Women Pay the Price: Structural Adjustment in Africa and the Caribbean*, Trenton, Africa World Press, 1995.

Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria, « The Muslim woman: magazine of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria », *The Muslim woman : magazine of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria*, 1992.

Federation Women's International Democratic, *That they may live: African women arise*, Berlin, Women's International Democratic Federation, 1954.

Imam Ayesha et Kamminga Evelien, *Women in Search of Citizenship: Experiences from West Africa*, Amsterdam, KIT Publishers, 2012.

Imam Ayesha, Pittin Renée Ilene, Omole H et Women in Nigeria (eds.), *Women and the Family in Nigeria*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1989.

Imam Ayesha, 1997, « The Dynamics of WINing: An Analysis of Women in Nigeria (WIN) » in M. Jacqui Alexander et Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, Democratic Futures*, New York, Routledge, p. 280-307.

Iroanusi Sam, *Nigeria's First Ladies: Contributions to Nation-building*, Lagos, Sam Iroanusi, 2006, 120 p.

Odi Mma, *The Power of Women's Collective Action*, Lagos, Rural Women Empowerment and Development NetworK, 2010.

Ogundipe-Leslie Molara, *Re-creating ourselves : African women & critical transformations*, Trenton, N.J., Africa World Press, 1994.

Okunnu Lateefa et Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria, *Keynote address delivered at the formal launching of the Lagos State branch of the Federation of Muslim Women*

Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), on Sunday 23rd February 1986 at the University of Lagos Auditorium Akoka, Lagos, 1986.

Robson Elsbeth (ed.), *Women in Nigeria: the First Ten Years*, Zaria, WIN, 1993.

Women in Nigeria (ed.), *Women in Nigeria Today*, London, Zed Book, 1985.

Appendix 5: A non-exhaustive typology of Nigerian women's organizations

1. Trade Associations
2. Pressure Groups Associations (defined themselves as political or social)
    - Women's political parties
    - Women's « non-political » organizations
    - State's organizations or institutional bodies
    - Religious associations
3. Economic cooperatives of women (sort of women's contribution clubs)
4. Religious Associations
    - Muslim
    - Christians
        (i) Girls associations
5. Esusu Groups
6. Professional Associations
7. Branches of international organizations based abroad
8. Women's clubs
9. Development-concerned organizations
10. « Wives of » social organizations

Appendix 6: General chronology of women's groups in Nigeria

Before the 1940s
• Women's trade associations,
• Esusu Groups
1940s – 1950s
• First religious associations (they stand in-between the religious organizations and the pressure groups),
• Pressure groups' associations (women's parties, women's organizations),
• Economic cooperatives,
1960s – 1970s
• Pressure groups with a national and more institutional character (FNWO, NCWS)
• Birth of professional associations
• Emergence of branches of international organizations
1980s
• Development of pressure groups independent from the NCWS and with different characteristics
▪ FOMWAN
▪ WIN
• Massive development of religious associations just confined to the religious sphere
• « Governmentalization » of previous pressure groups linked to NCWS
• Emergence of state organizations of women (M-team, Better life program).
• Rise of development-centered organizations
• Birth of « wives of » organization for recreational purposes
• Creation of a National Commission of Women
1990s
• Institutionalizations of women's issues with the creation of a Ministry of Women's Affairs
• Birth of women's club in Benin City and abroad

Appendix 7: NWCS' Organizations – 2018

S/N	NAME
1	Defence and Police Officers Wives Association (DEPOWA)
2	Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA)
3	Naval Officers Wives Association (NOWA)
4	Nigerian Air force Officers Wives Association (NAFOWA)
5	Police Officers Wives Association (POWA)
6	Customs Officers Wives Association (COWA)
7	Immigration Officers Wives Association (IMMOWA)
8	Prisons Officers Wives Association (PROWA)
9	Fire Officers Wives Association (FOWA)
10	Civil Defence Officers Wives Association (CDOWA)
11	Road Safety Officers Wives Association (ROSOWA)
12	Medical Women Association of Nigeria
13	Lady Pharmacists Association
14	National Association of Women Journalist
15	Women In Colleges of Education
16	Young Women Christian Association
17	Social Welfare for Widows Initiative
18	United Women Traders
19	International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA)
20	Women for Equity and Social Change Initiative
21	Nigeria Girl Guide
22	National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives
23	Reality Organization
24	Home Science Association
25	Lady Chy New World Foundation
26	The Adorable Socials
27	Unity in Diversity

28	Adazuruezu Igbo
29	Yoruba Women & Youths
30	International Women Society
31	Divine Treasure Women & Youths
32	Solid Women Initiative
33	Widows International
34	Divine Precious Women Star & Youths Dev. Org.
35	Grassroot Women Empowerment
36	Jammi'ar Matar Arewa
37.	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)
38.	Soroptimist International
39.	Kabezyan Club
40.	Catholic Women Organization
41.	Keke Owners and Riders Association
42.	Women Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWCAN)
43.	Hausa Fulani Women
44.	The Lady Mechanic Initiative
45.	Bridge Builders Association

Source : NCWS website http://ncwsnigeria.com/about-ncws/affiliatespartners/ , view on the 15 april 2018.

Appendix 8: List of Benin based associations members of the NCWS in 1961

S/N	Name of Society	Headquaters	President	Date Founded	Date Applied	No of member
1.	Alaghodaro	17, Asoro Lane, Benin	Grace Oshodi	6th July 1960	7th Jan. 1961	80
2.	Otasowie	Lagos St. Benin City	Emoriatu Evbomwan	Sept. 1958	8th Jan. 1961	94
3.	Okherekhologan	Urora Vilage via Benin	Madam Agbinware O.	Sept. 1957	1961	25
4.	Lekpelasirinwa Women Society	Ugbor village via Benin	Isaac I Okundayo	24th June 1948	9th Jan. 1961	75
5.	Owemrisiede	Western Boys High School, Benin	Iyanmu Oguevba Umodu	10th Sept. 1952	7th Jan. 1961.	108
6.	Isaken Women Society	Amagbe Village, Benin	Akanbaklose	4th June 1948	9th Jan. 1961	40
7.	NLGHOCHON	Okpagha Village, Benin	Aigbonghae	14th July 1949	9th Jan. 1961	43
8.	Osazenegharu Women Society	Upper Ikepemasi	MD. Idusuyi Liso	1958	7th Jan. 1961	104
9.	Kajola Union	Beautuce Akwata, Benin	Adijat Akintola	7th Jan. 1935	1961	36
10.	Nosakhare	Ibiwe, Benin City	Madam Ayi Ahikhobare	13th Feb. 1960	9th Jan. 1961	133
11.	Oturetin Women Society (Omo Village)	Benin City	Okhurohesogie Iyewuare	10th Feb. 1960	1961	60
12.	Enibokun	Sokpoba Rd. Benin City	Isaac Aguebor	18th May 1950	7th Jan. 1961	80
13.	Egberamwen Union	Uzebu Str. Benin City	H. O. Aghedo	1957	9th Jan. 1961	120
14.	Osadebamwe	Forest Rd. Benin City	Amasuen Ehue	1er Jan. 1955	1961	35
15.	Atuaruwa (Iguosodin) Society	Ido College, Benin	Atiti Joseph	18th May 1960	7th Jan. 1961	30
16.	Arende Women Society	East Biscular, Benin City	Esomon Akenuwa	16th March '60	1961	60
17.	Oghomwenoyeme (2)		Oghamuwa Izeolome		1961	
18.	Osayabamwe		Salamotu Gbohodo	4th March 1942	1961	52

19.	Edo Sewing Mistress Service	Benin City Council	W. O. Elaho	1953	6th Jan. 1961	65
20.	Akugbe Union	Plymouth Rd, Benin	Imade Eregie	10th Oct. 1958	6th Jan. 1961	53
21.	Evbayobomwanru Union	Ward A.,Benin City	Madam Ikoko Imarhiagbe	12th Dec. 1949	7th Jan.	150
22.	Akpitavi Union	Ward A. Abehe Str. Benin City	Onaiwu Ayobagiegbe	12th Dec. 1949	6th Jan. 1961	190
23.	Omoayelena Progressive Union	Imiokomo	Azetu Mura	1958	9th. Jan. 1961	200
24.	Giasimwineybuoman Progressive Union	Ekiti Str. Benin City	Ekiomado Igbinedion	21th Dec 1959	8th Jan.1961	51
25.	Nosedeba Women Society	Mission Rd, Benin City		1958	7th Jan. 1961	88
26.	Nosayaba Union	Ward "A" Benin City, Ekpenede Street	Madam Omosigho Imasuen	26th Fevrier 1950	1er Jan. 1961	237
27.	Iyobosa Society	Old Siluo Road, Benin City	E. Ehigie Oliha	12th June 1957	8th January 1961	200
28.	Ezenomayobogokura	Asoro Lane Benin City	Grace Oshodi	10th September 1960	7th January 1961	60
29.	Osayoubanbor	Benin City	Aghimwen	22nd Sept 1960	9th January 1961	33
30.	Izogiekhieubata Women	Aybiama Village	Amenaghamwan (illitrate)	12th February 1958	9th January 1961	80[41]

[41] Ogunsheye Foundation Archives in Ibadan: « Ogunsheye Foundation Archives in Ibadan, Application forms 196 », OGFAD/00113 NCWS Benin City Branch.

Bibliography

ABDULLAH Hussaina, 1995, « Wifeism and activism: the Nigerian women's movement. » in *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective*, Boulder, Westview, p. 209-225.

AMADIUME Ifi, 2000, *Daughters of the Goddess, Daughters of Imperialism: African Women Struggle for Culture, Power and Democracy*, New York, Zed Books, 328 p.

AWE Bolanle (ed.), 1992, *Nigerian Women. A Historical Perspective*, Ibadan, Bookcraft, 167 p.

AWE Bolanle, 1988, « Nigerian Women's Visions and Movements: An Overview », Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Unpublished paper.

AWE Bolanle, 1977, « The Iyalode in the traditional Yoruba political system » in A Schlegel (ed.), *Sexual Stratification: a cross-cultural view*, New-York, Columbia University Press, p. 144-159.

BASCOM William Russell, 1952, « The esusu: a credit institution of the Yoruba. », *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.*, 1952, vol. 82, p. 63-69.

BOUILLY Emmanuelle, 2017, *Du couscous et des meetings contre l'émigration clandestine". Mobiliser sans protester au Sénégal*, Ph.D thesis under the supervision of Johanna Siméant-Germanos, University of Paris 1, Paris, 608 p.

DENZER LaRay, 1998, *The Iyalode in Ibadan politics and society, c. 1850-1997*, Ibadan, Sam Bookman Publishers for Humanities Research Centre, 45 p.

ELLIS Stephen, *This present darkness: a history of Nigerian organised crime*, USA, Oxford University Press, 2016, 256 p.

FALOLA Toyin et HEATON Matthew M., 2008, *A history of Nigeria*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 329 p.

GERVEREAU Laurent, 2004, *Voir, comprendre, analyser les images*, Paris, France, Éd. la Découverte, 197 p.

GIGLIETTO Fabio, ROSSI Luca et BENNATO Davide, 2012, « The Open Laboratory: Limits and Possibilities of Using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a Research Data Source », *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 2012, vol. 30, 3/4, p. 145-159.

GOERG Odile, 1997, « Femmes africaines et politique : les colonisées au féminin en Afrique occidentale », *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, November 1997, nº 6, p. 1-12.

IWERIEBOR Ifeyinwa, 1997, « Carrying the Baton: Personal Pespectives on the Modern Women's Movement in Nigeria » in *Sisterhood, feminisms and power : from Africa to the diaspora*, African World Press., Trenton, Obioma Nnaemeka, p. 297-321.

JOHNSON-ODIM Cheryl, 1982, « Grass Roots Organizing; Women in Anticolonial Activity in Southwestern Nigeria », *African studies review: the journal of the African Studies Association*, 1982, vol. 25, 2/3, p. 137-157.

JOHNSON-ODIM Cheryl et MBA Nina, 1997, *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 198 p.

KOZINETS Robert V, 2013, *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*, Los Angeles, Sage, 221 p.

KOZINETS Robert V, 1998, *To Boldly Go: a Hypermodern Ethnography of Star Trek Fans' Culture and communities of Consumption*, National Library of Canada, Ottawa.

MAMA Amina, 1995, « Feminism or Femocracy? State Feminism and Democratisation in Nigeria », *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, 1995, vol. 20, nº 1, p. 37-58.

MAYOUKOU Célestin, 1994, *Le système des tontines en Afrique: un système bancaire informel : le cas du Congo*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 143 p.

MBA Nina, 1982, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*, Berkeley, University of California, 344 p.

NORRIS Sigrid, 2012, « Multimodal Interaction Analysis » in *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, New York, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, p. 1-7.

OJEWUSI Sola, 1996, *Speaking for Nigerian Women: (a history of the National Council of Women's Societies, Nigeria)*, Abuja, All State Pub. and Print. Co., 415 p.

PANATA Sara, 2016a, « Les militantes yorubas se mettent en scène : la politisation du corps habillé à l'époque coloniale », *Genre & Histoire*, 2016, nº 18, [On line], accessed on the 16th of March 2018. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/genrehistoire/2585.

PANATA Sara, 2016b, « Campaigning for political rights in Nigeria: the Women Movement in the 1950s », *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 1 June 2016, vol. 43, (coll. « Citoyennetés »), p. 174-183.

PANATA Sara, 2016c, « Les trajectoires des militantes d'Ibadan : le succès d'un apolitisme de façade et l'échec du militantisme politique (1947-1957) », *Recherches féministes*, 2016, vol. 29, nº 2, p. 105-130.

RANGER Terence, 2012, « The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa » in *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 322.

SAYARH Nada, 2013, « La netnographie: mise en application d'une méthode d'investigation des communautés virtuelles représentant un intérêt pour l'étude des sujets sensibles », *Recherches Qualitatives*, 2013, vol. 32, nº 2, p. 227-251.

SIEGEL Dina et BLANK Sylvia de, 2010, « Women who traffic women: the role of women in human trafficking networks – Dutch cases », *Global Crime*, 19 November 2010, vol. 11, nº 4, p. 436-447.

SOMOTAN Halimat T., 2018, « Lagos Women in Colonial History: a biographical sketch of Alimotu Pelewura (Vestiges Biographical Sketch Series Sketch 1) », *Vestiges: Traces of Record*, 3 August 2018, vol. 4, nº 1, p. 72-74.