



HAL
open science

A mine for women? Trajectories of Kanak women in the nickel industry in New Caledonia

Guillaume Vadot, Séverine Bouard, Mathilde Barिताud, Christine Demmer

► To cite this version:

Guillaume Vadot, Séverine Bouard, Mathilde Barिताud, Christine Demmer. A mine for women? Trajectories of Kanak women in the nickel industry in New Caledonia. Thierry Rodon, Sophie Thériault, Arn Keeling, Séverine Bouard, Andrew Taylor. Mining and Indigenous Livelihoods. Rights, Revenues and Resistances, 1, pp.283-304, 2024, 9781003406433. 10.4324/9781003406433-18 . hal-04834406

HAL Id: hal-04834406

<https://hal.science/hal-04834406v1>

Submitted on 12 Dec 2024

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 - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

13 A mine for women? Trajectories of Kanak women in the nickel industry in New Caledonia

*Guillaume Vadot, Christine Demmer,
Séverine Bouard, and Mathilde Barिताud*

A rapid and unique process of feminization

This chapter deals with a subject that has not yet been fully explored in New Caledonia: The wage economy of Kanak women. The material on which it is based consists primarily of detailed biographical interviews with Kanak women employees of Koniambo Nickel SAS (KNS), a multinational nickel-processing mining company that has been fully operational since 2013, near the capital of the North Province, Koné (see map, Fig. 13.1). Nine years ago, Christine Salomon observed a process of feminization at the plant under construction, especially in the areas of catering and cleaning (Salomon 2015). Like Marie Salaün (2014), she noted the hiring of young Indigenous people, an initiative promoted by the local government and the mining company itself, and indirectly supported by various training and work integration schemes. While our survey confirms the prevalence of women employment on the site, it also highlights a profound change in the type of jobs held, which are increasingly in the core industrial business in the concentrator/plant and in the mine (particularly the role of machine operator). By examining a sample of biographical trajectories, this work looks at what it means for Kanak women employees to work in what is still considered a man's job.

In many respects, the process of feminization in mining discussed here can be compared to other industries, for example, the textile industry in Western Europe in the nineteenth century (Canning 1996), factories during World War I (Downs 1995; Mak 2017), the electronics sector in the 1970s (Kergoat 1982), and, more recently, the automobile industry (Beaud and Pialoux 2002), in the wake of the industrial decentralization of France in the 1960s (Gallot 2015). In each case, women have been rapidly projected into occupations and, more broadly, into social roles once deemed to be reserved for men, provoking a series of adjustments in the representations associated with employment and in gender relations in and beyond the workplace. However, it is important to distinguish what is happening in New Caledonia from the European context on several points. On the one hand, while the New Caledonian labor market is classically divided along gender lines (21% of employees in the manufacturing industry are women, compared to 81% in the hotel industry, e.g.), it is within the Kanak community that the employed workforce is most feminized. While the gap between men and women in employment is almost

ten points for the population as a whole (61.8% of the men in New Caledonia vs. 52% of the women), it is only 3.8 points (50.2% vs. 46.4%) among Kanak people (ISEE 2019a). This smaller gap should therefore be kept in mind in order to better study the current and future gendered division of labor among the Kanak.

New Caledonia, as a former settlement colony, is nonetheless still marked by considerable segregation between the Indigenous community and the rest of the population, and gendered assignments are highly pronounced and present on all sides. One of the aims of our research was to explore the framing effects of this (post)colonial context, which have been intensely debated and reformulated since the recognition of New Caledonia as an overseas country (“Pays d’Outre-mer”) that now has a *sui generis* status and that, since the *Nouméa Agreement*, has seen a gradual transfer of powers to it, with the exception of those of a sovereign nature. The process of feminization is therefore both amplified and, in some respects, undermined. In this context, our work explores the tensions between the promotion and disqualification of the Kanak women’s workforce. In so doing, it aims to highlight the consubstantial relationships between a variety of social markers in the composition of workspaces, reminding us that “*travailleuse n’est pas le féminin de travailleur*” (Kergoat 2012), which translates loosely as “it’s not enough to merely add the feminine ending to the masculine form of ‘worker’” to denote a women worker, and that, even more so in this case, being a Kanak woman employee is not the same as being a non-Kanak woman employee.

A labor market that remains ethnically divided

Although New Caledonia has a GDP per capita comparable to that of Italy, it has an exceptionally low employment rate due to its weak economic development outside the capital, Nouméa. In 2018, the employment rate was only 56.9% compared to 66% in mainland France, and over 73% and 77%, respectively, in Australia and New Zealand. The rate drops to 48% for the Kanaks, the largest community in New Caledonia, with just over 41% of the total population, compared to 24% for Europeans (ISEE 2019). The Southern Province alone accounted for 82% of salaried employment in 2018 (IDC NC 2018).

Deprived for decades of freedom of movement and confined to reserves until the end of the *Indigénat* regime in 1946, the Kanak people entered the market late. This situation did not prevent Kanak men (primarily) from being massively put to work to perform forced labor and services in the first half of the twentieth century (Merle and Muckle 2019). In the mining sector, after the mobilization of convicts from mainland France at the end of the nineteenth century, employers relied on Asian migrant workers until the 1950s (Merle 2012). Significant recruitment of Kanak men began during the nickel boom of the following two decades (Freyss 1995). At the same time, Kanak women entered the workforce, primarily as domestic workers (Grochain 2007).

The proportion of Kanak women in employment has, however, increased steadily over the past 15 years. As studies on ethnic inequalities in access to employment in New Caledonia have shown, this integration is taking place mainly in low-skilled

occupations, with three-quarters of male and female Kanak wage earners being employees or workers (Gorohouna and Ris 2015). The contemporary relationship of most Kanak people to the wage-earning sector remains characterized by the fact that part of their food requirements are covered by the practice of a food-producing economy in former cantonment areas that have become “customary lands” (Bouard and Sourisseau 2010). Although efforts are underway to reverse past trends of late and limited schooling (Salaün 2001), the differences in qualifications remain significant (see below) and constitute an obstacle to hiring (Ris 2013).

Who are the Kanak employees of KNS?

The Northern Plant and the rebalancing in New Caledonia

For the Kanak independence fighters who have been waging their battle since the mid-1970s, the control and development of nickel—of which New Caledonia holds 15% of the world’s reserves and which represents up to 25% of its GDP, depending on the year—is part of the battle for full sovereignty (Demmer 2015, 2018; Le Meur 2017). The creation of the Northern Plant, an alternate name for KNS, which includes an industrial site (Vavouto) and a mining site (Koniambo), was a condition of the negotiation of the *Nouméa Agreement* signed with France and the loyalists in 1998 and is part of the process of economic rebalancing initiated in 1988, at the time of the Matignon–Oudinot accords. KNS is 51% owned by Société minière du Sud Pacifique (SMSP), a company in which the pro-independence North Province holds the majority of shares, while 49% are held by the multinational Glencore. The industrial mining complex is located next to the capital of the Kanak-majority North Province and is intended to counterbalance the concentration of economic power in the South Province, where the capital Nouméa and the historic SLN plant are located, and which, according to the latest census in 2019, accounted for 74.8% of the country’s total population.

From the perspective of the sectoral and hierarchical division of labor, the configuration of KNS’s gender mix is relatively conventional. In 2017, all communities combined, 26% of KNS’s female workforce was in the mine and 30% in the plant, while support roles, which include positions traditionally considered female, accounted for 44% of the female workforce.¹ Recalling that when she arrived in 2007, she was one of only two women machine operators at KNS, Géraldine² adds: “After that, the women were in the offices, of course.”

The company’s management, while less feminized, is also marked by a very classically gendered division of labor. From the outset, women have mainly held positions in human resources, communications, or the environment division, which led one of them to say that she “does not have the impression that it has become

AuQ30

more feminized.”³ In 2015, only 6% of KNS managers were women, compared to 13% of executives, 31% of supervisors, and 54% of rank-and-file workers. Women had thus already become a majority at the bottom of the pyramid.⁴

However, a closer look at the situation of Kanak women reveals the original nature of the feminization process in play. Indeed, it is worth noting that within the Kanak community in KNS, the ratio of men to women in management positions is reversed, with women holding the majority. This result can be explained by the stronger academic results of Kanak girls (see below). In 2018, two of three Kanak heads of department were women, whereas this proportion was only four of thirteen for non-Kanak women.

In fact, whether they are members of the management team, multiskilled operators at the plant, or drivers of mining equipment required to extract nickel ore (carried out in the open air), the new female employees of KNS are generally qualified workers whose professional training is often more advanced than that of the male colleagues who preceded them. This is one of the specificities of the phenomenon observed. However, it is expressed differently, depending on the position and status of the job.

In addition to the divisions identified above is the divide between KNS and its subcontractors. The latter are in charge of site development, the management of the “mine front,” or revegetation projects and are often owned by the local Kanak chiefdoms as compensation (Bouard *et al.* 2019). However, among these subcontractors, the distribution of jobs by gender is much more set in stone. The workforce specializing in construction or maintenance is mainly male. Floriane says that she was the only female welder at Somainko from the time she was recruited in 2010 until the end of 2018.⁵ Conversely, the workforce of subcontractors in charge of revegetation is mainly female. At Thor, which specializes in machine maintenance and fuel supply, “the boys do the refueling and we did the cleaning [of the drivers’ cabs].”⁶ Other characteristics distinguish these women employees from the women operators at KNS: They are less qualified and less educated, and half of them come from the local tribes (areas of residence created with the cantonment and still subject to specific land tenure),⁷ whereas salaried employment is very largely associated with mobility outside the Indigenous communities for the rest of the women employees.

Two final points bear emphasizing. On the one hand, while there are more and more Kanak women working in production today, they are still mainly supervised by men. On the other hand, the experience of these women is different, depending on whether they work in the plant or in the mine. In the plant, unlike in the mine, they do not have a sense of having entered a “male bastion.”

In the mine, women are very much in the background. Maybe in the mine it's a much older profession than we have in the plant. Let's say that here the men and women have all seen the plant evolve at the same time. That is to say that there were not men who started working there and that the women arrived afterwards; we all followed the growth of the plant, we all learned

at the same time. (. . .) As a result, we don't have the same mentalities in the mine and in the plant.

(Solange, production technician at the KNS plant)

When local employment benefits female graduates

As far as the political framework for hiring at the Northern Plant is concerned, it is not the feminization of the workforce that has been the strongest constraint for management, but rather the challenge of safeguarding local employment at different levels. KNS has committed to prioritizing local recruitment (Fig. 13.1), according to the terms negotiated with the country's elected representatives and the state. The rebalancing approach between provinces, combined with considerations linked to the environmental impact for the Indigenous communities close to the industrial site, intersects with that of the country's autonomy, which is enshrined in the *Nouméa Agreement*.⁸

As far as the female presence is concerned, I don't think it's something that Koniambo Nickel was looking for. I'd like to be able to say 'Yeah, we said

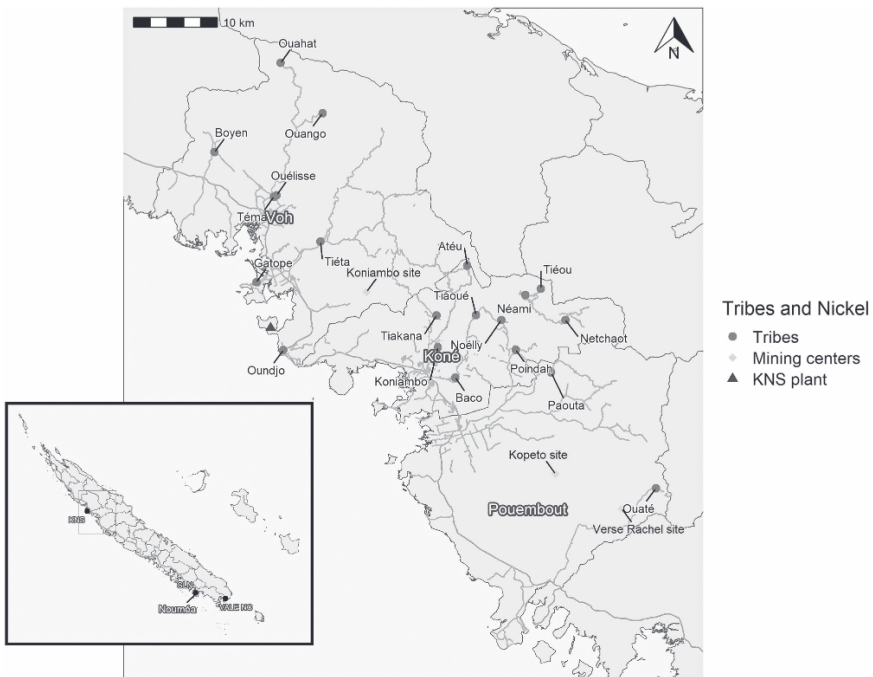


Figure 13.1 Voh, Koné, Pouembout (VKP) area, location of the main mining centers, the metallurgical plant, the villages, and the surrounding Indigenous communities

Source: Produced by Jonas Brouillon, IAC

let's do it, 30% and all that' . . . No, that's not true. On the other hand, from the start [we] respected and enforced a recruitment structure. And that was something that had been negotiated with the Northern Province and the government. We had to make sure that the priority pools had been targeted before we could go any further. So the first basin was the [ecologically] impacted areas. So basically, the tribes around the site. The second was the VKP area. Voh, Koné, Pouembout. [Then] the North Province. [Then] the Island Province. And then the Southern Province. And if we had simply made sure, or each of our subcontractors had made sure, that these recruitment pools had been exhausted, then we had the right to go and look for expatriates. With the backing of Cap Emploi and therefore of the Northern Province, the backing of the territory, the backing of the state.

(Nicolas, former HRM and then communications director of KNS)

At the same time, the increasing professionalization of the mining industry's occupations, influenced by the standards promoted by the multinationals, has contributed to raising the expectations of recruiters in terms of qualifications. In order to understand how these two developments have benefited Kanak women seeking employment, it is necessary to examine the distribution of educational success in New Caledonia. Research into ethnic inequalities in employment in the archipelago has shown that access to diplomas is the main factor in the development of disparities (Ris 2013), while for all ethnic groups combined, a diploma is more essential for women than for men in order to obtain a job (ISEE 2019a). The latest available data (2019 and 2014 censuses) show that there are still drastic differences between the communities: While 62% of Europeans have at least a *baccalauréat* (and 43.7% at least one higher education diploma), this rate is only 21.7% (and 6.5%) for the Kanak. However, among the latter, women are generally more successful: In 2014, they represented 58% of Kanak graduates with a *baccalauréat* or higher—this proportion being 49% among Europeans by comparison.⁹ For those interested in colonial history, this specific commitment to schooling from young Kanak girls is a reminder of the way in which schooling may have been privileged among the subalterns of the Indigenous population, thus constituting a path to social mobility (Bayart 2006; Jézéquel 2003).

Among the Kanak women interviewed who were employed by KNS, those who were in a relationship were almost systematically more qualified or educated than their spouses (six of seven cases at the technician level and above, and eight of nine for operators; the opposite was true for subcontractor employees). The same observation can be made about their brothers. Florence, who is in charge of a strategic department, is an engineer like her older sister, while their first brother has a BTS (senior technologist certificate), and the second has not yet started higher education 2 years after his *baccalauréat*. The same is true of Lynda, a buyer. She and her two sisters each obtained a 5-year degree, while their brother did not finish high school. Rose, a former training manager, and Sonia, an HR advisor, who both accumulated their educational capital through continuing education, before becoming supervisors at KNS, as well as Solange, a technician at the plant who has a DEUST

(French scientific and technical university diploma) in metallurgy, have all helped a spouse with no qualifications gain employment. For the operators, spouses who work generally do so without qualifications and with a more precarious status, in the mines or in the building trade, while others make a living from hunting or fishing in the Kanak communities and from social and family allowances.

Another indication of the way in which this educational success differential among Kanak women contributes to the feminization observed can be found in the overrepresentation of women from the Loyalty Islands, particularly among managers and supervisors. No fewer than six of the ten managers interviewed were from this province, which is home to less than 7% of the New Caledonian population. This is in line with the observation previously made that people from the Loyalty Islands are more academically successful than young people from Grande-Terre (Nicolas 2010), which can be understood in light of the long-standing integration of this population in Nouméa, including at the time of the cantonment and forced labor.

Specific professional training courses taken by women

Women are also overrepresented in the vocational training schemes that prepare them for mining jobs, to the extent that these indirectly contribute to the feminization of KNS, compensating for the underrepresentation of women among spontaneous applications. “Let’s say that for every ten CVs I get, one CV is from a woman,” says the HR manager at the Koniambo Mine.¹⁰ It is therefore not surprising that, in our sample, more than half of the interviewees had taken part in the schemes mentioned here, a proportion that climbs to 90% for the female operators at KNS.

The main training courses that feed into the process of entry into employment for Kanak men and women differ from vocational training as it is known in mainland France, and are part of the affirmative action measures designed to close the gaps that have opened in the past between Kanak and non-Kanak people. Our survey revealed that technical and managerial staff have benefited from these so-called rebalancing policies, some of which were included in the political agreements of 1988 and 1998 (*Operation 400 cadres* and, later, *Cadres avenir*, which also targeted non-Kanak people). Two of the interviewees, Karine and Sonia, attained their bachelor’s degree, thanks to the support of the North Province and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Florence is working toward a master’s degree at Haute Ecole de Commerce (HEC) with the support of the New Caledonian government; and Lynda acquired her executive status by joining the army, which enabled her to go to France and then take evening classes at National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts (CNAM). Conversely, none of the three non-Kanak managers interviewed had taken part in such schemes. Several of the interviewees went through the “juvenile school” system, a scheme that specifically targets “bush” high school students by helping them obtain a scientific or technical *baccalauréat* and through one of the two DEUST (*baccalauréat* + 2 years’ higher education) courses that prepare them for jobs in the mines. These latter courses generally have a much higher percentage of women students than the occupations for which they prepare (46.3% of the students in the metallurgy DEUST between 2010 and 2019 were women).

The least qualified women have often taken part in two schemes: The *Mission d'Insertion des Jeunes* (MIJ)¹¹ and the *Régiment du Service militaire adapté* (RSMA).¹² The former is an association created 30 years ago, after the Matignon Agreements, to promote the integration of the most disadvantaged young people. Meanwhile, with two detachments based in the North, the first of which was created in 1986 at the height of the Kanak political turmoil, the RSMA emerged in the wake of a system created in 1961 specifically for the overseas territories. It is seen as a godsend for many young people aged 16–25 years who have difficulty accessing employment, boasting an integration rate of 72%, with 43% of those positions in long-term employment. Nowadays, employers and elected officials (including independents) value those who have joined its ranks, and the program appears to give renewed focus to young people who are considered to be “losing their bearings” on a cultural level (Salomon 2020). Young Kanak women have responded positively: Of the 619 young people accepted by the RSMA in 2019, 45.2% were women, and this proportion has been rising steadily in recent years. Although few young people go on to work in the mines (around ten in Koné), the RSMA has the advantage of covering the financial costs of the heavy goods vehicle license that machine drivers need in order to work in the mines.

The Centre de formation aux techniques de la mine et des carrières (Technical training center for mining and quarrying; CFTMC), which provides the certificate of aptitude for safe driving (CACES), is also specific to the territory and has become a condition of employment for drivers. In 2006–2007, the New Caledonian government temporarily imposed a quota of 50% for women, 90% of whom found a job, compared to 82.4% for men (Testenoire 2017). Even though the tests conducted by mainland psychologists for entry into training (aptitude and motivational tests based on knowledge of the profession) put women at a disadvantage (*Ibid.*), this appears to be compensated for by gendered differences in relation to addictions and risky behavior, which are systematically sanctioned by all the schemes mentioned. At the Poro training center, tests for cannabis use are carried out. A positive test leads to exclusion, regardless of the stage of progress of the learner in question. Employers such as KNS, keen to limit risky behavior, also carry out such tests.

However, although surveys that have sought to measure the addictive practices of young Kanak men and women have emphasized both their exceptional intensity and the fact that there is little difference between the genders in terms of consumption, they have also shown that boys are more often regular smokers (Hamelin *et al.* 2008; Estivals 2009) and that their consumption is more frequently associated with risky behavior (Baromètre santé jeunes 2019). Among the respondents, several saw cannabis use as a past stage in their lives, clearly different from the one that saw them gain stable employment in the nickel industry (“Here you have many advantages when you don’t smoke cannabis,” explained one trainee). Rosemarie, the only woman to declare that she smokes (and grows) cannabis, is, on the other hand, particularly unstable in terms of employment. She lives close to the Vavouto plant, in a Kanak community, has no qualifications, and only works on an

occasional basis for a subcontractor. The strict attention paid to addictive practices in the context of training for nickel jobs, and at KNS itself, is therefore likely to work in favor of the candidates.

Ultimately, as with studying for diplomas, women appear to be better able to meet the institutions' expectations. For example, one CFTMC trainee explained that it was important to be able to "put on a show" in order to be taken on, in this case by emphasizing her status as a responsible single mother and her determination to get by, in other words, to conform to the self-presentation expected by such schemes.

It should be emphasized that the integrative virtues attributed to specific training courses—especially those judged by the public authorities through a bleak and stigmatizing discourse as being "the last chance"—unequally benefit the people concerned. Although communication campaigns in high schools or BTS (Higher National Diploma (HND) technical courses), or a visit to a Cap Emploi employment agency, encourage these pathways, this type of knowledge is not evenly distributed, as Marie Salaün (2014) previously noted with regard to young Kanak people who left to train in Québec for mining jobs. Membership in kinship networks that are better integrated than others into New Caledonian society (through trade unionism, politics, or even religion) undoubtedly plays a supportive role in encouraging young people to take part in existing schemes.

A career in nickel . . . or more broadly in employment?

At the time the plant was built, Christine Salomon (2015) showed that women did not really anticipate a specific profession but rather sought simply to gain employment. Our survey shows that, even today, women operators, whether employed by KNS or by subcontractors, do not generally see themselves as building a professional career in the nickel sector. Employment at KNS comes at a time when they have had some initial experience of odd jobs or contracts with local institutions (town halls or schools), which familiarize them with the range of vocational training and jobs available. This is the case, for example, for Doriane (age 30), who had already been with the company for 8 years at the time of the survey. She joined RSMA only 18 months after discontinuing her studies (in her first year of vocational training). She then took a job in a laundry and then obtained her driver's license, which opened up a position as a driver in Nouméa, the key to accessing the upper stratum represented by CFTMC and employment in the mines. After joining KNS, Doriane took advantage of her right to training to become certified as a volunteer firefighter and then obtained a soil testing qualification which, after several years of operating machines, has enabled her to join a subcontractor specializing in this field.

For managers, on the other hand, the move to KNS, a high-tech multinational, represents a key step in the accumulation of specialized professional capital. Whether they are in production or support roles, Kanak members of the management team have the characteristic of inscribing their relationship to their job in a

professional trajectory that is much more linear than that of subordinate employees, and which—much more often, although not systematically—began with the pathway choices that guided their initial training (6 cases out of 10). The prestige associated with the experience acquired at KNS is a career resource, as emphasized by many of the women interviewed. The political significance of this experience also counts for these managers (whereas a majority of the operators do not attach any importance to it), leading one of them, who is committed to the Loyalist camp, to say that she only applied for the job as a joke, while several others spontaneously insisted on the significance of their commitment to KNS as a Kanak. All in all, the ability (and professional need) to portray one's path as the gradual development of a career is a distinctive feature of the interviewees in management.

The answers given in the interview were often similar to the biographies presented on LinkedIn, on Facebook, or in the profiles produced by the SMSP monthly newsletter. As elsewhere, the use of LinkedIn is a distinctive attribute (12 of the 14 managers or supervisors in the sample had a LinkedIn profile, while none of the other 19 respondents did). These pages, which are sometimes introduced by a short personal pitch, make it possible to highlight one's training and present one's career path. The expectations of employers and the reputational issues specific to the restricted space of private sector executives in New Caledonia, through which they progress, are clear.

Whether or not the interviewees viewed their entry into KNS as part of a professional career move, it was nonetheless part of a wider social trajectory. The Kanak employees of KNS are in fact unique in that they most often belong to families (both extended and nuclear) that have accumulated experience in salaried employment, particularly in the mining industry. Taking all statuses together, the proportion of respondents with at least one employed parent is exceptionally high (21 cases out of 26 Kanak women who answered this question), and in over 70% of cases, the parent is a father or grandfather who is a miner. Consequently, these pioneers in terms of gender are less so if we consider their family experience. This explains why, among female workers, those who are not local are generally from the Indigenous communities affected by mining activity on the east coast of the mainland, between the communes of Canala and Ponerihouen, where employment opportunities are otherwise scarce outside this area.

As for my father, all his brothers drive a truck to the mine. As for my mother, she's more into . . . fields and all that. In fact, nobody works. Her brothers and sisters live off that, the field . . . hunting . . . the products they sell at the roadside.

(Aline, a welder with a subcontractor and originally from the Canala area)

Male ancestry is also often used to justify the attraction of the mining sector, in explanations that attempt to reduce the exceptional dimension of the individual experience.

And if you didn't work at KNS, would you have stayed in the tribe?

I don't think so . . . it wasn't in my plans to stay at the tribe. In fact, it's because my old man was . . . well, he was someone who used to work in the mines and there are a lot of them in the family . . . So I think it was the fact that I always woke up early in the morning, as a child, with my old man . . . Afterwards, it was this rhythm of working hours that I liked, working in the mines.

(Doriane, driver, originally from Nonhoué, Canala)

Among the managers, this mining socialization is coupled with access to an exceptionally high level of schooling within the families. Three of them (four, if we include one father who is a pastor, which can also be considered a qualified job) have parents who hold higher education diplomas, which is not the case for any of the other respondents, and which was the case of less than 1% of Kanak people before the year 2000 (Gorohouna and Ris 2015).

Working to gain autonomy

By shedding light on the weight of previous socialization in the trajectories of employment at KNS, we are not implying that employment is part of a smooth biographical continuity. On the contrary, it is often experienced as a real fork in the road by the interviewees, who emphasized their desire to escape family constraints or to bounce back after a life event.

Once again, we must begin by underlining a specificity common to the Kanak women employees of KNS. Taking all ethnic groups together, single women were clearly overrepresented in the 2017 workforce. Only 15% of 30- to 34-year-olds were in a relationship, compared to 31% nationally (this proportion rises to 26% among 35- to 39-year-olds, compared to 42%). But the Kanaks, who represent two-thirds of the total, are six points above the average proportion of their colleagues who have at least one child (53% compared to 47%). This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that these Indigenous women employees are faced with a social overvaluation of motherhood, with an ideal that may reach 5 or 6 children (Salomon 2000). Raising children, combined with a refusal to depend on the spouse and his kinship group (residence is virilocal in the tribe) or a desire to escape from the conflicts arising in the relationship, drives the search for salaried work in town (in Koné). Among female workers at KNS, and for subcontractors, less than one-third had seen their relationship survive the wage situation (this was the case for 50% of managers and supervisors). Separation is the life event most often associated with entry into training and employment.

Then the second one was born and from then on, I could no longer live like that in a tribe [with her ex-spouse]. Well, my father didn't teach me to live off other people, I'm not a parasite. And with the children, we need money, well

the nappies, they're not banana leaves. Their father wasn't too . . . he made little commitments here and there. But I understood that this was the way it was with him. And what motivated me to work was the fact that my mother lived at home, it's not easy every day. I can't . . . it was impossible for me to live like that.

(Gina, driver, 2 children, joined KNS at age 24)

Similarly, it was often childbirth at a young age (one-quarter of the respondents had had their first child before the age of 20), with the obligations that entailed, that motivated the decision to bounce back through employment. Rose, along with others, explained that “[her] will and perseverance” stemmed from the daughter she had at age 16. But her example also attests to what constitutes an enabling condition for these transitions: The availability of resources in the family circle that can be mobilized to guarantee their material means, starting with childcare and, thus, women’s work. The interviewees emphasized the decisive role of their mother (or her sisters) in initiating their change of direction, during the training and establishment period. These women family members helped them cope with domestic tasks despite highly restrictive working hours (44 hours over 4 days, followed by 4 days off for the operators). Erika’s mother looked after her little girl in the community for three and a half years, and now travels back and forth between the commune of Kouaoua on the east coast and Koné to continue assisting her daughter. Gina and Josiane, a cleaning worker, have received the same kind of support and expressed their willingness to give back, by taking care of her little brothers, in the case of the former, or by doing the shopping for her mother every weekend, for the latter.

For some women, their move into employment also stems from dissatisfaction with life in their Indigenous communities, where they (in their own terms) feel “not well established,” materially and symbolically, in the husband’s clan. Single mothers find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, devalued because of the uncertain status of the child (which in principle falls under the father’s lineage but is often cared for by the mother’s clan). The case of Erika, who became a driver at the age of 29 after two major events, is a good example of how the search for a job can be an attempt to bounce back from a weakened, initial social position. While the early death of her father had prevented her from obtaining her vocational *baccalauréat* in hotel management, the humiliating abandonment by her ex-husband, an employee at the southern plant who left her for a colleague, threatened to lock her and her daughter into the Kanak tribe of her birth. After a period of “discouragement,” Erika first got her HGV license and did minor contracting work at the mine next to her community in Kouaoua and then enrolled at CFTMC, after applying via Cap Emploi.

This increased autonomy is also reflected in changes in consumer behavior (like Gina, who links the signing of her permanent contract to the purchase of a car, which is her pride and joy) and in place of residence. Access to property outside the Kanak community, in the towns of Koné, Pouembout, or Voh (villages with a greater ethnic mix), is very common among the respondents. It applies to a majority of female operators, half of the employees of subcontractors interviewed, and

is virtually systematic among managers. Others also rent accommodation outside their community. For these women, the creation of the industrial hub in the North clearly represents an additional opportunity other than Nouméa to assert themselves in relation to men and to free themselves from certain social obligations. This is also seen in the advanced savings and investment strategies they are putting in place, and the efforts made to ensure their children's success at school, which are even more extraordinary at senior levels (two executives have already opened a savings account for their babies, only a few months old).

For most of these women, salaried employment in the nickel industry therefore appears to be a way out. However, while more or less accepted by their family of origin, it is often contested by the spouse, sometimes even violently.

Spouses who feel threatened by women's work

For the women interviewed who were still in a relationship, or who entered into a new one once they were employed at KNS, their testimonies were consistent regarding the sense of threat that women's work poses to the position held by the man (the case of a woman driving a mining machine that is larger than her husband's is very symbolic in this respect). Arguments and even physical violence form a recurring pattern, characterized in particular by the man's jealousy of his partner's male colleagues and his anxiety about the opening up of the domestic sphere.

We've been separated for a while now. Because he was too . . . sometimes we argued for hours. He would even wake me up with a start and say "how come you're talking to so-and-so?" I would say, "He's a colleague from work. What's wrong with you?" From then on, I was so upset that I said, "either my work is taking a hit, or my family is." So I said no, ah no, I've struggled to get here, I'm not going to give up my job. Because when I came to work here, it was because we were already having problems as a couple. That's what motivated me to leave home. I was at home with the children and he sometimes went to work, didn't come home in the evening, came back two days later and all that . . . After that, it built up over time. And I said, I'll wait until the children grow up a bit and then I'll start to do it. That was with the little one. The second one I was [secretly] pregnant with him when I was in training in Poro.

(Doriane, driver, 2 children, joined KNS at age 20)

In fact, even when the couple stays together despite them both being employed, problems can still persist. Solange, a technician who joined KNS after completing her DEUST diploma, has been pressured by her husband for 5 years to return to the community, where he has land and the support of his clan. In the end, he gave in to his wife's wishes and came to live with her and their two children when she bought a house in Koné by herself. Sonia, an HRM, had the same experience: Her husband finally gave up trying to prevent her from moving to the village of Koné when she

gave him an ultimatum about maintaining their relationship, and the children now move between the apartment she bought and the Kanak community.

The trajectory followed by Marie-Noëlle, a mother of eight children, who joined KNS at the age of 40 via Cap Emploi and CFTMC, corroborates several of the above remarks. Her reason for joining the mine, after escaping to Nouméa for a year and working in a series of precarious jobs, was to put an end to the feeling of confinement she felt in the community and to the humiliation inflicted by an ex-husband for whom she had dropped out of school at the age of 14. The new husband she met in Koné works for a small mining company. He is less qualified than she is, but is also less jealous than his predecessor. After 3 years on the machines, Marie-Noëlle took and passed a competitive examination to become a care assistant.

I took the exam. And I passed! And my husband fell on his ass. Yes, he did. My children said to me “Hey Mum, Dad said wow, she passed the exam!” I told them “Well, why, did he think I was stupid?”

(Marie-Noëlle, eight children, former machine driver-turned care assistant, January 2019)

While Marie-Noëlle expresses pride in having learned to drive mining machinery and in having escaped from a humiliating situation, and while she is keen to convince her daughters that they, too, can build their independence, she also insists on the fact that “in the end, mining work is not women’s work.” This assessment, sometimes shared by the women concerned, highlights the ambivalence of Kanak women’s contemporary experience toward work.

The workplace: Resource or vector of heteronomy?

Although work often represents a turning point in the lives of Kanak women, it should not be seen as the start of a linear path for their future. The ambiguous place given to female recruits in their new workspace, and the emotional isolation they say they feel, often leads them to take different directions.

Noting the feminization of its workforce, the Koniambo Nickel company has undertaken efforts to promote its women employees. Each year, it invests in the celebration of International Women’s Day on 8 March and sponsors the Orange the World Campaign, run by UNESCO to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on 25 November. During our survey, these initiatives were lauded not only by the members of the management team in charge of publicizing them but also by the women employees, who freely praised the greater openness of the multinational KNS to feminization compared to other mining employers (particularly those from local fortunes). This attention to gender violence is nevertheless accompanied by a racializing discourse, also widespread in other multicultural contexts, which consists of criticizing the society of the other under the guise of championing feminism (Fassin 2006). The implicit narrative here is one of a dichotomy between an Indigenous social world described as

the site of violence against women and a “modern” world that is egalitarian and respectful of individuality. This framing is present in almost all the interviews conducted with non-Kanak respondents, who return to the same traumatic event—the rape of a female employee by a man from a neighboring Indigenous community. These culturalist formulations, however, overshadow the shared—albeit unequal—dimension of domestic violence in New Caledonian communities (Hamelin and Salomon 2004) and merely reinforce the criticisms of Kanak feminists who have long denounced racism and gender inequalities in the domestic sphere and in (post) colonial relations (Réveil Canaque 1972). In this context, gaining employment at KNS, while initially experienced as a form of emancipation, has nevertheless led several Kanak women employed by the company to feel a conflicting sense of loyalty, affecting both the personal sphere and the feeling of belonging to a collective identity sharpened by Kanak nationalism.

This is all the more true when the employer uses a second type of essentialism, seemingly flattering for women, to justify the feminization process. That is, if women are needed in the nickel industry, it is by virtue of certain dispositions that are feminine by nature and that apparently make them better operators or better drivers of the mining machinery, more conscientious, and careful with the machines.

The different management levels at Koniambo Nickel praise their female employees for their diligence, their respect for procedures regarding attendance at work without being under the influence of various substances, their care for the equipment, and their productivity.

(“The Koniambo Nickel Woman,” KNS press release, 6 March 2015)

They are more productive. Less gear breakage, so I'd say they're gentler . . . they're more careful too. But I don't want to offend men because it's in their nature to be hard. But women are very gentle and very productive, so it's valuable for the teams.

(Rose, CFTMC consultant, quoted above)

This type of assessment is not specific to the studied field and only rarely refers to representations of Kanak culture. It has even been identified by Michel Gollac and Volkoff (2002) as a constant among rationalizations for the move to hire women in industry, promoting a “putting to work of gender stereotypes.” From a subjective point of view, we must consider the ambiguity of the mode of self-legitimization that it proposes to female employees, who are reduced to a series of gendered assignments that the employer does not fail to solicit in return. The premise of increased female productivity is in fact based on allusions to two types of qualities: On the one hand, “gentleness” or “thoroughness,” which amounts to cost savings linked to wear and tear on the equipment through increased mobilization at work (concentration and patience when driving), and, on the other hand, “seriousness,” “discipline,” or “availability,” which underline the possibility of a specifically extensive use of female employees.

The professional positioning proposed to Kanak women workers in this way invariably puts them at odds with their male colleagues, whose position is discredited and who react with various forms of denigration. In addition to this “positive” gendered discourse, there is also the much more derogatory discourse, already identified during the plant construction phase, of the condemnation of Kanak women as “easy” women who, by working, deviate from the valued form of female sociability confined to the domestic sphere. This view is held not only by Kanak men but also by others. It also reflects colonial discourses—and, in particular, the familialist discourse of missionaries, who were ambivalent about Kanaks working.¹³ In the testimonies collected, places of work (and training) are hyper-sexualized, perceived as places marked by the free and “uncontrolled” movement of women. After describing KNS and its living quarters as a “brothel,” the spouse of a female respondent, a welder, stated: “I’ve seen twelve maternity leaves. They’re not the real fathers. And the first six months, well, the next six months I saw about twenty of them.” In this context, many women employees describe the code of conduct they have adopted to avoid being labeled as “easy.”

In fact, when you work in the mine, you really have to put up barriers with the men. You have to have a protective threshold. After that, you have to be careful with your clothes, you can't be too forward, you have to be careful. (. . .) Where you go out, who you go out with . . . When you want to go for a drink, sometimes it is interpreted differently. They'll say, "Oh, he's slept with her or she's led him on." You know? It's easy to be labeled, isn't it?

(Lynda, purchasing manager at KNS who previously worked in production, then in HR at SLN)

In the mines, women employees are confronted with symbolic aggression from their male colleagues. “We were constantly hassled,” says Géraldine, a former sprinkler driver, recalling, like several of the other women interviewed, the offensive and sexualizing “jokes” made by the operators on the radio used for mine coordination operations. Three of the interviewees recounted direct incidents of sexual harassment. The publicization and repression of such behaviors at KNS remain clearly limited, despite the procedures put in place on paper. While one CFTMC manager only raised the issue to talk about how a victim had “lied” about her consent, two others at KNS redirected the interviewer’s focus and wanted to talk about “feelings of harassment” instead. Among them, Florence, a manager, explained that she had been confronted with the “problem” several times but, in the absence of “evidence,” had organized amicable mediation within her department.

The process of feminization studied here has therefore led to a power struggle between the sexes in the workplace, similar to that observed by Stéphane Beaud and Pialoux (2002) in the French car industry in the early 2000s, but with the specificities linked to the postcolonial context of New Caledonia. What is at stake is the (de)legitimization of female recruitment, leading to a multitude of trials experienced on a daily basis, which crystallize episodically, such as during the strike

carried out at SLN in the commune of Thio, in January 2020, against what was denounced in a leaflet as the “excessive hiring of women.”

The respondents’ accounts demonstrate that they find the resources to oppose this delegitimization and continue working. More than two-thirds of the women interviewed mentioned they have constructed a personality that keeps certain representations of female socialization at bay in order to put forward others that are a far cry from the ethos of submission (Salomon 2000). Having a character (“a bad temper” or “being ready with a quick reply,” “being able to lose it” or “blow a fuse,” “being authoritarian,” “carrying a big stick,” etc.) is key here for many female employees. “I’m often told that I’m a ballsy woman,” says Lynda (quoted above) with a touch of pride, a sentiment also shared by Géraldine (a driver), when she recounts that her mother and uncle immediately identified her as a “tomboy” who surpassed her brothers in mechanics.

From this point of view, wage employment also provides resources that enable the transformation of gender relations to be reinforced. However, this form of self-affirmation can place women employees in peril by pushing them to an unusual level of investment in the job. Whether they were with plant technicians like Solange, HR advisors like Sonia, drivers like Géraldine, or plant operators like Nadia or Andy, the interviews we conducted are full of examples showing that the integration of gender norms leads them to make themselves more available in general, and during periods of “all hands on deck,” and to take on unpaid tasks more than others. As a result, work becomes ever more intrusive.

The interview with Anna, an employee of a subcontractor firm specializing in cleaning, shows that the “strength” that women put forward in their work capacity can backfire. Her husband, a welder for KNS, intervened vehemently on several occasions to underline the harm done by her “workaholic,” accusing her of being “too nice” and recounting how he had once gone to her boss to “tease him” about the overtime she had accepted. Hyper-availability for work is sometimes part of a care-based approach which, when mobilized in the workplace, increases tensions with regard to domestic responsibilities, especially when pointed out by the spouse. The path followed by Graziella, an operator and then technical director in a revegetation company, before becoming a stay-at-home mother at the age of 37, is a good example of this. As the granddaughter of a chief, she wanted to “not live the life of [her] mother” and was burdened by the failure of the sheep farming project she had set up after completing her BTS diploma because of a lack of accessible land (“My father explained to me that, as a girl, you have no right to your own property.”). After 5 years of odd jobs, her meeting with Mr. “M” marked a turning point. Hired as an operator in his company, she climbed the ladder, thanks to her unlimited commitment to her work (weekends and holidays):

That is to say, it even went as far as the snack bar. There were some, they couldn't pay for their snacks, so what do you do [sigh], “Well hang on, yes, I'll help you out.” But the thing is that the help lasts all month. So I had my ex-boyfriend who used to say to me, “Oh, put the brakes on, you're not their mum.” Sometimes he would say to me, “You take more care of them than of

your daughter.” I said “Yes, that’s true.” (. . .) So no, but I’d rather look after my kids at home than lose my mind with people who are forty years old and don’t know how to manage their lives.

(Graziella, November 2018)

Now at home, Graziella takes care of all the domestic chores, looks after the children of her new partner’s son in addition to her youngest child, and puts her professional skills to use to handle the administration of the subcontracting business run by her husband. “Maybe it’s our fault too, we’re the ones who give them this habit,” she says. This doubling of responsibilities, and the burden to reconcile them that it places on the interviewees, also marks the trajectory of Gina, a driver who is hyper-available for work, but also a single mother of two children, and who takes in three of her younger brothers (“I’m kind of responsible for everyone.”). For her, these multiple commitments nevertheless appear in a more gratifying form, as a vector of authority in the family, which she feels she shares with her own father.

An unsustainable job? the challenging quest for personal balance

The above observations shed light on the discomfort felt by many Kanak women employees at KNS, notwithstanding the autonomy conferred by their jobs. Whatever their status and hierarchical level, many of the women interviewed described their commitment to mining as untenable over time. They feel they devote too much energy to their job and that it generates too many conflicts, to the extent that it calls into question the place given to motherhood and marriage. Lynda, a single, childless executive who describes herself as impervious to men’s remarks, confessed that she was badly hurt when a colleague told her that she had “only work in [her] life.” Our survey identified another recurring theme: Several women used the resources they had gained in their jobs to make a second shift in life, motivated by the desire to have more time for themselves or for their children. Like Graziella, Géraldine made a concerted move toward motherhood and the domestic sphere as she entered her forties, after working 10 years in the mine. Leaving her job, she relied on her partner and devoted herself to their baby, whom she did not plan to leave with a nanny as her colleagues did. The interview with Géraldine underscored a polarity between strong professional identification and pride, and this self-discovery as a “very maternal mother.”

Three other interviewees, who were single and had no children, expressed their intention to leave their jobs or switch to part-time work in order to consider starting a family. Isabelle, a technician at KNS at the time of the survey, has since done this by taking advantage of her skills to set up her own business in Maré, her hometown. After describing the life she would have had outside of work and her mother’s existence in the tribe as so many deterrents, Nadia, age 39, described how, in 2012, she was recruited and then separated from her first spouse, with whom she had two boys, and expressed her joy at being able to accommodate the “little family” she is rebuilding in the house she purchased in Pouembout and to buy everything her “baby doll” (born 4 months ago) needs.

While these reversals may suggest the integration of gender norms, some of them emerge from the loyalty conflicts identified above. For example, investment in “customary obligations” (attending exchanges between kinship groups within the Kanak community) on the occasion of a birth, a wedding, or a bereavement, where the women are in the kitchen—sometimes for several days in a row—raises questions. The cultivation of a field of yams, presented as a condition for taking part in customary ceremonies with dignity, is the subject of divided opinions during the interviews. While Lynda abruptly rejects the interviewer’s question (“Me, in a field??”), Josiane asserts that without this investment of oneself in the land, “you are nothing” as a Kanak, and Nadia, along with others, maintains that giving it up “is not good.” Some women told the interviewer about the tactics they had developed to reconnect with their community after a period of distancing themselves from it due to their job commitments. Graziella, for example, has restarted her yam field after a long period when, like many of her colleagues, she was content to buy yams for the customary dates. She says that she takes advantage of available opportunities to show her crop to her father, with whom she had been estranged since her move into employment. For Rose, getting closer to her community represents a new stage in her life, following a phase of what she considers “excessively intense” employment. Having become a part-time consultant after starting work at the age of 18, she considers that maintaining her ties is a matter of education for her children, a way of emphasizing a form of Kanak socialization that involves knowledge of kinships. Her first decision after her resignation was to marry according to custom (at age 33 and with 4 children).

Conclusion

While it is important not to infer a one-sided interpretation of the relationship between these Kanak women employed in the nickel industry and “customs” as a moving set of specific norms and practices, we cannot fail to note the insistence of several of them on this identity marker as both social (conferring a place in a clan and a chiefdom) and cultural. After phases of disconnection that were felt to be excessive, these respondents are trying to make up for lost time, revealing the burden placed on them by particularly strong family assignments, given their gender, but from which Kanak men are not exempt either. For Kanak women employed in the nickel industry, gender relations and racialized representations of sexual relations make the alternatives more divisive and brutal. Especially for those from Indigenous communities further away from the industrial site, and who did not grow up in the city, the task of reconciliation is more difficult, and this is reflected in their frequent life changes. On the other hand, the fact that they are more successful in their schooling and training gives them advantages, just as the gradual legitimization of their presence in these men’s occupations can encourage a transformation of gender relations and representations and herald more equal relations within their Kanak communities, albeit not without considerable effort on the part of these women.

In this respect, the biographical trajectories presented here shed a historically situated light on Kanak women’s employment and suggest further investigation is

required from a non-essentialist intersectional perspective. More specifically, we may ask how the social and personal situation of Indigenous women will evolve if their presence in the nickel industry becomes even more commonplace. To what extent will their presence alter the way the New Caledonian working class is viewed, of which the mining sector, as in many other places, constitutes a paradigm?

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Knowledge Network on Mining Encounters and Indigenous Sustainable Livelihoods (MinErAL) through funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (grant number 895-2016-1015), Institut Agronomique néo-Calédonien (IAC), and the Centre Norbert Elias (CNRS). We are deeply grateful to the former and current KNS staff and to all interviewees for their time. Any errors are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Notes

- 1 This analysis of the 2017 KNS workforce was carried out by Séverine Bouard. It is worth recalling that women represented 28.9% of employees in the industry in mainland France in 2018 (INSEE 2020).
- 2 Fictitious first names were used to mask the identity of the interviewees.
- 3 Interview with Kelly, performance coordinator, October 2018.
- 4 www.koniambonickel.nc/actualite/press/communique-de-presse-06d31?ln=En, [accessed 23 June 2020].
- 5 Interview with Floriane, October 2018.
- 6 Interview with Josiane, November 2018.
- 7 In New Caledonia, the term “tribe” refers to the areas of residence created with the colonial cantonment and still subject to a specific land tenure system. At that time, the creation of the legal entity “tribe” on the land of the “reserve” was intended to control the Kanak. This process led to the introduction of a system of indirect rule that made the “chief” responsible for the actions of his “subjects.” At the end of the *indigenat*, both the tribe and the particular land tenure system were preserved to enable a different personal status to be maintained. Today, “tribes” constitute an emic category of social and spatial belonging. It is to this entity that we refer when we use the term here.
- 8 The *Nouméa Agreement* established New Caledonian citizenship based on a restricted electoral body for local elections and on preference for hiring New Caledonian citizens. A text was adopted, albeit with difficulty, in this regard for the private sector in 2010 and another for the public sector in 2016.
- 9 Proportions calculated from data available at www.isee.nc/population/jeunes-femmes-seniors/femmes.
- 10 Interview with Sonia, HRM for KNS mine management, December 2018.
- 11 This association is in charge of supporting the integration of youth into the workforce.
- 12 Adapted military service program.
- 13 In 1936, Catholic missionaries obtained a change in the rules for forced recruitment of Kanak workers in the name of defending the family. No more than one-third of adult men were allowed to work outside the tribe, with conditions attached to the hiring of married men. The hiring of women was limited to those without children (Merle and Muckle 2019).

References

- Baromètre santé jeunes, 2019. La santé en chiffres. Conduite de véhicule à moteur. Available from: www.santepourtous.nc/la-sante-en-chiffre/barometre-jeunes/tabac-alcool-cannabis-et-autres
- Bayart, J.-F., 2006. *L'État en Afrique: La politique du ventre*. Paris: Fayard.
- Beaud, S., and Pialoux, M., 2002. Jeunes ouvrier(e)s à l'usine. Notes de recherche sur la concurrence garçons/filles et sur la remise en cause de la masculinité ouvrière, *Travail, genre et sociétés*, 8, 73–103.
- Bouard, S. (Coord.), Levacher, C., (Coord.), Bencivengo, Y., Decottigny, L., Demmer, C., Le Meur, P.-Y., Blaise, S., Burton, J., Enjuanes, F., and Grochain, S., 2019. *Petites et moyennes entreprises minières en Nouvelle-Calédonie. Programme PME Minières en Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Nouméa: CNRT Nickel & son environnement, 108 pages + appendices.
- Bouard, S., and Sourisseau, J.-M., 2010. Stratégies des ménages kanak: hybridations entre logiques marchandes et non marchandes. *Natures Sciences Sociétés*, 18 (3), 266–275.
- Canning, K., 1996. *Languages of labor and gender: Female factory work in Germany, 1850–1914*. Ithaca, NJ: Cornell University Press.
- Demmer, C., 2015. De la diversité des enjeux du nickel pour les kanaks aujourd'hui. *Ethnies*, 37–38, 134–158.
- Demmer, C., 2018. Nationalisme minier, secteur nickel et décolonisation en Nouvelle-Calédonie. *Cahiers Jaurès*, 230 (4), 35–52.
- Downs, L. L., 1995. *Manufacturing inequality: Gender division in the French and British metalworking industries, 1914–1939*. Ithaca, NJ: Cornell University Press.
- Estivals, M., 2009. *Tabac et cannabis chez l'adolescent scolarisé de Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Mémoire pour le DIU de pneumologie pédiatrique, Marseille: Faculté de médecine de Marseille.
- Fassin, E., 2006. Questions sexuelles, questions raciales: parallèles, tensions et articulations. In: Didier and Eric Fassin, eds., *De la question sociale à la question raciale*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Freyss, J., 1995. *Economie assistée et changement social en Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Paris: PUF.
- Gallot, F., 2015. *En découdre*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Gollac, M., and Volkoff, S., 2002. La mise au travail des stéréotypes de genre. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, 8, 25–53.
- Gorohouna, S., and Ris, C., 2015. Inégalités ethniques sur le marché de l'emploi en Nouvelle-Calédonie. *Ethnies*, 37–38, 126–135.
- Grochain, S., 2007. *Les Kanaks et le travail en Province Nord de Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Paris: Thèse de sociologie, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.
- Hamelin, C., and Salomon, C., 2004. Parenté et violences faites aux femmes en Nouvelle-Calédonie. Un éclairage sur l'ethnicité différenciée des violences subies au sein de la famille. *Espaces, populations, sociétés*, 2, 307–323.
- Hamelin, C., Salomon, C., Lert, F. et al., 2008. *Situation sociale et comportements de santé des jeunes en Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Rapport d'étude, Inserm, 112 p. AuQ31
- Institut de la statistique et des études économiques (ISEE), 2019. Enquête sur les Forces de Travail en Nouvelle-Calédonie: résultats 2018. Synthèse n° 40. Nouméa: ISEE, 5 p. Available from: <https://dtenc.gouv.nc/sites/default/files/atoms/files/eft-resultats20182.pdf>
- Institut de la statistique et des études économiques (ISEE), 2019a. Synthèse enquête force de travail 2019. Approche par genre. Synthèse n°46. Nouméa: ISEE, 5 p. Available from: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.isee.nc/phocadownload/non_theme/publications/toutes_publications/Synthese/Emploi-chomage/eft2019-approchepargenre.pdf&ved=2ahUKewj1p4GjotWGAXUSjK8BHe_LCboQFnoECBAQAQ&usq=AOvVaw0DMFLjTr9wLjCdo2LFgU15

- Institut pour le développement des compétences en Nouvelle-Calédonie (IDC NC), 2018. *Etude prospective emploi-formation 2017: principaux résultats*. Nouméa: DFPC-NC, 20 p.
- Jézéquel, J.-H., 2003. Histoire de bancs, parcours d'élèves. Pour une lecture "configurationnelle" de la scolarisation à l'époque coloniale. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 43 (169–170), 409–433.
- Kergoat, D., 1982. *Les ouvrières*. Paris: Sycomore.
- Kergoat, D., 2012. *Se battre, disent-elles . . .* Paris: La Dispute.
- Le Meur, P.-Y., 2017. Le destin commun en Nouvelle-Calédonie : entre projet national, patrimoine minier et désarticulations historiques. *Mouvements*, 91 (3), 35–45.
- Mak, A., 2017. Conspicuous consumption in wartime? Welsh mining communities and women in munitions factories. In C. Peniston-Bird and E. Vickers, eds., *Gender and the second world war: Lessons of war*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 55–72.
- Merle, I., and Muckle, A., 2019. *L'indigénat. Genèses dans l'empire français. Pratiques en Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Paris: CNRS éditions.
- Merle, I., 2012. Autour de la condition ouvrière en Nouvelle-Calédonie. Le recrutement des travailleurs asiatiques entre les deux guerres et aujourd'hui sur les chantiers de mines, Rapport pour le projet Gouvernance minière n°11/12, CNRT Nickel.
- Nicolas, H., 2010. "Emporter un diplôme dans son sac." Les transformations de la socialisation sexuée à Lifou (1945–2004). In: I. Merle, ed., *La Nouvelle Calédonie, vers un destin commun?* Paris: Karthala, 225–244.
- Réveil Canaque*, 1972. Sexualité et racisme, 20, 5–7.
- Ris, C., 2013. Les inégalités ethniques dans l'accès à l'emploi en Nouvelle-Calédonie. *Économie et Statistique* 464 (1), 59–72.
- Salaün, M., 2001. Les "moniteurs" kanak ou l'impossible élite indigène en Nouvelle-Calédonie. *Genèses*, 43 (2), 71–88.
- Salaün, M., 2014. Des Kanaks au Québec: l'expérience de jeunes autochtones calédoniens en formation aux métiers de la mine à Rouyn et à Sept-Îles. *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 44 (2–3), 55–62.
- Salomon, C., 2000. Hommes et femmes. Harmonie d'ensemble ou antagonisme sourd? In: A. Bensa and I. Leblic, eds., *En pays kanak: Ethnologie, linguistique, archéologie, histoire de la Nouvelle Calédonie*. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 311–338.
- Salomon, C., 2015. L'emploi des femmes kanak à Vavouto, *Ethnies*, 37–38, 160–186.
- Salomon, C., 2020. Service militaire adapté et nostalgie du service militaire obligatoire en Nouvelle-Calédonie. *Outre-Mers, Revue d'histoire*, 108 (406–407), 49–71.
- Testenoire, A., 2017. Dynamique et résistances au principe d'égalité réelle; la loi sur l'emploi local et la formation continue en Nouvelle Calédonie. In: Foued Laroussi, ed., *Insularité, langue mémoire, identité*. Paris: l'Harmattan, 245–261.