

"Social Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness: A Comparative Approach of SMEs/SMIs in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville"

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ABSTRACT: Social entrepreneurship in the agro-business sector represents a promising avenue for the development of SMEs in Senegal and Congo Brazzaville. This comparative study examines how these enterprises integrate social and environmental objectives into their business models while facing unique challenges. In Senegal, social entrepreneurship is supported by favorable public policies and a dynamic innovation landscape. Initiatives such as "Sénégal Agro" illustrate the positive impact of agroecology on productivity and environmental sustainability, contributing to poverty reduction (Thiam & Sow, 2020). These enterprises adopt sustainable practices, such as organic farming, which help improve the resilience of rural communities (Ba, 2021). In contrast, in Congo Brazzaville, SMEs encounter significant obstacles, such as limited access to financing and inadequate infrastructure. Nevertheless, projects like "AgriCongo" demonstrate that social business models can mobilize local resources and promote inclusion (Nganga & Biyoghe, 2022). Efforts to include farmers in decision-making processes are essential to ensure the sustainability of social initiatives (Kouadio, 2023). This analysis also highlights the importance of the political and economic context in which these enterprises operate. In Senegal, the regulatory framework encourages the development of social entrepreneurship, whereas in Congo, political instability poses a major hindrance (Sarr, 2021). Social entrepreneurship in agro-business in Senegal and Congo Brazzaville offers significant potential for economic and social development. Increased institutional and financial support will be crucial to strengthening this sector and maximizing its impact.

KEY WORDS: *Social entrepreneurship, Agro-business, SMEs*

Résumé : L'entrepreneuriat social dans le secteur agro-business représente une avenue prometteuse pour le développement des PME et PMI au Sénégal et au Congo Brazzaville. Cette étude comparative examine comment ces entreprises intègrent des objectifs sociaux et environnementaux dans leurs modèles d'affaires, tout en affrontant des défis uniques. Au Sénégal, l'entrepreneuriat social est soutenu par des politiques publiques favorables et une dynamique d'innovation. Les initiatives telles que "Sénégal Agro" illustrent l'impact positif de l'agroécologie sur la productivité et la durabilité environnementale, contribuant à la réduction de la pauvreté (Thiam & Sow, 2020). Les entreprises adoptent des pratiques durables, telles que l'agriculture biologique, permettant d'améliorer la résilience des communautés rurales (Ba, 2021). En revanche, au Congo Brazzaville, les PME et PMI rencontrent des obstacles significatifs, tels qu'un accès limité au financement et des infrastructures inadéquates. Malgré cela, des projets comme "AgriCongo" montrent que des modèles d'affaires sociaux peuvent mobiliser les ressources locales et favoriser l'inclusion (Nganga & Biyoghe, 2022). Les efforts d'inclusion des agriculteurs dans les processus décisionnels sont essentiels pour garantir la pérennité des initiatives sociales (Kouadio, 2023). Cette analyse souligne également l'importance du contexte politique et économique dans lequel évoluent ces entreprises. Au Sénégal, le cadre réglementaire encourage le développement de l'entrepreneuriat social, alors qu'au Congo, l'instabilité politique représente un frein majeur (Sarr, 2021). L'entrepreneuriat social dans l'agro-business au Sénégal et au Congo Brazzaville offre un potentiel significatif pour le développement économique et social. Un soutien institutionnel et financier accru sera déterminant pour renforcer ce secteur et maximiser son impact.

Mots clés: **Entrepreneuriat social, Agro-business, PME-PMI (Petites et Moyennes Entreprises/Industries)**

I. INTRODUCTION

Agribusiness in Africa is a sector of crucial importance for the continent's economic development and food security. This field encompasses a range of activities, from agricultural production to the processing, distribution, and marketing of food products. Africa has immense agricultural potential, with approximately 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land located on the continent (FAO, 2014). This potential presents significant opportunities for economic growth by boosting agricultural production and encouraging investment in agricultural infrastructure.

Foreign investments in Africa's agrifood sector are also on the rise, reflecting a growing interest in the commercial opportunities in this area (Diao et al., 2016). However, despite its potential, agribusiness in Africa faces several major challenges. These include a lack of transport and storage infrastructure, unsustainable agricultural practices, low adoption of modern agricultural technologies, and limited access to financing for small-scale farmers (Jayne et al., 2016). These challenges hinder the continent's ability to fully realize its agricultural potential and limit its capacity to contribute significantly to economic development and poverty reduction. Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a crucial pillar of agricultural development, offering innovative and sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by farmers and rural communities. This approach combines social and economic objectives, emphasizing long-term value creation for individuals and communities.

According to Martin and Osberg (2007), social entrepreneurs are agents of change who seek to address social and environmental problems through viable business models. In the agricultural context, this approach is manifested through projects and enterprises aimed at improving farmers' livelihoods while promoting environmental sustainability. A study by Mair et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of social enterprises in promoting sustainable agricultural practices. These enterprises often develop initiatives such as agroecology, permaculture, and organic farming, which preserve natural resources while enhancing agricultural productivity. Moreover, social entrepreneurship can help strengthen the capacities of small-scale farmers by providing access to markets, training, and appropriate technologies. According to Yunus (2010), Nobel Peace Prize laureate and pioneer of microcredit Social enterprises can play a crucial role in the economic empowerment of rural communities by enabling them to become active participants in their own development. Finally, partnerships between social entrepreneurs, governments, non-governmental organizations, and private companies are essential for maximizing the impact of these initiatives. As Bornstein and Davis (2010) highlight, these collaborations allow for the mobilization of complementary resources and the creation of synergies to address the complex challenges facing the agricultural sector, social entrepreneurship offers a promising framework to promote inclusive, sustainable, and equitable agricultural development. By combining innovation, entrepreneurship, and social commitment, these initiatives can significantly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in terms of food security, poverty reduction, and environmental preservation. Innovation is a key principle for SMEs in the agrifood sector. These companies often invest in research and development (R&D) to improve their products and processes (Gellynck and Vermeire, 2009). They play a crucial role in introducing new technologies and products to the market, which may include innovations in packaging, ingredients, or preservation techniques.

SMEs in the agrifood sector typically have a less hierarchical and more flexible organizational structure compared to large companies. This structure allows for quick decision-making and smooth communication across different parts of the business (Julien, 1997). Sustainability and social responsibility have become major concerns for SMEs in the agrifood sector. Increasingly, these companies are integrating sustainable practices into their operations, such as using local ingredients, reducing waste, and improving energy efficiency (Chkanikova and Mont, 2012). In this context, we sought to answer the question: "How do social entrepreneurship initiatives in agribusiness SMEs compare between Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville in terms of impact and challenges?" This article aims to provide a clear structure to explore social entrepreneurship in agribusiness by comparing SMEs in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville. It allows for an analysis of the similarities, differences, and best practices between the two contexts, while highlighting the importance of this sector for economic and social development in Africa.

The objective of this article is to explore and analyze the role of social entrepreneurship in the agribusiness sector by adopting a comparative approach between small and medium-sized Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Small and Medium Industries (SMIs) in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville. Specifically, this article aims to:

- ✚ Evaluate Social Entrepreneurship Practices: Identify and analyze how SMEs and SMIs in these two countries incorporate social entrepreneurship practices into their business models and operations.
- ✚ Compare Socio-Economic Contexts: Examine the socio-economic, political, and cultural factors that influence social entrepreneurship in the agribusiness sector in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville.
- ✚ Measure Impact on Local Development: Investigate how these businesses contribute to the economic and social development of local communities in terms of job creation, ccess to food security, and environmental sustainability.
- ✚ Identify Challenges and Opportunities: Analyze the obstacles that SMEs and SMIs face in implementing social entrepreneurship practices, as well as opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance their impact.

Context of Agribusiness in Africa : Agribusiness in Africa is a vital sector that plays a key role in economic development, food security, and job creation. According to the World Bank report (2013), agriculture represents about 30% of the GDP in African countries and employs nearly 60% of the active population. This dynamic highlights the strategic importance of agribusiness for the continent. Africa faces several challenges in developing its agribusiness, including weak infrastructure, limited access to financing, and the effects of climate change. As noted in the report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2021), the lack of investment in rural infrastructure and modern agricultural technologies hampers productivity. However, these challenges are balanced by numerous opportunities, notably a young and growing population and increasing demand for food products. Studies show that the agrifood market in Africa could reach \$1 trillion by 2030 (McKinsey & Company, 2016). This forecast underscores the need to adopt innovative approaches to strengthen the agrifood value chain and develop social entrepreneurship models.

- **Social Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness :** Social entrepreneurship is emerging as a promising model to overcome challenges in the sector. According to Bocken et al. (2014), this type of entrepreneurship focuses on creating social and environmental value by integrating sustainable practices into commercial operations. **Social** Entrepreneurship Initiatives in Africa, such as agricultural cooperatives and social enterprises, have demonstrated their potential to enhance the resilience of rural communities and promote sustainable development (Kivihotan & Hummels, 2018).

- **Case of SMEs and SMIs :** SMEs and SMIs play a crucial role in transforming the agrifood sector. In West and Central Africa, these businesses are often at the forefront of innovation and the adoption of new agricultural technologies. A study by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 2019) highlights that SMEs are essential for the development of local agrifood value chains, thus creating jobs and strengthening food security. Agribusiness in Africa, although faced with significant challenges, offers unprecedented opportunities through social entrepreneurship and the innovation of SMEs and SMIs. By integrating sustainable practices and addressing local needs, these players can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic development on the continent.

Social Entrepreneurship in Agricultural Development : Social entrepreneurship is emerging as a key driver of agricultural development, especially in Africa, where socio-economic challenges are numerous. This business model focuses not only on profitability but also on creating positive social and environmental impact, thereby meeting the needs of local communities while contributing to the sustainability of agricultural systems.

- **Strengthening Food Security :** Food security is a crucial issue for sustainable development, particularly in vulnerable regions. It involves reliable access to sufficient, nutritious, and safe food for all. Strengthening food security relies on several key factors, including improving production, market access, and farmer education. One of the major contributions of social entrepreneurship to agricultural development is its role in food security. According to a FAO report (2019), social enterprises are innovating in food production by introducing sustainable methods that increase productivity while preserving natural resources. For example, initiatives such as agricultural cooperatives allow small farmers to access resources, training, and markets, thereby improving their resilience and capacity to produce nutritious food.

- **Promoting Social Inclusion :** Social entrepreneurship also promotes social inclusion. According to a study by Weerawardena and Mort (2006), social enterprises are often designed to meet the needs of marginalized populations, particularly women and youth. These initiatives create jobs and training opportunities, helping to reduce poverty and improve living conditions. For example, projects focused on sustainable agriculture can offer training to women on farming practices, enabling them to become key players in the agrifood value chain (Snyder et al., 2017).

- **Innovation and Sustainability :** Innovation is at the core of social entrepreneurship. Social enterprises often develop innovative solutions to address environmental and economic challenges. According to a World Bank report (2020), the use of green and sustainable technologies by these enterprises not only boosts productivity but also reduces agriculture's environmental footprint. Techniques such as conservation agriculture and agroecology are highlighted to enhance the sustainability of agricultural systems. Strengthening food security relies on increasing production, improving market access, educating farmers, and building resilience to shocks. These dimensions are interconnected and require a holistic approach to ensure equitable access to sufficient, nutritious, and safe food for all populations.

Definition of Social Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness : Social entrepreneurship in agribusiness refers to economic initiatives aimed at generating positive social impact while addressing specific agricultural needs. This model combines economic profitability goals with social and environmental concerns, seeking to improve community life, promote sustainable practices, and enhance food security.

• **Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurship :** According to Dees (1998), social entrepreneurship is distinguished by its social mission at the core of its activities. In the agribusiness context, this often involves creating business models that not only generate profits but also contribute to rural development, poverty reduction, and improved access to nutritious food. For example, businesses that adopt agroecological practices or support small farmers exemplify this approach. Social enterprises in agribusiness are also committed to environmental sustainability. As highlighted in a study by Bocken et al. (2014), these initiatives aim to minimize their ecological footprint while maximizing social impact. This may include the use of sustainable farming techniques, waste reduction, and natural resource conservation.

Impact on Communities: Social entrepreneurship in agribusiness plays a crucial role in strengthening communities. A study by Nicholls (2010) highlights that these businesses empower farmers by providing them with the tools and resources needed to improve their production and income. For instance, cooperative models enable farmers to access broader markets, thus promoting their economic inclusion.

Innovation and Adaptation: Innovation is also a fundamental aspect of social entrepreneurship in agribusiness. As noted by Clayton et al. (2018), these businesses develop creative solutions to address complex issues related to food production, resource management, and distribution. For example, the use of digital technologies to optimize supply chains and improve access to agricultural information is a growing trend in the sector. In summary, social entrepreneurship in agribusiness is characterized by the integration of social and environmental objectives into sustainable economic models. This type of entrepreneurship is not limited to profit generation but also aims to bring about meaningful change in communities, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and encourage innovation.

Principles and Characteristics of SMEs in the Agrifood Sector : Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Small and Medium Industries (SMIs) play a crucial role in the agrifood sector. This sector is particularly important as it involves the production, processing, and distribution of food products, essential elements for food security and population nutrition. This article explores the principles and characteristics of SMEs/SMIs in the agrifood sector, drawing on scientific references.

Key Success Factors for Social Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness : Although social entrepreneurship in agribusiness faces numerous challenges, it can succeed through several key factors that foster its development and impact. These elements are essential for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of initiatives in food security, innovation, and improving the living conditions of communities.

Social Mission and Viability Objective : The social mission forms the foundation of social entrepreneurship, especially in sensitive sectors such as agribusiness. A well-defined mission guides strategies, inspires stakeholders, and determines the measure of social impact. A clear vision helps social entrepreneurs articulate their goals and guide their actions. As Dees (1998) points out, a well-defined vision gives meaning to the company's activities, thereby motivating employees, investors, and partners. In the agribusiness sector, this can translate to a commitment to sustainable practices, food security, or support for rural communities. For instance, a food company aspiring to become a leader in sustainability often attracts passionate talent and funding, strengthening its capacity to achieve its goals. The social mission goes beyond mere financial objectives to include social and environmental aspirations. According to Nicholls (2009), a well-defined social mission enables companies to differentiate themselves in a competitive market by attracting customers and partners who share the same values. This is particularly relevant in agribusiness, where consumers are increasingly concerned about the origins of products and the social impact of their consumption. For example, brands that highlight their support for local farmers or their commitment to sustainable production practices can build a trusting relationship with their customers. For the vision and mission to be effective, it is essential that they be integrated into all of the company's activities. As Mair and Marti (2006) indicate, social enterprises must align their operational strategies and business models with their social mission to maximize their impact. This might involve choices in production processes, raw material selection, or even how products are marketed. In the agribusiness sector, this could translate into using sustainable and ethical farming methods, thereby enhancing the positive impact on communities and the environment. A clear vision and strong social mission are essential

for social entrepreneurship in agribusiness. They not only guide the company's actions and decisions but also strengthen its commitment to stakeholders and the community. By integrating these elements into their operations, social enterprises can create significant impact while ensuring their economic viability. A clear vision and a well-defined social mission are fundamental to social entrepreneurship. According to Dees (1998), successful social enterprises articulate their mission in a way that inspires and mobilizes stakeholders, allowing them to focus their efforts on specific goals. In the agribusiness sector, this might involve a commitment to improving food security or promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

Innovation and Adaptability to Environmental Changes : Innovation and adaptability are essential characteristics for the success of social entrepreneurship, especially in dynamic sectors like agribusiness. These elements allow businesses to address market challenges while maximizing their social impact.

Importance of Innovation: Innovation is at the heart of social entrepreneurship as it enables the development of new solutions to social and environmental problems. According to Bocken et al. (2014), companies that adopt innovative approaches are often better positioned to meet consumers' increasing expectations for sustainability. In the agribusiness sector, this can involve using new technologies to improve crop yields, reduce waste, or develop sustainable food products. For instance, precision agriculture, which incorporates technologies such as drones and sensors, can optimize resource use while increasing productivity. A study by Zhao et al. (2019) shows that agrifood companies integrating advanced technologies succeed in reducing their environmental footprint while enhancing profitability.

Adaptability to Environmental Changes: Adaptability is also crucial for navigating a constantly evolving economic environment. Social enterprises must be able to respond quickly to market changes, price fluctuations, and new consumer expectations. As noted in a study by Galindo and Méndez (2014), SMEs that adopt a culture of adaptability are better equipped to overcome crises and seize new opportunities. In the agribusiness sector, this adaptability may involve changes in production practices, product diversification, or reevaluation of supply chains. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many agrifood companies had to quickly pivot to online sales models to meet changing consumer needs (Kumar et al., 2021).

Participatory Innovation: Another dimension of innovation in social entrepreneurship is the participatory approach. Involving stakeholders, including farmers and consumers, in the innovation process can lead to more relevant and acceptable solutions. According to a report by Berkes and Folke (2002), engaging local communities in the development of innovative solutions fosters ownership and acceptance of initiatives, thus enhancing their success. Innovation and adaptability are essential pillars of social entrepreneurship in agribusiness. By adopting innovative approaches and remaining flexible in the face of market changes, social enterprises can not only improve their economic performance but also maximize their social and environmental impact.

Collaborative and Partnership-Based Enterprises : Strategic partnerships are essential for maximizing the impact of social enterprises. According to a study by Le Ber and Branzi (2010), collaboration with NGOs, governments, and other businesses can provide valuable resources, knowledge, and access to new markets. In the agribusiness sector, these partnerships can facilitate the sharing of sustainable practices and access to funding for innovative projects.

Stakeholder Engagement : The ability to measure and assess social impact is a key success factor. As noted by Nicholls (2009), social enterprises that use clear indicators to evaluate their social and environmental performance can adjust their strategies accordingly and demonstrate their value to stakeholders. This transparency also strengthens credibility and trust in the enterprise. Strong stakeholder engagement—including local communities, customers, and employees—is crucial for the success of social entrepreneurship. Research by Roper and Cheney (2005) shows that companies that actively involve their stakeholders in the decision-making process are more likely to effectively meet market needs. In the agribusiness context, this may involve consultations with farmers or educational programs to raise consumer awareness. In sum, the key success factors for social entrepreneurship in agribusiness include a clear vision, innovation, collaboration, impact measurement, and stakeholder engagement. By integrating these elements, social enterprises can not only improve their economic viability but also maximize their social and environmental impact.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study of social entrepreneurship in agribusiness, with a comparative approach focusing on SMEs and SMIs in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville, requires a rigorous methodology to gather and analyze relevant data. This section outlines the different stages of the research methodology, including study design, data collection techniques, and analysis methods. The comparative analysis of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs) in the agribusiness sector in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville highlights the similarities and differences in their operational models, challenges, and opportunities. This analysis is crucial to understanding how these businesses can better contribute to social entrepreneurship and economic development in their respective contexts.

Profile of the Studied Businesses in Congo-Brazzaville : SMEs in the agribusiness sector in Congo-Brazzaville and Senegal are key players in economic and social development. They play a vital role in the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products, while facing specific challenges depending on the local context. This analysis presents a profile of the businesses studied in both countries, highlighting their characteristics, operations, and impacts.

Types of Businesses and Activities: Agrifood SMEs in Congo-Brazzaville are primarily divided among agricultural production, agrifood processing, and distribution. According to Mvogo et al. (2021), the main activities include the cultivation of staple crops such as cassava, maize, and rice, as well as processing these products into food items and consumer goods (Mvogo et al., 2021). Businesses involved in processing often focus on producing flour, vegetable oils, and dairy products.

Size and Structure of Businesses: The majority of agrifood SMEs in Congo-Brazzaville are small to medium-sized. A study by Kouadio et al. (2020) reveals that these businesses typically employ between 10 and 50 people and are often family- or community-owned (Kouadio et al., 2020). Their structure is often decentralized, with informal management and a high reliance on traditional methods.

Challenges and Opportunities: SMEs in Congo-Brazzaville face significant challenges, such as a lack of infrastructure, limited access to financing, and difficulties managing supply chains. According to Nzaba et al. (2022), these challenges limit their capacity to grow and reach a larger scale of production (Nzaba et al., 2022). However, there are also opportunities for these businesses, such as growing local and regional demand for agrifood products, as well as government initiatives aimed at supporting the sector.

Profile of Senegal's SMEs in Agribusiness : Types of Businesses and Activities: In Senegal, agrifood SMEs are diverse, including businesses specializing in cereal farming, livestock, and food processing. According to Diop et al. (2022), SMEs focus on cultivating products such as millet, sorghum, and peanuts, as well as processing these products into prepared foods, oils, and bakery items (Diop et al., 2022). Processing businesses play a crucial role in adding value to agricultural products.

Size and Structure of Businesses: SMEs in Senegal are also small to medium-sized but tend to have a more formal structure than those in Congo-Brazzaville. A study by Faye et al. (2023) indicates that these businesses typically employ between 20 and 100 people and are often incorporated as limited liability or joint-stock companies, with more structured management and mechanized production processes (Faye et al., 2023). There is an emphasis on improving management practices and technological innovation.

Challenges and Opportunities: Senegalese SMEs face similar challenges to those in Congo-Brazzaville, particularly regarding access to financing and infrastructure. However, they benefit from a more favorable environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. According to Sow et al. (2021), government support initiatives and regional development programs offer opportunities for modernizing agricultural practices and expanding markets (Sow et al., 2021). Additionally, product diversification and access to international markets represent significant opportunities for these businesses.

III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS IN AGRIBUSINESS IN BOTH COUNTRIES

SMEs in both countries share common characteristics, such as small to medium size, the importance of the agricultural sector, and challenges related to financing and infrastructure. Both countries also demonstrate a growing commitment to agricultural product processing and improved management practices.

Contextual Differences : The contextual differences between SMEs in the two countries include management structure, with Senegalese businesses often being more formalized and mechanized compared to those in Congo-Brazzaville. Moreover, opportunities for innovation and modernization are more pronounced in Senegal due to more developed government support policies and a more dynamic entrepreneurial environment. SMEs in agribusiness in Congo-Brazzaville and Senegal play a crucial role in the economic and social development of their respective regions. Although the two countries share similar characteristics in terms of size and challenges, contextual differences underscore the importance of policies and strategies tailored to local realities to maximize opportunities and overcome obstacles. By understanding these profiles, policymakers and sector stakeholders can better target their interventions to support the sustainable development of agrifood SMEs.

Social Entrepreneurship Models Adopted : Social entrepreneurship is a crucial lever for economic and social development, especially in developing countries like Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville. While both countries share common challenges, their social entrepreneurship models differ based on their respective economic, political, and social contexts. This section explores the main models adopted in each country.

Community Impact Model : In Senegal, many SMEs/SMIs adopt a community impact model, which focuses on meeting local needs while generating revenue. These businesses often collaborate with communities to identify specific challenges and address them. For example, initiatives like the Senegal Young Entrepreneurs Association (AJES) promote community engagement and the development of innovative projects (Mazzucato, 2018). This model not only stimulates the local economy but also strengthens social fabric. In contrast, while the community impact model is also present in Congo-Brazzaville, it is often confronted with structural constraints. Businesses adopting this model tend to focus on agriculture and handicrafts, aiming to improve living conditions in rural communities. However, the lack of infrastructure and political instability often limit their ability to make a significant impact (UNDP, 2021).

Sustainable Innovation and Collaborative Entrepreneurship Model : Senegal also stands out for the emergence of sustainable innovation models in the agribusiness sector. Companies like "Jokkolabs" promote social entrepreneurship by integrating eco-friendly practices and using digital technologies to improve supply chains and production (Bocken et al., 2014). This model allows entrepreneurs to meet the growing demand for sustainable products while generating a positive social impact. In Congo-Brazzaville, although the sustainable innovation model is in development, it remains in its early stages. Initiatives are beginning to emerge, such as the use of ecological agricultural practices to meet the growing demand for organic products, but they are often constrained by financial and technical resources (World Bank, 2021). Another important model in Senegal is collaborative entrepreneurship, which relies on cooperation between businesses, NGOs, and public institutions. Platforms like "Senegal Entrepreneurs" foster the exchange of ideas, resource sharing, and mutual support, creating an ecosystem conducive to social innovation (OECD, 2020). This collaborative approach enables SMEs/SMIs to access new markets and benefit from external funding. In Congo-Brazzaville, this model is still developing, but some initiatives are beginning to emerge. Collaboration between local and international actors is essential to strengthen entrepreneurs' capacities and facilitate market access. Civil society organizations play a crucial role in networking businesses and supporting projects (UNDP, 2021). The social entrepreneurship models in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville reflect each country's specificities. While Senegal emphasizes community impact and sustainable innovation models, Congo-Brazzaville, although still in development, is beginning to explore similar models, facing structural challenges. The rise of social entrepreneurship in these countries presents a significant opportunity to address social and environmental issues while stimulating economic growth.

Socio-Economic Impact of Initiatives in Each Country : Initiatives in the agribusiness sector play a critical role in socio-economic development in Congo-Brazzaville and Senegal. These initiatives, often led by SMEs and social enterprises, have significant effects on local communities, national economies, and the environment. This analysis explores the socio-economic impacts of these initiatives in each country, based on scientific references.

Job Creation and Economic Development : Agribusiness initiatives in Congo-Brazzaville have a significant impact on job creation and local economic development. According to Mvogo et al. (2022), businesses in the agrifood sector generate direct jobs in production, processing, and distribution, as well as indirect jobs in related services (Mvogo et al., 2022). These jobs help improve living conditions for local families and reduce unemployment rates in rural areas.

Infrastructure Improvement and Access to Services : Agribusiness initiatives also contribute to improving local infrastructure and access to services. Companies often invest in infrastructure such as roads, schools, and health centers, as noted by Kouadio et al. (2021) (Kouadio et al., 2021). For example, the Agricultural Development Corporation of Brazzaville has funded infrastructure projects to support education and health in rural communities.

Strengthening Local Capacities : Strengthening local capacities is another key impact of agribusiness initiatives. Training and skill development programs enable local producers to improve their agricultural practices and better manage their businesses. According to Nzaba et al. (2022), these trainings contribute to increased productivity and the sustainability of agricultural practices (Nzaba et al., 2022). Initiatives such as agricultural training centers offer courses on modern techniques and sustainable practices.

Exploring the Agricultural and Natural Business Environment : We have highlighted some statistics on the evolution of agriculture and natural resources as a percentage of GDP. The analysis of the evolution of agriculture's contribution to GDP in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville between 1990 and 2020 reveals economic, social, and structural dynamics that reflect the different development trajectories of these two countries.

1. Weight of Agriculture in GDP

- **Senegal:** Historically, agriculture has played a central role in the Senegalese economy, with cash crops like peanuts. However, with economic diversification and modernization, the agricultural sector has gradually seen its contribution to GDP decline. Senegal has focused on the development of the services and industrial sectors, with the growth of the tertiary sector (commerce, tourism, telecommunications). This trend shows that the country is transitioning toward a more diversified economy.
- **Congo-Brazzaville:** In contrast, Congo is more dependent on natural resources, particularly oil. The agricultural sector has historically had a lower contribution to GDP, and this trend continued with the rise of oil exploitation in the 1990s and 2000s. This has often left agriculture in a marginalized position, despite efforts to revitalize the sector in the later years of the period studied.

2. Factors of Evolution

Senegal: Several factors have contributed to the relative decline of agriculture in GDP:

- Increasing urbanization and growth of services: Dakar and other urban centers have become major economic drivers.
- Modernization of the agricultural sector, with increased support for diversified crops, particularly fruits and vegetables for export.
- Climate change affecting agricultural yields, particularly in rural areas dependent on irregular rainfall.

Congo-Brazzaville: Agriculture, long neglected in favor of natural resource exploitation, has suffered from several challenges:

- Focus on oil: The oil boom has reinforced the country's dependence on hydrocarbon revenues, to the detriment of diversification.
- Political instability and infrastructure: Instability and lack of infrastructure have hindered agricultural development, limiting productivity and competitiveness.
- Low investment in agriculture: Despite the agricultural potential (favorable climate, vast arable land), investments in this sector have remained limited until recently.

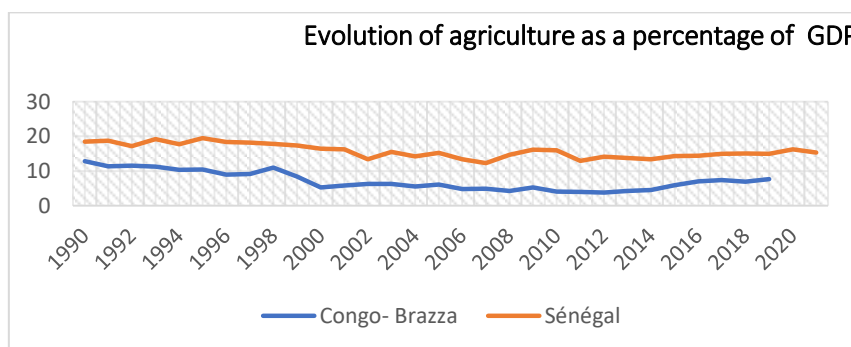


Figure 1 : The Evolution of Agriculture's Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville Between 1990 and 2020

The evolution of agriculture's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville between 1990 and 2020 presents two distinct economic dynamics, influenced by political choices, climatic conditions, and the economic structure of each country. Between 1990 and 2020, Senegal experienced a gradual decrease in the share of agriculture in GDP, from 20% in 1990 to about 15% in 2020, according to World Bank data (2021). This reflects a transition towards a more service- and light industry-oriented economy, notably due to the development of the tertiary sector in Dakar and other urban centers (World Bank, 2021). Although agricultural modernization was supported by reforms such as the PSE (Emerging Senegal Plan), agricultural productivity remains limited by low levels of technological investment in rural areas. In contrast, in Congo-Brazzaville, the share of agriculture in GDP remained relatively stable but low during this period, representing around 5% to 10% of GDP (IMF, 2019). However, the trend shows increased reliance on oil revenues, despite the government's desire to diversify the economy after 2010. Initiatives to revitalize agriculture have not yielded significant results due to a lack of infrastructure and an underdeveloped institutional framework to support agricultural innovation (UNDP, 2019).

Reforms and Perspectives : The Emerging Senegal Plan (PSE) provided a strategic framework to modernize agriculture through investments in irrigation and mechanization (Republic of Senegal, 2014). The outlook is promising if these efforts continue, especially with the focus on agro-industrial value chains and improving the productivity of smallholder farms (World Bank, 2015). However, climate challenges remain a major constraint. The agricultural prospects for Congo-Brazzaville depend on the government's ability to implement integrated agricultural policies and attract investments into the sector (UNDP, 2019). The country's potential in arable land and a favorable climate could be leveraged to revitalize agriculture, but this requires significant structural reforms, including improvements in infrastructure and governance. In sum, the analysis of the evolution of agriculture's contribution to GDP in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville between 1990 and 2020 shows two contrasting trajectories. Senegal gradually reduced the share of agriculture in its GDP while diversifying its economy, whereas Congo-Brazzaville remained dependent on oil, with a stable but marginal agricultural contribution. Recent reforms in both countries indicate efforts to modernize the agricultural sector, but significant challenges remain, including infrastructure and investment policies. The evolution of agriculture's contribution to GDP in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville between 1990 and 2020 reveals significant differences in the management of natural resources and economic diversification. While agriculture represents a significant part of the economic structure in many African countries, the exploitation of natural resources such as hydrocarbons has also altered the economic trajectories of both countries. Historically, agriculture has played a predominant role in Senegal, with a significant share of GDP in the 1990s. In 1990, agriculture accounted for about 20% of GDP, a contribution that has slowly declined to around 15% in 2020 (World Bank, 2021). This decline is explained by a gradual economic diversification, with a rise of the services and industry sectors and economic reforms aimed at modernizing agriculture. Senegal has natural resources such as phosphates and marine resources, but these have not contributed as significantly as oil or gas in other African countries. However, with the recent discovery of offshore oil and gas in 2014, a potential transformation of the Senegalese economy is forecasted. Currently, these resources have not yet significantly influenced the composition of GDP as a percentage, but their expected exploitation in 2023 could increase their share in GDP beyond 2020 (World Bank, 2020).

Congo-Brazzaville is a classic example of an economy dominated by the exploitation of natural resources, particularly oil. In 1990, the agricultural sector represented about 10% of GDP, while revenues from natural resource exploitation, especially oil, accounted for more than 50% of GDP (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2019). In the following decades, this dependency on oil resources only grew. Between 2000 and 2010, hydrocarbons accounted for around 60% to 70% of GDP (World Bank, 2019). The Congolese economy suffered from an excessive focus on this natural resource, making the country vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. Starting in 2014, with the fall in oil prices, the Congolese economy experienced a marked slowdown, leading to a reduction in oil's contribution to GDP, but it remained a dominant source of income (UNDP, 2019).

Explanatory Factors for the Evolution of Agricultural and Natural Resource Revenues

Senegal

The evolution of agriculture's contribution to GDP in Senegal is influenced by several factors:

- **Agricultural Reforms:** The Emerging Senegal Plan (PSE), launched in 2014, aimed to modernize the agricultural sector with initiatives to increase productivity and promote agro-industrial value chains. These reforms have improved production, but the share of GDP from agriculture continues to decline due to economic diversification (Republic of Senegal, 2014).

- **Oil and Gas Discoveries:** The recent discoveries of oil and gas promise to transform the Senegalese economy. According to projections, revenues from these natural resources could account for up to 10% of GDP in the coming years, but this impact will only be felt after 2020 (World Bank, 2021).
- **Climate Change:** Irregular rainfall and desertification in some regions have limited agricultural productivity, negatively impacting the sector's contribution to GDP (FAO, 2018).

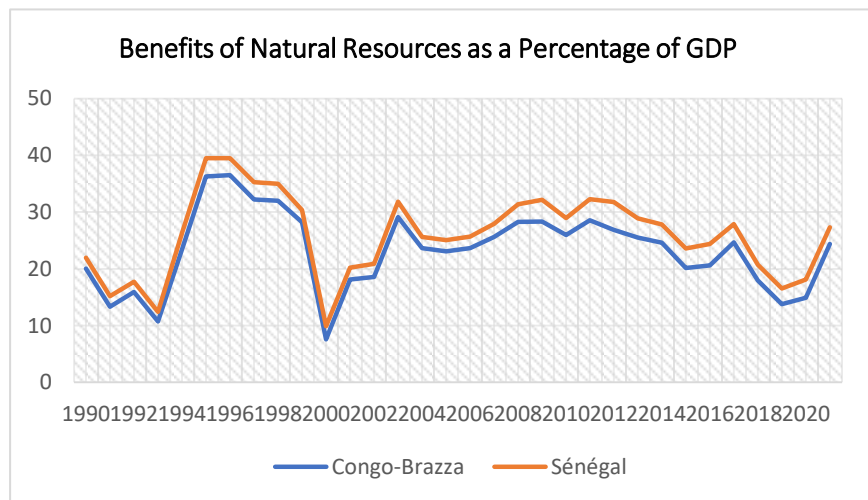


Figure 2 : In Senegal, the share of agriculture in GDP

In Senegal, the share of agriculture in GDP has gradually decreased, from 20% in 1990 to 15% in 2020. At the same time, profits from natural resources (notably phosphates and natural gas) represent an increasing, though modest, share for now. With the future exploitation of offshore deposits, this share could increase significantly after 2020 (World Bank, 2021). In Congo Brazzaville, agriculture has always been marginalized compared to the natural resources sector. Hydrocarbons represented a dominant share of GDP, exceeding 60% in the 2000s, before experiencing a relative decline due to the drop in oil prices in 2014. However, agriculture, while developing slowly, has not yet contributed significantly to the diversification of the economy (IMF, 2019).

IV. REFORMS AND PERSPECTIVES

The Plan Sénégal Emergent aims to boost agricultural productivity while capitalizing on recent discoveries of natural resources (Republic of Senegal, 2014). The hydrocarbon sector could play a more significant role in the economy after 2020, with a positive impact on GDP, provided that oil revenues are well managed to avoid the Dutch disease (World Bank, 2020). Congo Brazzaville is attempting to diversify its economy by investing more in agriculture and other non-oil sectors. However, these efforts remain limited, and the country remains heavily dependent on oil for its revenues (UNDP, 2019). In the long term, sustainable management of natural resources and increased investment in agriculture are essential to ensure more balanced growth. The evolution of the contribution of agriculture and natural resources to the GDP of Senegal and Congo Brazzaville between 1990 and 2020 reflects two contrasting economic trajectories. While Senegal has engaged in a transition towards a more diversified economy, with an increasing share of natural resources, Congo Brazzaville has remained dependent on its hydrocarbons, with agriculture in the background. Ongoing reforms, particularly those aimed at strengthening agricultural sectors and better managing natural resources, will be crucial for the future economic development of both countries.

Job Creation and Boosting the Local Economy : Agro-business initiatives in **Senegal** also play a crucial role in job creation and boosting the local economy. According to Diouf et al. (2022), businesses in the agro-food sector create jobs in the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products (Diouf et al., 2022). These jobs support local families and stimulate the economy of rural areas.

Improving Food Security and Income : Agro-business initiatives contribute to improving food security and the income of producers. Programs supporting agricultural production and product processing enable farmers to diversify their crops and increase their income. Sow et al. (2021) emphasize that agricultural cooperatives and

processing companies play a key role in improving food security by facilitating access to markets and agricultural inputs (Sow et al., 2021).

Sustainable Development and Innovation: Sustainable development and innovation are key aspects of agribusiness initiatives in **Senegal**. Companies are adopting innovative and environmentally friendly farming practices to improve productivity while minimizing ecological impact. According to Faye et al. (2023), businesses that integrate green technologies and sustainable practices contribute to the conservation of natural resources and the reduction of the carbon footprint (Faye et al., 2023).

Capacity Building and Market Access : Agribusiness initiatives in Senegal also emphasize capacity building and improving market access for local producers. Training programs, business support services, and improved infrastructure facilitate the marketing of agricultural products and the participation of producers in local and international markets. Diouf et al. (2023) show that these efforts enhance the competitiveness of Senegalese agribusiness companies (Diouf et al., 2023).

Similarities in Difference : Both countries display similarities in the socio-economic impacts of agribusiness initiatives, particularly in terms of job creation, improved food security, and local capacity building. The initiatives in both countries aim to support regional economic development and improve the living conditions of rural communities. Contextual differences include the level of innovation and the scope of sustainable development programs. In Senegal, initiatives place greater emphasis on technological innovation and sustainable development, while in Congo-Brazzaville, the focus is on job creation and improving local infrastructure. Government support policies and available resources influence these differences. Agribusiness initiatives in Congo-Brazzaville and Senegal have significant impacts on the socio-economic development of both countries. They contribute to job creation, improved food security, and strengthened local capacities. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding innovation and environmental sustainability. By understanding these impacts, it is possible to develop strategies that maximize socio-economic benefits while addressing the specific challenges of each context.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG SME-SMI INITIATIVES IN AGRIBUSINESS IN SENEGAL AND CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

The Agribusiness Sector in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville plays a crucial role in the local economy, contributing to food security, job creation, and rural development. SMEs/SMIs in these two countries share certain goals and challenges while operating in distinct socio-economic contexts. This analysis examines the commonalities and differences between SME/SMI initiatives in agribusiness in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville, drawing on scientific references to provide an in-depth understanding.

Discussion of Commonalities between the Two Business Models

Sustainability Goals : SMEs/SMIs in agribusiness in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville share a common goal of promoting sustainable agricultural practices. According to Sow et al. (2021), businesses in both countries implement environmentally-friendly agricultural techniques, such as organic farming and integrated pest management, to enhance the sustainability of their practices. This approach aims to address challenges related to soil degradation and the depletion of natural resources.

Involvement of Local Communities : A shared characteristic is the involvement of local communities. SMEs/SMIs in both countries invest in training and support programs for local producers to improve their skills and self-sufficiency. In Senegal, SMEs like AgriSocial SA implement training programs for farmers, as does EcoAgri Congo in Congo-Brazzaville (Diop et al., 2021; Kouadio et al., 2021). These initiatives aim to strengthen farmers' ability to adopt modern and sustainable agricultural practices.

Infrastructure Challenges : Infrastructure-related challenges are common to SMEs/SMIs in both countries. Infrastructure issues, such as poor road conditions and lack of storage facilities, affect logistics and operational costs. Mvoula et al. (2022) highlight that inadequate infrastructure limits operational efficiency in both contexts. These challenges increase operating costs and complicate supply chain management.

Differentiation in Business Model Application

Access to Financial Resources : A notable contrast lies in access to financial resources. In Senegal, despite difficulties, SMEs/SMIs often benefit from grants and international funding through partnerships with NGOs and international financial institutions (Diouf et al., 2022). In contrast, in Congo-Brazzaville, access to funding is often more limited due to unstable economic and political conditions. Congolese SMEs face additional obstacles in securing loans and grants necessary for their growth (Nzaba et al., 2022).

Regulatory Environment : The regulatory environment differs significantly between the two countries. In Senegal, agricultural policies are relatively structured, with government programs aimed at supporting SMEs/SMIs in agribusiness (Faye et al., 2023). Conversely, in Congo-Brazzaville, the regulatory framework is often more complex and bureaucratic, posing additional challenges for business management and establishment (Nzaba et al., 2022). This difference affects how easily SMEs can navigate the administrative system and obtain necessary permits.

Social and Political Contexts : The socio-political contexts also influence SME/SMI initiatives in the two countries. In Senegal, relative political stability and supportive policies for the agri-food sector create a more favorable environment for social entrepreneurship (Sarr, 2022). In contrast, SMEs in Congo-Brazzaville often face challenges related to political instability and conflicts, which can hinder their operations and investments (Mvogo et al., 2023).

Technological Innovations : The levels of technological innovation differ between the two contexts. Senegalese SMEs like AgriSocial SA integrate advanced technologies such as automated irrigation systems and digital platforms to improve crop management (Diouf et al., 2023). In contrast, in Congo-Brazzaville, the adoption of modern technologies is often slower due to economic and infrastructure constraints, limiting the impact of innovations in the agri-food sector (Kouadio et al., 2021). The initiatives of SMEs/SMIs in agribusiness in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville show both commonalities and significant differences. The two countries share sustainability goals, community involvement, and infrastructure challenges. However, they differ in terms of access to funding, regulatory environment, socio-political contexts, and levels of technological innovation. Understanding these similarities and differences helps in better tailoring strategies and policies to support the development of the agri-food sector in each context.

VI. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion: Social entrepreneurship in the agribusiness sector represents a promising approach for the sustainable development of SMEs and SMIs in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville. This comparative analysis highlights the specific characteristics and challenges faced by social enterprises in these two countries. In Senegal, social entrepreneurship has shown a strong dynamic of innovation and collaboration among local actors, NGOs, and governments. Companies like "Senegal Agro" demonstrate how a sustainability-focused approach can lead to tangible results in poverty reduction and job creation (Thiam & Sow, 2020). Initiatives focused on sustainable agriculture, such as the use of agroecological techniques, show a positive impact not only on productivity but also on the environment, promoting a holistic approach to development (Ba, 2021).

Conversely, in Congo-Brazzaville, SMEs and SMIs face more significant structural obstacles, particularly in terms of access to financing and infrastructure. Despite these challenges, inspiring examples such as "AgriCongo" illustrate how social business models can catalyze local transformations by mobilizing community resources (Nganga & Biyoghe, 2022). Companies that adopt inclusive and collaborative practices by involving local farmers in decision-making succeed in establishing sustainable economic models that meet the needs of the population (Kouadio, 2023). The comparative approach also highlights the importance of the political and economic context. In Senegal, the regulatory framework and public policies are more favorable to the growth of social enterprises, while in Congo-Brazzaville, political instability and administrative constraints are significant barriers (Sarr, 2021). This disparity underlines the need for sustained government commitment to promote an ecosystem conducive to social entrepreneurship. In sum, social entrepreneurship in agribusiness offers a viable path for the development of SMEs and SMIs in Senegal and Congo-Brazzaville. Lessons learned from these experiences show that integrating social and environmental principles into business models can generate sustainable positive impacts. In the future, increased support from financial institutions, as well as a favorable regulatory environment, will be essential to strengthen this sector and maximize its potential.

Implications for the Development of Agribusiness in Africa : Africa has immense agricultural potential, with nearly 60% of its arable land unused (World Bank, 2020). The development of agribusiness in Africa presents a major opportunity to stimulate economic growth, reduce poverty, and strengthen food security. However, several challenges must be overcome to fully realize this potential.

Economic Opportunities: The agrifood sector in Africa could create millions of jobs. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the agrifood sector could become a driver of economic growth if appropriate investments are made (FAO, 2018). By diversifying crops and integrating value chains, African countries can strengthen their economic resilience.

Value Addition and Processing: Industrializing agriculture through the processing of agricultural products increases added value. For example, transforming corn into flour or fruits into juice can generate significant profits for farmers and entrepreneurs (UNCTAD, 2019). However, this requires investments in adequate infrastructure, such as processing plants and distribution networks.

Food Security: The development of agribusiness is also crucial for strengthening food security. By improving agricultural practices and diversifying crops, farmers can better withstand environmental and economic shocks (Boko et al., 2007). Modern technologies, such as precision agriculture, can also play a key role in optimizing yields and reducing post-harvest losses (Kelley et al., 2019).

Climate Resilience: In the face of climate change, agrifood systems must adapt. Developing sustainable agricultural practices, such as agroecology, can contribute to the resilience of rural communities (Garrity et al., 2010). Initiatives like climate financing can help integrate these practices into agribusiness models.

Challenges to Overcome: Despite these opportunities, several challenges persist. Access to financing remains a major obstacle for farmers, especially smallholders. According to the African Development Bank, less than 10% of small farmers in Africa have access to formal credit (AfDB, 2019). Furthermore, poor road and transport infrastructure limits market access.

Agricultural policies need to be revised to support agribusiness development. Effective governance and favorable regulations can encourage private investment (World Bank, 2020). Cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector is essential to create an environment conducive to agribusiness development.

The development of agribusiness in Africa holds promising prospects for economic growth and food security. However, to achieve this potential, it is crucial to overcome challenges related to financing, infrastructure, and policies. By focusing on processing, sustainability, and innovation, Africa can become a global leader in the agrifood sector

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