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Article

Young Women as Social Entrepreneurs in the Environmental Sector in Ghana: Development Hackers and the Re-imagining of Sustainable Development Models

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Abstract The article considers the extent to which social entrepreneurship of young women is contributing to sustainable development in Ghana, based on field research conducted between October 2018 and April 2019. Data collection involved a review of the literature and a questionnaire survey of actors within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Ghana but is primarily based on the life histories of 13 women entrepreneurs collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Social entrepreneurship is undergoing a boom in Ghana which is characterized as having the most entrepreneurs as a proportion of the population globally and with women outnumbering men. Critical discourse analysis was employed to highlight the potential difference between grand narratives of entrepreneurship for development—how it is supposed to work, and how it is working in practice for young women social entrepreneurs in Ghana. The life histories demonstrate that the social entrepreneurship of young women in Ghana does not appear to be contributing to sustainable development because the enterprises yielded small or non-existent economic benefits for the entrepreneurs, demonstrating the limitations of this framework in the Ghanaian context. Indeed, most of the enterprises do not go beyond the ideation stage while the fame of winning social entrepreneurship competitions is used by individuals to build social and symbolic capital for employment by the public sector and the United Nations. In this way, young women are "hacking" social entrepreneurship for their own purposes as it is one of the opportunities open to them but it does not lead to sustainable enterprises. While the social entrepreneurship sector in Ghana is booming, it appears in reality to be a survival activity for women who are subject to gender inequalities and social-cultural harassment.

Keywords social entrepreneurship; sustainable development; alternative model; environment; young entrepreneurs; gender; critical discourse analysis; Ghana

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1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurs combine activities with social purposes with commercial activities (see, for example, [1–3]), prioritizing social impact but needing to generate profit to be sustainable [4]. In the literature, they are seen as being particularly effective in poverty alleviation (for example [5,6]). Consequently, social entrepreneurs have an important role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 [7] because they represent an innovative form of socio-economic organization that can "address problems that others overlook or cannot address as efficiently" ([8], p. 4). While the dominant social, economic, and political systems carry models of development that reinforce inequalities, discrimination, exploitation, or even the destruction of human, animal, and plant populations, social entrepreneurship is seen as an alternative model in a context where non-profit organizations are being encouraged, on the one hand, to reduce their expectations in terms of financing social activities and, on the other hand, to generate more self-financing of their activities [9].

Despite the apparent value of social entrepreneurship, it remains contested [10]. Not only is the "grand narrative" of entrepreneurship for development facing criticism for the way it ignores the burdens and risks accruing to women entrepreneurs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries' (LMICs) settings [11,12]), social entrepreneurship itself is criticized for its positive normative

connotation [13]. Other scholars have argued that social entrepreneurship needs to be seen in a specific context and that a better understanding of the link between social entrepreneurship and its environment is required [14]. Against this background, this paper considers the extent to which social entrepreneurship of women contributes to sustainable development—taken as the triple bottom line of social economic and environmental benefits—in the context of Ghana. Ghana has been chosen because it is the country with the most entrepreneurs in the world, representing the only country with more women entrepreneurs than men [15]. In this context, the social entrepreneurship sector is booming and the concept is being mobilized by different stakeholders such as entrepreneurs and institutional actors. We specifically focus on women because women social entrepreneurs are frequently invisible but also because any benefits for them directly accrue to their families and wider society [16]. If social entrepreneurship is not contributing to sustainable development in this context, its contribution elsewhere will be very limited indeed.

The research question focuses on the extent to which social entrepreneurship of young women is contributing to sustainable development in Ghana with a sub-question related to the adequacy of current models of social entrepreneurship in the Ghanaian context. The article is based on a field research conducted between October 2018 and April 2019 in Ghana, analyzing data collected from different actors in the Ghanaian social entrepreneurship ecosystem. We employ critical discourse analysis to explore the enactment, reproduction, and transgression of dominant models/narratives of social entrepreneurship—how it is supposed to work, and how it is working in practice for young women social entrepreneurs in Ghana. The article makes a novel contribution to the literature by demonstrating how entrepreneurship is appropriated in practice in the Ghanaian context, reflecting the findings of other studies from the global North which show how individual agents are subverting entrepreneurship for their own purposes and within their own context in a form of "tactical mimicry" [17]. It also adds to the body of literature which is developing a critical, nuanced, and contextual understanding of entrepreneurship for development and particularly its implications for women.

2. Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development

The SDGs can be understood as the global community's efforts to address complex environmental, social and economic challenges; entrepreneurship is being seen as capable of addressing these challenges. This emphasis on entrepreneurship reflects the increasing emphasis on the private sector in the current political context of the SDGs [18]. There are many different models of entrepreneurship which are relevant to sustainable development, including social, environmental, sustainable, green, and women entrepreneurship in the academic literature [19], all based on the more generic concept of entrepreneurship, and these will be discussed below.

Since its conceptualization by Schumpeter [20], the entrepreneur has been seen as a (male) innovator who plays a key role in transforming the economic system. Studies on the discourses of entrepreneurship [21,22] but also of social entrepreneurship [23,24] indicate that the entrepreneur is represented as a "hero" rather than as a heroine. In this context, while social entrepreneurship is described as "a movement of thought inscribed in capitalism" ([25], p. 1), analysis of discourse applied to social entrepreneurship show that the "heroic" accounts of social entrepreneurship, emphasizing performativity, progress, rationalism, and individualism, engender a depoliticization of social change [24]. Social entrepreneurship is seen as a micro-level solution to overcoming poverty [26,27], and is positioned as "development beyond aid" [9], representing a change within the development aid paradigm and breaking with charity. Social enterprises are not only innovative in terms of the products and services they develop, but also in their relationship with the market or the forms of enterprise they adopt. Clark Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan [28] analyze the term "social entrepreneurship" from several feminist perspectives showing that it is subject to complex gender connotations: while the term "entrepreneur" is associated with the masculine (heroic, ambitious, courageous, strong, and enterprising), the term "social" denotes a female commitment (concerns related to exclusion, marginalization, suffering, and activities related to empathy). While there is relative success of women in social entrepreneurship when compared to traditional entrepreneurship, however, the gender-specific dimensions of the field of entrepreneurship restrict women to less lucrative businesses. Moreover, given the growing emphasis placed on, social entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a "magic bullet" to solve development challenges [29], "challenging the obstacles that have prevented companies from providing services to the poor" ([26], p. 242).

Social entrepreneurship is presented as contributing to women's empowerment because it provides access to employment. All over the world, social entrepreneurship is presented as a female-friendly sector because women are over-represented in all forms of the social economy. However, the explanations appear to focus on stereotyped female competencies: the "social" skills of women. In a report for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for example, Huysentruyt [30] explains that it is because women have a higher level of altruism and a stronger preference for redistribution that they are more socially engaged and more opposed to competition and therefore widely represented in the social entrepreneurship sector. In another example, a study of social salience, namely "the importance entrepreneurs place on the social outcomes of their organization" ([31], p. 157) indicates that women have "a natural inclination to create organizations with social goals and intentions in mind" ([31], p. 155).

Analyses of discourses on female entrepreneurship [22] and discourses of researchers in the scientific literature [23], show that these discourses generally reinforce gender stereotypes. The myth of the heroic entrepreneur celebrates male concepts of control, competition, rationality, or domination and also involves gender discrimination and in particular a sexual division of labor: the entrepreneur described as wilful, determined, persistent, resolute, detached, and egocentric assumes that a woman performs the unpaid reproductive work associated with the private sphere [22,23]. In addition, Byrne et al. [32] show that the role models put forward for women entrepreneurs mobilize a "superwoman" narrative, namely a discourse that promotes images of individualized entrepreneurial femininity. A discourse that masks racial, social class, and gender barriers, reproduces gender stereotypes, but also normalizes discriminatory treatment in the workplace, with entrepreneurship being described as an appropriate alternative for working mothers because it allows them more flexibility.

Green and environmental entrepreneurship is seen as being equivalent [33]. They comprise a subset of entrepreneurship which develops solutions to environmental challenges, promoting social change that does not harm the environment [33]. Kirkwood & Walton [34] propose that green entrepreneurship could be a new business paradigm rather than a subset of entrepreneurship because green entrepreneurs have wider motivations than only eco-friendly products and services. However, green and environmental entrepreneurship can be explained as a subset of sustainable entrepreneurship [35] which will be discussed further below. Ecopreneurs represent a sub-set of green entrepreneurs. They are entrepreneurs who create new businesses that produce goods and services in the environmental sector based on the principles of sustainable development.

Sustainable entrepreneurs have been defined as simultaneously creating positive social and environmental outcomes and as well economic value creation [36] and have been equated with other entrepreneurship concepts, such as ecopreneurship [37,38], green entrepreneurship [39] or environmental entrepreneurship [40]. Indeed, earlier academic work has focused on sustainable development through an environmental perspective, while gradually seeing a convergence with the distinct literature on social entrepreneurship [41]. The booming field of sustainable entrepreneurship—which has been attracting much scientific attention over the last 15 years—comprises interrelated modes of actions [42,43].

Although social entrepreneurship can create important opportunities for sustainable development and make a positive impact on the lives of people, critical viewpoints have also emerged. It has been put forward that many enterprises unjustifiably picture themselves as contributing to sustainable development while transgressing planetary boundaries [44]. Sustainability initiatives, namely pro-social and pro-environmental motivated initiatives, are described as lacking the capacity for action translation [45] with entrepreneurship conceived as a tool to address sustainability issues too largely derived from privileged contexts providing an economic mode of action taking advantage of the neoliberal globalized economy [46].

In the literature, there are many forms of entrepreneurship which are relevant to sustainable development. The types described above are similar but with some variations. Given social entrepreneurship's link to female entrepreneurship, we use this terminology in our article.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse is not neutral, they are active [47] and, rooted in power relations, have political effects that fuel inequalities [48]. Discourse analysis refers to various scientific methodologies which aim to analyze how meaning is created and communicated by semiosis, that is, written, vocal or gestural language [49]. This study adopts critical discourse analysis, a type of discourse

analysis that aims to "understand, denounce and ultimately resist social inequalities" ([50], p. 352) to examine the grand narrative of entrepreneurship. According to Fairclough [49], networks of social practices constitute a social order, and "one aspect of this order is domination: some ways of giving meaning are dominant or traditional in a particular order of discourse, others are marginal, opposing or alternative" ([49], p. 2). In this article, we apply transdisciplinary critical discourse analysis [18,49] by relying on Dey & Steyaert's [24] conceptualization of "grand narratives", "counter-narratives" and "little stories". The process followed in which we have combined critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, and a feminist perspective can be seen in Table 1. The grand narrative represents the dominant narrative that reflects, for example, patriarchy and other hierarchies of domination. The counter-narrative represents the critical narrative.

Dey & Steyaert employ the term "little narratives" to consider the "little narratives of social inventiveness" ([24], p. 97), counteracting the grand narrative in three ways. So-called little narratives make the social visible as far as this is possible, represent experiments at the limit of the grand narratives, and at the same time, they demonstrate the prosaic, everyday character of narratives [24]. Although Dey & Steyaert [24] were unable to go beyond some descriptions of potential little narratives, in the article we use descriptions of entrepreneurship, derived from fieldwork undertaken in Ghana. However, we use the term "local stories" in place of little narratives, following Seferiadis and colleagues because "…there is nothing grander or more important to feminist analysis than the actual, local, lived experiences of actual women" ([51], p. 3).

Table 1. Methodology has been adapted from CDA and narrative analysis (Source: the authors).

Critical Discourse Analysis	Narrative Analysis	Feminist Perspective	Approach in this Article	Where this is Evident in this Article
[49,52]	[24]		[24,49,52]	Section 3
Phase 1: Identification of the social question				
Step 1: Selection of research topic that can be approached by focusing on text			Literature and stories of social entrepreneurship	Section 1
Step 2: Genealogy of past discourses	Grand narratives and counter-narratives	Dominant grand narratives and feminist counter-narratives	Dominant grand narratives and feminist counter narratives	Sections 1, 2 and 5
Phase 2: Selection and analysis of tests				
Step 1: Select appropriate texts	"Little narratives"		Creation of local stories based on fieldwork	Section 6
Step 2: Analysis of the different texts			Analysis of the different texts	Sections 6 and 7
Step 3: Identify discourses in the text, based on past discourses identified in Phase 1.			Identify discourses in the text, based on past discourses identified in Phase 1	Section 7
Phase 3: Describe how the text was created				
Describe how the text was created			Describe how the local stories were created	Section 4
Phase 4: Possible solutions and way forward				
Possible solutions or ways past the dominant discourse in terms of creating new discourses, narratives, and arguments			Possible solutions or ways past the dominant discourse in terms of creating new discourses, narratives, and arguments	Sections 1, 7 and 8
		Possible solutions or ways past the dominant discourse in terms of creating new praxis	Possible solutions or ways past the dominant discourse in terms of creating new praxis	Sections 7 and 8

4. Data Collection

A variety of different data collection methods have been used and they are described below. Field data were collected in Ghana between October 2018 and April 2019 during three different periods of field research for a total of six weeks. Semantic analysis of the field data (transcripts, various documents for example competition website on social entrepreneurship) was carried out

manually from the analysis of the dominant discourses of the literature ("grand narratives", "counter-narratives") enabling the emergence of the local stories.

4.1. Literature Review

This article is based on a review of the literature allowing an analysis of the dominant discourses of social entrepreneurship. This concerns generic literature on social entrepreneurship, other forms of social entrepreneurship described in the previous section, and literature on Ghana which is discussed in the next section.

4.2. Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire with 39 social entrepreneurs was conducted. This was developed during a participatory workshop with 25 men and 14 women during which determinants of performance were developed. Some 55 of the 57 social entrepreneurs included in this research were at least once identified by the same local networking organization, the Ghana Think Foundation, which organizes social entrepreneurship competitions in conjunction with international non-governmental organizations. Not only was this survey carried out in partnership with the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which is a government research institution—with which one of the authors is affiliated, but the first author was also hosted in the home of a social entrepreneur which allowed to make numerous participant observations via of the host social entrepreneur's network made up of social entrepreneurship actors in Ghana. It is thus a survey carried out through the prism of young recognized social entrepreneurs who represent trajectories of success.

4.3. Life Histories

The life histories of 13 women who identified as social entrepreneurs were collected during this research and are the main focus of this paper. We used life histories representing the collection and interpretation of oral testimonies in interviews [53]. These semi-structured interviews aimed to understand the Ghanaian ecosystem of social entrepreneurship, the definitions and criteria of successful performance, as well as the different ways in which social entrepreneurship is defined and positioned within discourses of development and entrepreneurship. These data have been complemented by various sources of information. We draw on a British Council survey of the social entrepreneurship sector in Ghana published in 2018 [54]. Additionally, the websites of organizations identified in this report as catalysts for social entrepreneurship were analyzed. These data were further informed by numerous informal exchanges. The individual interviews were conducted in the respondents' workplaces as far as possible to be able to supplement the data with participant observation. The interviews were conducted in English, recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

5. Social Entrepreneurship in Ghana

The analysis of new economic modes of action mobilizing the concept of social entrepreneurship in Africa is not widespread. One exception concerns a comparative analysis of social entrepreneurs in 19 countries of sub-Saharan Africa and indicates a correlation between high poverty levels and traditional values with higher rates of social entrepreneurship [14]. As Fowler & Marti ([55], p. 1) put it: "African philanthropy" as opposed to "philanthropy in Africa" remains seriously under-studied and often prejudicially interpreted as "traditional". In Ghana, in a context presented as exceptionally favorable to entrepreneurship, the social entrepreneurship sector is booming although it has been shown how a lack of infrastructure can impede social entrepreneurship in the country [56]. A study conducted in 2018 by the British development agency assessed that more than 26,000 social enterprises were identified in Ghana, with 90% of these enterprises having started to operate after 2004 and 47% after 2013 [54]. These companies form the majority in the sectors of education (36%), agriculture and fishing (33%), but also health and social affairs (26%), manufacturing (22%), and services (21%). These entrepreneurs are young: 43% are 25–43 years old, educated, and often return migrants (ibid). While research on sustainable entrepreneurship orientation of formal firms in Ghana shows how it can impact social, environmental, and financial performance [57], it is also informality which has been described as more than "survival activities" but also leading to "creative entrepreneurship" capable of addressing sustainability issues, for example, waste management [58]. Green entrepreneurship in

Ghana is perceived as having the capacity to promote sustainable development [59–61]. Research also has shown that having a higher degree of education, originating from a rural locality, and being female is more conducive to environmental entrepreneurship in Ghana [62].

Women social entrepreneurship can be a poverty alleviation tool used by development NGOs in Ghana [63]. In addition, Ghana is usually presented as conducive to traditional female entrepreneurship with half of all businesses run by women and female-driven entrepreneurship perceived as a catalyst for economic development [64]. However, analysis of types of businesses run by women captures gender inequalities at work. Indeed, 80% of businesses run by women are micro-enterprises, and women entrepreneurs in Ghana have been shown to have more difficulties than men in accessing bank financing and compensate with social capital to leverage resources [65]. In this context, about a third of social enterprises are run by women, and the social enterprise sector employs proportionally more women than the private sector: 31% of full-time employees in social enterprises in Ghana are women and 43% of part-time employees, compared to 25% of women in full or part-time in the private sector [54]. These figures thus raise the question of the ways in which social entrepreneurship allows entrepreneurs to meet their needs and whether it contributes to a more inclusive economic system or, on the contrary, if it reproduces inequalities, in particular gender inequalities. Moreover, a recent study of women social entrepreneurs in Ghana in branches that are associated with "masculine" tasks such as construction work shows how women are subjected to socio-cultural and sexual harassment [66]. In the context of Ghana presented as favorable to social entrepreneurship, it is a question of analyzing how alternative economic modes of action are innovated by women in the country.

5.1. Young People Who Seize Opportunities and Change the World?

The interviews that we conducted with different actors of social entrepreneurship in Ghana but also our analysis of different websites show that social entrepreneurs are referred to by sentences that highlight the notion of "innovation": they are "innovative social enterprises", "social innovators" and "visionaries". The entrepreneurs interviewed mobilize stories that tell how they were able to seize opportunities. These are stories based on discoveries: for example, an entrepreneur discovering baobab oil made in Africa and incorporated into cosmetics during a stay in the USA appears as the key point of her story.

Our survey results also show that many discourses referring to social entrepreneurs highlight the image of a "role model", which "empower the next generation". They are "entrepreneurs who change the rules of the game". Self-stories are mobilized that testify to the strength to overcome difficulties. Some nine of the 13 social entrepreneurs from whom life histories were collected come from very modest backgrounds. Among them, for example, an entrepreneur who had an arm amputated as a child recounts how this influenced her choice to contribute to social issues and therefore to become a social entrepreneur: "I felt I could understand difficult situations." These are also among the social entrepreneurs coming from privileged backgrounds, namely stories that show persistence in the face of setbacks, such as the entrepreneur who tells how she lost her first shipment of agro-food merchandise and the resilience that it was then necessary to demonstrate: "It is about trying and failing and trying and failing." Another entrepreneur who builds houses with natural materials recounts her long learning process with her partner: "digging, making walls, breaking down walls". She recounts her persistence until finally succeeding in finding the right mixture and building her first house. These are local discourses that are consistent with the dominant discourses presenting social entrepreneurs as heroes involved in societal change.

5.2. The Promotion of a Development Model

The social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Ghana includes a number of supporting organizations in the capital city, Accra, including incubators, accelerators, investors, non-profits, NGOs, professional associations, and institutes of higher education, research, forum and networks. Not only does social entrepreneurship appear to be promoted by the government of Ghana but also by various intermediary actors, and local actors who promote social entrepreneurship, supported by actors from the private sector, various foundations, or international organizations. In this context, competitions are organized, role models of social entrepreneurship are identified and promoted (for example via websites or by inviting them to testify at conferences), and access to funding (grants, action funds, loans) is provided. Thus, during pitch days, entrepreneurs try to sell

their idea to investment funds, private companies, intermediary organizations, or international organizations.

The entrepreneurs interviewed are recommended and indicated to the researcher who collected the data through several channels. These entrepreneurs win competitions, carry out radio and television interviews, are solicited by foreign journalists, are invited to testify in schools or embassies, and are selected to participate in international programs. Most of the social enterprises interviewed not only have links with international actors but some social enterprises are founded by foreign students from countries in the global North or by returning migrants. The surveyed population is not only made up of social entrepreneurs with strong social capital and very recognized but also young people promoted by development actors from the global North. Through the support of these young entrepreneurs, it is a development paradigm shift that is promoted.

Various testimonies show how it is the traditional development sector that is thus reconverted into a social enterprise. Like this testimony from an employee of an intermediary organization who explains that it is about facilitating a transformation of economic modes of action because what is at stake is "to prove profitability to donors". In another example, a social entrepreneur who took part in a competition says that she started to think of her social activity as a social enterprise in response to the competition, although she continues to operate her enterprise as a charity and does not currently generate any financial income. She finances her activities entirely from her own funds derived from her employment. Thus, it is local actors linked to actors from the North who support specific profiles of social entrepreneurs and through this, a social entrepreneurship which, positioned in neoliberalism, would gradually replace the non-financially autonomous NGO sector. Whether proving profitability to donors or responding to a competition stimulus, development is facilitated in the domain of social entrepreneurial activity.

6. Local Stories

What is interesting is that often, to address complex problems of sustainable development, the enterprises are developed in activities across sectors (see Table 2). The sectors of activity of the social entrepreneurs that were interviewed include agroecology, the development of local and ecological products within the agro-food value chain, waste recycling, energy technologies for sustainable development, or the development of non-polluting technologies. For example, one entrepreneur project concerns the trade of coconuts in exchange for solar panels through a barter system. Another enterprise has developed baobab oil production linked to micro-credit groups. Another example is a woman facilitating the training of young mothers living in the streets by other young mothers who have already been trained in making bags from waste. Another woman is building earthen buildings for disadvantaged communities, funded by paid training for foreign students from the global North. These initiatives have in common that they have designed a method of generating profits that allows them to have an environmental and social impact.

Table 2. Summarizing the characteristics of the 13 female social entrepreneurs from whom life histories were collected and domains of activities.

Social Enterprise Sector	Age of the Enterprise	Age of the Entrepreneur	Marital Status of the Entrepreneur	Education Level of the Entrepreneur
Agriculture and Food	5	25	Single	Bachelor
Waste Management	9	33	Single	Bachelor
Natural Resources, Building, and Housing	7	32	Relationship, unmarried	Bachelor
Agriculture and Cosmetics	2	30	Single	Bachelor
Agriculture and Energy	2	23	Single	Bachelor
Agriculture and Energy	2	25	Single	Bachelor
Agriculture and Food	3	28	Single	Bachelor
Food	5	45	Married (four children)	Bachelor
Agriculture and Cosmetics	9	25	Single	Bachelor
Cosmetics	8	59	Married (three children)	Bachelor
Education	4	21	Single	Bachelor
Education	4	23	Single	Bachelor
Education	3	28	Single	Bachelor

6.1. Reproducing Inequalities

The women entrepreneurs encountered during this study all explain they have difficulty in making any revenue from their enterprises. An entrepreneur explains, for example, that she has the skills to manage her business on the social side, consisting in making products for vulnerable people from recycled material, but not the commercial skills to sell the products. Waiting for the time and the money, these entrepreneurs have different responsibilities. For example, a young woman explains that her social enterprise is at the "ideation stage" and that she won a competition with this idea, obtained seed funding, and had started contacting different partners four years ago. However, her social enterprise has remained "just an idea" at the moment; it is a project "on hold". Another entrepreneur explains that she needed to find a job to save money but that since being employed her social enterprise is, also, "on hold". She even apologizes for the fact that she has taken a job, thus describing a trajectory that she perceives as contrary to the imagination of the entrepreneur, a fighting woman who is unstoppable. In this way, employment is an obstruction to achieving her dream but a necessary financial security that will also allow continuing the establishment of the social enterprise through the provision of funding. In another example, two women entrepreneurs who developed together a social enterprise project explain: "We want to be employed full time because we know that the project will have problems" hereby showing how risky engaging in entrepreneurship is seen. And several women entrepreneurs explain that they do not have a salary themselves now, although they have several employees. In these cases, social enterprises which are currently not generating any revenue are therefore more or less equivalent to NGOs which depend on volunteering. This inability to generate an income is perceived as limiting the development of enterprises.

The women entrepreneurs surveyed all mentioned that they began to undertake an activity from childhood or teenage years. These activities are often presented as the beginnings of their social enterprises, they tell stories of themselves with this entrepreneurial spirit from childhood. In addition, all the women interviewed during the survey in Ghana described themselves with the force that had to be demonstrated, to fight against gender discrimination. Some say that they impose themselves on men by doing the tasks associated with the masculine: "They must see our efforts, otherwise they will devalue you, they say 'oh you are a woman'". It is also discourses that show recognition of the ability to extricate oneself from gender stereotypes. For example, a social entrepreneur in the agriculture sector who received training from the government to drive a tractor explains her pride in being observed because she takes a role that is outside female stereotyped work: "I can drive a tractor, so people make videos of me." Other women say they ignore the remarks or barriers. An entrepreneur explains that she suffers from discrimination both because she is a woman and because she is physically disabled and that she decided to stop blending in with social conventions but to assert herself: "Before, I wanted first and foremost to please people, but I'm vocal ... I just wanted to be me ... I said to myself: it's going to be hard anyway ... so come on, assert yourself and have fun!"

6.2. Entrepreneurship as a Necessity

In contrast to entrepreneurship as an opportunity, these are also stories that tell entrepreneurship as a necessity. Being an entrepreneur means working on her own, and as a woman entrepreneur explains, this allows you to have time and flexibility. She explains that she started to "have time for my house and my baby". Social entrepreneurship is thus an activity which makes it possible to conform to the activities of the sphere of social reproduction, adhering to gender roles. These are women who work independently and flexibly to be able to reconcile professional and family life. As Clark Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan [28] explain, the flexibility of a self-employed activity in contrast to salaried employment may create an additional burden for women who will earn less money and shoulder more of traditional family responsibilities, thus reinforcing the gender division of domestic labor. Social entrepreneurship in the Ghanaian context thus appears not only to be spaces of celebration where individuals engage in world-changing social innovations but also spaces where gender roles are reproduced. Most social enterprises can be found in traditionally female sectors and some women take a very critical stance on the discourses associated with female social entrepreneurship such as this entrepreneur working in "women empowerment". In general, my main challenge is to be a woman. It affected me. (…) Sometimes, you introduce yourself and you are asked "What are you doing?", "I work with rural women." And it seems so cliché that every woman works for the empowerment of women.

An organization training entrepreneurs in the technology sector explains that "some women pushback the discourse of male-led technologies, many of these women do not use the gender discourse. They explain that they do so because they don't want to be used as a "role model", and rhetorically ask "Do I have to be the poster child for women in business?" This shows how it is specifically the discourses that are being identified by women in Ghana as problematic when they want to engage in entrepreneurship, at the same time, they do not want to be constrained by gendered roles but also, they do not want to be instrumentalized.

6.3. Social and Symbolic Capital

These highly educated young people invest heavily in networking opportunities. Social entrepreneurs interviewed develop support networks, especially young entrepreneurs looking for networking. For example, an entrepreneur, who comes from a modest background, explains while recounting her trajectory how her strong social capital played an important role: several NGOs, the deputy of her region, a teacher or the librarian of the campus where she studied, a contact at the American embassy... all of them helped her, in particular financially (via grants or jobs), which enabled her to study and get involved in the development sector. A characteristic that seems predominant specifically for the women interviewed during the survey.

There is also not only the prize money associated with social entrepreneurship competitions but also the fame—that is to say the associated symbolic capital—that is appropriated. A social enterprise having won a competition, carried by a woman as an individual entrepreneur during that competition, is in fact a project of an organization made up of several students who have benefited from several university programs promoting the emergence of social enterprises. The organization is headed by a young man who competes in numerous competitions and programs in different West African countries, including programs developed by international institutions, but none of them goes to a development stage, all remaining ideas winning recognition. This helps strengthen one's *curriculum vitae* as one female interviewee put it: "You need impact stories to get to college, or for example, the UN." Another social entrepreneur explains: "To be employed, you need an out-of-school experience, they look at what you have done: research, volunteering." As another entrepreneur explains, she seeks to be spotted by international organizations: "I'm waiting for the moment when organizations like UNDP find me." In the study conducted by Richardson [54], 43% of women social entrepreneurs in Ghana expressed an ambition to work for the government, a company, or a large NGO. These women thus position social entrepreneurship as a path, a gateway, to other sectors.

In their stories, the women express the search for social recognition that is part of the responsibility to contribute to their family and their community. An entrepreneur explains that she is recognized by her family and her community: "Sometimes I go to the market, and I take a walk, some people call me Madame. I like this." There is also official recognition. The social enterprises we surveyed are all, except for one, officially registered (or in the process of being registered) with the Registrar General's Department. This is also illustrated by the official roles assigned: There is the president, project vice-president, finance vice-president, R&D vice-president, communication vice-president, and partnership vice-president. This social recognition is a symbolic capital which opens access to jobs, networks, and financing. Our survey shows that young Ghanaian people appropriate the model of social entrepreneurship and in particular the methods of promoting the model, to strengthen their symbolic and social capital.

6.4. Social Innovations Rooted in Local Knowledge

The women entrepreneurs interviewed expressed their objective of "having a social impact". The women mention that they cannot define their business model in advance, as there are cycles of iterations in the development of social enterprises. These innovations require ideas and knowledge: knowledge is indeed a priority, and as one entrepreneur mentions it is "the biggest challenge". Businesses are based on local knowledge, for example, traditional knowledge. Women entrepreneurs seek to have a project with an impact. The impact is perceived as capacity building, based on the knowledge that is shared so that beneficiaries can "make their own choice" or an entrepreneur explains having adapted her technology so that it can be "mastered and reproduced locally". In this process, knowledge is shared, made available and accessible. These social enterprises are part of an idea of sustainability, they are development models that want to

be sustained throughout time: "We want to create a support chain (...) when we are gone, we know that they can do it alone" as another entrepreneur explains.

Women entrepreneurs have a discourse that highlights their "passion". However, the entrepreneurs questioned all must balance different priorities and different responsibilities. For example, one entrepreneur explains that there are slowdowns and pauses which punctuate her social enterprise, making it possible to rethink the model according to the capacities and to adapt it according to competencies. Another entrepreneur explains that her main objective is the social impact for the women with whom she works, and, if she does not have the capacity to invest herself, she prefers to put her social enterprise on hold because she does not have the capacity to invest, and does not trust anyone else to have the same concern for women: "I want to protect women, I'm afraid they are not selling a good enough price. It must be win-win." This puts forward a certain form of responsibility for one's actions, expressing an absence of compromise on the type of social impact.

Emerging women social entrepreneurs in Ghana are developing forms of appropriation in order to develop a career allowing them both to meet their needs (sometimes via a job in another sector) and to develop solutions to societal and environmental problems.

7. Discussion

The research data show how the discourses of actors in the global North on social entrepreneurship influence discourse and practices at the local level. These discourses, like those of entrepreneurship, are part of the grand narrative of modernity where development is progress [23]. To the extent that "non-profit organizations are invited to reduce their expectations of funding social activities through taxes and generate more self-financing of their activities", Fowler [9] questions how social entrepreneurship can provide a new framework for non-governmental development organizations and "development beyond aid" and how it is innovations within the market that are promoted rather than within society.

The survey focused on educated young Ghanaian people who are developing social enterprises with determination but also creativity. These young people, however, develop a number of social enterprises which remain at the ideation stage, where they fail to become viable despite ingenious models rooted in local knowledge. These young Ghanaians, who represent an educated segment of the population, appropriate the methods of promotion of the system and thus develop their social capital and their symbolic capital. Like Hamilton [67] who applies discourse and gender analysis to entrepreneurship and shows that identities are both "contested and legitimized", this survey sheds light on the ways in which young entrepreneurs, especially women, oscillate between resistance (mobilizing counter-discourses) and appropriation (legitimizing discourses—in particular of an individual development hero, and henceforth models).

This research shows that some social entrepreneurs are indeed founders of NGOs that they are trying to reclassify into social enterprises, while commercial expectations represent a strong barrier. Therefore, these young people turn away from their initiatives and put their energy into a salaried job and a career. It raises a question of the extent to which social entrepreneurs are capable of remaining engaged in what they frame as their "ideals". There are the contextual challenges of economic insecurity, family pressures to succeed, or even survivability. However, those who end up venturing into social entrepreneurship as a stepping stone to move out of it may be seen as "hackers" who appropriate the development system available.

Thus, if these young social entrepreneurs appropriate the dominant discourses on social entrepreneurship, we also see that these discourses direct these young Ghanaians towards a certain form of resistance within the market. In this context, young social entrepreneurs retain their desire to positively impact society without compromise, and social entrepreneurship is one of the means of meeting their objectives. At the same time, they innovate within the market, subverting the rules of the market. In this way, it is the very concept of social entrepreneurship that is appropriated and subverted. The social impact can be attained through the enterprise or employment in a development organization, while funding may come from employment in the for-profit sector, development sector, or through funding from the development sector. What remains unnegotiated is how they engage with addressing social and environmental problems. However, far from relying on traditional mechanisms, it is philanthropy that involves creative processes.

These accounts show how different objectives are balanced for social entrepreneurs. The enterprises are often conceived with activities which have the inherent potential of social and environmental impacts combined with revenue generation, which implies that more output in one

domain impacts positively the other domain. The conception of these enterprises is *coherent* with instruments for evaluating the impact of social enterprises such as social return on investments (which evaluates in a dichotomy cost *versus* benefit) or like the social multiplier (which incorporates indirect and induced synergy effect). However, the evaluation of social impact is faced with complexity at the computational level (relating to the process of mathematical calculation), but also at the systemic (relating to the system), epistemic (relating to the knowledge), and axiological (relating to the values) level [68]. Moreover, the tools for measuring social impact have emerged from the need for management information concerning socially responsible activities carried out by the private for-profit sector [69]. Our analysis shows how young entrepreneurs engage in social enterprises with a commitment to social and environmental goals, and with objectives consistent with the non-for-profit sector. Alix & Baudet [70] describe that the quest for funding in social entrepreneurship could be leading to a restructuring of the enterprises and an avoidance of innovations, with entrepreneurs focusing on activities allowing obtaining good results at the level of the indicators. Our data show a different picture. Instead, we see how social entrepreneurs navigate between the for-profit framework to evaluate their impact and finance externally their activities, and the social entrepreneurship framework from a for-profit perspective to sell their "idea" and capture funding via an appropriation of the discourses, funding (and evaluation) instruments.

8. Conclusions

Ghana is experiencing fervent social entrepreneurship much in line with the conceptual elaboration of what social entrepreneurship is in the literature. There is an orientation towards development goals and objectives in the social entrepreneurial activities. The youth are strongly represented in the population of social entrepreneurs and so are women. However, there are challenges facing these entrepreneurs including the reality of the economic unsustainability of the activities. The dependence on external sources of funding (where external simply is not from within the social enterprise itself) means the social entrepreneur must resort to various ways to generate financial resources. Securing a salaried job then becomes a veritable option. Fall & Guèye ([71], p. 111) consider that the social and solidarity economy constitutes "the place par excellence for the invention of new productive and redistributive value" in West Africa within which the dominant economic model of modernity is not rejected but domesticated. The young Ghanaian social entrepreneurs operate a domestication of the system of promotion of social entrepreneurship. In this context of the grand narrative of social entrepreneurship as a development pathway promoted by the development actors of the global North, and widely promoted locally by intermediary organizations, the article analyses how young Ghanaians oscillate between forms of resistance within the market and forms of appropriation or domestication of a system rooted in neoliberalism.

Based on the local stories, the social entrepreneurship of young women in Ghana does not appear to be contributing to sustainable development. Most of the enterprises do not go beyond the ideation stage while the fame of winning social entrepreneurship competitions is used by individuals to build social and symbolic capital for employment by the public sector and the United Nations. The social enterprises of the 13 women studies yielded small or non-existent economic benefits for the entrepreneurs, demonstrating the limitations of this framework in the Ghanaian context. The young women are "hacking" social entrepreneurship for their own purposes as it is one of the opportunities open to them, but it does not appear to lead to sustainable enterprises. While the social entrepreneurship sector in Ghana is seen as booming, it is in reality a survival activity for women who are still subject to gender inequalities and social-cultural harassment. Although feminist scholars already see the limitations of social entrepreneurship, current conceptualizations of this phenomenon do not include this "hacked" nature of social entrepreneurship in which the opportunities for deriving a profit are seriously limited, making social entrepreneurship an economic activity with limited viability. The different problems these women face show how they are struggling to develop viable enterprises while prioritizing social and environmental impacts. This can be seen through the lens of women "sacrificing" their well-being for the community which is the unpaid reproductive work of the private sphere. As the work of Destremau [72] shows in the context of development projects, there is thus an additional exploitation of women that takes place through their involvement in social enterprises. Hence, social enterprising cannot be seen as an alternative model of development which reduces discrimination and exploitation. Instead, the example of Ghana reinforces claims in the literature

that women social entrepreneurs are restricted to less lucrative businesses. New research is needed to explore whether the hacker phenomenon is also consistent with men's involvement in social entrepreneurship in Ghana and whether it is also visible among men and women social entrepreneurs in other global contexts. The results of this research have practice implications: If social entrepreneurship is not working for entrepreneurs in LMICs, it is important to question whether development organizations should continue to advocate for its use.

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Author Contributions

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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