



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Female entrepreneurship in West Africa - ESRC DTP Joint Studentship in the Midlands Graduate School

Aston University and University of Birmingham

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), with the first intake of students to begin in October 2017.

One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Joint Studentship between Aston University (where the student will be registered) and the University of Birmingham to commence in October 2017.

Contemporary research such as the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)¹ shows that female entrepreneurship is more common in Africa than in the rest of the world. This is particularly true of West Africa, which has higher rates of female entrepreneurship than the rest of Africa. Historical research shows that this has a long tradition, with women having been perhaps even more dominant as entrepreneurs before colonialism.

This doctoral research project aims to establish both historical and contemporary reasons for the greater prevalence of female entrepreneurship in West Africa. It is important to understand this because a) entrepreneurship is an important driver of economic growth and job creation, and b) gender has been recognized as an important factor in driving social development, inclusive growth and intergenerational progress. However, high levels of entrepreneurial activity can also be an indicator of poverty and inequality. This doctoral research project should identify the complex reasons behind the predominance of women in West African entrepreneurship.

Research questions:

- Why do women in West Africa chose to become entrepreneurs more commonly than in other areas of the world?
- What drives these choices: necessity, cultural attitudes, lack of alternative opportunities, historical tradition, gender stereotypes?

The student to be recruited to this project would develop these research questions further in line with her/his expertise and interest. The exact choice of case context (country / region) would be a matter of negotiation with the student researcher. Applicants who are invited for interview will be

¹ E.g., Global Entrepreneurship 2014 Women's Report (2015). <http://gemconsortium.org/report/49281> GEM Sub-Saharan Africa Report (2015) <http://www.gemconsortium.org/report/48601>

ask to indicate the direction in which they would like to take this project, and how they would develop the topic.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Joint Studentship application form [available online here](#), together with a cover letter and a CV and along with two references email this to Elizabeth Bridges e.bridges@aston.ac.uk.

Application deadline: Monday 27 February 2017

Interviews will be held Tuesday 7 March 2017 at Aston Business School

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/mgsdtp/studentships/eligibility/

Informal enquiries about the research or Aston Business School prior to application can be directed to Professor Stephanie Decker s.decker@aston.ac.uk.