Parents’ Gender Role and Its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency

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Introduction

1.1 Background

After eight years of activities in Europe (France, Germany and Belgium) as voluntary worker for social issues in Christian institutions, I was concerned in a social issue in my fatherland, Cameroon. Juvenile delinquency, the set of infringement perpetrated by a minor (Baloma, 1), seized my attention. It seized my attention because during my activities as a voluntary worker in Europe, I was deeply moved by the cases of children who because of a poor and or bad relationship with their parents started to develop anti social behaviors. I wanted to know if this could also be the case in Cameroon.

*The World Youth Report 2003* of the UN writes, “The process of globalization … have led to an increase in criminal activity (206)”. Also, Baloma makes us understand that juvenile delinquency is an increasing phenomenon in Cameroon (1). Even if I have heard in several TV programs in Cameroon that the Ministry of Social Affairs in Cameroon is fighting against this plague, despite all my efforts, I have not been able to find information or statistical work in the domain for the specific case of Cameroon.

Was someone born delinquent as some people in the Cameroonian society believe? According to Hofstede, “The source of one’s mental programs lie within the social environments in which one grew up and collected one’s life experiences (4)”. This suggests that someone was not born delinquent, but someone becomes delinquent and this delinquency is constructed in the environment a child grew up. Yet, it is known that in most cases, a child grows up in his family where he is controlled by his parents. This implies that the identity of a child or how a child sees, or practices his interaction with the society will, in most cases, be constructed with the interaction and control of his parents. I learn from oral traditions in Cameroon that control over children was more efficient in the past because when a parent could not make it, the communal spirit that existed between people, tribes and families allowed children to benefit of the control of a relative, but the communal spirit has decreased in Cameroon with the social change that occurred. In addition to this oral tradition, *The World Youth Report 2003* of the UN writes, “The informal traditional control exercised by adults (including parents, relatives and teachers) over young people has gradually declined, and adequate substitutes have not been provided. Lack or insufficiency of parental supervision is one of the strongest predictors of delinquency” (199); this is explicable because a lack of a parental control or the absence of a father may lead a child to find a surrogate father through peer groups who may teach him to become delinquent (8). Also, *The World Youth Report 2003* of the UN suggests further that the “contemporary Western family structure constitutes one of the most important factors associated
with the increase in juvenile delinquency in the past 50 years (199)”. This is also comprehensible because the extended family have been replaced by the nuclear family (199) that prevents a child to have appropriate control, protection and care of an adult member of his family (relative) if his parents tend to be absent (might be because they are too busy with their job). Probably someone will ask where the link between the Western family structure and Cameroon lies. The link comes from the colonization of Germany, and the governance made by France and Great Britain before Cameroon independence 50 years ago. Since then, Cameroon has been influenced in his multiple cultures by the Western way of living that was introduced to it. Indeed, in a report showing the changes occurred after colonization in Central Africa, where Cameroon is located, “Feminism in Africa” states, “The three influential colonial spheres (church/mission, governance and trade) each had their own disruptive influence on traditional power and gender roles.” In addition to this, “Cameroon Timeline” helps to understand that after colonization, Cameroon became a nation state with laws governing the country and institutions inspired from the Western culture that colonized Cameroon. The notion of a nuclear family was also introduced in the Cameroonian culture, bringing an approach of individualism that is purely Western oriented. The article, “Cameroon”, presents the conclusion of a study, which suggests that the social change in Cameroon (poverty) “tends to accelerate the trend toward nuclearization of the family.”

Is there any link between parents’ gender roles and juvenile delinquency in a nuclear family? I believe there is. Indeed, Cota-Robles & Gamble show in the result of their study (“Parent-Adolescent Processes and Reduced Risk for Delinquency: The Effect of Gender for Mexican American Adolescents”) the effect of parents’ gender roles on juvenile delinquency in a family. I use the Mexican example because Mexico has similar traditional gender roles with people of Central Africa. Concerning gender roles in Central Africa, “Feminism in Africa” reveals, “Traditionally women are more associated with the private spheres (children, home, …), whereas men are more seen in connection with public life en the ensuing social roles. (3)” Revelation related to the Mexican example because Frias-Armenta and McCloskey write, “Mexican family structure is usually traditional and patriarchal, men's status within the family increases as a function of his occupational status. … most women kept the traditional role of housewife (137)”. I know that the link I try to draw here between Mexican’s gender roles and Cameroonian’s might not be seen as deep enough, but I must confess that I have not been able to find precise information about gender roles in Cameroon that can fit to this research paper. What I found was more related to gender roles in rural areas especially in connection with farmers, and it is not what is useful for this research that is meant for gender roles in the case of the education of children. I went to the Ministry of Social Affairs and
to the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family, but I have not been able to find information about the traditional role of the father and the mother in Cameroon. Though the article 212 of the civil code describes the father as the head of the family, when I asked to the delegate of the Littoral Region of the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family if the Cameroonian state defines the meaning of the head of the family, she told me that each family has to define it based on its own culture. After more than one year or research for documentation on traditional parents’ gender role in Cameroon, I was not able to find any information. This is also understandable because Cameroon is a 50 years old country with 200 tribes that is still in the process of building its national culture. Up till today, it is not easy to talk about a Cameroonian national culture in some domains, but it is most common to talk of Beti’s culture, Sawa’s culture, Bamilékés’ culture that are tribes in Cameroon. The only resource I could have and I decided rely on was my own experience as a Cameroonian who lived 23 years in Cameroon and 19 years in Douala. In the environment I have lived in Douala, and in the majority of the families I had interaction with, some fathers tended to be absent in the education of their children, or they tended to be authoritarian. They mostly gave the argument that it is the way they have lived with their fathers, and suggested that the education of children is the women’s role and not the men’s. I strongly believe that fathers’ attitudes influenced by their cultural convictions do not respond to the need and expectations of Cameroonian children nowadays. The UNICEF makes sure to inform children of their rights as children. For example, in the articles 12 of the children rights, it is stipulated that children have the right of expression, and the right to have their opinion taking into account; rights that normally restrain the authoritarian character of the father. In the article 18 it shows the expectancy of both parents to share responsibilities in bringing-up their children. All these render obsolete for fathers to practice their roles based on their cultural convictions because with these methods, children will lack the appropriate control and fathers’ presence they feel and they know (through information of their rights as children and their parent’s duties) they need. Moreover, still in my observation as a Cameroonian, some mothers complained and started to preach on emancipation that will enhance their condition, and will prevent them to live the same fate of their mothers who underwent their husbands’ tyranny and also underwent difficult cultural expectations. In this emancipation, some felt free to ask for a divorce from their husband if he becomes polygamous. In some cases of divorce, women abandoned the children who could not also benefit from the presence of their fathers anchored into cultural convictions. In the process of emancipation, women also started to complain that they should not be the sole caretaker of their children, and they gave up in their educational role in order to force the men to be also involved in the education of their children; attitude that did not really work, because
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men remained adamant about their cultural convictions of men’s role and men’s position in the family. Women’s emancipation that prevents them to be present in their children life’s education; men’s cultural convictions that prevent them to be present in their children life’s education, or that prevent them to give the appropriate care a child may need, and the notion of a nuclear family will make a child to lack or have insufficient parental or relative supervision he needs and this is a strong predictor to juvenile delinquency (The World Youth Report 2003 of the UN, 199)

1.2 Aim and Purpose of the Research

The information above helps me to understand that the better way to comprehend the genesis of juvenile delinquency in Cameroon nowadays is to focus on the family in which a child grows up and precisely on the role played by his parents according to their gender - gender roles that, I believe, have been primarily influenced by past cultural convictions, after by the colonization and gradually by the globalization -. This suggests that it would be more useful to look at what has changed in the parents’ gender roles from the period before colonization to the period after colonization. In order to have access to information concerning parents’ gender roles before the colonization, I will learn the oral traditions said by local chiefs who are guardians of customs. For a more strategic approach, I decide to conduct a study in Douala, the largest city in Cameroon, the commercial capital of the country and the city where I have spent the major part of my life.

Hence, my research question is,

What are the parents’ gender roles before and after the colonization and its effects on juvenile delinquency in Douala-Cameroon?

1.3 Theories

1.3.1 Power-Control Theory developed by Hagan

According to Hagan et al in the article “The Class Structure of Gender and Delinquency: Toward a Power-Control Theory of Common Delinquent Behavior”, power-control theory is the part combination of power theories and control theories. Power theory “focus on relations of dominance that derive from control over the means of production”, and control theory “focus on the relations of dominance established within the family”- (1154). The presence of power and the absence of control contribute to the conditions that can make adolescents deviate (1154-1155). Also, in their research, Hagan et al prove that “mothers are more instrumental than fathers in controlling their children” (1172). In another article “Clarifying and Extending Power-Control Theory” Hagan et al predict that in patriarchal families where power belong to the father, the control of the mother is weak on the
male child but is more present on the female child. This will explain why boys tend to be more delinquents than girls (1029-1030). I intend to use this theory to support the idea that mothers have to be present for the education of their children, but also to suggest the need of fathers to be as instrumental as mothers in controlling their children.

1.3.2 Social Bonding Theory developed by Hirschi

In *Causes of Delinquency*, Hirschi makes us understand that delinquents behavior occur when someone social bond and the attachment parents-child is weak or broken. This social bond is made up of four elements:

“Attachment emphasizes sensitivity to the opinion of others; as Hirschi explains, ‘If a person does not care about the wishes and expectations of others … he is to that extent not bound by the norms. He is free to deviate’

Commitment: The extent to which an individual is committed to conventional lines of behavior determines how much they have to lose…

Involvement: The more an individual is involved or engrossed in conventional activities, the less time they will have to indulge in crime.

Belief: People vary in the extent to which they believe they should obey societal rules, ‘… the less a person believes he should obey the rules, the more likely he is to violate them’” (qtd. in Taylor, 372-373)

For the purpose of this study, I intend to concentrate more on the Attachment [to the parents] and the role they have to play to strengthen these four elements of social bonding in the life of their children.

1.3.3 Life Course Theory by Elder

Elder believes that “the life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime (3).” He also asserts, “Historical forces shape the social trajectories of family, education, and work, and they in turn influence behavior and particular lines of development (2).” He adds, “Individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances (4).” Even though Elder is writing here about the historical force at a macro level, as he takes the example of the Great depression and the World War II, I intend to use historical force here at a macro and micro level. The micro level will involve the history of a family, and I will take the case
of a monogamous home that suddenly becomes polygamous. On the other hand, the macro level will involve the history of Cameroon where I believe that after colonization some parents lost their reference marks and the perception of their roles became disturbed.

1.4 Literature Review

“Feminism in Africa” lists some factors introduced with colonization in Central Africa - where Cameroon is located-, among them: “Catholicism with the introduction of monogamy,… western marital law according rights of ownership to women which the traditional rituals could not guarantee so that traditional matters of ascendancy were threatened; and lastly the new legal systems which recognized the independence of African women” (5). These factors brought new perspectives into Central Africans’ understandings of gender roles, and created a disturbance in the harmony of the family. Gbonigi describes the disturbance that the introduction of monogamy brought by the colonizers who did not take in consideration the African culture, and who brought a gospel that was “culturally-conditioned Europeans” (79) preaching monogamy and the notion of nuclear-family. He cites in his article the example of a man who the mother became a prostitute in order to be able to take care of him and his brethren after his father became Christian. Indeed, his father who had several wives was obliged, because of his Christian faith, to “drop every wife except the first, and his mother was the last. (80).” Furthermore, based on the supreme court of Cameroun1, there is a cause for divorce if a husband who previously engaged himself for a monogamous marriage takes another wife. These awake the awareness of women who discover that they can claim their right of being the unique wife of their husbands and it gives them the right to divorce if the husband does not respect his first engagement to be monogamous. The debate “Que feriez-vous si votre mari décidait d’épouser une autre femme?” seen on a Cameroonian web site, reveals Cameroonian women who will decide to leave their husbands and to divorce if their husbands take another wife. The civil code, partly rooted in the French civil code, as “Cameroon – Judicial System” mentions, and introduced with the birth of the Cameroonian nation state brings also new perspectives in the parents’ gender roles. For example, the article 213 requires the man to work with the woman to ensure the moral and financial safety of the household as well as the children’s education, and the article 215 of the same civil code gives the right to a judge to allow a woman to have another place of residence for her and the children if the husband’s choice is a threat for the family.

1 “arrêt” n°76 of the January 27th 1970
1.5 Hypotheses

I have deduced my research to three hypotheses:

1. Colonization that brought Christianity, Education and the notion of nation state that introduces a civil code, would have disturbed parents’ perceptions of their gender roles; and, by so doing, also disturbed the harmony of the traditional family - disturbance that would lead some parents to become absents and, by so doing, contributes in increasing the rate of juvenile delinquency.

2. Fathers who are still deep anchored into their traditional cultural convictions could no longer meet the present emotional and controlling needs of their children - attitude that could lead to an increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency.

3. Women’s emancipation influenced by the Western culture - that could, in some cases, lead mothers to be absent in their children’s life - might lead a child to lack appropriate care, love and control, and this might lead to an increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency.

For this research paper, I will present the methods used to conduct this research that are both quantitative and qualitative, and I will present the results of my methods in the next chapter. Finally, I will discuss the result of my studies by evaluating if my hypotheses have been confirmed, by analyzing them with the theories and the literature review and by making a synthesis of all the elements used in this research paper.

2. Method

The book I used to guide me in the process of my research was Social Research Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches of Lawrence Neuman. I have combined qualitative to quantitative methods to conduct this research that was done at different levels. I interviewed a sample of 62 minors that is 31 delinquents and 31 non delinquents. I also interviewed two local chiefs - representing what I judged as relevant tribes based on the information received from minors - a pastor from a Christian church; an imam of the Islam religion; and finally, I have interviewed a social worker who has been working for 30 years at the Ministry of Social Affairs for cases concerning juvenile delinquency.
2.1 Minors’ interview

2.1.1 Before the interview

I wrote the survey questions that was the same for all the minors (delinquents or not delinquents). I tried to ask the questions in simple English or French; taking in consideration that depending on the level of education of the interviewee, I might need to explain my questions. The questionnaire was a guideline to receive information from minors concerning their parents’ region of origin in order to determine their ethnicity, their parents’ level of education (I asked for the highest level of education between the father and the mother), their parents’ socio economic status that was subjectively determined, their parents’ matrimonial regime (this was to determine if it was polygamous home or monogamous home), their parents’ religion, the presence of their father and mother in their education, and the state of their home (broken or not broken home). This information was meant to be used to perform a statistical testing. I also had questions that could not be quantified and could not be used for a statistical testing; and these were, to determine the role the parents have played or not played, to know if these roles (played or not played) had an repercussion on their present status (delinquent or not delinquent) and to know their interpretation and expectations of their parents’ gender roles. My strategy to have a sample of delinquents’ minors was to go to the Central Prison of Douala and to interview minors who acknowledge that they have committed a crime. I had to apply for an authorization of the Vice Prime Minister in Charge of Justice to conduct this survey in Prison, which I did and I received after several weeks of negotiations with civil servants who needed to know if I do not have any hidden motivation aside my academic research. As for non delinquents’ minors, my sample was found through people that I know, and who could recommend me a minor who they know is not delinquent.

2.1.2 Carrying out the interview

I used a book, a pen and a Dictaphone (the Dictaphone was used the last day for the purpose of a film documentary) to record the information collected during the interviews. I was dressed in a way to appear teenage and relaxed; it was with the intention to make them feel relaxed and to allow them to talk to me with ease, that is without having the impression that I am inaccessible. It is important to note that in prison I was really careful with my dress because some dress might have caused me a huge prejudice. For example, before reaching the minors’ district, I had to take the corridor of prisoners who are sentenced to death, these prisoners do not have anything to lose, since

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2 See the attached copy of the questionnaire in the Appendix A
they know that their case is closed, and a provocative dress or a dress that shows just a small part of my body either being my arms or my legs might have pushed one of them to rape me or try to rape me even if I was escorted by a guardian. Even with my dress that was descent, I received threats of some prisoners. They regularly threatened to rape me, and to wound my face. Being escorted by a guardian was not a guarantee not to be raped or wounded because it happens that the prisoners surrounded me, creating a distance and a wall between the guardian and me. In this situation, they might do whatever they want or at least start to do whatever they want before the guardian succeeds to stop them; and in some cases, it would be a cohort of guardians that could have the possibility to stop them. In this situation, it was important to stay calm; it was important not to show that I am intimidated and at the same time try not to intimidate them, but it was important to continue my way regardless of who is in front of me. My interaction with minors in prison was not easy. Even if I had to be relaxed and friendly with them, I also had to be strict if necessary. It sometimes happened that a minor sees in me a potential girlfriend; in such a case, I had to find a way to centre the interview. Before starting the interview with minors in prison, I gave them information about me, and the purpose of the interview; asking them to feel free to ask me any question if they wanted to. I always tried to find a way to be alone with minors and talk with them in privacy; but in prison, even if I had a room to discuss with each minor, I made sure that the door is half closed, half opened. I assured them that the information received will be strictly confidential. I showed that I was available if they needed to confide in someone; it was really important because when they felt that they could confide in me, they could open themselves more than I could have thought. I was also ready to give them advices when they needed to. This strengthened my relation with them, and it sometimes happened that someone tells me lies, but the day after or some days after comes to me, to tell me the truth. I made sure that they see in me a big sister, who does not judge them, but who understands them regardless of the crime they have committed; be it murder, rape, robbery or whatever. I also made sure that I respect them as I wished to be respected in return by them. I rendered them some services, like calling their family members to deliver messages. I sometimes played a role of a mediator between their families and them. This was really important and motivated them to approach me and always smile when they see me coming. It helped those who were skeptical to be curious to participate and to get to know the lady their peers loved to speak with. I used the same method with non delinquents’ minors. I recorded all the data received in my book, and when it happens that the interview turned out to be a confidence, I consciously closed the book, left my pen aside and listened. After listening, I asked for their permission to note in my book what they told me if I felt
that it was important for the purpose of my study, and I explained the importance to note it in my book.

Back home, I entered the data in my computer and rechecked them to make sure that I did not forget to mention something, or I did not do any mistake. If I discovered a mistake that I could not resolve, I went back to the field to ask the respondent what I needed to know. The survey was conducted from September 1st 2009 to December 27th 2009.

2.2 The Statistical Testing

I used the information concerning the ethnicity of the parents, their socio-economic status, their matrimonial regime, their level of education, their presence in their children’s life education, and the state of their home (broken home or not broken) to perform a statistical testing with the help of a statistical engineer; we used software PASW Statistic 18 to perform it. Region, Socio-Economic Status, Matrimonial Status, Home, Level of Education of the Parents, Father’s Presence and Mother’s Presence were independent variable and Delinquency was the dependant variable.

The Table1 below represents the coding used for my statistical testing:

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<td>Unknown = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamy = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamy = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent Father = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Father = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Education Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University = 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The value unknown is meant for information that minors did not know about their parents. In the graphics of the result’s section it is marked as DK.
Socio Economic Status

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<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>3</td>
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Region:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>5</td>
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Home

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Broken</td>
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Mother Presence

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<th>Code</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Mother</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Delinquency

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Coding of Variables

2.2.1 Logistic Regression Analysis

I will use the regression results to determine the most significant effect among each variable on the dependent variable (Delinquency)…. This effect on delinquency is measured by a standardized regression coefficient (B) … (369).

2.2.2 Statistical Significance

“Statistical significance means that results are not likely to be due to chance factors. It indicates the probability of finding a relationship in the sample when there is none in the population”. A level of significance has to be given in order to determine when the results are expected to be due to chance factors. If for example I determine that the results are significant at the .01 level, it means that result with .01 as a level of significance is due to chance factor only 1 in 100 times (370-371). For the purpose of this study, I have decided to limit the level of significance at .15.
2.2.3 Chi-Square

“The chi-square⁴ is the more precise way to tell whether there is an association between two variables...(372).” The more the value of a chi-square approaches 0, the bigger the independency between two variables exists. It is important to note that Chi-square does not measure the effect of a variable on another. Instead, it measures the association between two variables. For example, if it is shown that there is a relationship between the matrimonial status polygamy and delinquency, it indicates that it is very more likely to see delinquents’ children in polygamous homes than in monogamous home, but it does not indicate that polygamous home has an effect on delinquency.

2.3 Proportion and Observation

I used the data received to compute the proportion of delinquent child according to their region of origin. This calculation was made based on a recent study, on 1000 households in Douala, helping to determine the repartition of households according to their region of origin (The information of this recent study will be attached in the Figure 12 of the Appendix F, and the Figure 13 of the same appendix gives information on how the count of non delinquents minors needed was deduced from the recent study on the 1000 households in Douala). I also computed the proportion of families with absentee fathers and the proportion of families with absentee mothers. (The formula used will be inserted in the Appendix F). In addition, I discussed with the minors and I took note of the recurrent information that could not be quantified or used for a statistical testing.

2.4 Local Chiefs Interviews

I have interviewed two local chiefs; the questionnaire used during this interview is attached in the Appendix B. Because I was also doing research for the purpose of a film documentary, I recorded the information received with a camera, a microphone, a pen and a book. I interviewed a local chief of the Beti’s Tribe - that is located in the Centre, South and East region of Cameroon - and another one of the Grassfields representing the North-West and West Cameroon that both have similar cultures. The chief I chose was the Chief of Babadjou in the West; I had to travel to this region. Even though I am from the West region, I did not choose a chief of my village. Those who introduced me to the chiefs told me that in Africa someone does not visit a chief empty handed, so I had to visit the chiefs with a gift: a good bottle of whisky and quality set of wine. Knowing nothing about what they would like, I still received an advice of the choice of whisky and wine to buy. Even with those gifts, there is no guarantee that the chief will agree to receive you, he may expect more; something that

⁴ Formula of the chi square can be seen in the Appendix F
happened and I was almost obliged to travel back without interviewing the chief. In such a situation, it was important that I let other people, especially men, to negotiate for me, and that I stay quiet with the position of a submissive woman – that is inclined head in the direction of the ground, arms along the body with crossed hands -. In the questionnaire, I asked questions based on my observation and statistical testing results received from the minors and I also get to know the gender roles before and after the colonization.

2.5 Pastor’s interview

Even though I am a Christian and I attend a church with a pastor, I decided to look for a pastor of another church who is married and has children. Assuming that he / she will not only gives me theoretical concepts of parents’ gender roles from the Bible that are not tested in his / her own life, but theoretical concepts that he / she found possible to put into practice in his / her life and have had significant results. The method of recording was the same as the local chiefs for the same purpose; the questionnaire used to perform this interview is attached in the Appendix C.

2.6 Imam’s interview

Islam is one of the religions present in Cameroon aside Christianity and Animism. I interviewed an imam to know what are the rules assigned to fathers and mothers in the Islam religion. This was the most difficult opportunity of interview to have. It was not easy to find one who can answer the questions; most of them were skeptical about my motivations. The one I found that had a better level of education, and who could understand my questions and answer them, did not want to appear in a film documentary. Because of that, I had to give him the questionnaire form. Answering to this questionnaire was not an easy issue, I had to contact him several times to remind him, I also had to discuss with him to prove my sincerity. After several weeks he answered and I had the opportunity to comment with him about the answers, and ask questions in order to have more enlightenment. However; because he was so skeptical from the beginning, I made sure not to note on a book the additional information he gave me, but I kept it in my memory and noted it later at home. The questionnaire used to perform this interview is attached in the Appendix D

2.7 Social Worker’s interview

Finally, I have interviewed a social worker who has been working for 30 years at the Ministry of Social Affairs for cases concerning juvenile delinquency. She is also the president of an association in charge of children in distress. I used a camera and a microphone to record the information. The questionnaire used to perform this interview is attached in the Appendix E
3. Results

All the minors of my sample were males because during the period of my study only one female delinquent was reported in the Central Prison of Douala, and I did not find it necessary to perform the survey on another sex. The male predominance in juvenile delinquency was significant information that I did not want to ignore but to take in consideration.

3.1 Statistical Testing

3.1.1 Mother’s Presence

As shown in Figure 1, with 2 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 11.19 and my significance level 0.00, I therefore conclude that there is a strong association between Mother’s presence and juvenile delinquency. Also, there is a very high probability (88%) to be delinquent with an absentee mother.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>11.19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Association between Mother’s presence and delinquency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

3.1.2 Father’s presence

As shown in Figure 2, with 2 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 6.43 and my significance level 0.04, I therefore conclude that there is a strong association between Father’s presence and juvenile delinquency. Also, there is a high probability 63% to be delinquent with an absentee father.

5 See the Formula at the Appendix F
Parents’ Gender Role and its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Association between Father’s presence and delinquency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

### 3.1.3 Matrimonial Status

As shown in Figure 3, with 2 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 6.255 and my significance level 0.04, I therefore conclude that there is a strong association between Matrimonial Status and juvenile delinquency. There is also a very high probability (83%) to be delinquent when the child does not know his parents’ matrimonial status, and there is a high probability (57%) to be delinquent when the child is coming from a polygamous home.

![Probability to be delinquent by category](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>6.255</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Association between matrimonial status and delinquency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3

### 3.1.4 Parents’ Education Level

As shown in Figure 4, with 4 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 8.76 and my significance level 0.07, I therefore conclude that there is an association between Parent’s Educational Level and juvenile delinquency. There is also a very strong probability 90% to be delinquent when the parents’ educational level is limited to the secondary school.

![Probability to be delinquent by category](image)
Parents’ Gender Role and its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>There is an association between Parent’s education level and delinquency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4**

### 3.1.5 Home

As shown in Figure 5, with 1 degree of freedom, my chi square value is 2.02 and my significance level 0.16; I therefore conclude that the association between the type of home (broken or not broken) and juvenile delinquency is due to chance, but it shows that there is a high probability 61% to be delinquent when the child is coming from a broken home.

**Figure 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>The association between type of home and delinquency is due to chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.6 Region of Origin

As shown in Figure 6, with 4 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 2.95 and my significance level 0.57; I therefore conclude that there is no association between the Parent’s Region of Origin and juvenile delinquency; but it shows that there is a strong probability to be delinquent when the child is coming from the Grassfields: North West (57%) and West (54%), and there is a low probability to be delinquent when the child is coming from the Centre region (17%).

**Figure 6**

Probability to be delinquent by category

- Broken: 0.61
- Not broken: 0.42

Probability to be delinquent by category

- Extreme North: 0.50
- North-West: 0.57
- Centre: 0.17
- Littoral: 0.50
- West: 0.54
Parents’ Gender Role and its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHI2</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>There is no association between region of origin and delinquency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6

3.1.7 Socio-Economic Status

As shown in Figure 7, with 2 degrees of freedom, my chi square value is 2.77 and my significance level 0.25, I therefore conclude that there is no association between the Parent’s Socio Economic Status and juvenile delinquency; but it also shows that there is a strong probability to be delinquent when a child is coming from a family with a lower socio economic status (60%) and a less strong probability to be delinquent when the child is coming from a family with an upper socio economic status (40%).

Figure 7

3.1.8 Logistic Regression Analysis

The result of the logistic regression analysis shows that among the controlling variables, the variable that has the most significant effect on the variable delinquency is the Mother’s Presence. It shows (see Figure 8) that when we go from a home where the mother is present to a home where the mother is absent because she is dead, the probability of having a delinquent child is multiplied by 10.24, but this is multiplied by 11.94 when we go from a home where the mother is present to a home where the mother is absent but alive.
Parents’ Gender Role and its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Presence</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Presence (Orphan)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>10.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Presence (Absent mother)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>11.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 8**

3.2 Proportion

**Figure 9**

**Figure 10**

**Figure 11**

3.3 Observations

With the exception of the independence shown in the statistical testing between the region of origin and delinquency, all other points confirmed my observation. First of all, I realized that among
the delinquents of my sample, all the ten regions in Cameroon were not represented, and some had a greater proportion than others. As you can see in the Figure 9, the Centre region was only represented with 0.63%; the Littoral region with 2.99%; the West region with 4.09%; the North West with 11.11% and the Far North with 11.76%. The South West, the East, the North, the Adamaua, the South (the 5 other regions in Cameroon) were absent.

Besides, I made a striking observation: Even if the father’s absence and juvenile delinquency are strongly associated, I realized that minors of the Centre region of my sample (either delinquents or not delinquents) suffered the most from absentee fathers, but I met less cases of delinquencies in this region than in the other four regions (see Figure 10).

Furthermore, even if there is an impression that there is a relationship between the parents’ socio-economic status and juvenile delinquency, the results of my statistical testing - that shows it does not - confirms what all the minors told me. They were all of the opinion that their parents’ welfare did not really matter to them; what matters the most is their parents’ love and parents’ presence and parents’ coaching in their life. I had a single case of a child who abandoned his parents because of their poverty, but he acknowledges today that he prefers his parents’ poverty to their absence. However, some minors understood that a father who is poor may out of frustration become an absentee father; though most of them, and even the majority, did not excuse that fact which may, according to them, lead children to delinquency.

Also, minors expected care, love, attention, advices, discipline and coaching to help them in the practice of socialization from their mothers. As for their fathers, they expected love, coaching and discipline, this time for the purpose of preparing them to meet the hardship of life and get to be used to the experience of life. Most of the minors (delinquents and not delinquents) confirmed to me that they despised the authority of their mothers (because she is the “weaker” sex), but expected the authority of their father who is a man like them and have the strength to resist them; in other words, the authority of the father weight more on their male adolescent child than the authority of their mother. They expected confrontation with their fathers, but never expected abandon of their father, no matter what they do. Indeed, I had cases of delinquents who were rejected by their fathers because they were stubborn, and from the stubbornness they went into delinquency because the father, who gave up on them, was no longer there to coach them. Finally, they saw in parenting a team work: The ability of the mother to show love and attention helped them to overcome the hardship of discipline imposed by their fathers. Moreover, the mother played the role of peace maker between the children and the father; helping, by so doing, the children to understand their father, to
understand his discipline and to love him the way he is. I had some cases of minors (not delinquents) where the mothers played the hard disciplinarian role and the father the soft caregiver role, and it never seemed to be an inconvenience for the minors who experienced such a combination.

Finally, I realized that the highest proportion of absentee mothers, in my sample, was in the West Region as you can see in the Figure 11.

3.4 Interview with Local Chiefs

3.4.1 Local Chief of the Beti: His Majesty Beliby Ndzana Dieudonné

According to his majesty Beliby, families before the colonization were generally polygamous families. The father played the role of the absolute master that no one had the right to question the decision or authority; the family obeyed his rules and at an extent, underwent them. His role was to preserve the security of his household and to make sure that the family is united and nobody is frustrated. To ensure this, each wife had their turn to cook whereas others were busy doing other duties; and when it was the time to eat, the family ate in the same pot. The father was responsible of his children life’s education in collaboration with his wives, whose main roles were to make sure that the political lines drawn by the father are respected. If, for example, a wife realized that something was not going on well in the house as it has to be, according to the political lines drawn by the father, she had to report it to the father.

After colonization, the father who used to be the absolute master, the god of his family saw his authority divided by three. That is with teachers in school, and priest in the church. He received a pressure to send his children to school. This created dislocation in families because when children came back home after school, they looked at their father as someone who does not know anything, and someone who became a nuisance. Such attitude frustrated the father who lost his authority towards his children.

3.4.2 Local Chief of Babadjou: His Majesty Temgoua Bertrand

According to his Majesty Temgoua, the role of the father was to take care of all that was needed in the education of the children, but this was not the case for every family, especially in polygamous families where the mother was the one to take care of her kids. Indeed in a polygamous families in the Bamilike’s tribe (Grassfields region representing the West and North West), the father has his own apartment and does not live with his wives, who each has her own apartment where she
lives with her children. In such a case, the father could not control his children and could not educate them. The mother was the only one who had this possibility to educate and control the children.

After colonization, some fathers did not want to send children to school giving the pretext of not having money for it; whereas they were using this money to satisfy their own desire like drinking alcohol. Also, mothers started to complain that the responsibility of their child is not theirs alone and gave up on the education of their children. Some other women had to ensure the education of their children alone and because of their financial constraints could not further the child’s education.

His Majesty Temgoua sees in globalization and TV in homes where movies with bad moral values are broadcasted a force that negatively change children and shape parents to become softer with children because they risk of being seen as abnormal if they do not do what children wished them to do for them. It becomes difficult for parents to exercise their authority as they wish to.

3.4.3 Interview with a pastor: Rev. Mrs. Perpetua Fonki, PhD.

According to the Rev. Dr Mrs. Fonki; in Christianity, the Bible is filled with rules given to parents about the way they should raise up their kids and especially the book of Proverbs is filled with them. For example, the Bibles says, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov. 22: 6). According to her, there is no instructions given in the Bible about a mother who should be soft towards her child and a father who should be tough towards his child, those are stereotypical rules the society assigns to the mother and the father. People have their character; some are hard by nature; and “others are more quiet and reserved, that does not make them bad parents”. For her, parenting is a team work as well as education involves the participation of both parents. The Bible verse that refers to the father’s instruction and the mother’s teaching (Prov. 1: 8) presents two synonym words: Instruction and teaching. This shows that both parents should be teachers. “If the fathers bring the male touch, the woman should also be able to bring the female touch.” She also gave me a Bible verse that says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6: 4).

As for the question to know if polygamy can be a hindrance in parenting, she sees it this way if it is a family where there are a lot of kids because “the larger the number of kids, the more difficult it becomes to manage”. She sees it this way also if parenting lies on the father; and if each home and each wife are treated as a unique. In other words; when there is independence, polygamy becomes a

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6 The information that mothers decided to give up on the education of their child in the West confirms the information received when I compute the proportion of absentee mothers in my sample (See Figure 11)
problem. However, if “it lies on the mother like in the real polygamous home in those days where in
the African communal spirit parenting was a team work between mothers - the mothers used to get
together and nobody’s child was anybody’s child, each mother had the right to discipline a child
regardless of whose mother the child is.”” polygamy will not be a hindrance.

3.4.4 Interview with an Imam: Mr. Hayatou

According to the Imam Mr. Hayatou, the role of the father in the Islam religion is to ensure
the spiritual and moral education of the child and to ensure his financial safety. (Ch 31 V 13-17-18-
19 of the Quran) This should be done from his childhood to his puberty. As for the mother, she is a
primary care giver of the child, the one who should teach him the laws of God. (Ch2 V 233 of the
Quran). He makes understand that God does not recommend a man to be severe and the woman to be
soft; these might be the society’s expectations. However, God requires for a woman to be submitted
to her husband. Finally, he sees the participation of both parents as crucial for the education and
good development of the child because each has his own role to play in the child’s education.

According to him a polygamous father may not play his role efficiently, though in Islam a
polygamous man should make sure he treats his wives and children equitably. They are all gifts from
God, and he will have to answer about the way he treated them.

3.4.5 Interview with a Social Worker at the Ministry of Social Affairs: Mrs. Fomekong

According to Mrs. Marie Odette Fomekong, juvenile delinquency is an increasing phenomenon
in Douala that is influenced by factors such as: “lack of the father’s authority that encourages this
plague, cultural convictions, parent’s poverty, economic crisis, demographic boom, I can also add to
the list, the inadequacy concerning abundant procreation and the income of those who are involved
in abundant procreation…. ” She also points out, “A closer look at the juvenile delinquency problem,
for us who work in the domain, helps to recognize that in most cases the absence of parents leads
children to deviate from the right way; and if added to this the absent parent is an irresponsible one,
the consequences are the worst.” When trying to find an answer to the less frequent cases of
delinquencies met in the Centre region in my sample despite the high rate of absentee fathers, Mrs.
Fomekong makes understand that this is due to the fact that families in the Centre region have more
cultural predisposition to take care of their children without their fathers than families in the other
four regions. They have a strong communal spirit and girls have been used to be welcomed with their
children when they conceived out of wedlock; the child conceived out of wedlock is mostly educated
by the parents of the girls. However, this is rarely the case in the Grassfields, for example, where it
has been always an abomination to become pregnant out of wedlock, and where the education of the child incumbents more on the mother than any other member of the family.

4. Discussion

The results of my interview with the local chiefs, the result of my interview with the pastor, the literature I reviewed for this research (9) confirm a part of my first hypothesis, which states that colonization that brought Christianity, Education and the notion of nation state that introduces a civil code, would have disturbed parents’ perceptions of their gender roles; and by then, also disturbed the harmony of the traditional family. Combined with the statistical testing, which proves a strong relationships between parents’ absence and delinquency, it confirms the other part of the first hypothesis that states that the disturbance occurred after colonization would lead some parents to become absents and, by so doing, contributes in increasing the rate of juvenile delinquency -. Indeed, as his Majesty Beliby points out, the dislocation occurred in families after the introduction of the education and the church, the father was despised by his children who saw in him a nuisance; this frustrated the father who could no longer have the possibility to play a role in his children’s education. Also, as his Majesty Temgoua mentions, school that became an important point in the education of a child and which expected to spend more money on a child forced some parents, who were not used to spend that much money on the child’s education, to become runaway parents. Additionally, the introduction of the civil codes that requires, in the article 213, the husband to work with the wife to ensure the financial safety and education of the children awake the awareness of mothers who realized that they should not be the sole care taker of a child; something that they used to do without complains in the past, but started to complain after colonization. Complains which followed to an abandon on the education of their children (“Local Chief of Babadjou: His Majesty Temgoua Bertrand”, 23-24). In addition to this, the article 215 - that gives the right to a judge to allow a woman to have another place of residence for her and the children if the husband’s choice is a threat for the family -, shows the right given to women to question their husband’s decision; (decision of the husband who used to be the god and the absolute master of his family according to His Majesty Beliby) something that never happened before, and which can lead to the frustration of the father. This frustration may lead him to become a runaway husband and later might be a runaway father who will not be able to play a role in his children’s life education. The Bible verse, Rev. Dr Mrs. Fonki gave me, which says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6: 4).” Shows that what matters now is no longer the father’s instruction, but the Lord’s instruction through the father. Instruction of a God they had never
heard before. A child who is aware of his rights as a child and who is aware of the duty of his father based on the Scriptures, may question the father’s ways of educating him if the father is a dictator, and if he is not following the Lord’s instruction. This attitude may frustrate the father who may feel incompetent, and it may lead him to become absent. In addition to this aspect, Christianity that brought the conception of monogamy confused families and women who, based on the Scriptures, could now expect fidelity from their husbands, and who, based on the Cameroonian judicial system, could ask for a divorce if the husband takes another wife. In some other cases, it is the men who became obliged to divorce from other wives, as the given example by Gbonigi (80), in order to become monogamous; divorce that can prevent children from the constant education of both parents.

If a child cannot benefit of the constant education of both parents, or if a child has a runaway father - might be because he is frustrated -, or if a child has a runaway mother – might be because she is fighting for her rights to be respected by her husband -, the result of my statistical testing shows that the child is more likely to be in a situation where he will become delinquent because there is a strong relationship between absentee father and delinquency, and there is a strong relationship between absentee mother and delinquency. On top of it, there is an increasing probability for a child to become delinquent if his mother is an absentee.

Even if the result of my statistical testing shows an absence of relationship between the parents’ region of origin and delinquency, giving the impression that my second hypothesis - that fathers who are still anchored into their traditional cultural conviction could not meet the present needs of their children, which could lead to an increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency - is not confirmed, other results of my statistical testing and other results of my research confirm this hypotheses. For example, the statistical testing shows that the relationship between polygamy - that is related to traditional cultural convictions - and delinquency is strong. On the other hands, I realized that all the regions in Cameroon were not represented and the Figure 9 shows some had a greater proportion of delinquent cases than others (“Proportion”, 21). Besides, Mrs. Fomekong, the social worker I interviewed sees in cultural conviction a factor influencing juvenile delinquency. I can also add to these points the fact that his Majesty Beliby reveals that the father, who used to be the absolute master, became after colonization an object of ridicule to his children who had now embraced the Western culture and could no longer see in their father the absolute master he used to be; preventing their fathers, by so doing, to have the possibility to control and educate them. Also, the polygamous home who used to be a home where the father was absent in the Grassfields, according to his Majesty Temgoua, tends to become inappropriate for the children since the result of my statistical testing shows a strong relationship between father’s absence and delinquency.
New facts arise concerning women after colonization. Firstly, women have the possibility, based on the Supreme Court, to divorce from their husband in the case he wants to become polygamous; divorce that can lead a child to miss his mothers’ presence. Secondly, women are aware, based on the article 213 of the civil code inherited from the French system, that they should not be the sole care taker of a child. Awareness that I believe made some women to realize that they are free from the traditional culture that expects them to be the sole care taker of their child. This awareness made them to give up on the education of their children as His Majesty Temgoua makes us understand. These new facts -that influenced women’s emancipation, contributed in making them to become absent in the education of their children- and with the statistical testing -that shows a strong and close link between mothers’ absence and juvenile delinquency-, confirms the third hypothesis that -women’s emancipation influenced by the Western society that could, in some cases, lead mothers to be absent in their children’s life might lead a children to miss appropriate care, love and control, and might lead to an increase rate of juvenile delinquency-. Also, this statistical testing shows that the probability of having a delinquent child increases with an absentee mother.

The disturbance colonization has brought into the family cell through the introduction of Christianity, Education and the notion of nation state is no longer to be proved in this dissertation. The violent and drastic change that occurred in families shaped the life course of the fathers, the mothers and, of course, the children. The understanding of the life course theory by Elder helps me to understand that the social trajectories of families have been totally twisted after colonization provoking fathers and mothers to completely lose their reference marks in the role they have to play in their children’s life education. It appears that with the frustration that fathers encountered, through the mockery of their children and the lost of their supreme authority over their families, fathers constructed their own life course as well as mothers. These are, some frustrated fathers became runaway, and some mothers - whose awareness of their rights as wives and awareness of their husbands’ duties were awoke through the civil code and Christianity - in the process of fighting for their rights missed to be present for their children. Unfortunately, their life course was constructed at the expense of their children who found themselves without parents who could play their roles. The results of my statistical testing shows that in such a situation it is more likely for children, in return, to construct their own life course that lead them into delinquency. Now, on a micro level - that is in the history of a family that goes from a monogamous home to a polygamous home - it appears in relationship with the result of the statistical testing that proves a strong relationship between matrimonial status and delinquency, that the historical force of the family that shapes its social trajectory can push a child to construct his life course through the choices and actions he takes to
deviate within the constraints in which the polygamous state of his family is pushing him into. Indeed, polygamy is the cause of a lot of stress among children. Al-Krenawi quotes several authors about the effects of polygamy that “has long been associated with family stress and mental illness among women. The practice can lead to co-wife jealousy, competition and unequal distribution of household resources creating acrimony between co-wives and between the children of different wives (187-188).”

It has also been proved in this paper that fathers who practice their roles based on their cultural convictions - that do not require them to educate or control their children in a polygamous family in the Grassfields, and that make them to be an object of mockery of their children in the Betis - cannot meet the present needs of their children. Moreover; according to the result of the statistical testing, absentee father and juvenile delinquency are strongly associated. Additionally, my observation with minors showed me that even if the power-control theory, developed by Hagan et al, proves that mothers are more instrumental than fathers in controlling their kids, children require fathers to control them, and even despise the control of their mothers. Confirming by this the prediction of Hagan et al that in patriarchal families where power belongs to the father, the control of the mother is weak on the male child. This suggests that fathers have to learn or tend to be as instrumental as mothers in controlling their children. By so doing, they will have power and control on their male children that can give the possibility to help these children not to deviate. Nevertheless, the result of the statistical testing -that shows a strong and close link between mother’s absence and delinquency, an increase in the probability of having a delinquent child when the mothers is absentee- and my observation - that shows that children require their mothers’ coaching and discipline in the aspect of socialization - do not allow to ignore the proof made by the power-control theory that mother are more instrumental than fathers in controlling their kids.

A combination of the power-control theory - that stipulates that mothers are more instrumental in controlling their child-; the result of the statistical testing that shows the greatest importance of present mothers and present fathers for their children; the need that children express concerning the presence of their parents and the element of “Attachment” that is an element of the social bonding theory, developed by Hirschi, help to understand that the absence of a mother and the absence of a father in the education of their child may have serious effects on him. Definitely, a child whose parents are absentees is more likely to not be attached to his parents; and if he is not attached to them, he will not be sensitized to what the parents might expect from him. This means, if a child becomes delinquents and it affects the parents, the child will not care. The weak bond that exists
between his parents and him does not allow him to care about his parents expectations or wishes. However; if because his parents are absentee a child finds an attachment with peer groups that involved him in criminal acts, the child will then be more sensitized to the expectations and wishes of this peer group than the wishes and expectations of his family. On the other hand, the other element of social bonding theory that is “Belief” suggests to me the need of a mother (who is more instrumental in controlling her child as Hagan et al points out) to teach to her child to believe in the obedience of the societal rules. Besides, the minors expected their mothers to coach them in the process of socialization. An absentee mother will not be able to cultivate the belief in the obedience of societal rules to her child. In addition to this, talking about “Commitment”, - that is another element of the social bond theory - if a child is strongly attached to his parents, he will be more likely to be committed to keep the familial bond, and he will be less likely to do something that can break it. This implies that if deceiving his parents by becoming a delinquent might break this familial bond, the child is more likely to avoid it. Finally, the need that children expressed to have a father who will coach and discipline them in order to prepare them to meet the hardship of life and get to be used to the experiences of life, confirms the need of the other element of the social bonding theory; that is “Involvement”. Certainly; if a child is involved in school activities and benefits from the control of his father, the child will not have time to indulge in criminal activities. However, this can be a tricky issue in Cameroon because sometimes parents do not have the necessary means to provide for the basic needs of their families, not to talk of sending children to school; a father may not have the financial means to send his child to school. This is where that Mrs. Fomekong’s statement about poverty as a factor influencing juvenile delinquency tends to be more considered than the result of the statistical testing that shows no relationship between juvenile delinquency and the parents’ socio-economic status. Nevertheless, I still consider what the children say when they all said that what matters most to them is their parents’ love, presence and coaching in their life. I strongly believe that the Western system that made people consider education as crucially important in a child’s life (even though it is a good idea) does have some weaknesses in the issue of juvenile delinquency in developing countries like Cameroon. If a father cannot send his child to school and if the Government cannot help him financially, he should also be allowed and encouraged to make his child being involved in other activities where he will benefit of the control of his father and at the same time will not have the time to be indulged in criminal activities.

Colonization that forced some fathers and some mothers to construct their life course in which they became runaway has weakened some children’s social bond; preventing them to benefit from the control of their parents. This in turn forced some of those children to construct their life course
where they started to become delinquent. At the same time, colonization and globalization contributed to render obsolete the fathers’ traditional role, expecting them to change and to be as instrumental as mothers in controlling the children, but it maintained the importance of the mothers’ traditional role to avoid children to fall into juvenile delinquency.

Summary

The fathers’ role before the colonization has been proved to be, according to the culture in which someone is in, the role of the absolute master or the role of someone who alone is supposed to ensure the education of his child, but who sometimes missed to ensure it and leaved it to the mother of the child. As for the mother her role has also been proved to be, according to the culture someone is in, the role of the one who accompany the husband in the education of the child, ensuring that the political lines drawn by the father are respected, otherwise she has also been proved to be the sole care taker of a child. After colonization, with the introduction of Christianity, the civil code and Education, these roles were forced to change. Parenting was expected to become a team work involving the participation of both parents, and the father who was an absolute master became an object of mockery of his children who saw the role of their fathers becoming obsolete. This frustrated some fathers and made them to become absent in the education of their children. On the other side, it awoke the awareness of women to fight for their rights, sometimes at the expense of the education of their children. This change sometimes destroyed the harmony of the family, weakened the social bond of children, made them to miss parental control and contributed to the increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency in Douala.
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Parents’ Gender Role and its Effect on Juvenile Delinquency


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Appendices

Appendix A : Questionnaire for the minors

Hi, I’m Eugenie Lonmene; I’m 30 and a student at Malmö Högskola in Sweden. Actually I’m doing research on Parents’ gender role and its effect on juvenile delinquency.

If you have personal questions to ask during the interview, please do not hesitate to do that, and I will answer the best I can. I need to precise that it is really important that you give the right answers to the questions asked. If you do not want to answer, please do not hesitate to say that you do not want to. If you want to know the motives behind a question, please, do not hesitate to ask.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your religion?
3. What is your parent’s religion?
4. What is your tribe?
5. Are you living with your parents or were you adopted by them? Is it a home with one parent?
6. Are your parents married or divorced?
7. Are you in a polygamist home or a monogamist?
8. What is dad and mum level of education?
9. What is dad and mum function?
10. What does it mean to you that dad is the chief of the family?
11. Do you answer to that based on your experience with dad or according to what you believe?
12. If it’s according to what you believe, what makes you believe that?
13. Do you believe that it is better that a chief serves himself; it is served or serves when he is exercising his authority?
14. According to you, what does it mean when it is written in the civil code that a woman with her husband has to educate the children?

15. Do you think that a man has a place in the education of his children? If yes, which place does he have?

16. What do you think about homes where the woman is the only one to have the responsibility of her children? Do you believe that there is a risk?

17. How is the case in your family?

18. How is your relationship with your father? Is it tight?

19. How is your relationship with your mum? Is it tight?

20. Do you think that the role dad is playing or had played affects you in your situation right now?

21. Do you think that the role mum is playing affects or had played affects you in your situation right now?

22. Do you believe that poverty might explain why a father or a mother does not play his or her role as parent? Do you believe it can excuse it?

23. Do you have an advice to give to parents who abandoned their children because of their poverty?
Appendix B: Questionnaire for a Local Chief

1. How old are you?
2. What is your region?
3. Are you married?
4. Are you a polygamous?
5. Do you have children? If yes, how many children?
6. What was before the colonization, according to your culture, the role of the father?
7. Has it changed after the colonization? If yes, what is the change?
8. Was Dialogue between father and son important in the education of a young boy before the colonization? How is it today?
9. What was before the colonization, according to your culture, the role of the mother?
10. Has it changed after the colonization? If yes, what is the change?
11. Did men have, before the colonization, a place in the education of their children? What was this place?
12. Has it changed after the colonization?
13. Was polygamy common at that time? If yes, how did fathers play their roles while being polygamous?
14. Do you believe that it is still possible for men today to be involved in the education of their children when they are polygamous?
15. How possible could a polygamous father play efficiently his role in this 21st century?
16. How was the education of a child born out of wedlock with an unknown father? Did he receive more favor or less favor compared to a child conceived in a family with a known father?
17. What is usually done (according to the custom of your tribe) when a father does not play his role as a father in the life of his child?
Appendix C : Questionnaire for a Pastor

1. How old are you?
2. What is your religion?
3. Are you married?
4. Do you have children? If yes, how many children?
5. What is according to God, in the Christian belief, the role of the father? Can you prove it biblically?
6. Do you believe that polygamy can be a hindrance to play this role efficiently?
7. What is according to God, in the Christian belief, the role of the mother? Can you prove it biblically?
8. Do you believe that working while being a mother can be a hindrance to play this role efficiently?
9. Do you believe that Christian parents who practice what is written in Proverbs 1: 8 will not have delinquent children?, if not what is the other role they should play to avoid delinquency?
10. What does Proverb 1: 8 suggests to you concerning the character the father and the mother should have to fulfill what is written there?
11. Do you believe that men need to be tough to instruct their children? Why?
12. Do you believe that women need to be soft to teach the law of God to their children? Why?
13. Is it according to you God’s expectation for a man to be tough / severe and a woman to be soft? Or is it the society’s expectation?
14. What if it is the other way around?
15. What if one parent is absent in the education of a child? Should the present one, play his / her own role and play the one of the missing parent or what should he / she do?
16. What if the parents have characters that do not allow them to play their assigned roles? For example, what if a man has a soft character and cannot be severe to his children and a mother is tough and does not know how to show affection to her children? Could it bring a negative effect on the education of the children?


Appendix D: Questionnaire for an Imam

1. How old are you?
2. What is your religion?
3. Are you married?
4. Do you have children? If yes, how many children?
5. What is according to God, in the Muslim belief, the role of the father? Can you prove it in the Koran?
6. Do you believe that polygamy can be a hindrance to play this role efficiently?
7. What is according to God, in the Muslim belief, the role of the mother? Can you prove it in the Koran?
8. Do you believe that working while being a mother can be a hindrance to play this role efficiently?
9. Do you believe that men need to be tough to instruct their children? Why?
10. Do you believe that women need to be soft to teach the law of God to their children? Why?
11. Is it according to you God’s expectation for a man to be tough / severe and a woman to be soft? Or is it the society’s expectation?
12. What if it is the other way around?
13. What if one parent is absent in the education of a child? Should the present one, play his / her own role and play the one of the missing parent or what should he / she do?
14. What if the parents have characters that do not allow them to play their assigned roles? For example, what if a man has a soft character and cannot be severe to his children and a mother is tough and does not know how to show affection to her children? Could it bring a negative effect on the education of the children?
Appendix E: Questionnaire for a Social Worker

1. What is your name?
2. For how long are you working at the Ministry of Social Affairs?
3. Do you have something to say about the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in Douala?
4. What are the factors influencing this phenomenon?
5. Is it an increasing phenomenon?
6. What are the consequences if nothing is done against it?
7. What are the social classes that are more represented in the world of juvenile delinquency?
8. What is according to you the responsibility of the father in this increasing phenomenon?
9. What is according to you the responsibility of the mother in this increasing phenomenon?
10. During my research, I have realized that children from the Grassfields representing the North West and West region are far more involved in juvenile delinquency than children from the Centre region although children from the Centre suffer more from the absence of their father. How could you explain this?
Appendix F: Formulas

Figure 12: Repartition of households according to the region of origin of the chief of the household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province d'origine</th>
<th>Douala</th>
<th>Column N%</th>
<th>Count needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sud</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouest</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>39.10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nord Ouest</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sud Ouest</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamaoua</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nord</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrême-Nord</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>88% of the sample</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13: Count needed of non delinquents according to their region of origin
Formula for the Proportion of Delinquents
(Delinquent Count / Household Count) * 100

Formula for the Proportion of Absentee Fathers
(Count of absentee father / Count of minors) * 100

Formula for the Probability to be Delinquent with a Present Mother
Delinquent count with present mother / Delinquents and Non Delinquent counts with present mothers.

Chi Square formula

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \]

\[ \chi^2 = \text{the test statistic} \]
\[ \sum = \text{the sum of} \]

\[ O = \text{Observed frequencies} \]
\[ E = \text{Expected frequencies} \]