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THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE WELCOMING OF FAMILY MEMBERS FROM OUTSIDE THE NUCLEAR FAMILY IN AFRICA: THE CASES OF CAMEROON, COTE D'IVOIRE AND SENEGAL¹

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The lineage family in Africa is generally presented as a patriarchal structure particularly oppressive for the African woman, which tends to promote her submission and exploitation for the benefit of men. The Western type of nuclear family is presented and perceived as an ideal model which can ensure her greater freedom and happiness. Certain evolutionary sociologists such as T. Parsons (1955) and W. Goode (1963) have even seen this model as one towards which all family models are bound to converge under the effect of "modernisation", a process of which women's emancipation is a part.

Moreover, the emergence of women as household heads in Africa is being talked about more and more (Tichit, 1994). And this access of women to the status of household head is to a greater or lesser degree seen as a sign of increased autonomy and independence from the extended family (Pilon, 1994). As a consequence there is reason to wonder what is the behavior of female heads of households with regard to welcoming members of the extended family within the nuclear family, notably as their socio-economic status improves. Do they continue to conform to traditional values concerning the welcoming of other members of the extended family or do they take this opportunity to "emotionally and economically nuclearise their families" (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987)? The objective of this study is to answer these questions while attempting to compare the behavior of these women with that of their male counterparts.

¹ This study is part of research on family structures in sub-Saharan Africa focused on Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, being carried out at IFORD with the financial support of the French Ministry of Cooperation and of the *Agence Francophone Pour l'Enseignement de la Recherche (AUPELF-UREF)*.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The study will deal with three African countries: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. It will analyse household structure and more precisely family households¹. Family households correspond to households where the head of the household has a family nucleus (complete or incomplete). Nuclearisation will therefore be studied by looking at the nuclear family of the head of the household and the household will be considered as extended if it includes at least one member from outside this nucleus.

The data used will be those from the most recent censuses carried out in Cameroon (RGPH-1987), Côte d'Ivoire (RGPH-1988) and Senegal (RGPH-1988), of which we have 10% samples. The study will thus include 135,997 family households in Cameroon, 126,330 in Côte d'Ivoire and 66,433 in Senegal, of which, 17,142 (13%), 15,643 (12%) and 7,997 (12%), respectively, are households headed by women.

The structure of the households will be analysed through the frequency and the intensity of the welcoming of people from outside the family nucleus, measured by the proportion of extended households and the proportion of family members from outside the family nucleus, respectively. The following indicators of socio-economic status will be used: education, employment, standard of living, occupancy status of the home and living space (i.e. the number of rooms). The socio-economic environment will also be taken into account through the degree of urbanisation.

Certain of these characteristics deserve more detailed explanations. To take into account the socio-economic environment or the degree of urbanisation, we have distinguished: (1) four strata for Cameroon: the two capitals (Yaoundé, the political capital; Douala, the economic capital), for which the socio-economic development is almost identical in both cases, but where populations often behave very differently; "Other Urban" (all the other towns in the country) and Rural; (2) and three strata for Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan, "Other Urban" and Rural) and Senegal (Dakar, "Other Urban" and Rural).

Occupation includes 9 categories ranging from senior executives to middle management to workers and to farmers. However, to facilitate classification according to socio-economic status, these 9 categories have been grouped into three classes: "Upper Class" including senior executives, "Middle Class", including all the middle management (administrative and technical staff, Army, Police and Civil Defence personnel); "Working Class" (sellers and petty traders, hotel/restaurant/service staff, workers/labourers and farmers/livestock farmers/fishermen).

¹The African family is certainly distinct from the household; however, we presume that family nuclearisation, if it occurs, does so through the nuclearisation of the households which make up the family.

Given the available data, the standard of living index was established from: (1) the characteristics of the dwelling (building materials of walls, floor, lighting, water supply, facilities and energy used for cooking) for Cameroon; (2) characteristics of the dwelling and the possession of modern appliances (radio, television, refrigerator) for Côte d'Ivoire. For Senegal the index was constructed differently according to whether dwellings were in rural or urban areas: in urban areas, the number of radios, televisions, refrigerators, telephones and cookers owned by the household was used; and in rural areas the number of ploughs, carts and draught animals (horses and oxen) was added.

VARIATION BY SEX ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Among the three countries considered, Senegal is the one where the proportion of extended families is by far the highest (68%); followed by Côte d'Ivoire (57%). Most households in Cameroon are nuclear families, extended families representing only 45% of households; moreover, the proportion of members from outside of the nuclear family is only 17% in Cameroon compared with 28% in Côte d'Ivoire and 35% in Senegal. This situation is the same regardless of the sex of the household head. However, curiously, as we had already observed in a previous study on Cameroon (Wakam & Kuépié, 1996), in these three countries, it is among female-headed households that: (1) there is a higher proportion of extended families: 49% compared with 45% among male-headed households in Cameroon, 60% compared with 57% in Côte d'Ivoire, 69% compared with 68% in Senegal; and (2) the welcoming of outsiders within the family nucleus is of greater intensity: 25% compared with 17% in Cameroon, 37% compared with 27% in Côte d'Ivoire and 42% compared with 35% in Senegal.

Tables 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 show the variations in the frequency and intensity of the welcoming of household members from outside the family nucleus (measured respectively by the proportion of extended households and the proportion of members from outside the family nucleus) according to socio-economic characteristics (urbanisation, the level of education of the head of the household, and his or her socio-professional category, the household's standard of living, the status of occupancy of their home and the number of rooms available) and the sex of the head of the household (HH).

Urbanisation

On the whole and for both sexes, the frequency and intensity of the welcoming of household members from outside the family nucleus are mostly positively associated with urbanisation in Cameroon and reach a peak in Yaounde (Table 12.1). The proportion of extended households thus

went from 41% in rural areas to 51% in secondary cities, 53% in Douala and 61% in Yaounde, whereas the proportion of people from outside the family nucleus varied from 16% in rural areas to 20% in Douala and secondary cities and 24% in Yaounde. But whatever the socio-economic environment, women household heads proportionally welcome more people from outside the family nucleus than do men: 25% compared with 19% in Douala, 31% compared with 23% in Yaounde, 27% compared with 19% in "Other Urban Areas" and 23% compared with 15% in rural areas.

The effect of urbanisation in Côte d'Ivoire is different from that in Cameroon. On the whole urbanisation tends to favour family nuclearisation of households by reducing the proportion of outsiders to the family nucleus. This proportion goes from 30% in rural areas to 24% in Abidjan (Table 12.2). But its effect varies according to sex: whereas urbanisation tends to decrease the welcoming of outsiders by men, it tends to favour it among women, notably when comparing rural areas with secondary cities (36% compared with 41% for the proportion of outsiders to the family nucleus).

In Senegal nuclearisation tends to grow with the degree of urbanisation for households in general and for households headed by men (Table 12.3). The proportion of extended households thus goes from 69% in rural areas down to 64% in Dakar and the intensity from 37% to 31%. However, among households headed by women, nuclearisation is much more pronounced in rural areas than urban areas: 64% of rural households compared with 72% of households in Dakar headed by women include at least one person external to the family nucleus and the proportion of outsiders to the family nucleus rises from 39% in rural areas to 44% in Dakar.

Education of the Household Head

In Cameroon, education was measured according to the schooling level reached (Table 12.1) and the highest degree obtained. These two variables are positively correlated with the proportion of extended households as well as with that of outsiders to the family nucleus. This is the case for all household heads as well as for each sex. However, whatever the degree obtained and whatever the level of education, women welcome more outsiders than men. For the degree, for example (results are not presented in the table), this proportion is 23% compared with 17% among people "having no degree", 28% compared with 22% among people having a "BEPC or general school certificate", 35% compared with 24% among people having passed the "Baccalauréat or end of secondary exam" and 42% compared with 27% among people having a "university degree".

We observed a similar although less pronounced trend in Côte d'Ivoire: it was among the more educated heads of households (upper secondary and university graduate levels) that the frequency and intensity of

welcoming of people from outside the family nucleus is highest. Thus, 75 to 76% of households headed by people having been to upper-level secondary school or university are extended compared with 68% among the "lower-level secondary", 56% among the "primary" and 54% of households where the head had "no schooling". The proportion of residents from outside the family nucleus is 35%, 29%, 26% and 28%, respectively. The tendency is practically the same for men and women. But whatever the level of education observed, women definitely welcome outsiders more than men (Table 12.2).

Contrary to Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, education tends to be negatively associated with the welcoming of those from outside the family nucleus in Senegal. The relation is, however, somewhat variable: among women, but not among men, education tends to increase the frequency of extended families, which goes from 69% among the category with "no schooling" to 73% among the "upper-level secondary and university" category (Table 12.3). Moreover, as in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, whatever the level of education, households headed by men are less likely to include outsiders than those headed by women.

Occupation

Occupation is negatively associated with family nuclearisation of households in Cameroon on the whole and whatever the sex of the head. The situation is almost identical in Côte d'Ivoire, but quite different in Senegal. However, in almost all the socio-professional categories studied, men welcome outsiders much less than women do. In Cameroon, for example, intensity (the percentage of household members not from the nuclear family) is 15% in male-headed households compared with 24% in female-headed households in the "lower class", 20% compared with 31% in the "middle class" and 23% compared with 30% in the "upper class".

Table 12.1. – Percentage of extended households and of persons from outside the family nucleus according to the sex of the head of the household (HH) and certain socio-economic characteristics in Cameroon ("Family" Households)

Socioeconomic Characteristics	% of extended households			% of persons from outside the family nucleus		
	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total
<i>Urbanisation:</i>						
1. Yaoundé	61	61	61	23	31	24
2. Douala	53	53	53	19	25	20
3. Other cities	51	53	51	19	27	20
4. Rural	41	44	41	15	23	16
<i>Educational level of the HH:</i>						
1. University	67	83	67	26	41	27
2. Secondary (upper)	64	69	64	24	31	24
3. Secondary (lower)	56	55	56	21	27	21
4. Primary	48	50	49	18	23	19
5. No education or kindergarten only	38	46	39	14	24	15
<i>Socio-professional category of HH (occupation):</i>						
1. Management, scientists, professionals, and related	62	69	63	23	34	24
2. Legislative, executive and management	64	81	64	24	36	24
3. Business managers and entrepreneurs	55	51	54	20	25	21
4. Administrative and technical personnel	60	64	61	21	31	22
5. Armed forces, Police & Civil Defence	54	78	54	18	31	18
6. Salesmen and tradesmen	50	50	50	18	25	19
7. Hotel/restaurant/services	45	49	46	16	26	17
8. Non-agricultural workers and laborers	48	50	48	18	24	18
9. Farmers and fishermen	40	45	40	15	23	15
10. Others	48	49	49	22	25	23
<i>Standard of living of household:</i>						
1. Very high	63	75	64	25	34	26
2. High	66	66	66	23	30	24
3. Average	57	57	57	21	27	21
4. Low	54	52	53	19	26	20
5. Very low	44	48	45	17	25	18
<i>Home occupancy status:</i>						
1. Owner with deed	60	63	61	21	30	23
2. Owner with no deed	43	48	44	16	24	17
3. Tenant (renters)	47	47	47	18	22	19
4. Housed by employer	49	49	49	18	23	18
5. Free accommodation (other)	39	40	39	16	19	16
<i>Number of rooms:</i>						
1. 1 Room	16	24	17	07	12	08
2. 2 Rooms	26	34	27	10	16	10
3. 3 Rooms	37	43	38	13	20	14
4. 4 Rooms	47	53	47	16	24	17
5. 5 Rooms	54	60	55	18	28	19
6. 6 or 7 rooms	57	63	58	20	31	21
7. 8 rooms and over	63	67	63	21	33	22
Total	45	49	45	17	25	17

Source: RGPH-1987 (Census).

Table 12.2. – Percentage of extended households and of persons from outside the family nucleus according to the sex of the head of the household (HH) and certain socioeconomic characteristics in Cote d'Ivoire ("Family" households)

Socioeconomic Characteristics	% of extended households			% of persons from outside the family nucleus		
	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total
<i>Urbanisation:</i>						
1. Abidjan	54	64	56	23	37	24
2. Other cities	57	64	58	27	41	29
4. Rural	57	58	57	29	36	30
<i>Educational level of the HH:</i>						
1. University	74	82	75	34	45	35
2. Secondary technical	77	85	78	32	46	34
3. Secondary (upper)	75	84	76	33	45	33
4. Secondary (lower)	67	73	68	28	40	29
5. Primary	56	58	56	26	34	26
6. Can read and write	57	58	57	26	34	26
7. Koranic school	47	59	48	25	35	25
8. Cannot read or write	54	59	54	27	37	28
<i>Socio-professional category of HH (occupation):</i>						
1. Management, scientists, professionals and related	78	87	79	32	47	32
2. Legislative, executive and management	73	80	73	32	36	33
3. Business managers and entrepreneurs	62	79	63	29	39	29
4. Administrative and technical personnel						
5. Armed forces, Police & Civil Defence	69	85	71	27	44	29
6. Salesmen and tradesmen	84	10	84	32	82	32
7. Hotel/restaurant/services	46	58	49	23	36	26
8. Non-agricultural workers and labourers	34	36	34	15	25	15
9. Farmers and fishermen	49	64	49	22	35	22
	56	57	56	29	35	29
<i>Standard of living of household:</i>						
1. Very high	79	85	80	34	46	35
2. High	78	87	79	31	48	33
3. Average	64	78	65	28	45	30
4. Low	50	60	51	25	38	26
5. Very low	54	55	54	27	34	28
<i>Home occupancy status:</i>						
1. Owner	60	63	61	30	40	31
2. Tenant (renter)	48	53	48	20	31	21
3. Housing provided by employer	61	77	62	26	42	27
4. Other	46	55	47	24	35	26
<i>Number of rooms:</i>						
1. 1 Room	24	37	27	12	21	14
2. 2 Rooms	39	56	41	15	30	17
3. 3 Rooms	60	75	62	23	40	25
4. 4 Rooms	70	81	71	28	44	29
5. 5 Rooms	76	84	77	32	49	33
6. 6 or 7 rooms	82	89	82	36	54	38
7. 8 rooms and over	91	92	91	46	58	46
Total:	57	60	57	27	37	28

Source: RGPH-1988 (Census).

Table 12.3. – Percentage of extended households and of persons from outside the family nucleus according to the sex of the head of the household (HH) and certain socioeconomic characteristics in Senegal ("Family" households)

Socioeconomic Characteristics	% of extended households			% of persons from outside the family nucleus		
	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total
<i>Urbanisation:</i>						
1. Dakar	61	72	64	29	44	31
2. Other cities	66	71	67	32	44	34
4. Rural	70	64	69	37	39	37
<i>Educational level of the HH:</i>						
1. University	66	73	66	28	40	28
2. Secondary (upper)	67	73	68	30	37	30
3. Secondary (lower)	65	68	65	29	34	29
4. Primary	68	70	68	32	36	32
5. No education	68	69	68	36	44	36
<i>Socio-professional category of HH:</i>						
1. Management, scientists, professionals and related	64	68	64	27	50	28
2. Legislative, executive and management	70	100	70	27	52	27
3. Business managers and entrepreneurs	65	72	66	29	35	30
4. Administrative and technical personnel	67	90	68	26	37	26
5. Armed forces, Police & Civil Defence	61	100	61	25	33	25
6. Salesmen and tradesmen	59	71	63	30	43	33
7. Hotel/restaurant/services	57	71	58	24	37	24
8. Non-agricultural workers and labourers	64	65	64	29	39	29
9. Farmers and fishermen	69	62	69	36	38	36
<i>Standard of living of household:</i>						
1. Very high	85	87	85	48	60	49
2. High	84	84	84	42	54	43
3. Average	75	80	76	37	48	38
4. Low	64	71	65	30	42	32
5. Very low	53	57	53	25	32	26
<i>Home occupancy status:</i>						
1. Owner	72	73	72	37	45	37
2. Co-owner	50	56	51	22	30	23
3. Tenant (renter)	51	58	52	22	32	23
4. Sub-tenant (sub-renter)	54	65	55	24	30	25
5. Housed by employer	60	76	61	24	40	25
4. Housed by family	61	63	61	31	38	31
<i>Number of rooms:</i>						
1. 1 Room	24	36	27	9	19	11
2. 2 Rooms	49	60	51	18	29	20
3. 3 Rooms	66	74	67	26	38	27
4. 4 Rooms	76	85	77	32	49	33
5. 5 Rooms	83	87	84	37	52	38
6. 6 or 7 rooms	89	93	89	43	59	44
7. 8 rooms and over	93	94	93	54	67	55
Total:	68	69	68	35	42	35

Sources: RGPH-1988 (Census).

Standard of Living

The proportion of extended households, as with the proportion of "outsiders", is positively correlated with the standard of living in Senegal, in general and for both sexes (Table 12.3). Overall, it goes from 53% among households whose standard of living is "very low" to 76% among those whose standard of living is "average" and 85% among those whose standard of living is "very high".

The pattern observed in Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire is almost identical. The proportion of extended households in Cameroon (Table 12.1) goes from 45% among the poorest category ("very low" standard of living) to 57% among the households whose standard of living is "average" and 64% among the wealthiest ("very high" standard of living). In Côte d'Ivoire (Table 12.2) it varies from 54% to 65% and to 80%, respectively, for these 3 categories.

The study of the variation according to sex of the household head shows that the structure is almost identical for men and for women. But in practically all cases it is among women that nuclear families are less frequent and the welcoming of "outsiders" more intense (Tables 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3).

Home Occupancy Status

The 1987 census in Cameroon distinguished 5 categories of home occupancy status: "owner with deed", "owner without deed", "renter", "accommodation provided by employer" and "free accommodation not provided by employer". As Table 12.1 shows, the heads of households who are owners of their homes "with a deed" are the ones who include outsiders most with 61% being extended households and 23% with outsiders not from the family nucleus compared with 47% and 19% respectively among renters, and 39% and 16% respectively who have free housing not from an employer. But in all cases the greatest number of outsiders not from the family nucleus were welcomed by female heads of households.

The situation is quite comparable in Côte d'Ivoire: the heads of households who own their homes or live in accommodations provided by their employers welcome more outsiders, with 61% and 62% having extended households, respectively, compared with 48% among renters on the one hand, and on the other with 31% and 27% being "outsiders" compared with 21% among people living in rented accommodations. A higher standard of living, as indicated by the status of home-owner or of a person whose lodging is provided by his/her employer, tends to favour the welcoming of outsiders, both in frequency and in intensity, among both men and women (Table 12.2). Moreover, whatever the occupancy status, women household heads are more welcoming than men.

In Senegal, the proportion of extended households and outsiders not from the family nucleus is highest among home-owners (72% and 37%, respectively); followed by those housed by the family (61% and 31%) or by the employer (61% and 25%). This is the case irrespective of sex; however, the frequency and intensity of welcoming of outsiders is higher in every case among women than among men (Table 12.3).

Available Space

In the three countries, the number of rooms available is very strongly and positively correlated with the welcoming of outsiders not from the family nucleus as much in frequency as in intensity: the proportion of extended households in Cameroon goes from 17% for households living in one room to 63% for households living in 8 rooms or more; in Côte d'Ivoire from 27% to 91%; and in Senegal from 27% to 93%. The proportion of "outsiders" goes from 8% to 22% in Cameroon, from 14% to 46% in Côte d'Ivoire and from 11% to 55% in Senegal. This relation is the same for both sexes; however, in all cases, women household heads include outsiders more.

To sum up, it would appear that among women, as well as men, economic power, seen in terms of standard of living, occupancy status and living space (number of rooms), is very positively associated with the extension of family households in the three countries studied in the survey. The same applies for level of education and employment in Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, as opposed to Senegal where the situation remains quite different. As for urbanisation, it tends to be positively associated with the welcoming of outsiders among female heads of households in the three countries, whereas among men this is only the case in Cameroon and tends rather to be negatively associated in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. However, on the whole, as well as in almost all the social categories observed, it is paradoxically the women who welcome outsiders both more frequently and to a higher degree.

AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY FACTORS EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN WELCOMING PERSONS NOT FROM THE FAMILY NUCLEUS

The previous analyses show that not only is the welcoming of "outsiders" rather positively associated with socio-economic status among both men and women, but that it is also more frequent and of greater intensity among women heads of households. This result was unexpected since there is reason to believe a priori that if such a difference did exist it would be in favour of men. On the one hand, men are expected to have greater resources, which would allow them to provide for the needs of the

nuclear family and possibly take on persons from outside their family nucleus. On the other hand, if one follows, for instance, the reasoning of feminist theoreticians, with greater autonomy, independence and authority through acceding to the status of head of the family, women, who are traditionally supposed to be oppressed and exploited by the large patriarchal African family, will be able to decide themselves what their family life is to be like and therefore will not hesitate to "emotionally and economically nuclearise their family" (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987). This point therefore deserves further study. That is why we wished to know which among the socio-economic, socio-demographic and cultural characteristics contributed most to explaining the reasons for this difference in favour of women when it came to welcoming persons not from the family nucleus.

To answer this question we used multiple classification analysis (MCA). The dependent variable here is the proportion of outsiders not from the family nucleus. The indicators selected to represent socio-economic status are: economic environment (or degree of urbanisation), educational level of the head of the household, standard of living and the number of rooms. These variables, as well as cultural and ideological background, as indicated by ethnic origin in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal and by place of birth in Cameroon², will serve as control variables. This will also be the case for marital status³, the type of family (conjugal/single-parent/parental)⁴ and the age of the head of the household.

The successive inclusion (as control variables) of these different variables in models using two variables, one of which is sex, makes it possible to obtain the "gross" (unadjusted) effect of each of these variables on the variation in the proportion of outsiders not from the family. The results were: (1) all the socio-economic variables tend rather to increase this difference or at least to maintain it: in other words, if the women had a level of socio-economic development comparable to that of the men (whose level is, on average, higher), the women would welcome outsiders even more; (2) the age of the head of the household and the size of the household also tend to increase the difference, whereas marital status, the type of family (conjugal/single-parent/parental) and the cultural or ideological background (ethnic origin or place of birth of the head of the household) tend rather to reduce it.

Tables 12.1.A, 12.2.A and 12.3.A, in the Appendix, present the results of the multivariate analysis obtained by the successive and cumulative introduction of all of the different control variables in the initial model using

² Ethnic origin and religion were not included in the data gathered in Cameroon.

³In which "polygamous" will be used to describe a man with two wives or more, or a woman whose husband is polygamous.

⁴(1) "conjugal" household: a household including a head of the household and his spouse or spouses and possibly other people, without the head's children; (2) "single-parent" household: a household including the head of the household, his/her children and possibly other people, without a spouse; (3) "parental" household: a household including the head of the household, the spouse or spouses, the head's children and possibly other people.

one variable: the sex of the head of the household⁵. The variables for which the "gross" effect tends to increase the difference were introduced first, followed by others. The results were the following :

- The difference between the two sexes is maintained even after all the control variables are included.

- The difference in favour of women increases by 1% in Cameroon, 4% in Côte d'Ivoire and 5% in Senegal after including socio-economic variables (model M4), going from 8% (gross) to 9% in Cameroon, from 10% to 14% in Côte d'Ivoire and from 8% to 13% in Senegal. It grows further by 1, 3 and 2 points, respectively, with the inclusion of the size of the household (model M5), and brings the (adjusted) difference to 10% in Cameroon, 17% in Côte d'Ivoire and 15% in Senegal, in favour of women. The β statistic then goes from 0.12 to 0.15 for Cameroon, from 0.11 to 0.20 for Côte d'Ivoire and from 0.08 to 0.16 for Senegal.

- The introduction of other socio-demographic and cultural variables (place of birth or ethnic group, marital status and type of family), does not only narrow the gap, but also tends to cancel out or even reverse the situation. Thus, controlling for marital status and the variables mentioned above (model M7) narrows the gap down to 5% in Cameroon, to 8% in Côte d'Ivoire and to 13% in Senegal. Including the type of family (conjugal/single-parent/parental) eliminates the difference between the sexes in Senegal and leads to a difference of 1 point in Cameroon and of 3 points in Côte d'Ivoire, but in this case the difference is in favour of men.

Marital status of the head of the household and especially the type of family (conjugal, single-parent or parental) definitely appear as crucial variables in determining the observed difference in the welcoming of outsiders not from the family nucleus. This may be easier to understand if one refers to the structure of each of the two sexes according to marital status and the type of family. In Cameroon, for example, whereas 97% of male heads of households are married, monogamous (75%) or polygamous (22%), only 32% of women household heads are married (21% to monogamous men and 11% to polygamous men). By contrast, 68% of women heads of households are either single (15%), widowed (43%) or divorced (10%) compared with only 1% of men in each of these three categories. But households headed by non-married men or women (single/widowed/divorced) tend to be less nuclear than those headed by married persons. At the same time, however, it should also be noted that it is

⁵It should be noted that this involves an analysis weighted by size; but on the whole the results point in the same direction as those obtained without weighting, level of significance included. Actually, almost all the results of the unweighted analysis were very significant (1 per thousand). However, we did weighted analyses with the aim of obtaining proportions identical to those obtained previously in the descriptive analysis (Tables 12.1 to 12.3).

precisely among married heads of households that women welcome outsiders more than men⁶.

As far as the structure according to the type of family is concerned, in Cameroon, for example, more than 92% of family households headed by women are single-parent households compared with 4% among men, for whom most households are mainly of the parental type (79% compared with 6% among women). However, in the three countries, the parental type households are the ones which welcome outsiders the least (Tables 12.1.A, 12.2.A and 12.3.A). It should also be noted, though, that among the parental type households, those with women heads also welcome outsiders more. In fact, as Table 12.4 below shows, in households where the couple cohabits (conjugal and parental households), the women heads of households welcome outsiders more than their male counterparts: + 7% and + 3% in Cameroon, + 13% and + 8% in Côte d'Ivoire and + 1% and + 6% in Senegal, for conjugal and parental type households, respectively. On the other hand, in single-parent households, women tend to welcome outsiders as much (the case in Cameroon) or less than men (the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal with - 7%). The situation is practically the same regarding frequency in welcoming outsiders (proportion of extended families), except in Cameroon, where the difference remains in favour of women even among single-parent households (Table 12.4). Analysis according to place of residence, sex and type of family, in the case of Cameroon, also points to the fact that although single-parent households headed by men tend to welcome outsiders more than those headed by women in Yaounde and Douala (the two largest cities in the country), the opposite is true in the smaller cities and towns ("Other Urban Areas") and in rural areas. Similarly, for households in which the couple cohabits (conjugal and parental households), women heads welcome outsiders more frequently and to a greater extent whatever the place of residence.

⁶In Cameroon, for example, the proportion of persons from outside the family nucleus in households headed by women is 21% compared with 18% among households headed by men for monogamous heads and 23% compared with 14%, respectively, among polygamous heads.

Table 12.4. – Percentages of extended households and of outsiders not from the family nucleus according to the sex of the Head of the Household and the type of family nucleus in Cameroon (1987) in Côte d'Ivoire (1988) and in Senegal (1988) (Family households)

Country and type of household	% of extended households			% of outsiders not from the family nucleus		
	Male head (1)	Female head (2)	Difference (2)-(1)	Male head (1)	Female head (2)	Difference (2)-(1)
CAMEROON						
1. Conjugal	41	50	+ 9	30	37	+ 7
2. Single-parent	46	49	+ 3	25	25	0
3. Parental	46	51	+ 5	15	18	+ 3
COTE D'IVOIRE						
1. Conjugal	50	62	+12	43	56	+13
2. Single-parent	64	60	- 4	44	37	- 7
3. Parental	57	77	+20	26	34	+ 8
SENEGAL						
1. Conjugal	76	84	+ 8	68	69	+ 1
2. Single-parent	71	69	- 2	50	43	- 7
3. Parental	67	74	+ 7	32	38	+ 6

Source: Censuses of the different countries.

These results raise several questions. Although it is understandable that single-parent households headed by women, with less purchasing power, tend to welcome outsiders less than or as much as those headed by men, who usually support extended families, there is reason to wonder why conjugal or parental households (i.e., with cohabiting couples) headed by women welcome outsiders not from the family nucleus more than those headed by men. It should also be noted that this difference in favour of women is maintained in the three countries even when one applies the different multivariate models mentioned above only to the households where the couples cohabit (conjugal and parental households). A multivariate analysis by place of residence also reveals, in the case of Abidjan, a difference in favour of women which remains for all the different types of family households, i.e., single-parent, parental and conjugal households together. Could it be that women heads of households who are married and cohabit with their husbands take advantage of their decision-making power and sharing of decisions with their husbands concerning the management of the household, leading to the presence of a greater number of outsiders not from the family nucleus? This is likely, especially for the members of their lineage family. But who are these women who head households in which the husbands live?

Table 12.5. – Some results obtained from the Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) of the proportion of outsiders not from the family nucleus in households headed by women in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal (Family households)

Independent Variables	Cameroon			Côte d'Ivoire			Senegal		
	M1	M4	M9	M1	M4	M9	M1	M4	M9
	A,B, ..., H	A to D	A to H [#]	A,B, ..., H	A to D	A to H [#]	A,B, ..., H	A to D	A to H [#]
A. Urbanisation:									
Relation with the dependent variable (n) and (β) statistics	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
	.10	.09	.04	.08	.0	.02	.07	.08	.02
B. Level of education of HH:									
Relation with the dependent variable (n) and (β) statistics	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
	.08	.07	.09	.08	.06	.08	.10	.14	.05
C. Standard of living:									
Relation with the dependent variable (n) and (β) statistics	+	+	+	+	+	+-	+	+	+
	.10	.03	.01	.16	.09	.02	.26	.09	.05
D. Living space:									
Relation with the dependent variable (n) and (β) statistics	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	.26	.26	.08	.43	.42	.10	.47	.43	.17
E. Size of household:									
Relation with the dependent variable (n) and (β) statistics	+		+	+		+	+		+
	.43		.45	.61		.53	.57		.47
F. Place of birth of HH:									
(n) and (β) statistics	.17		.07	.25		.07	.08		.06
G. Marital status of HH:									
(n) and (β) statistics	.11		.10	.24		.11	.20		.09
H. Type of household:									
(n) and (β) statistics	.10		.20	.06		.13	.10		.18
R ² Statistic (%)		9 %	30 %		20 %	47 %		24 %	46 %
#: With the age of the head of the household as a covariate.									
M1, M4, M9: Model with 1, 4 and 9 independent variables, respectively.									
+, -, +-: positive, negative, curvilinear relationship (respectively) between the dependent variable and the explanatory variable being considered.									
Level of significance: all results have a level of significance of at least 1%.									
Source: in Cameroon: Census-1987, in Côte d'Ivoire: Census -1988 and in Senegal: Census -1988.									

Undoubtedly, other studies will be needed to get a better understanding of the situation. Meanwhile, to conclude we will note that the results in Tables 12.1.A, 12.2.A and 12.3.A (in the Appendix) also show that socio-economic development is far from leading to a nuclearisation of the family in Africa, as evolutionary sociologists such as Talcott Parsons (1955) and William Goode (1963)⁷ had predicted in the 50s and 60s. On the contrary, economic power tends rather to be positively and very significantly associated with the welcoming of persons from outside the family nucleus,

⁷ For in-depth studies on this question, see Wakam (1995, 1996) and Wakam *et al.* (1996).

especially in female-headed households, as shown in the results in Table 12.5.

SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of the socio-economic status of female heads of households on their behavior concerning the welcoming of people from outside the family nucleus, in relation to that of their male counterparts. It concerns family households (households including at least one family nucleus) drawn from 10% samples from censuses in Cameroon (1987), Côte d'Ivoire (1988) and Senegal (1988). Socio-economic status is measured by the level of education and the socio-professional (occupational) category of the head of the household, the standard of living of the household, the number of rooms and occupancy status. The welcoming of outsiders not from the family nucleus is measured by the proportion of extended households (frequency) and the proportion of household members who are outsiders (intensity). The study involved two types of analysis: (1) a descriptive analysis aimed at revealing the differences and the similarities between the behavior of heads of households of both sexes concerning family nuclearisation as well as the variations occurring with improved socio-economic status; (2) a multivariate analysis to try to identify the factors explaining the differences observed between male and female heads of households regarding the welcoming of outsiders not from the family nucleus. The results show the following:

- Among both men and women, socio-economic status (or power), as can be evaluated through the standard of living and the living space especially, tends to be positively associated with the extension of family households in the three countries. In short, nuclearisation tends to occur more at the lower end of the social scale and the poorest households tend to be more often nuclearised, whether headed by men or women.
- Households headed by women tend to welcome more outsiders not from the family nucleus (in frequency and intensity) than those headed by men. And in households having more or less identical socio-economic status (or levels of modernisation), this difference between the sexes concerning the welcoming of outsiders tends to increase in favour of women. In other words, female heads of households would welcome outsiders even more, compared with their male counterparts, if they enjoyed the same socio-economic status.
- This difference in favour of women is strongly linked to the differential structure by sex with respect to the type of family (conjugal, single-parent and parental). However, although for single-parent households analysis by type of family tends to cancel out the difference (the case of Cameroon) or to reverse it in favour of men (the case of Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal), this is not

the case for households where the spouses cohabit (conjugal or parental households), because the difference in favour of women is maintained even in the case of the most complete multivariate models. Further studies will certainly be needed in order to gain a better understanding of this.

But meanwhile it would seem that the possible autonomy or authority linked to women gaining access to the status of head of the household does not necessarily imply a rejection of family traditions, and does not seem to dispense them from the obligation of solidarity towards other members of the extended family. On the contrary, access to improved economic status enables them, as is the case with men, to welcome more outsiders not from the family nucleus. This fact must be taken into account and promotion of the status of women should not be based on the hope for a hypothetical emergence of the nuclear family. Surely it would be better to try and identify what African family concepts and practices have best to offer (in human and social terms) and use these positive aspects to promote mutually supportive human development.

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Table 12.1.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations from the overall average =0.18 [#]									
		Gross	Net in relation to the independent variables considered and the "age of the head of the household (HH)" covariate for the last model								
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov+ A to I
135 997	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	
E. Living space:											
1. 1 Room	8 348	-.10				-.10	-.05	-.05	-.06	-.04	-.04
2. 2 Rooms	21 204	-.07				-.07	-.04	-.04	-.05	-.03	-.03
3. 3 Rooms	24 102	-.04				-.03	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.02	-.02
4. 4 Rooms	23 659	-.01				-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
5. 5 Rooms	18 909	.02				.01	.01	.01	.01	.00	.00
6. 6 or 7 Rooms	21 025	.03				.03	.02	.02	.02	.01	.01
7. 8 Rooms or more	17 656	.04				.05	.02	.02	.04	.03	.04
8. Other	1 094	.00				.00	.00	-.01	-.01	.00	.00
(n) and (β) stat.		(.20)				(.20)	(.11)	(.10)	(.14)	(.11)	(.11)
Level of signif.		***				***	***	***	***	***	***
F. Household size:											
1. 2 people	15 717	-.17					-.15	-.16	-.18	-.46	-.46
2. 3 people	17 730	-.08					-.06	-.06	-.08	-.17	-.17
3. 4 people	18 262	-.04					-.03	-.03	-.05	-.08	-.08
4. 5 people	17 409	-.02					-.02	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.04
5. 6 people	15 719	-.01					-.01	-.01	-.02	-.01	-.01
6. 7 people	13 376	.00					.00	.00	-.01	.01	.01
7. 8-9 people	17 985	.02					.01	.01	.01	.04	.04
8. 10 people or more	19 799	.05					.04	.04	.07	.10	.10
(n) and (β) stat.		(.25)					(.21)	(.21)	(.29)	(.57)	(.57)
Level of signif.		***					***	***	***	***	***
G. Place of birth of HH:											
1. Yaoundé	1 421	.06						.05	.04	.03	.03
2. Douala	1 780	.05						.04	.03	.02	.02
3. Adamaoua	6 338	-.03						.00	.01	.00	.00
4. Centre	15 778	.06						.05	.04	.03	.03
5. East	6 176	.01						.03	.02	.02	.02
6. Far North	29 590	-.04						-.02	-.02	-.01	-.01
7. Coast	6 588	.04						.02	.01	.00	.00
8. North	9 334	-.03						-.01	.00	.00	.00
9. North-West	16 320	.00						-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
10. West	25 652	.00						-.03	-.02	-.01	-.01
11. South	5 305	.07						.08	.07	.05	.05
12. South-West	6 776	.02						.00	.00	.00	.00
13. Foreigner	4 939	-.04						-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
(n) and (β) stat.		(.19)						(.15)	(.12)	(.08)	(.09)
Level of signif.		***						***	***	***	***

Table 12.1.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations from the overall average =0.18 [#]										
		Gross	Net in relation to the independent variables considered and the "age of the head of the household (HH)" covariate for the last model									
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov+ A to I	
	135 997	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	
H. Marital status of HH:												
1. Single	3493	.06							.09	.07	.07	
2. Monogamous	92940	.00							.03	.03	.03	
3. Polygamous	28082	-.02							-.07	-.07	-.07	
4. Widowed	8495	.06							.08	.05	.05	
5. Divorced	2987	.01							.08	.05	.05	
(n) and (β) statistics		(.10)							(.25)	(.23)	(.23)	
Level of significance		***							***	***	***	
I. Type of household:												
1. Type of household:	22186	.04								.33	.33	
2. Conjugal	20448	.04								.10	.10	
3. Single-parent	93363	-.02								-.05	-.05	
4. Parental		(.15)								(.53)	(.53)	
(n) and (β) statistics		***								***	***	
Level of significance												
Statistics R ² (%)			2.6	3.9	4.2	8.2	11.6	13.4	17.3	39.9	39.9	
Increase (%)			-	1.3	0.3	4.0	3.4	1.8	3.9	22.6	0.0	
#: Average weighted by size.												
Level of significance: * .05; ** .01; *** .001												
Source: Census -1987												

Table 12.2.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations in relation to the overall average =.28 [#]									
		Gross	Net in relation to the independent considered and in relation to the "age of the head of the household" covariate for the last model								
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov + A to I
126 330	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	
<i>E. Living space:</i>											
1. 1 Room	20 878	-.14				-.16	-.08	-.07	-.07	-.06	-.06
2. 2 Rooms	31 250	-.12				-.11	-.06	-.05	-.06	-.05	-.05
3. 3 Rooms	25 693	-.04				-.04	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03
4. 4 Rooms	19 818	.01				.00	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
5. 5 Rooms	10 597	.05				.05	.02	.01	.02	.01	.01
6. 6 or 7 rooms	9 969	.09				.10	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05
7. 8 rooms or more	8 125	.18				.19	.13	.12	.14	.13	.13
(n) and (β)stat.		(.40)				(.42)	(.25)	(.23)	(.26)	(.24)	(.24)
Level of signif.		***				***	***	***	***	***	***
<i>F. Household size:</i>											
1. 2 people	9 768	-.28					-.25	-.24	-.28	-.53	-.53
2. 3 people	13 916	-.19					-.15	-.15	-.18	-.24	-.24
3. 4 people	15 666	-.15					-.11	-.11	-.13	-.16	-.16
4. 5 people	15 144	-.11					-.08	-.08	-.11	-.11	-.11
5. 6 people	13 641	-.08					-.05	-.05	-.07	-.07	-.07
6. 7 people	12 821	-.05					-.03	-.03	-.05	-.04	-.04
7. 8-9 people	16 389	-.01					.00	.00	-.01	.01	.01
8. 10 people or more	28 985	.11					.08	.08	.10	.12	.12
(n) and (β)stat.		(.43)					(.33)	(.32)	(.40)	(.53)	(.53)
Level of signif.		***					***	***	***	***	***
<i>G. Ethnic group of HH:</i>											
1. Akan	35327	.07						.04	.02	.02	.02
2. Krou	13322	.04						.03	.03	.02	.02
3. Mandé from the North	12326	.03						.00	.01	.01	.01
4. Mandé from the South	9731	.01						.01	.01	.01	.01
5. From Volta	15409	-.04						-.03	-.02	-.02	-.02
6. Other from Côte d'Ivoire	382	.00						-.05	-.04	-.03	-.03
7. Not from Côte d'Ivoire	39833	-.09						-.04	-.03	-.03	-.03
(n) and (β)stat.		(.25)						(.14)	(.10)	(.08)	(.08)
Level of signif.		***						***	***	***	***

Table 12.2.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations in relation to the overall average = .28 #										
		Gross	Net in relation to the independent considered and in relation to the "age of the head of the household" covariate for the last model									
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov + A to I	
	126 330	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	
<i>H. Marital Status of HH:</i>												
1. Single	3 850	.09								.11	.08	.08
2. Monogamous	88 738	-.01								.04	.04	.04
3. Polygamous	26 727	-.02								-.10	-.09	-.09
4. Widowed	2 631	.13								.13	.06	.06
5. Divorced	4 384	.20								.15	.09	.09
(n) and (β)stat.		(.17)								(.29)	(.24)	(.24)
Level of signif.		***								***	***	***
<i>I. Type of household:</i>												
1. Conjugal	13 484	.15								.33	.33	.33
2. Single-parent	20 800	.11								.14	.14	.14
3. Parental	92 046	-.03								-.04	-.04	-.04
(n) and (β)stat.		(.23)								(.40)	(.40)	(.40)
Level of signif.		***								***	***	***
Statistic R ² (%)			1.9	2.9	4.4	20.2	27.3	28.9	34.5	44.5	44.5	
Increase (%)			-	1	1.5	15.8	7.1	1.6	5.6	10	0	
#: average weighted by size. Level of significance: * .05; ** .01; *** .001. Source: Census - 1988.												

Table 12.3.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations from the overall average = .35 [#]									
		Gross	Net relation to the independent variables taken into account and the "age of the HH" covariate for the last model								
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov + A to I
	66 435	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
<i>E. Living space:</i>											
1. 1 Room	6 507	-.24				-.24	-.14	-.14	-.15	-.13	-.12
2. 2 Rooms	12 507	-.16				-.15	-.09	-.09	-.11	-.10	-.09
3. 3 Rooms	14 147	-.08				-.08	-.05	-.05	-.06	-.06	-.06
4. 4 Rooms	10 836	-.02				-.02	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.03	-.03
5. 5 Rooms	7 996	.02				.02	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
6. 6 or 7 rooms	7 823	.08				.08	.05	.05	.06	.05	.05
7. 8 rooms or more	5 110	.19				.19	.15	.15	.17	.16	.15
1 507	1 507	-.02				-.03	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02
(n) and (β)stat.		(.44)				(.43)	(.29)	(.29)	(.34)	(.31)	(.29)
Level of signif.		***				***	***	***	***	***	***
<i>F. Household size:</i>											
1. 2 people	1 997	-.35					-.28	-.28	-.30	-.57	-.57
2. 3 people	3 591	-.25					-.17	-.17	-.20	-.29	-.29
3. 4 people	4 908	-.21					-.14	-.14	-.17	-.21	-.20
4. 5 people	6 005	-.17					-.11	-.11	-.14	-.16	-.15
5. 6 people	6 600	-.14					-.09	-.09	-.11	-.12	-.12
6. 7 people	7 021	-.14					-.09	-.09	-.11	-.11	-.11
7. 8-9 people	0 120	-.08					-.04	-.04	-.06	-.05	-.05
8. 10 people or more	6 190	.08					.05	.05	.06	.07	.07
(n) and (β)stat.		(.41)					(.26)	(.26)	(.32)	(.39)	(.39)
Level of signif.		***					***	***	***	***	***
<i>G. Ethnic group of HH:</i>											
1. Wolof	25 570	.00						-.02	-.01	-.01	-.01
2. Sérère	9 697	.01						.02	.01	.01	.01
3. Toucouleur	7 526	-.01						.00	-.01	-.01	-.02
4. Dioula	4 218	-.02						.01	.00	.00	.00
5. Peul	8 491	.00						.02	.01	.01	.01
6. Bamabara	893	-.02						-.02	-.03	-.03	-.03
7. Manding	2 396	.05						.03	.03	.03	.03
8. Lébou	488	.00						-.01	-.01	.00	.00
9. Manjaag	704	.02						.03	.03	.02	.03
10. Sononké	826	.08						.03	.04	.03	.03
11. Other ethnic groups	3 697	-.02						.02	.01	.01	.01
12. Other Africans	1 650	-.12						.00	.00	.00	.00
13. Other foreigners	277	-.15						.01	-.01	-.01	-.02
(n) and (β)stat.		(.09)						(.07)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Level of signif.		***						***	***	***	***

Table 12.3.A. (continued)

Independent variables	N	Deviations from the overall average =.35 #									
		Gross	Net relation to the independent variables taken into account and the "age of the HH" covariate for the last model								
			A to B	A to C	A to D	A to E	A to F	A to G	A to H	A to I	Cov + A to I
66 435	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	
H. Marital Status of HH:											
1. Single	381	.10							.18	.11	.12
2. Monogamous	36 034	-.01							.07	.06	.07
3. Polygamous	25 671	-.01							-.07	-.06	-.06
4. Widowed	3 200	.14							.09	.05	.04
5. Divorced	916	.06							.11	.05	.04
(n) and (β)stat.	231	.06							.06	.03	.03
Level of signif.		(.11)							(.27)	(.23)	(.23)
		***							***	***	***
I. Type of household:											
1. Conjugal	5 317	.33								.37	.35
2. Single-parent	8 996	.08								.17	.17
3. Parental	52 120	-.03								-.04	-.04
(n) and (β)stat.		(.32)								(.40)	(.39)
Level of signif.		***								***	***
Statistic R ² (%)			1.4	1.6	8.1	21.9	26.0	26.4	32.3	44.1	44.6
Increase (%)			-	0.2	6.5	13.8	4.1	0.4	5.9	11.8	0.5
#: average weighted by size.											
Level of significance: *: .05; **: .01; ***: .001.											
Source: Census-1988.											