

THE FAMILY AT THE HEART OF THE HOUSEHOLD
EVOLUTION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE
IN COTE D-IVOIRE, 1975-1998

Patrice VIMARD and Raïmi FASSASSI

INTRODUCTION

We will not come back here to the theoretical debates that were at the origin of research on the family and the households, from the functionalist family theory of Talcott Parsons (1955) to the affirmation by Louis Roussel (1986) of the existence of a plurality of family models, via the inference of a post-modern family by William Shorter (1977). These debates have been extensively presented elsewhere.

All these theoretical approaches provide the subject matter of an examination of the present-day evolution of the household and the family, and their prospects. Although such an examination has often been based on studies concerning the western industrialized countries, it is also relevant for the developing countries that are undergoing profound transformations of their kinship structure.¹ It is particularly important for the countries of sub-Saharan Africa where kinship systems strongly shaped the structure of traditional societies.

The following questions must be addressed if we want to make sense of the present-day forms of the family and the household: What is the role of kinship relationships in the formation of households as residential units? How permanent are household based on an extended family, and how important is the nuclearization of households? Are there types of household that reflect a certain decay of family structure, such as single person households or one-parent households? Can the presence of a single, or dominant model of the household be ascertained, or is there a co-existence of several models of co-residence? Are there differentials between sections of the population that can be attributed to social class, mode of production, or economic situation?

¹On transformations of the family in developing countries, see among others the articles of Carmen Bernand and Serge Gruzinski on Latin America, Jean-Pierre Dozon on sub-Saharan Africa, Philippe Fargues on the Arab world, and Roland Lardinois on Asia in Burguière et al. (1986)

In order to answer these questions, we have selected a country for which we dispose of several country-wide sources of data since 1975. These sources have already permitted to identify certain characteristics and trends of family structures such as the family nucleus and the household. For example, the analysis of the multi-round survey of 1977-78 has led to main conclusions that can be summarized as follows:

The nuclear family presents itself ... as the dominant form that determines to a large extent the structure of family nuclei and the family life cycle of individuals. It assumes a different importance in various populations, is greater in rural than in urban areas, and varies according to demographic characteristics of the head of the unit, being non-existent for women and weakened for the youngest and the oldest men. Beside this nuclear unit, widely diffused secondary forms can also be identified, such as the single parent family unit headed by a woman, or non-family units. The importance of links between individuals, related or non-related, outside of the nuclear component itself should be noted. These family structures that run counter to the exclusive character of the nuclear family are essentially a consequence of the activation of solidarity within the extended families, of the development of extra-family structures of co-residence, of female autonomy and the appearance of new forms of parenthood. (Vimard and N=Cho, 1988).

These conclusion were obtained by considering the family nucleus as the statistical unit of observation. They were confirmed by observations concerning larger units such as households or domestic groups in urban areas (Antoine and Herry, 1983) as well as in rural areas (Vimard, 1987). They were refined through an analysis of household structure in the census of 1988. The latter demonstrated relatively distinct patterns of household structure by socioeconomic groups, which can be characterized by a particular mode of residential aggregation by kinship group.

Confronted with these consistent series of observations, it seems useful to seek a more complete view of the evolution of household structure in order to evaluate the persistence over time as well as the transformations of these multiple family models, and to investigate the principles that determine household structure in the communities of Côte d'Ivoire. In the following analysis we try to estimate, at the global level and for various groups represented in the population, the extent to which various phenomena have emerged that are all manifestations of a relative fraying of the demographic fabric: increase of the number of single-person households, dominance of the nuclear component of households and even of the mother-child nucleus, instability of the marital nucleus. These phenomena have become manifest in the last thirty years in industrialized countries, but they can be observed in the developing countries too. It is also necessary to document the relevance of evolutions that are characterized by the survival or reappearance of family solidarities, made concrete by the persistence of extended household structures that have been observed in African societies (Locoh, 1988; Vimard, 1993).

The present chapter updates and complements an article written in 1995 and published in 1997

(Vimard and N=Cho, 1997). At the time, data from the population censuses of 1975 and 1988 and from the 1993 survey of migration and urbanization were available. Since the date of the latter survey was close to that of the census of 1988, the analysis was not entirely adequate to evaluate long-term family changes. Today it is possible to use the results of a national survey on the level of living of households that took place in 1998, while waiting to have access to the files of the population census of 1998. Using the 1998 data provides better historical depth, particularly to appreciate the changes during the decade of the 1990s, a crucial advantage if we wish to link the evolution of households with that of the economy and society.

EVOLUTION OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Three population files were used for this analysis: those for the two first censuses of Côte d'Ivoire, in 1975 and 1988, and that of the national survey of household levels of living of 1998. Random samples of districts were drawn from the censuses, of 1 in 30 for 1975 and 1 in 35 for 1988. The entire sample of the national survey of household levels of living was used. It had been drawn randomly among 210 clusters drawn from enumeration areas in the census of 1988, weighed to insure the representativity of the sample.

The household files include: for 1975, 34 842 households representing a *de jure* population of 191 191 persons; for 1988, 44622 household representing a *de jure* population of 269 623; for 1998 4200 households representing a *de jure* population of 24 594 persons.²

Heads of household.

The sub-population of household heads undergoes three evolutions (Table 1). First, the share of single-person households decreases after a slight initial increase. Second, there is an important increase in the mean age of household heads between 1975 and 1998, for male as well as for female heads. And finally, the third change must be treated as the most important one: a large increase in the proportion of female-headed households between 1975 and 1988, followed by stabilization.³ The share of female-headed households has more than doubled in 23 years. The increase is proportionately largest among households of more than two members, their number being multiplied almost by two and a half.

²The definitions of the household in the various operations can be found in Appendix 1. The household files were constituted with the SANDCO program (Chevaugéon and Vimard, 1990). A Table of Appendix 1 gives the size of the population and the households by socioeconomic groups at the three dates.

³The proportion of female heads of household in the survey of levels of living is very close from that computed from the census data for the same year: 16 per cent. (Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat de 1998, p. 23).

TABLE I
Change in household characteristics, 1975, 1988, 1998

Index	1975	1988	1998
Percentage of single person households	16,6	17,9	11,4
Average age of heads of household :			
Both sexes	37,9	41,0	43,0
Male	37,9	40,8	42,4
Female	38,6	42,3	46,2
Percentage of female-headed households	7,4	15,1	15,3
Average size (all households)	5,5	6,0	5,9
Average composition of households			
Spouse	1,0	0,8	0,9
Children	2,4	2,4	2,7
Other relatives	0,8	1,3	1,2
Non related	0,3	0,6	0,1
Size of the sample:			
Number of people	191 191	269 623	24 594
Number of households	34 842	44 622	4 200

This increase in the proportion of female-headed household between 1975 and 1998 leads to a corresponding increase of the population living in such households (Table 2). The contribution of women to the family structure has been increased markedly during the two decades of observation, and is not a marginal factor anymore as in 1975.

Table 2
Changes in the percentage of female heads of household and of the population living in their households,
1975, 1988, 1998

	1975	1988	1998
Female headed single-person households	14,0	19,0	21,1
Female headed households with 2 persons or more	6,1	14,5	14,6
Population in female headed households	4,8	11,5	11,4
Population in female headed households with 2 person or more	4,5	11,3	11,3
Members of the family component in female headed households with 2 person or more	4,4	11,1	9,3

Changes in the general composition of households

During the observation period, the average size of households increased between 1975 and 1988, from 5.5 to 6 persons, and then stabilized between 1988 and 1998 at 6 and 5.9 persons respectively.⁴ (Table 1). The evolution is slightly different among households of two persons or more. The average size of all households is a combination of the size of households of two persons or more, and of the proportions of households of one person.

Other trends deserve to be noted. The number of non-related individuals per household decreases over the period. On the contrary, the size of the family component (head, spouse, children and other parents) progresses over the period, from 5.2 in 1975, to 5.5 in 1988 and 5.8 in 1998. This family component increases also as a proportion of all households, from 95 percent in 1975 to 98 percent in 1998. Within it, the various categories of relatives evolve differently; the average number of spouses is stable, the number of children and other relatives increases. Thus, the nuclear component increases absolutely from 4.4 to 4.6 persons, but decreases as a proportion of the whole family, from 80 to 78 percent. The households become more family-centered, but not more nuclear, as they include on the average more children, but fewer non-related members in 1998 than in 1975.

⁴ The size reported in the survey on levels of living, 5.79, was very close to that calculated on the basis of the census taken in the same year. (Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat de 1998, p. 17).

These global tendencies seem to confirm certain observations of economists and sociologists on Ivorian society. They have noted the evolution of kinship solidarity, including the welcoming of the underprivileged in the more well-to-do households at the beginning of a crises, and the weakening of solidarity as the crisis last or intensifies (Vidal and Le Pape, 1986); Jaret and Mahieu, 1991). Welcoming the poor may well explain the doubling of the number of the non-related in households between 1975 and 1988, while the strong decline by 1988 would reflect the weakening of social solidarity. Such parallelism over time should be treated with a grain of salt, however. The welcoming curve seems to reach a peak in 1988 if we believe the statistical evidence, whereas the process of expelling the guests was already reported earlier in households from Abidjan (Vidal and Le Pape, 1986). Moreover, data from 1998 suggest that the welcoming had already ebbed then in households of two persons or more, while the general economic situation had been relatively stable in the preceding period.

Changes in the composition of households with two persons or more

Considering households with two persons or more separately in Table 3 controls for the effect of changes in the proportion of single-person households, which will be discussed later. The size of these households was relatively stable at the two ends of the period of observation, 1975 and 1998, although it increased in 1988. The trend in the family component is different: stable between 1975 and 1998, it grows in 1998. Within the family component, the various categories of relatives changes slightly; the decline in the number of spouses and the increase in the number of children and other relatives suggest a tendency towards denuclearization. Most of the variation is in the number of non-related persons, and this accounts for a major part of the change in the average size of households.

TABLE 3

Average composition of household, by sex of the head (households of 2 persons or more)
1975, 1988, 1998.

		Spouse	Child	Other relative	Non related	Total
Male	1975	1,3	2,9	1,0	0,3	6,5
	1988	1,1	2,9	1,5	0,7	7,1
	1998	1,1	3,2	1,3	0,1	6,7
Female	1975	0,1	2,1	1,2	0,3	4,7
	1988	0,1	1,8	1,9	0,6	5,4
	1998	0,0	2,2	1,7	0,1	5,0
Both sexes	1975	1,2	2,9	1,0	0,3	6,4
	1988	0,9	2,7	1,5	0,7	6,8
	1998	1,0	3,0	1,4	0,1	6,5

Composition of the household according to the sex of the head

The growing importance of female-headed households lends special interest to the difference in the make-up of households by the sex of their head (Table 3). Concentrating again on the households with two or more members, the female-headed households⁵ are in sharp contrast with those headed by a man in the following respects:

* Their size is markedly smaller: 5.0 versus 6.7 in 1998;

* spouses are almost completely absent, to the extent that these female heads are most often widowed or divorced;

⁵In 1988, even more clearly than in 1975 or 1988, the female heads of household were older than the men (46.2 years versus 42.4) and have been responsible for the household for a shorter time, having reached the headship at an older age than the men (Fassassi, 1997).

- * the number of children is smaller, about 2 in contrast with 3 for the male-headed households;
- * the number of other relatives is larger, for example 1.7 versus 1.3 in 1998.

On the other hand, the number of non-related individuals is comparable. Thus, female-headed households are characterized by a more restricted biological cell, because of the absence of a spouse and of the smaller number of children, and by a wider extension in the direction of extra-nuclear kinship. The trends in the average size of their households between 1975 and 1998 runs parallel with that of the male-headed ones: increase until 1988, followed by a decrease; over the whole period, the size increase for both sexes.

The evolution by sex leads to the conclusion that the relative stability of the average size of households of more than two persons during our period of observation is principally accounted for by an increase in the proportion of the smaller female-headed households, while the average size increases for both categories of heads of household.

CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF HOUSEHOLDS BY SOCIOECONOMIC GROUP

General evolution of household structure

A look at the distribution of households by type complements the preceding discussion of size, composition and sex of head. In the following typology, we distinguish between nine types of households on the basis of the structure of their nuclear component and of the presence or absence of individuals classified as *Aother relatives*⁶. This yields the following types: *Aliving alone*, *Acouple*, *Asingle-parent family*, *Anuclear family*, *Ahead of household + other relative*, *Acouple + other relative*, *Asingle-parent family + other relative*, *Anuclear family + other relative*, *Ahead of household + non-related*⁷ (Table 4)

For the population as a whole, the remarkable fact is the stability of the various types of households. Some changes in the distribution should be noted, however:

- * the dominance of the nuclear family increases slightly; the most important types are the

⁶The *Aother relatives* include ascending and lateral relatives, grandchildren, and individuals allied by marriage to the head of household.

⁷ This type, *Ahead of household + non-related* is the only one for which the presence of non-related individuals is taken into account.

Anuclear family@ and the Anuclear family + other relative@, which are also the most important throughout the period of observation;

* the couples living alone are subjected to a slight attrition, Acouples + other relatives@ are stable;

* the heads of household living with other relatives or with non-related are also relatively stable;

* in contrast, the proportion of single-parent families increases markedly, whether they are associated or not with other relatives;

* on the contrary, individuals living alone are in clear decline.

TABLE 4.

Type of household by socioeconomic group of the head of household
per 100 household in each group – 1975, 1988, 1998.

	Head alone	Couple	Single- parent family	Nuclear family	Head + other relative	Couple + other relative	Single- parent family + other relative	Nuclear family + other relative	Head + non- related	% of all house- holds
Farmer	7	6	4	41	4	4	4	29	1	48
	10	5	4	33	7	4	4	32	1	46
	7	6	5	44	5	3	4	25	...	45
Agricultural	36	9	1	31	8	2	1	8	6	5
Salaried or	25	6	7	26	13	2	5	10	6	5
Laborer	31	10	2	32	6	1	2	13	3	3
Unskilled	22	9	...	33	7	4	1	22	2	14
Worker	14	6	2	39	6	3	2	26	2	7
	16	7	3	38	5	3	4	23	1	14
	21	6	2	25	7	4	4	29	2	13
Clerical	21	6	2	25	7	4	4	29	2	13
Worker or	12	4	3	28	8	3	6	34	2	13
Manager	13	5	2	22	8	5	9	35	1	8
Craftsmen	24	7	6	27	9	3	5	17	2	9
or Petty	19	5	7	28	12	2	7	16	4	14
Trader	18	5	12	25	8	2	15	14	1	16
Employer	30	5	5	27	6	3	2	20	2	4
Or Pro- fessional	22	5	6	28	10	2	4	20	3	4
	8	2	3	26	4	2	8	45	2	6
Inactive or	36	3	10	11	12	1	10	11	6	6
Without	21	2	16	7	18	2	17	12	4	11
Fixed	11	5	8	21	12	5	15	23	0	8
income										
Total	16	7	4	34	6	3	4	24	2	100
	14	5	6	29	9	3	6	26	2	100
	11	6	6	35	6	3	7	25	1	100

First line for 1975, second line for 1988, third line for 1998.

The broad picture is characterized by a decline of the share of people living alone and an affirmation of single parenthood. In 1998, 13 percent of households are based on a single parent, versus 8 percent in 1975. This is the most striking change in a structure otherwise characterized by

great stability. Together with this shift that reflects the weakening of marital stability, a slight progression of the inclusion of other relatives in the households is observed. The growth demonstrates the importance, during the last two decades, of the inclusion of members of the household heads' kinship who do not belong to his or her nuclear family.

Household structure and socioeconomic groups

In order to refine our analysis of the typology of households and to investigate the different types of structure by socioeconomic classes, we shall distinguish between seven socioeconomic groups defined in terms of the type of activity, occupation and employment status of the head of household: independent farmers, agricultural wage earners or laborers,⁸ unskilled workers, clerical workers or managers, craftsmen or petty traders, employers or professionals, economically inactives or without fixed income.⁹

These groups have different weights in the population, and these weights change during the period, sometimes significantly. Of particular interest are:¹⁰

- * the attrition of agricultural activities, those of farmers as well as of wage earners and unskilled laborers.

- * the decrease in the number of clerical workers and managers, probably as a result of a decade of severe economic difficulties and structural adjustment. In contrast, the share of unskilled workers had regained its 1975 level in 1998, after having been cut in half in 1988, in the middle of the crisis;

- * three groups have been growing: employers and professionals, inactives or without fixed income, and most of all craftsmen and shopkeepers. The growth of the two latter categories is symptomatic of changes during the crisis: the extension of the informal sector consisting mainly of petty crafts and trade, and the increase in the number of individuals without activity of fixed

⁸Farmers are independent agriculturalists. Agricultural wage earners and laborers includes salaried workers of agro-industrial complexes as well as laborers earning wages or paid by the piece on village farms; their common characteristics are that they do not own the land on which they work.

⁹ The inactives or without fixed income include individuals those who are not presently active (students, unemployed, retired...) and unpaid workers (housewives, growers of food crops for home consumption, family workers, apprentices...)

¹⁰ A summary table in the Appendix gives the numbers of individuals and households for each socioeconomic group. Because the number of heads of household whose activity is unknown is not significant, the make-up of households in that category have not been presented in the text.

income who are not welcomed any more in the less economically destitute households. The growth of the number of employers and professionals suggests that modernization continued during the crisis, and that a modern private sector of small businesses and professionals is developing.

Ongoing nuclearization in most groups

Beyond the general distribution characterized by a strong hierarchy among the types of households, we note clear differences between socioeconomic groups with respect to the structure of their households, and particularly to nuclearization.

It is possible to distinguish between:

- *strongly nuclearized groups*: They are those with a majority of households based on a nuclear family, with or without other relatives. In 1998, the following groups were ranked on top: employers and professionals (71 percent); farmers (69 percent); unskilled workers (61 percent); clerical workers and managers (57 percent). Nuclearization is most often associated with the presence of other relatives among the clerical workers and managers and the employers and professionals;
- *groups with limited nuclearization*: For agricultural wage earners and laborers (45 percent), inactive persons and persons without fixed income (44 percent), and the craftsmen and petty traders (39 percent), nuclearization concerns less than half the households. For inactive persons and persons without fixed income, nuclearization is most often associated with the presence of other relatives.

Unequal importance of one-parent families

The proportion of single-parent families (with or without other relatives) is an important index of household structure, both from a statistical point of view, as they included 13 percent of all households in 1993, and from a social point of view since they reveal a break or a relaxation of the marital bond. The phenomenon differentiates among group, because it is very unequally represented, being associated with the proportion of female heads of households.

[Note: 2 Omitted paragraphs to be translated later.]

Differentiation by presence of other parents

[Note: 3 omitted paragraphs]

Strong variations in the proportion of single-person households

[Note: 2 omitted paragraphs]

Diverging evolution of family structure in the socioeconomic groups

The various trends that have been described previously show that beyond the global trends, there are diverging transformations that affect the socioeconomic groups. An overview of these changes can be obtained by regrouping the seven socioeconomic groups in three larger categories: Farmers, dominated, and modern categories,¹¹ and by regrouping the types of household into four main categories: isolated, monoparental, nuclear, extended.¹² The presence of other relatives than members of the nuclear family can also be examined. Table 5 includes only male-headed households, so as to eliminate the effect of different size by sex of the head.

TABLE 5.

Main types of household and presence of other relatives by three socioeconomic categories of (per 100 male-headed households) – 1975, 1988, 1998.

		1975	1988	1998
Agriculturalist	Isolated	7	10	5
	Monoparental	5	4	3
	Nuclear	84	80	88
	Extended	4	6	4
	Presence of other relatives	40,4	41,1	38,6
Dominated	Isolated	33	27	20
	Monoparental	3	3	6
	Nuclear	56	57	68
	Extende	8	13	6
	Presence of other relatives	28,8	23,2	45,7
Modern	Isolated	24	16	15
	Monoparental	2	4	4
	Nuclear	67	73	78
	Extended	7	7	4
	Presence of other relatives	38,1	37,1	51,3
Total	Isolated	17	15	12
	Monoparental	4	4	4
	Nuclear	73	73	80
	Extended	6	8	4
	Presence of other relatives	37,5	35,7	44,1

¹¹ Farmers are only independent agriculturalists. The dominated include agricultural wage workers and laborers, craftsmen and petty traders, and the individuals who are inactive of without fixed income. The modern category includes the other groups.

¹² The “isolated” type includes heads of household living alone or with non relatives; the “monoparental” and “nuclear” types regroup the households of those types with and without non relatives; the “extende” type relates to heads of households living with other relatives.

[Note: 3 omitted paragraphs.]

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY AND SOCIETY

In a community, the pattern of household structure is related to family cohesion to the extent that it determines the modalities and the degree of integration of individuals into the family units. Thus, the differences in the structure of households by socioeconomic groups corresponds to lags in the cohesion of family and society. Four indicators point to them:

- the proportion of persons living alone,
- the proportion of non-relatives in households,
- the proportion of relatives in households,
- the ratio of the number of children living in single-parent families, to the number of children living in nuclear families, with both parents. (Table 6)

The proportion of persons living alone reflects the individualism in a given group, and is a first index of familial and social cohesion...

[NOTE: Description of the trends in Table 6 has not been translated.]

The proportion of individuals who are not related to the head of their household is a second indicator, and a more ambiguous one. It reflects a lower social cohesion, but also a certain social solidarity with individuals who are not part of the heads kinship group.

[NOTE: Description of the trends in Table 6 has not been translated.]

The proportion of other relatives in the households reflects the intensity of another ambivalent phenomenon in family life. It corresponds on the one side to extended family solidarity, mostly towards lateral branches, but also towards grandchildren and parents; on the other side, it reveals a certain fragmentation of the nuclear family, since most of these other relatives have left their own nuclear family.

[NOTE: Description of the trends in Table 6 has not been translated.]

The ratio of the number of children in single-parent families to those who live in nuclear families reflects the impact of a breakdown of marital cohesion and, to a lesser extent, of extramarital births on the mode of socialization of children.

[NOTE: Description of the trends in Table 6 has not been translated.]

Table 6.
Indicators of familial and sociale cohesionby socioeconomic group
1975, 1988, 1998.

	Persons living alone (%)	Non related individuals (%)	Other relatives (%)	Children in nuclear families (%)	Children in single parent famillies (%)	Ratio of children in single parent famillies to children in nuclear families (per 1000)
Farmer	1.1	4,2	13,7	92,8	7,2	77
	1.4	9,3	22,0	93,2	6,8	75
	1.1	0,7	18,6	91,3	8,7	96
Agricultural wage earner or Laborer	11.3	7,1	9,7	94,2	5,8	62
	6.6	9,9	18,6	78,7	21,3	271
	9.0	1,8	13,4	87,7	12,3	141
Unskilled Worker	5.0	4,5	14,5	98,0	2,0	21
	2.6	7,2	14,2	96,9	3,1	32
	3.0	1,9	17,3	92,4	7,6	83
Clerical Worker or Manager	3.9	6,3	20,7	92,6	7,4	80
	1.8	10,0	20,6	91,4	8,6	94
	2.1	3,4	28,2	91,3	8,7	95
Craftsman Or Petty Trader	5.4	5,8	15,4	85,3	14,7	172
	3.8	9,0	19,5	83,2	16,8	202
	3.8	2,2	21,5	65,1	34,9	536
Employer or Professional	6.1	5,9	11,2	92,9	7,1	76
	4.1	12,6	18,6	90,5	9,5	105
	1.1	4,3	22,2	89,7	10,3	115
Inactive or Without Fixed income	8.7	7,7	17,4	62,6	37,4	598
	4.1	11,8	31,8	48,9	51,1	1043
	1.8	3,0	30,0	76,3	23,7	311
Total	3.0	4,9	14,8	91,7	8,3	91
	2.3	9,6	21,8	88,1	11,9	135
	2.0	1,7	20,8	86,8	13,2	152

Note: First line for 1975, second line for 1988, third line for 1998

If we consider the four indicators together, then the agricultural wage workers and laborers, the persons who are inactive or without fixed income, and the craftsmen and petty traders seem to constitute the groups that are most affected by the decline in familial and social cohesion. These groups are also those that share the most precarious economic conditions, but these groups are also those where the heads of households, as a consequence of their sex and age, are in a demographic condition that is co-terminous with a lack of structure of the family. This is the case for women heads in the group of craftsmen and petty traders or in that of the persons who are inactive or without fixed income, as well as for the young heads who are wage-workers or laborers in agriculture. The demographic characteristics, the economic conditions and the family status of these groups are not distinct factors.

On the contrary, familial and social cohesion is found in the communities that have an adequate economic underpinning, whatever the basis of this adequacy: ownership of land or of means of production, a stable wage job, financial comfort... and in spite of the random bumps during the crises. This is true for all the better-endowed economic groups

THE FACTORS BEHIND THE COMPLEXITY OF HOUSEHOLDS

[NOTE: This section gives a multivariate analysis of household complexity that I did not have the time to translate. I decided to move on to the Conclusion of the chapter.]

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the evolution of household structure from the middle of the 1970's to the end of the 1990s in Côte d'Ivoire, as recorded in three data collection operations, suggests that there are more than one principle of organization of family structure, and that the various socioeconomic groups behave differently. Various forces that bind or dissolve families, such a nuclearization, the hosting of other relatives, individualization or marital instability, are encountered within the households, and account for their particular morphology in line with the distribution of characteristics that vary according to the socioeconomic group. The particular mix is determined at least in part by the economic and financial ability of the groups to withstand the constraints of the crises encountered by Ivorian society since the early 1980s , but also in part by the demographic characteristics, sex and age, of the heads of household. The structure of households is a joint function of the economic and social position of their heads, but also of the phase of the life cycle in which they are located.

It is observed that the groups possessing the best economic foundations have also the strongest family bonds. Inversely, the groups characterized by precarious economic circumstances, and who have been hit hardest by the crisis, are also most prone to the breakup of the family. For the latter groups, the relaxation of family links is a necessity rather than the choice of a social norm, and it is a structural collapse due to poverty and crisis. As such, it is very different from what the industrial countries have experienced during the 1970s and 1980s (Roussel, 1986).

In reference to various theories of the evolution of the family, it seems that the populations of Côte d'Ivoire have conformed to a multiplicity of family models in shaping the dominant household structures. This diversity is not predicated on an opposition between a nuclearization of the family and its extension in the direction of the kinship group beyond the nuclear family unit, as several analyses of family models in the developing world have argued, but rather on the competition between principles of family cohesion and marital stability on one side, and between the reality of destructureation, individualization and marital breakdown on the other. Ivorian families since 1975 have been characterized as much by the constant or even increasing tendency of certain groups to expand outside of the family nucleus to the larger kinship, as by an increasing frequency of single parenthood, which has gone together with a growing role of women in family and society, particularly in the underprivileged

section of the population. These general trends, however, must not hide the progress of nuclearization, by attrition of the isolated households and a rejection of other relatives in the household when it is headed by a man.

The severe crisis that affected the 1988 results was accompanied by a strong progression of single parenthood and an increase of the number of non-related persons in households. Ten years later, in 1998, single parenthood has remained constant, and appears to become a long term structural phenomenon related to a change in the position of woman in the economy and society and to a progress of her capacity for autonomy in familial and social life. On the other hand, the presence of the non-related has clearly ebbed, indicating that it was a short-term phenomenon linked to the onset of the crisis.

In summary, in Côte d'Ivoire during the last 20 years, we have witnessed an evolution of the family model, that is to say of the mode of communal living in a more or less stable way, that was specific to economic groups. This evolution was linked to the transformations of marital and kinship solidarity. It developed under the influence of the modernization of socioeconomic structures that continued though recession and crises. Little by little, the household models diverged according to the social strata. At the same time, the members of the family nucleus and, beyond them, the members of the whole kinship group have represented a larger share of the households. More than ever, the family is at the heart of the household.

APPENDIX 1: Definition of the household in the sources of data.

In 1975 and 1988, the household was defined as “the group of persons, related or not, who acknowledge the authority of one individual entitled ‘head of household’ and who hold part of their resources in common. They live in the same building.”

In 1998, the household was defined as “a group of persons who sleep usually in the same dwelling and who have shared their meals during three months at least during the 12 months that preceded the interview.”

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