



## Perceptions of Parental Functions among Married People in Benin

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**ABSTRACT:** Parental function remains one of the rare “jobs” that people exercise without any prior formal preparation. The consequences associated with poor parenting skills, however, raise many social issues. An important factor in positive parenting is the partage of and ability to fulfill parental roles. Unfortunately, parenthood is a very little explored field of research in Benin. To identify perceptions of parental roles in the country, one-on-one semi-structured interviews with married women and men were conducted. The results indicate a distinct division of parental functions along maternal-paternal lines with respondents perceiving sexual division of responsibilities as being ‘natural’ rather than through a gendered lens. And yet, the reality is that maternal ability to engage in income-generation activities is critically important in fulfilling parental roles and this is negatively impacted by childcaring responsibilities, especially in contexts of high fertility.

In the context of developing and implementing parenting support policies, this data could be useful to public authorities and structures intervening in this field.

**KEYWORDS:** Benin, Married People, Parenthood, Parental Roles.

### INTRODUCTION

The notion of parenthood is still being conceptualized [1]. At the current stage of its theoretical development, the concept of parenthood designates the job of parenting as, a code of conduct, knowing how to and having the skills intended to meet physical, emotional, and psychological needs of children [1,2,3].

Historically, parental functions have tended to be based on a theocratic framework that makes the man the head of the family and relegating the woman to the maternal function, especially the education, and the care of young children [4]. This distribution of parental roles has been gradually called into question due to growing female employment, growing possibilities for women to avoid unwanted motherhood, gay and lesbian parenting etc. [4]. Legal progress favoring the substitution of parental authority for paternal authority in the family and person’s codes in several countries as well as shared custody add to the factors which challenges the gendered nature of parental functions [1,5]. These facts lead to a profound change in the old family order in favor of parental authority co-exercised by both parents regardless of their gender. These changes, however, do not truly predict the end of gender identities [6,1] and approaches to parenthood still tend to reflect father roles and mother roles as the dominant representations of parental functions [7]. This leads parents to conform to standards and specifications prescribing what a father or mother is or should be [7].

On the other hand, parental incompetence or the way in which parents carry out their functions could generate significant social problems. Studies report that bad parenting induces many problems including behavioral disorders, abuse of psychotropic substances, school failure and criminality [8,9]. Specific poor parenting skills may not be exclusively responsible; for example, poverty and social exclusion can be at the origin of poor parenting skills which result in these problems [8]. In addition, several studies show a virtual absence of men assuming household and parenting tasks [10]. Women lose substantial salary or other income because of the time they devote to child-rearing responsibilities, especially the education and care of young children [11]. In contexts of high fertility, the loss of income related to maternity would be greater for women who must take care of many children.

Many of these drivers of poor parenting, especially poverty, are active in Benin. In response, the State has been implementing a microcredit program for several decades to ensure the financial inclusion of specific subgroups of the population [12]; in particular, women who are overrepresented in poor populations, informal work and excluded from the traditional offer of financial services [12,13]. These government microcredit programs are crucial for the empowerment of most women because women’s self-determination [14,15,16,17] and autonomy are clearly linked to engagement in an income-generating activity.

Although microcredits promote the empowerment of Beninese’ women, certain social norms disrupt the process of women’s participation in these programmes. For example, with the average number of children per woman being 5.7, Benin ranks amongst



the 15 countries with the highest fertility rates in the world [18,19]. In this context of high fertility, parents, especially mothers wanting to engage in income-generating activities, should balance family and professional responsibilities.

However, Beninese' women invest a significant portion of their working time in domestic tasks considered to be their natural responsibility [20]. In addition, regardless of their social status, Beninese' women put up with this burden of domestic work without rebelling [21].

This posture of women in the face of the responsibility of household chores is based on the social context of Benin which is strongly marked by gender inequalities. Among the Fon ethnic group, for example, a study shows that the terms symbolizing women and men clearly embed social gender issues [22]. Indeed, the woman is called "*Gnon nu Xuessi*", or "the domestic being" while the man is designated by the term "*Sunnu Glégénu*" which means "the being of the public sphere" [22]. The author also reports that within this ethnic group, the woman, also called "*Medjito*", or "the one who gives life traditionally" assumes an internal, maternal, and conjugal role. In other words, motherhood is the main function defining female identity in Benin where, despite their professional occupations, women maintain a domestic role [22,23,24,25,26].

Such a situation raises questions about parenthood in Benin because of the need to inform the support provided by the public authorities to address the social issues of both parents and children [27]. Yet, parenthood is a relatively new field of research in West and Central Africa [1]. In Benin, there is very little data on how parents conceive of their roles. To shed new light on parenting, I explored the following research question: What are the perceptions of parental roles among Beninese 'women and men living as married couples?

The data resulting from this research could encourage the Beninese public authorities to adopt policies likely to improve provision of programmes to support parents, especially mothers.

## METHODS

### Research Approach

To answer the research question, I did a phenomenological study. This qualitative research design makes it possible to produce knowledge from the content of consciousness and the experiences of the participants [28,29,30].

### Participants: profiles and selection method

The participants of this study are women and men married by custom, religion, or civil status and aged 18 and over. Participants aged 18 and over are recruited because the legal majority is set at 18 years of age in Benin and thus excludes from the study married minors whose relationship to parenthood raises very specific issues. Single people, people married and facing infertility problems as well as participants' conjugal partners were also excluded from the study.

I selected volunteers for the study because it takes people with particular life experiences or expertise in fertility to answer the research question. The people included in the study participated voluntarily. Only one person was recruited per couple without the knowledge of his/her conjugal partner. This measure aimed to make it easier for women to speak in the Beninese context where fertility decisions are the responsibility of men. The data used to write this article come from a large survey of married people on the social representation of the child, medical contraception, abortion, factors influencing the negotiation of contraceptive use by the married couple as well as parenthood. Thus, the study touches the privacy of the participants and requires specific measures to guarantee freedom and to facilitate speaking for all participants.

To get in touch with the participants, health workers based at the first level of the health system, in particular midwives, nurses, and community health workers were called upon. Operationally, health professionals offered the study to people who came for consultation in the health centers, while community health workers did the same in their localities where they provide certain health services to populations. Community health workers are designated by their communities to strengthen access to health services by providing specific health services such as the free distribution or sale of certain products. In this study, the community health workers involved in recruiting participants sell contraceptives.

People contacted by health workers were encouraged to tell others about the study and those who were interested were put in touch with me. Thirty participants were recruited into the study. Note that the recruitment process was based on the principle of theoretical saturation which is achieved when the collection of data no longer gives rise to new ideas likely to shed more light on the subject under study [31]. The selection of the sample did not aim at statistical representativeness because the study (of a qualitative type) does not aim to generalize of the results. It is a sociological and not a statistical representation. However, I ensured that women and



men of various social statuses present in married couples in Benin were represented in the study. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in the below table.

**Table:** Distribution of respondents according to their socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristics		Sex	
		Women	Men
Number of respondents (30)		21	9
Place of residence	Urban	14	5
	Rural	7	4
Household type	polygamous	5	4
	monogamous	16	5
Attitude towards medical contraception	Rejection	14	7
	Approval	7	2
Number of children	≥ 4 children	11	7
	< 4 children	10	2
Level of study	No education and primary level	11	4
	Secondary	6	2
	University	4	3
Religion	Christianity	12	7
	Islam	2	0
	Vodoun	7	2
Age	18 – 29 years	6	5
	30 – 39 years	11	1
	≥ 40 years	4	3

The numerical imbalance observed in the different socio-demographic categories was not intentional and reflects the difficulty of recruiting participants for a study that touches on taboo subjects related to fertility and the privacy of the respondents. I had originally planned to recruit a very balanced sample in its diversity and had worked hard to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, I failed. Aside from the sub-group of men of Muslim faith, I was able to find respondents in all other sub-groups although the number varied from one sub-group to another. Note that the most striking imbalances were observed between the number of women and men, respondents of the Muslim and other faiths as well as the number of participants from urban and rural areas. I had difficulty recruiting men because they believed that the subject of research was within the competence of women. In addition, people living in rural areas were more reluctant to bring up questions relating to the family, fertility, and private life .... I have no explanation for the low participation of people of Muslim faith given the relatively high number of participants among voodoo followers and Christians.



The subjects addressed during data collection (child, medical contraception, abortion, parenthood, conjugal dialogue about contraception use, etc.) raise questions and controversies across all religious denominations.

Ethical approval (certificate number 2138) was given by the Research Ethics Board for Student Projects Involving Humans (CERPE4). This is an institutional ethics committee of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Quebec in Montreal accessible under the link <https://cerpe.uqam.ca/les-comites/cerpe-4/>. Efforts to obtain ethics approval in Benin were not successful. When I should have submitted my request for local ethics approval, the national ethics committee for health research was no longer receiving new requests due to its internal difficulties. The institutional ethics committee of the Institute of Applied Biomedical Sciences was also not functional because its members were renewed but not yet installed.

Consent of the participants was obtained in two ways. Literate people signed the consent form after reading its contents. Uneducated participants gave recorded oral consent after the researcher had explained the content of the consent form in their mother tongue of Fon. All participants were encouraged to ask questions about the content of the consent form. In addition, they were fully informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without justification and prejudice. Responses were provided to those with concerns.

The data collection tools including the interview guide and the socio-demographic data questionnaire were tested and adjusted before the actual data collection phase. To do this, six people were recruited with the same ethical requirements and procedures as the full study participants.

### Data: collection, processing, and analysis

I carried out the data collection with a research assistant experienced in collecting qualitative information. She was recruited to collect data from women while I interviewed men. This step was taken to strengthen women's ability to speak. The research assistant has signed a confidentiality agreement and completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2018) online training on the ethics of research involving humans. Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews conducted in French and the local *Fon* language and recorded on digital audio tape. During the interviews, the following themes were discussed: the perceived role of the father in the education and maintenance of children and its foundations, the perceived role of the mother in the education and maintenance of children and its foundations, the effective role of the participant in the education and maintenance of their children and the underlying reasons, the satisfaction or not of the effective parenting role and the underlying reasons. The interviews, entirely transcribed by me, were the subject of a thematic analysis using the RQDA software. Thematic analysis consists of reducing and synthesizing the transcribed material into a certain number of themes which translate the essential information of the corpus [32]. It must be said that "the theme is a set of words making it possible to define what is discussed in the extract from the corresponding corpus while providing an indication of the content of the words" [32, p: 242]. All the themes resulting from the thematic analysis are described and discussed in the next section.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis identified themes that highlight distinct parenting functions for the father and the mother. We will first present the role assigned by the representatives to the father and then the perceived function of the mother.

The father perceived as the parent responsible for household expenses and family order.

Exploration of the discursive material shows that the father is seen as the parent who should assume the role of manager of the family. This clearly reflects a distinction between the paternal role and that of the mother. This dichotomy of parental roles reflects social relations of sex and gender [33]. It goes without saying that in Benin, parental roles are influenced by unequal gender relationships. Moreover, the paternal role predominates in the discourse on parenting. Almost all respondents mentioned that the father has a fundamental duty in the family to provide household expenses and maintain order. According to them, the father is the linchpin, that is, the head of the family. In contrast, Beninese family law and the Constitution enshrine equality between the sexes [34]. The code of persons and the family, the Beninese law organizing relations between the various members of the family, in particular spouses and children, emphasizes that:

"The spouses together ensure the moral and material direction of the family. They provide for the education of the children and prepare their future" Article 155.  
"[...] The spouses contract together, through their marriage,



the obligation to feed, maintain, raise, and educate their children". Article 158.

Despite the clarity of the laws on parental responsibilities and equality between men and women, parental functions are gendered because of the gendered social relations that characterize the patriarchal culture of Benin. Thus, conjugal dynamics are organized around male power. Several respondents indicate that the power of the man in the couple is of divine essence and is legitimized by the key tasks for which the person concerned must not fail. This prominent role of the father in the Beninese family is akin to the defunct paternal power of Western feudal societies, which has disappeared in favor of a more democratic and balanced relationship to parenthood between parents of both sexes even if the equality of parents regarding domestic tasks is not perfect [35,4]. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that the paternal power described by the respondents has an exclusively protective and constructive vocation. As a rule, I noted in the discourse that the paternal authority revolves around the supposed predisposition of the father to provide the resources necessary for the proper functioning of the household. Various arguments justify the importance of the role of father within the Beninese family model, as the respondents mention in the following excerpts from speeches:

*The father must provide for the family expenses because the children bear his name, therefore they are his property*

"The father must provide the means to feed the children. He must necessarily buy the children's school supplies ... The father has obligatory roles because it is his name that the children bear. So, the children are his property "[Woman, 55, mother of large family].

"Children are primarily the responsibility of their father because they belong to him [...]. It is his name that the children bear ... In short, the role of the father is to provide for food, clothing, school fees and health etc. "[Female, 19, mother of one child].

*The father must provide for the expenses of the family because that is his natural role*

"It's not for me to do that. It is not the society of now that wants to spoil everything, eh... It is not that eh... I am leaving everything to come and stay with him. The father of the children must take care of school fees, rent, food and household expenses. With my money, I buy goods and help my parents "[Female, 32, mother of one child].

"It's the father. The father must ensure the education of the children. Clothing, health care and food for the children are taken care of by the father "[Female, 31, mother of 3].

"I think it's mainly the role of the father. My father died when I was still young, and it was my mother who raised me. I saw how she looked after my sister and me. I am aware that it is a man's responsibility to take care of the children. The role of a father is to go and get money to cover all the expenses of health care, food, schooling etc." [Male, 44 years old, father of 4 children].

"[...] The responsibility lies with the parents. A child needs the presence of a father and a mother to be educated, but it is the father who must provide the necessary means provide the means to feed, care for and educate the children " [Male, 30 years old, father of 3 children].

*The father must provide for the expenses of the family because he is the head of the family*

"[...] It is the father of the children who must take care of schooling, feeding, housing and medical care the children because he is the head of the family" [Woman, 32 years old, mother of 5 children].



“[...] My wife and I do it together, but the big part of the expense falls on the father because he is the head of the house. The mother and the children are under his responsibility. It is up to the father of the family to ensure health, housing, food, schooling in the household ”[Man, 35, father of 5 children].

“[...] It’s the role of the father because he’s the head of the family. It is the father who must pay for the health care of the children when they are sick. He also has to pay their tuition fees etc.” [Woman, 29 years old, mother of 2 children].

*The father must provide for the expenses of the family because it is the will of God*

"In my opinion, it is the father who should take care of the children when it comes to expenses. I am a woman, so the man must take care of it. It is God's will that the father works and takes care of his children ... So, the expenses are his responsibility. The father has to provide for the expenses for food, health care and school fees ”[Woman, 31 years old, mother of 2 children].

“It is the father who has to take care of the expenses relating to schooling, health care fees, food and rent etc.... The father of the children is obliged to make these expenses because it is his duty... He is the head of the household according to the word of God ”[Woman, 37 years old, mother of 3 children].

In addition to his role as provider of household resources, respondents stress that the father embodies the authority essential to maintaining family order. On this subject, here is what some respondents confided during the interviews.

“[...]. But the role of the father is fundamental because mothers often do not have the necessary authority to control children ”[Female, 26, first pregnancy].

"[...] The father must also call and call to order the recalcitrant children in case their mother complains to him" [Woman, 37 years old, mother of 3 children].

“[...] Children need paternal authority. To grow up, children need an image of a father to have a personality. The father of the children must have firm authority .... The responsibility of the father is important ”[Woman, 39, mother of 4 daughters].

These comments suggest that in Benin, the family is structured around the male parent. Main provider of household resources and guarantor of the order that reigns there, the father plays a fundamental role in the Beninese family model. Also, it should be emphasized that if the discourse manifests a paternal function, it is because the latter is necessarily defined in relation to a maternal function. This is presented as follows regarding the statements of the respondents.

The mother perceived as being the multi-skilled parent with an essentially caring and educational function

Respondents state that regardless of her professional activity, the mother has a priority internal and domestic role based essentially on caring and educational tasks. According to their statements, said tasks fall under maternal competence and are carried out in a logic of complementarity to the paternal role. Thus, the maternal role is less a list of secondary and devaluing tasks reflecting an unequal relationship between the parents than an autonomous function. In other words, the mother does not perform menial and belittled tasks of parenting. To better understand the logic at work in the discourse of respondents on the maternal role, I suggest



the observation made by Guilmain-Gauthier (1985) among the Fali people, an ethnic group from Central Africa and worded as follows:

“Among the Fali of North Cameroon, the role of women is played out [as a “difference” that] ... is neither inequality nor opposition to the role of man, but rather complementarity in respect for the harmony of the world desired by God. ... [T]his difference, this complementarity is played out in a permanent dialogue between men and women, where the requests and proposals of one only have meaning in relation to the answers and suggestions of the other, this dialogue permanently affecting all areas of social and religious life, public or private.” [36, p: 37, translated by me].

This complementarity of social roles described by Guilmain-Gauthier (1985) eloquently expresses the basis of the sexual division of parental functions among respondents in my study. Intentions and facts reported in the speech corroborate such a complementarity of parental tasks. The paternal role does not suffer from any ambiguity in the discourse. The father has a duty to provide the means of operation for the household and to guarantee order there. The respondents are convinced of this, and the women are categorical about it. However, the discourse shows that there is a certain flexibility, a complementarity in the fulfillment of roles despite the sexual division which affect them. A few excerpts from interviews reflect this :

"[...] if a child is sick for example, the mother can supplement the cost of care if the father is not able to pay the medical prescription on his own" [Woman, 47 years old, mother of 4 children].

“[...] The mother of the children can help the father to fulfill his duty if the means are lacking to him” [Woman, 40 years old, mother of 3 children].

“The mother of the children may incur expenses if their father is not present. And when she comes back, she gives him a report for reimbursement ”[Female, 31, mother of one child].

“If I'm not there and their mother has the means to satisfy a need, she does it and I reimburse afterwards” [Male, 39, father of 4].

"[...] at one point I got sick, and my wives agreed to help me pay the children's school fees" [Male, 50, father of 12].

From these statements, it appears that the mother can compensate for the failings of the father to maintain the harmony and continuity of parental roles. A gesture that betrays the duality of parenthood and the spirit of complementarity that it manifests among respondents. However, in the discourse of people surveyed, most of the maternal function is organized around caring and educational tasks. More specifically, the maternal role includes essential functions such as care, supervision, and education.

#### Care and monitoring functions

With reference to the excerpts from corresponding discourse below, these functions include all the domestic tasks relating to children's personal and clothing hygiene, the cleanliness of the house, the preparation of meals and the monitoring of a child's health and schoolwork's.

“The mother must take care of the bodily cleanliness of the children. She has to cook and ensure the prevention of diseases in children. The mother must also check on the completion of school homework. If the children are sick, it is the mother who must ensure that they comply with the medical treatment ”[Female, 31, mother of 3].

"[...] for example if a child is sick and receives care, I make sure that he takes his medication correctly. I also make sure that the children are protected against diseases, mosquito bites so as not to create expenses for their father. As far as the children's school is concerned, I make sure they go there early, I prepare their meals before they come home, and I supervise the completion of school homework.... These tasks are mine. because their father is



not staying at home. And it's not good that he hears that despite his spending on the children, I am not playing my part and that the children are missing classes. [...]”[Woman, 32 years old, mother of 5 children].

"[...] Her role (speaking of the mother) is to take care of the upkeep of the house and the cleanliness of the children, cook for them and take care of their health" [Man, 24 years old, father of 5 children ].

“[...] If a child is sick and requires care paid for by the father, you need someone to give him the medicine. This is the job for the mother to do. The mother must also make sure that the children do the school homework.”[Male, 53, father of 10].

These speeches contrast somewhat with observations made in the largest city of Benin, Cotonou, where men are weakly involved in domestic tasks [20,37]. Supporting children's homework is the area where men are more involved than their wives because they often have a higher level of education than mothers [37].

### Educational function

In addition to the tasks described above, respondents stress that the education of children in moral and social values is primarily the responsibility of the mother because of her proximity to them. The statements below provide information on the practices and state of mind of respondents regarding this parental role.

“The social education of children is the responsibility of the mother because the father of the children does not often stay at home. And when children behave badly in society, it is their mother who is pointed at” [Female, 23, mother of one child].

“[...] My husband is not at home right now. Do you see! So, it is up to the mother to educate the children because it is the mother who is most in contact with them” [Woman, 35 years old, mother of 5 children].

"The social education of children is primarily the responsibility of the mother" [Male, 45, father of 4 children].

The minimum that can be drawn from these statements is that in Benin, the maternal role revolves mainly around domestic and educational tasks, a role socially devolved on mothers. Similar attribution of domestic and educational tasks to mothers also happens elsewhere as mothers also devote enormous time resources to childcare tasks. In France and Japan, for example, the opportunity costs of children are high for women [11]. According to Bustreel and Nishimura (2014), a Japanese woman and a French woman with two children give up 68% and 30% respectively of their wage earnings [11]. Also, these authors point out that in a couple of two working people with a young child, the man's domestic work time increases respectively by 57 and 4 minutes per day in France and Japan. In fact, the authors indicate that Japanese men spend only 10 minutes a day with their children under the age of six. Another study carried out in France among women and men doctors and lawyers revealed that for the great majority of respondents, work-family balance is always thought of in the feminine, as evidenced by the statement of this respondent:

"I believe that I am one of those who want to reconcile the two, my professional life is one thing, the hours I have to, I am a general practitioner, if I am not there when people need me, this is not worth it, I have to do this evening consultation, sometimes that's when I have the most work, if I was not available at least until 7 p.m., it there are patients that I wouldn't see. It is not a choice, it's part of the practice. I confess that I have a husband who participates a lot, he does the evening meals, the errands, takes care of the children. I do not do as my associates who are obliged in the morning to make the meal for the evening [...] But, on the other hand, as soon as I stop during the week, that is to say on Wednesday, Saturday, on Sunday, the roles are immediately reversed. That is extraordinary [Female general practitioner, 39 years old, partner in private practice, married, 2 children; 38, p: 50-51, translated by me].

Obviously, these data suggest that the sexual division of parental functions rests on a gendered foundation rooted in psychological predispositions giving pride of place to male dominance, on the one hand; and let believe, despite several decades of feminist struggles, that the domestic and caring component of these functions is naturally the responsibility of female parents, on the other





hand. The verb "to confess" (which means to recognize that a thing is or is not, to recognize for true especially things difficult to reveal, out of shame or modesty) used by the preceding respondent to evoke the implication of her husband in the domestic tasks reinforces the assertion according to which work-family life balance is always thought of in the feminine.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that parental functions are thought out and exercised in a gender-specific way in Benin. Respondents believe that there is a paternal function distinct from the maternal function. In the household, the father is thought of as the parent who must provide for the expenses and ensure order, while the mother should take care of caring and educational tasks regardless of her professional activity. Despite this sexual division of parental roles, the dividing line between them is not entirely watertight. In the event of failure of the paternal function, the mother who has the means replaces the father by providing for the means of subsistence of the household. However, the respondents explain that this maternal gesture which ensures the continuity of parental functions is a debt that the defaulting father must repay to his spouse. This reflects a certain complementarity or even solidarity in the exercise of parental functions in which each actor is firmly established and permanently referred to his specific responsibilities.

It is important to note that in the discourses of the respondents, this sexual division of parental roles is not perceived as a gender problem despite being unequal, especially for women because designating the father as head of the family or head of household does not establish a hierarchical relationship between the responsibilities of the parents. These functions are seen as natural and complementary roles. Such perceptions are probably based on the social representations of women and men in Benin where the former is supposed to have a domestic role while the latter is considered as a being of public space [22,24,25].

In summary, the sexual division of parental functions as perceived and / or experienced by the respondents demonstrates a real problem of gender and sex inequality, especially in the Beninese context where the State invests in policies for the empowerment of women. Benin has a relatively high fertility rate. As a result, assigning most of the household chores to women considerably reduces their time available for paid activities. This is already a problem for the empowerment process. In addition, women are totally exempt from household expenses in representations of parental roles. Exempting women from household expenses because they take care of household chores suggests that their work only makes sense if it supports household resources. This is not quite fair because they can work for something other than financing the expenses related to the maintenance of the children. The Beninese state must integrate the issue of parental functions, in particular the dimension relating to the relationship of mothers to domestic tasks, in its policy for the empowerment of women. Nonetheless, additional research work is required to thoroughly assess the reality of the exercise of parental functions and the underlying issues, in particular the impact of the maternal function on the empowerment of Beninese' women. All of which will allow the public authorities to usefully support parenthood, the social stakes of which are enormous for children, parents, and the State.

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**Annex 1**

**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM**

Questionnaire to be completed by the respondent or administered to him / her

**Important notice: Please note that your answers will be kept strictly confidential!**

1. Gender:        1. Male         2. Female
2. Place of residence
  - a. Name of the city or village: ..... (Specify name)
  - b. Name of Neighborhood: ..... (Specify name)
3. Religion  
Check only one answer among the following
  - a. Christianity
  - b. Islam
  - c. Traditional religion
  - d. Atheism
  - e. Others  ..... (specify religion)
4. What job do you do for a living? .....



5. What is the job / job of your spouse? .....

6. What is your level of education?

Check only one answer among the following:

- a. Never attended school
- b. Primary
- c. Secondary
- d. Higher education (University or others...)

7. What is your spouse's level of education?

Check only one answer among the following:

- a. Never attended school
- b. Primary
- c. Secondary
- d. Higher education (University or others...)

8. How old are you? ..... (Specify age)

9. How old is your spouse .....? (Specify the age)

10. How long have you been living as a couple with your partner? ..... (Specify the year)

11. What type of union do you live in?

Check one answer

- a. Monogamous union
- b. Polygamous union

12. Before your marriage, did you wish to have any child (ren) in your life?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

13. How many children would you like to have? ..... (Specify the number)

- a. Specify the number of children of each sex you want.
- b. Number of girls: ..... (Specify the number)
- c. Number of boys: ..... (Specify the number)
- d. Having children according to providence (God's will)

14. How many children do you have now? ..... (specify the number)

Specify how many children of each sex you have.

- a. Number of girls: ..... (Specify number)
- b. Number of boys: ..... (Specify the number)

15. At what age did you have your first child? .....

16. Are you pregnant or is your partner pregnant? ...

- Check one answer 1. Yes  2. No



- a. If yes, is your current pregnancy desired? ..... 1. Yes  2. No
- b. If no, was your last pregnancy desired? ... 1. Yes  2. No

**Annex 2**

Theme: Parenthood and parental functions

Who do you think should take care of the maintenance of the children in terms of expenses, social education and other care in a couple and why?

What role (s) do you think the father should play in the upkeep and education of the children and why?

In your opinion, what role (s) the mother should play in the upkeep and education of the children and why?

What role do you concretely play in the education and maintenance of your children and why?

Are you satisfied with the role you play in the education or maintenance of your children? ..... 1. Yes  2. No

If yes, why ?

If not, why ?

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