



REVISTA

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## Los estereotipos de género en la construcción de la mujer fang: una educación patriarcal para la sumisión

*Gender stereotypes in the construction of Fang women: a patriarchal education for submission*

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### Resumen

El objetivo fundamental de esta investigación es evidenciar que los estereotipos de género forman parte de la educación patriarcal que recibe la mujer fang. Este modelo de educación sociocultural está basado en la sumisión y en la dependencia, con pautas de comportamiento para someter a la mujer al servicio del hombre. En un contexto así, no se puede hablar de igualdad porque se infravalora las aptitudes de la mujer, por considerarla socioculturalmente inferior al hombre y que, por lo tanto, debe quedar solo en el ámbito privado. Este modelo de educación promovido por la existencia de estereotipos de género, es una manera de construir socialmente el tipo de mujer que necesita la sociedad. Por ello, la solución que se propone es el desmantelamiento de los estereotipos de género que constituyen los óbices sociales creados por el patriarcado, para favorecer exclusivamente a los hombres en detrimento de las mujeres. El método utilizado en esta investigación es explicativo-descriptivo, a partir de la metodología cualitativa, basada en la revisión bibliográfica y la observación directa sobre la situación de la mujer en la cultura fang, en cuanto a los estereotipos de género se refiere. Los resultados alcanzados con este estudio, ponen de manifiesto que es necesario el empoderamiento de la mujer para que salga del *status quo sempiterno* en que se encuentra debido a la educación sociocultural que se la ha



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inculcado. Por eso, las voces mismas de las mujeres fang, reclaman desde los colectivos feministas, un desmantelamiento total de este modelo educativo patriarcal.

## Palabras clave

Educación, estereotipo, género, patriarcado, sumisión.

## Abstract

The fundamental objective of this research is to show that gender stereotypes are part of the patriarchal education that Fang women receive. This model of socio-cultural education is based on submission and dependence, with behavioral guidelines to subject women to the service of men. In a context like this, one cannot speak of equality because women's abilities are undervalued, considering them socio-culturally inferior to men and that, therefore, they should remain only in the private sphere. This model of education, promoted by the existence of gender stereotypes, is a way to socially construct the type of woman needed by society. For this reason, the solution proposed is to dismantle the gender stereotypes that constitute the social barriers created by patriarchy, in order to favor only men to the detriment of women. The method used in this research is explanatory-descriptive, based on the qualitative methodology, which is based on a review of the literature and direct observation of the situation of women in the Fang culture, as far as gender stereotypes are concerned. The results achieved with this study show that it is necessary to empower women in order to leave the everlasting status quo in which they find themselves due to the socio-cultural education that has been inculcated in them. For this reason, the very voices of Fang women, from the feminist collectives, demand a total dismantling of this patriarchal educational model.

## Keywords

Education, stereotype, gender, patriarchy, submission.

## 1. Introduction

The fundamental purpose of this article is to explain the way in which gender stereotypes intervene in the construction of the fang woman, thus creating a model of education where the woman is submissive to the man. This study is the result of research based on a review of the existing literature on this issue. Furthermore, based on direct observation of this cultural context, it analyzes gender relations within Equatoguinean society, which are marked by the dominance of men over women. The patriarchal Fang system has educated women through subordination and oppression, all because this system represents the supremacy of the masculine over the feminine. Therefore, our problem is posed from the perspective that the education that a Fang woman receives, due to the patriarchal system, makes her a dependent being of the man and that, for that reason, she has to go through a series of humiliations that denigrate her as a person, such is the case of gender violence that she suffers at the hands of men. The patriarchal system fang vilifies women by considering them as weak beings who need to be always subordinated to men. For this reason, women's education is oriented to serve men and to raise children. That is why, within this system, women are relegated to the private sphere that corresponds to the house-kitchen, while men occupy the public space.

The logic followed by the patriarchal fang system allows or places the man at the center of all things, hence an androcentric culture where men arrange what they think women should



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do. In short, they make decisions about their feelings and behavior, even about their own reproduction. In fact, starting from the fact that women are weak, it is taken for granted that men must take care of them, while women must please their husbands. This education has been made possible by the creation of a series of stereotypes that represent women as truly submissive to men. However, it should also be noted that this education of women from the point of view of submission was even aggravated during the Spanish Guinean period, since the missionaries who were in charge of educating the native women did so from a Western mentality as well. For this reason, in the centers set up for the education of girls, they were taught mainly about domestic chores, because they had to be good wives. In this sense, it can be said that in the education for the submission of women to men, the colonists of the Spanish Guinea also intervened, to indoctrinate women. This argument is corroborated by Olegario Negrín Fajardo, one of the main scholars of the educational system of Spanish Guinea, who maintains that:

The nuns wanted to impose rigorously the education of women according to the canons established in Europe: teaching of domestic work and to be a good Catholic wife, which would allow to found a model home with some boy educated in the schools of the missionaries (Negrin Fajardo, 2011, p. 114).

Consequently, the subject matter we raise in this paper is a current anthropological issue that is frequently debated in Equatoguinean society. Although stereotypes are cultural constructions that affect both men and women, they serve as discriminatory elements where women end up being undervalued. The terminology of construction has been used because in the Fang culture women have been assigned certain stereotyped roles according to their sex, the most frequent stereotype being that of a submissive, oppressed or subordinate woman to a man. This is how Equatoguinean women have been culturally constructed. When addressing the issue of gender stereotypes in the construction of the Fang woman, we must be prepared to face serious problems, because what has been intended to be known about women has always been through stigmatizations or roles that present women as weak and dependent on men. In Equatoguinean society, women have been constructed and presented to the world as beings who could not take care of themselves, hence they must always be subordinated under the guardianship and protection of men. The social representation of women was constructed or thought of from very long ago in the patriarchal Fang system. The woman was constructed as a person who would dedicate herself exclusively to the house, who had to be submissive, always respecting her husband as the meaning of a good wife. The real conflict that is currently observed with gender stereotypes in Equatoguinean society, makes the woman of today to debate with her culture.

The patriarchal education is the cause of the submission of the Fang woman. Gender stereotypes are mechanisms of oppression that give oxygen to this model of education and constitute a scourge for Equatoguinean society because they represent the historical dominance that men have exercised over women. Based on the question posed above, the following questions arise: What are the most outstanding stereotypes in the construction of the woman Fang? In what aspects do these stereotypes favor the woman Fang? Is it possible to speak of equality in a context where the masculine imposes on the feminine? Can feminist ideology combat patriarchal education for the submission of the woman Fang?

Answering these questions is crucial to understanding the method of male domination that the patriarchal Fang system in Equatorial Guinea exercises over women to keep them in a



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constant state of domination. Based on this, it has been seen opportune to present a thesis to be able to respond to these questions and to better base our argumentation on the influence of gender stereotypes in the construction of the identity of the Fang woman. In fact, the thesis that we defend is the following: *the gender stereotypes assigned to the Fang woman have contributed to build a distorted image of her, which has been possible thanks to the education of the patriarchal system, focused on the submission of women*. This thesis will be developed from the arguments of several scientific authorities.

## 2.State of affairs

Talking about gender relations in the patriarchal Fang system is currently a complicated task, since there is not much academic literature written on this subject, mainly because gender studies in Equatorial Guinea are very scarce. The existence of gender stereotypes in Equatoguinean society is an issue that challenges many social studies because gender relations among the Fang are very complex. However, there is a common tendency that, according to feminist ideology, all women in the world suffer from, referring to the subordination of women to men. This subordination of Fang women to men has led to the argument that "gender relations are still perceived from the point of view of male domination" (Pérez Armiño, 2018, p. 30). Therefore, the socio-cultural education that women have received is the manifestation of the patriarchal Fang system, characterized by the domination of men over women.

In the academic field, there are several researchers who address the issue of gender stereotypes. That is to say, there is a great deal of literature about terms such as stereotype, gender, or patriarchy. Therefore, we are going to use this theoretical framework that exists on this issue to better argue about gender stereotypes in Fang culture. In this sense, it is important to note that, when dealing with gender stereotypes in the construction of feminine identity, that is, the way in which Fang culture conceives women. It should be said that, as has been highlighted above about the scarcity of gender studies in the patriarchal Fang system, we will rely mainly on the texts that are handled within feminist theory to conceptualize and politicize in this way, the inequalities between the masculine and the feminine.

Before we begin to develop this question in detail, it is useful to offer or base ourselves on the terms of patriarchy, gender and stereotype. In academia, patriarchy is a very important issue in analyzing gender relations. Although we must also point out that it is not a very universal structure as it is held in some feminist currents. In the case of Equatorial Guinea, the domination that men exercise over women means that we use this concept to explain situations of domination within this culture. In this sense, Victoria Sau Sánchez, one of the most prominent activists in the conceptualization of feminist theory in Spain, argues that :

Patriarchy is a historical takeover of power by men over women whose occasional agent was of the biological order, although this was elevated to the political and economic category. This takeover of power necessarily involves the subjection of women to maternity, the repression of female sexuality, and the appropriation of the total workforce of the dominated group, of which their first, but not the only product is children (Sau Sánchez, 2001, pp. 237-238).

Based on this reflection, the oppression and injustices suffered by women in relation to men in these contexts are catapulted by the existence of obstacles such as gender stereotypes that dictate how citizens should behave according to their sex, but behind all this is the



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discrimination suffered by the female side at the hands of men. Patriarchy should be understood as an ideology that favors only men to the detriment of women. In other words, patriarchy "is defined as a system of sexual domination which is, moreover, the basic system of domination on which all other dominations, such as class and race, are built" (Varela, 2019, p. 109). Furthermore, this makes it clear that men are, as far as possible, the ones who benefit most from this system, since they can exercise their power and domination over women and society would see it as something totally legitimate and normal. This position is not surprising since it is "a system of domination and exploitation that would have replaced the old matriarchy" (Puleo, 1995, p. 13). Note that in the case of the Fang culture, there is no evidence of matriarchal power. Furthermore, despite the fact that there are ethnic groups in Equatorial Guinea that are apparently matriarchal, it should be noted that patriarchy is a cultural pattern for all ethnic groups in the country. Based on the premise that patriarchy is a system of domination, it uses the category of gender to systematically oppress, undervalue and subordinate women. Therefore, "the fundamental objective of feminism is to end patriarchy as a form of political organization" (Varela, 2019, p. 231).

On the other hand, in relation to gender we can see that it is a social difference that the patriarchal system uses to establish the difference between them. Gender is not biological but social; it is what each culture or society understands as male or female. Being a little more precise, "gender is a cultural construction corresponding to the roles or stereotypes that in each society are assigned to the sexes" (Elósegui, 2011, p. 47). This implies that both men and women are products of a social construction and not biological, at least, that is what is deduced from the explanation offered within the feminist perspective. Aware that in this research we only and exclusively address the situation of Fang women, all women according to the feminist ideology, are practically equal because they all suffer and face to a lesser or greater extent the patriarchal system. For this reason, there are gender stereotypes, which "refer to the traits that men and women supposedly possess, which distinguish one gender from another" (Baron & Byrne, 1998, p. 262). In fact, these labels are involved in the socialization of human beings. Based on these labels, we behave in a certain way.

The submission that we relate as a way that has been used from the patriarchal fang system to educate women, is nothing more than a label or, better said, a stereotype. It is extremely important to insist that gender stereotypes are "systems of shared beliefs about groups of men and women in general or about the characteristics of masculinity and femininity developed by them" (Barberá Heredia, 2004, p. 79). Therefore, in societies such as the Fang, these stereotypes become natural and multiply from one generation to the next. With these principles on gender stereotypes, we will proceed to develop the proposed thesis, always relying on some authors who have also addressed a similar issue to ours.

## 2. Thesis defense

As announced *ut supra*, the thesis defended in this work is the following: *the gender stereotypes assigned to the Fang woman have contributed to build a distorted image of her, which has been possible thanks to the education of the patriarchal system, focused on the submission of women.*

Equatoguinean women are a product of their culture, which means that the way they are, feel, speak or act, they have learned through a socialization system established for their sex. That is, a patriarchal construction of female identity. The Fang woman is the result of a



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construction where she has to behave according to how her culture says so. Hence, gender stereotypes significantly mark the reality of all Equatoguinean women. In this regard, Colás and Villaciervos maintain that "stereotypes are, therefore, socio-cultural tools on which norms of social functioning are based while serving as a reference for structuring the identity of subjects" (Colás Bravo & Villaciervos Moreno, 2007, pp. 35-58).

In this sense, we can affirm that stereotypes inform us about how our behaviors should be in society. The result that is obtained is that, the woman ends up being domesticated to be a good wife and to be at the service of the man, it happens in the Fang ethnic group. The patriarchal Fang system is not a product of today, but rather it is a very long-lived system, with several centuries of existence in which a construction of the woman's identity has been carried out, to subject her to the will of the man. It must be recognized that women themselves also contribute to keeping this system alive. We point out that they contribute because by being indoctrinated by the patriarchal system, they have transmitted or reproduced learned patterns of behavior of submission, which is why this patriarchal system is so robust.

The option of being able to choose and decide is not a value that we can say exists in the Fang culture. On the contrary, it is the distribution of genders that sets the guidelines for this subordination. We do not want to talk about a macho culture where androcentrism shines by itself, but rather we can say that as in other cultures of the world, the Fang have followed the same patriarchal system, which "is characterized by the authority of men over women and their children imposed from the institutions" (Castells, 1998, p. 159). This is an architecture systematically established by men to benefit only men. Of all the institutions of the patriarchal Fang system, marriage represents the main focus of inequality between men and women, because it is given by men to marry women.

Despite this situation, "the institution of marriage is the backbone of the African social architecture" (Ondó Ndjeng, 2013, p. 13). This is because the Fang man, being African, understands that he is fully developed within marriage because through it he can ensure the continuity of his legacy. In order to ensure this continuity, women have had to be subjugated so that only the continuity of men's legacy is made possible. There are several problems that Fang women have to face throughout their lives, but the most terrible is having to learn to be a woman according to the canons that the culture establishes for them. As an individual belonging to the Fang culture, a woman is called upon to respect these rules, as long as they do not undermine her dignity. Therefore, it is important to review these cultural norms that were established by men, at a time when there are no written references. Therefore, within the patriarchal Fang system one cannot speak of equality between men and women, but rather of oppression and subordination which are the visible faces of gender inequality in Fang culture. Consequently, gender stereotypes have served to educate women to be constantly subordinate to men. Therefore, the space par excellence where this type of socio-cultural education has been carried out is the private space, which in the Fang culture represents the house-kitchen. The spaces are well differentiated, so that women occupy the private and men the public. These cultural norms must be respected so that society advances with balance.

However, this balance is a given, since the man always imposes his will so that the woman obeys him. For example, in Equatoguinean society, there is a stereotype common to all women, we mean that they are always at home taking care of their children, that is, they are



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always occupying the private space that is usually mainly the kitchen. Meanwhile, men are busy providing and supplying food to their families.

The existence of these stereotypes considerably slows down the progress of women, and makes them more prone to suffer any kind of violence from their husband. The cultural reasons given to justify this submission are that women are weak and must be cared for and protected because they are unable to look after themselves. A whole generation of women who are now our mothers have grown up under the belief that they are dependent because nature has made them so, when in fact it is the way they have been brought up to be submissive. Therefore, we perfectly find that:

Women, as the stereotype portrays them, will be considered as naturally destined for private life, maternity and family care. And little interested in any other activity, especially those linked to the public sphere (Bosch Fiol & Ferrer Pérez, 2003, p. 119).

In this quote, one of the arguments presented above is that in the Fang culture, women are more representative in the private space, which is the kitchen-house, where they prepare the food that their husband brings home, and take it to the public space which is, firstly, the dining room of the house, and secondly, the courtyard or the house of speech (abaa) where her husband usually stays to chat with his friends, some men who are just like him. Dependence is a product of the patriarchal fang system, without it there would be no woman who wants her husband to constantly humiliate or underestimate her. It is a current anthropological issue to empower Equatoguinean women in general, deconstructing gender stereotypes that lead to submission.

Gender stereotypes are factors that contribute to the vilification of women. A society with such deep-rooted parameters of subordination is called upon to change because otherwise we would be justifying vile treatment of human beings, outraging or violating their natural rights as persons. There are two main gender stereotypes that lead to socio-cultural education for the submission of Equatoguinean women.

1. The woman is submissive. This stereotype undoubtedly marks the gender relations in Equatorial Guinea. It is a cultural precept that makes any man feel with enough authority to impose his will on women. Not only the woman as a wife, but also as a mother or sister. The male has the stereotype of being dominant, so he must act as such. It should be noted that this submission is weakened by the penetration of feminist ideology in Equatoguinean society.

For this reason, it has come to be stated that if in Equatoguinean society it exists:

A conflict between feminism and patriarchy is because men are not willing to let women take power as well. By power, we mean the fact that women can also perform tasks that have traditionally belonged to men. The struggle against oppression requires that women dissociate themselves from the patriarchal system because it is totally incompatible with feminist ideology. (Bituga-Nchama, 2020, p. 20).

Obviously, assuming power is a way out of the gender stereotype of submission that has been assigned to women, although we think that power implies empowering women so that they are also able to decide for their future.



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2. Dependence. Although this gender stereotype is linked to the previous one, it constitutes one of the main ways of oppressing women in Equatoguinean society. There is a great deal of dependence on women in this society. For example, there is economic dependency, among other types of dependency where women are imprisoned or cornered and even screwed to a man because not doing so would make their lives very bad. This is the education that the patriarchal system has embedded in the mentality of women.

Economic dependence implies a total dependence of women on men. This strategy of the patriarchal system to oppress women has been strongly criticized from the so-called radical feminism. On this question Millet points out that:

One of the most effective instruments of patriarchal government is the economic domination it exercises over women [...]. Since in patriarchal societies women have always worked, often performing the most routine or heavy tasks, the central problem does not revolve around women's work, but around their economic retribution (Millet, 1995, p. 94).

To build an egalitarian society, we must start by eliminating those mechanisms that, like gender stereotypes, serve as obstacles to women's lives. Differentiated socialization is a social evil that holds back both men and women, although the latter are always the ones who have the most difficulties. So much so that Beauvoir, one of the main representatives of feminist theory, states that "the passivity that essentially characterizes the 'feminine' woman is a trait that develops in her from her early years" (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 118). In short, the stereotype of passivity is not something natural, but rather social or cultural that has been constructed by the great patriarchs of the different ethnic groups of Equatorial Guinea. Evidently, the Fang woman has been forged by the patriarchal system as submissive and dependent on men. The submission and dependence of women, as mentioned above, are the main gender stereotypes assigned to women in this society, starting from their ancestors, where they had women only and exclusively for housework and could not even think of being able to train academically because it was something that at that time only men, the ostentatious ones of knowledge and force, could do. A very androcentric vision of the world where the masculine is the right thing and the natural thing, the most perfect thing in the world. Seen from this perspective it is argued that:

Women have to be (according to the traditional stereotype) weak, without initiative and dependent on men among other characteristics. [...]. To be female is to be sensitive, loving, understanding, kind, respectful, dependent, submissive, weak, flirtatious, hardworking, maternal (López López & Recio González, 2008, p. 117).

Generally speaking, gender stereotypes are an obstacle in the life of the whole society, but especially in the life of the Fang woman, who has gone through difficult situations due to the existence of this kind of social obstacles. The patriarchal system dishonors women by considering them to be fragile beings who need to be always subordinated to men. For this reason, women's education is geared towards serving men and raising children. Gender stereotypes oppress and debase the proper development of women's skills. They gradually intervene in the construction of women, a construction that must be demolished, which is why Beauvoir argued that:



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You are not born a woman, you become one. No biological, sociological or economic destiny determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between man and eunuch, which is described as feminine (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5).

With these words, Beauvoir laid the foundations from which many theories that currently support the feminist movement would emanate. Within the patriarchal Fang system, women have been assigned roles and behavioral patterns that serve to define them. In this sense, Victoria Sau Sánchez emphasizes that:

These patterns of behavior are learned from the cradle, from generation to generation, through the family, the school and the systems of representation, and this has given women much less room for action than men to access politics, studies, property, have their own money, etc., measures that tend to homogenize the group (Sau Sánchez, 2001, p. 50).

From this perspective of Sau Sanchez, clearly a feminist, all these assignments that do not have a natural but a social or cultural foundation, end up shaping the identity of women, thus creating what are the stereotypes, that is, "[...] sets of packaged ideas, based on prejudices, on which for convenience most people do not exercise any critical judgment" (Sau Sanchez, 2001, p. 48). This means that the existence of stereotypes depends on people's convictions about what is best for them. Thus, for example, in the Fang ethnic group we find several cultural stereotypes of women. In addition to what has been highlighted above, some of the gender stereotypes that feminism attributes to Fang women are:

1. A woman's word is worth absolutely nothing because she cannot reason objectively. In fact, in the Fang language there is a pejorative expression where it is pointed out that the woman's urine cannot go beyond the stride of a fallen tree (moño ho memina ma dan Nkog).
2. The woman is the cause of evil in the Fang ethnic group, since she is the one who brought the spell (evú). Therefore, we must be careful with the woman.
3. The woman cannot eat certain animals, with the excuse that by doing so she could become sterile. However, although the latter does not seem to be a stereotype, it is an agent of discrimination, especially on the basis of sex, within the Fang culture.

In short, gender roles or stereotypes in the Fang ethnic group are fallacious arguments that serve to justify the inferiority and submission of women. For example, the fact that women are now massively present in primary and secondary education is because the cultural vision that conceived of women as beings who were not fit to go to school because their main function for the family is to marry and serve their husband's family has been abandoned. Therefore, she does not need to study, because the reasoning is exclusively of men. There is a real danger in relation to the achievements of Equatoguinean women in general to move from the private to the public. There is a constant threat that seeks to stop everything achieved so far. Some researchers argue that:

The woman must recover and make a critical review of the fa, the private space, that occupied the back of the traditional fang houses. The opposite would be to simplify the vision of the female role in Guinean society according to Western parameters. The fa is "the most precious property of women", a central space of the village where the life of the community



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is decided in front of the nseng, a superficial and treacherous space. However, the independent woman must make a decision about the place she wants to occupy in society: the fa or the nseng, the traditional or the western vision (Mbana Nchama, 2011, pp.127-129).

In response to Mbana Nchama's approach, there should be no further critical review of anything. No step backwards to return to private space. The traditional view relegates women to an environment that oppresses them, which is intolerable to the modern, non-Western view. We prefer to talk about the modern vision because in it the woman fang, thanks to the theoretical and critical contributions against the patriarchal culture, can decide without any western influence and if she did, that would have to help her chart her future. One cannot make a mistake of reasoning by thinking that the F, the private space, the house-kitchen, is the best place for the woman. By being in it, women were excluded from knowledge because they were not considered suitable for this work. At present, the feminist consciousness in Equatorial Guinea is unprecedented. Its purpose is to destroy the private space where the patriarchal system "has reified and commodified women in an extreme way" (Pérez Armiño, 2018, p. 55). In fact, it is totally unheard of to rethink a private space for women. This is what leads to "certain sectors of the female population being mobilized in a new activism that seeks to see in the Fang tradition the principles that have ideologically justified the domination of women" (Pérez Armiño, 2018, p. 56). In short, continuing to dismantle private space is the way to go on the road to equality, thus modifying gender relations in the patriarchal Fang system of Equatorial Guinea.

The different spaces between women and men have also allowed the gender stereotypes established by the patriarchal education system to be consolidated in such a way that each sex plays its role. It turns out that, when observing the roles, men are in a situation of dominance, while women become dominated. Therefore, it cannot be said that patriarchy has been eradicated in Equatoguinean society; on the contrary, it is very robust, although it is currently under some pressure from feminist activists in this society. What is certain is that gender stereotypes are aspects of daily life in Equatoguinean society, created by men and reproduced by women, so it is also difficult to get out of this situation. In this regard, Trifonia Melibea Obono, one of the main activists in the fight for women's rights in Equatorial Guinea, in an interview with the newspaper ABC, highlighted that:

The man creates an educational model, the woman reproduces it. And when the mother revolts against that educational system, she receives violence from the father. It is the woman who transmits, but the real power is in the hands of the man. She is really the one who educates, but the person who says "educate like that" is him [...]. In the Fang ethnic group, it is the man who is in charge. It doesn't matter what the woman says, anything. And in fact, when Dad appears in the house, everyone keeps quiet (Melibea Obono, 2016).

As a result, domination is reproduced because the woman has been educated to submit and be in the service of the man. This is the pattern that makes the Equatoguinean woman vulnerable. Consequently, patriarchal education is exercised from the families to the society itself, that is, it is inscribed in the gender relations of Equatoguinean society. Therefore, if men create the stages of domination and women reproduce them, it is crucial that a revolution be carried out in the educational sector so that women become aware of this situation that limits them as human beings. Consequently, the abolition of the system of male domination, with its multiple manifestations such as gender stereotypes, can bring



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Equatoguinean society into a context where there is less social exclusion of women. In this sense, the existence of gender stereotypes is one of the reasons why Equatoguinean women are confined to specific areas, where they cannot express their opinions or develop their activities with much autonomy. Given the lack of economic independence of Equatoguinean women, the kitchen-house is, as mentioned above, the place where a woman is to serve her husband. On a daily basis, we find situations such as control of economic resources, where the man has all the power over the woman, making her dominant will be fulfilled, because the woman lacks the autonomy and independence to put an end to this situation.

The fundamental tone observed today is that "Equatoguinean women debate between tradition and modernity [...], in a country where gender relations are still perceived from the point of view of male domination" (Pérez-Armiño, 2018, p. 30). In this sense, cultural changes are a necessary but not sufficient condition for dismantling the patriarchy that favors the domination of women. A society anchored in the stale values of patriarchy is a society that is almost obsolete and prone to underdevelopment. Therefore, the struggle to dismantle the gender stereotypes that favour a patriarchal education for the submission of women in this cultural context, has been one of the most fundamental issues in the path towards equality, however, it must be understood that this patriarchal education is precisely the result of the differentiated socialization that is established between the sexes, which is mainly due to the fact that in this culture "the world is defined as masculine and men are attributed the representation of the whole of humanity" (Varela, 2019, p. 227). However, gender stereotypes are facing their own demise because socio-cultural changes are inevitable and the patriarchal education system is facing its dismantling because it is the portrait of a bygone era.

Equatoguinean society faces a serious problem that can and does have dire consequences on women's lives. If stereotypes are one of the manifestations of the patriarchal Fang system due to the differentiated education given to both women and men, it is evident that men learn to be dominant, while women are socialized to be dominated. This model of patriarchal education is rooted in the culture, and many women are educated in it. Therefore, it is sometimes observed that when a woman suffers violence from her partner, she sees it as normal for her husband to beat her. This fact is a product of the way women are educated from an early age, they have to be submissive and dependent on men. Therefore, domination is reproduced because the woman has been educated to submit and be at the service of the man. This is the pattern that makes the Equatoguinean woman vulnerable and prone to any other form of domination or subordination. Consequently, male domination is exercised from the family to the society itself, that is, it is inscribed in the gender relations of Equatoguinean society.

The causes of this educational model of the Fang culture for women, are originated by the patriarchal system, the germ of submission. The strong influence of this system means that the main function that women continue to exercise is reproductive, in the service of men. The patriarchal character of culture allows the education that women receive to be marked by their gender role. Although one of the chapters of this research has said that men create the stages of domination and women reproduce them, it is crucial that a revolution be carried out on the patriarchal educational model so that women become aware of this situation that limits them as human beings. Therefore, the abolition of the educational model that uses the patriarchal system to keep women submissive must be abandoned because it has been proven that it prevents women from developing freely as persons. According to the voices of women themselves, feminist ideology is a panacea for the



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problems of domination imposed by the patriarchal Fang system. At least, the results of this research show that many women are against living submissively as they have been doing.

So-called gender stereotypes have contributed to the construction of women's identity, making them think that this submissive behavior is natural, while in reality it is a product of the educational model that the patriarchal system has to favor men exclusively. The exclusion of women in public spheres is mainly due to this way of educating women, since they had to be outside the areas that were only for men. The lack of visibility of this problem is due to the fact that most women assume this educational model as something normal and natural. However, there is a new generation of women who have opened the debate about gender stereotypes in Equatoguinean society. Although gender studies are very incipient in Equatorial Guinea, it can be said that, with the advent or influence of feminist ideology in this country, the demands for equality between women and men have worsened. Therefore, to try to hide this problem is to prolong an inevitable debate. Therefore, this study constitutes an important theoretical contribution that makes visible the problem caused by gender stereotypes in Equatoguinean society originated by the model of patriarchal education that is imposed for the submission of women. In spite of the multiple limitations and difficulties that have been assumed with this investigation, we think that it constitutes a theoretical and practical pillar to fight the educational model of the patriarchal system fang and of the Equatoguinean society in general.

#### 4. Methodology

According to the theme we are addressing, this study on gender stereotypes in the construction of Fang women, has adopted the qualitative methodology because it addresses a topic that belongs to the field of humanities and social sciences, and because "qualitative research seeks to understand reality in all its qualities, it is a dynamic structure" (Navarrete, 2002, p. 53). In this research, our concern has been centered above all on explaining and describing the model of socio-cultural education of the Fang woman, which is based on submission and dependence. For this reason, we have proceeded with a research design with an explanatory-descriptive method. In order to keep a correspondence between the problem and the research objectives, some techniques and instruments for data collection have been used to respond in some way to many of the questions that constitute a key part of this research. Taking into account that this research is carried out within the field of the humanities and social sciences, it seemed appropriate to us to choose the survey as the technique for data collection, while the instrument was preferably the questionnaire.

The purpose of our survey is above all to know the impact of gender stereotypes in the socio-cultural education of Fang women. In summary, it should be noted that we have proceeded with the written survey which is, without a doubt, the questionnaire, which has allowed us to obtain from our respondents the information we required from them on the issue being addressed. This questionnaire consists of ten closed questions where the respondent has been selecting the answers that seemed correct. The data obtained with this instrument has been analyzed in a qualitative way. The questionnaire has been directed only to those who are part of the sample we have selected.

The population on which this research has been directed has been from the city of Bata. Within this city, we have selected a group of individuals who constitute our sample. There are reasons that have led us to focus exclusively on the city of Bata. Firstly, it should be made clear that the city mentioned has been chosen because it is one of the largest in Equatorial Guinea. On the other hand, this research has also focused on the mentioned urbanization



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because all the Fang groups that exist in the country are represented there. However, even if the Fang ethnic group is subdivided into tribes or clans, this should not lead one to believe that the research presented here is not delimited. It has been delimited because the Fang have only one culture and it is the one that is being elucidated. Since it is complicated to carry out research covering all the Fang in Equatorial Guinea, we have opted for a sample. That is, a certain amount has been selected within the universe or population. In this sense, we have selected a sample of 384 citizens to whom the survey has been directed. The sample selected is representative and very significant, because even though it was taken from the Fang population in the city of Bata, this is where all the characteristics of the population under study are represented. As for the characteristics of the sample, it should be said that it is made up only of women of the Fang ethnic group, who are between 40 and 50 years old. Based on the selected sample, some results have been extracted that are perfectly generalizable to the entire Fang population living in Equatorial Guinea, with a known margin of error.

In relation to the above, it should be stressed that in this case the confidence level was 95%, which is equivalent to 1.96, while the sampling error is 5%, with a value of 0.05.

## 5. Analysis and discussion of the results

For the statistical analysis and the interpretation of the data that are exposed next, in this investigation the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) has been used, which has allowed to obtain the frequencies and percentages in each one of the different results that are handled here. The following question collects the response of our respondents when asked if the education they receive from their culture is patriarchal, that is, of submission and dependence to man.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Acumulated Percentage
Valid	Yes	107	27,9	27,9	27,9
	No	277	72,1	72,1	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

Can the educational model of the Fang culture be considered a patriarchal system for the submission and dependence of women?

In addition to the results of this question, the women themselves admitted that this educational model must be ended because it helps to perpetuate the dominance of men over Fang women. Therefore, 74.0% consider that gender stereotypes should be demolished by depatriating the culture

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Acumulated Percentage.
Valid	on favor	73	19,0	19,0	19,0
	Against	211	54,9	54,9	74,0
	Neutral	100	26,0	26,0	100,0



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Total	384	100,0	100,0
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What is your position on the education that women receive in the Fang culture?

Without a doubt, this question confirms one of our objectives because here it is demonstrated that the Fang ethnic group is patriarchal. That is, it is governed by a patriarchal system of male domination over female domination. At least, that is what the results of our survey leave us with, where for 72.7%, the Fang ethnic group is a patriarchal system where women are treated with many humiliations that have been cited throughout this work

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Acumulated Percentage.
Válido	Sí	279	72,7	72,7	72,7
	No	105	27,3	27,3	100,0
	Tota	384	100,0	100,0	
	l				

Can Fang be considered a patriarchal system where men have more privileges than women?

## 6. Conclusion

As in other parts of the world, gender stereotypes mark differences based on the sex of people. They are not natural or biological, but are constructs that each society assigns to each of its members. That is why this research has had as its starting point, the defense of the thesis that gender stereotypes are a construction created by the patriarchal system fang, to educate women socio-culturally to be submissive to men. This model of patriarchal education from submission, is given because women have been inculcated with behavioral patterns according to their sex. Therefore, this research shows that the Fang woman has been socio-culturally constructed, and is therefore educated to be subject to the designs of men. However, due to the universalization of feminist ideology, activists have emerged who seek to promote another type of education, not from submission, but from the autonomy and visibility of female skills that have been overshadowed by men. The feminist ideology currently rooted in Equatoguinean society, is forging a new consciousness where women have begun to question this education they receive from their mothers or society itself to become submissive, being only wives and mothers, exercising only the maternal function and caring for their husbands. The everlasting status quo of the submissive woman is being challenged in order to build a new history for the Equatoguinean woman.

Therefore, the first step is to end the patriarchal culture that undervalues women, placing them in the background and always subordinated to their husband's authority. All social barriers such as gender stereotypes are a challenge for many women, because the fight for equality must start with the dismantling of these barriers. So much so that all the cultural humiliations that women have had to endure are serving to make the fight against the patriarchal system a priority in order to prevent future generations from having to live with a discriminatory and androcentric culture. As can be seen, the construction of the fang woman, that is to say, her nature as a human person, has been determined by men, confined or confined to remain in the private sphere. For this reason, we emphasize that education for dependence and submission, which do not stand alone, represent the visible face of a



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system of domination where women face one of the worst forms of oppression and subordination within the patriarchal system. Gender stereotypes and other forms of domination are there to subjugate women so that they are always in the service of men. As has been made clear throughout this dissertation, Equatoguinean society should not adhere to the stale values of patriarchy, because these only harms and obstructs the country's development. This is the moment when new masculinities must emerge to support the feminist struggle in Equatorial Guinea against the patriarchal system that advocates a stereotypical education for women's submission and dependence.

In general, today's society cannot be indifferent when there are barriers created by the patriarchal system such as gender stereotypes. In fact, to end these gender stereotypes imposed by the patriarchal system that oppress women, it is necessary to empower women and educate them in equality and, depatrialize the culture. In Equatoguinean society, the revolution will be feminist or there will be no cultural change to end the patriarchal system. Not one step back!



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