



REVISTA

# CÁTEDRA

## Los roles de género en el concepto de familia fang: un sistema de socialización diferencial

### *Gender roles in the fang family concept: a differential socialization system*

Pedro Bituga-Nchama

Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial, Bata, Guinea Ecuatorial

[pedrobayem@gmail.com](mailto:pedrobayem@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2310-5879>

(Received on: 25/02/2021; Accepted on: 1/03/2021; Final version received on: 15/04/2021)

Suggested citation: Bituga-Nchama, P. (2021). Gender roles in the fang family concept: a differential socialization system. *Revista Cátedra*, 4(2), 84-100.

### Resumen

Este artículo se centra en visibilizar los roles de género, productos de la socialización diferencial del concepto de familia fang. Este objetivo fundamental pone de manifiesto que al ser la familia una institución en la que se produce la primera socialización de las personas, el modelo de familia fang no se aleja de este estándar, porque la manera de socializar dentro de esta cultura, hace que a los hombres se les asignen unos roles diferentes a los de las mujeres. Esto se ve notablemente en la división sexual del trabajo que está muy presente en el concepto de familia fang, perpetuando así el sistema de socialización diferencial que impulsa y agrava las desigualdades sociales, motivadas por el sexo-género. En este sentido, encontramos que las tareas domésticas y el espacio privado, corresponden exclusivamente a las mujeres, mientras que los hombres ocupan el espacio público. Una sociedad regida por este sistema de socialización diferencial crea un desequilibrio donde las mujeres terminan siendo minimizadas. A fin de estudiar mejor esta temática, se ha utilizado la metodología cuantitativa, partiendo del método descriptivo, el cual ha permitido reflejar la incidencia de este fenómeno en el grupo poblacional seleccionado. En esta investigación se reafirma que, los roles de género tradicionales se promueven de distintas maneras dentro del concepto de familia fang fomentando una educación de dependencia, donde las aptitudes cognitivas y personales de las mujeres son siempre infravaloradas por el sistema patriarcal fang.

### Palabras clave

Familia, género, patriarcado, rol, socialización.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

## Abstract

This article focuses on making visible the gender roles, products of the differential socialization of the concept of the Fang family. This fundamental objective shows that since the family is an institution where the first socialization of people takes place, the Fang family model is not far from this standard, because the way of socialization within this culture makes men be assigned different roles than women. This is notably seen in the sexual division of labor that is very present in the concept of the Fang family, thus perpetuating the differential socialization system that drives and aggravates social inequalities, motivated by sex-gender. In this sense, we find that domestic tasks and private space correspond exclusively to women, while men occupy public space. A society governed by this differential socialization system creates an imbalance where women end up being minimized. In order to better study this issue, a quantitative methodology has been used, based on the descriptive method, which has made it possible to reflect the incidence of this phenomenon in the selected population group. This research reaffirms that traditional gender roles are promoted in different ways within the concept of the Fang family, fostering an education of dependence, where the cognitive and personal skills of women are always undervalued by the Fang patriarchal system.

## Keywords

Family, gender, patriarchy, role, socialization.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyze gender roles in the concept of the fang family from the differential socialization of childhood. In this sense, it is intended to highlight the differential and complex socialization system that is carried out when determining what is masculine and feminine. A real fact is that because of the Fang family model, as in other African peoples, the education of children does not depend exclusively on the parents, but on the whole community.

Taking into account the impact of differential socialization in education within the concept of the Fang family, as the main agent of socialization where the masculine and feminine are constructed, this study analyzes this phenomenon based on the existing literature on the subject.

One of the institutions respected by the Fang is the family, which is why it is not exhausted exclusively with the father or mother, because it goes beyond, because it even includes people who have no blood ties in common, but by the kinship of a common ancestor or a totem. For the Fang, the family institution is very important because it is the center where the human person is formed. The family in the Fang community follows the same trend as that of other African peoples. Thus, it has been found that:

For African peoples, the family consists of a much wider circle of people than in the Western world. In the traditional community, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters who, in turn, have their own children, as well as other immediate relatives (Mbiti, 1990, p. 142).

This matter mentioned by the author cited above, presents the idea that in Africa the family extends far beyond the parental circle. The family constitutes one of the great values that African peoples possess and on which society fundamentally rests. The kinship ties that are established among the Fang people condition the individuals who belong to this tribe or



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

family. Their way of acting, speaking or reacting is not the same for those who do not belong to their tribe. In this sense, the concept of the Fang family remains strong and blood ties constitute an unbreakable bond. While it is true that in all African peoples in general and particularly those of Equatorial Guinea, the family structure is not nuclear, it should be noted that, at present, this structure has deteriorated in certain individuals modernized and influenced by globalization, which has blurred the concept of family previously held by the Fang community. Nevertheless, in spite of the multiple changes, "the African family today, as in the past, extends from the restricted nucleus (parents-children) to the whole kinship where customs and traditional ties combine to form a connected and indissoluble system" (Ki-Zerbo, 1972, p. 22).

Differential socialization within the concept of the Fang family is the result of the very consolidated patriarchal system on which this ethnic group is based, in such a way that the transmission of gender roles is done from an androcentric perspective where girls end up being educated to be at the service of boys. The gender roles discussed here are not a fortuitous fact, but are those that sustain the subordination of women, which is promoted by the differential socialization of the patriarchal system. Girls and boys are socialized from an early age to behave in a certain way, just as the adults who are educating them want them to. Therefore, problems such as gender violence, polygamy, levirate marriage, abortions, education, are current issues in Equatoguinean society, but they are approached and solved from a patriarchal position, without considering the gender perspective.

Therefore, the problem posed in this research has to do with the way in which, from the differential socialization, boys and girls are educated within the Fang family model, assigning girls some values and boys others. What is intended with this model of education is to clearly establish the space that each one should occupy, and the roles they should play at the social level, in this way, it is evident that girls are educated to be mothers, get married and take care of their husbands and children. The assigned gender roles are the result of the way a woman is wanted to be fang, that is, submissive, while the man is dominant.

In relation to the above, the problem posed is based on some questions that are key to better unravel the issue being addressed. The research questions to be answered are the following: What is the concept of the Fang family? How does differential socialization influence the concept of the Fang family? To what extent do gender roles aggravate the subordination of women in the Fang culture? How does differential socialization help to maintain the Fang patriarchal system?

The asymmetry that can be glimpsed within the concept of the Fang family in relation to the transmission of gender roles from the earliest stage allows boys and girls to identify with certain values and behavioral patterns. In the case of boys, they are molded to dominate while girls are educated to be passive. In short, differential socialization also allows boys to receive a different education than girls, something that is later reinforced at school.

If the assignment of gender roles is a product of differential socialization in which men are educated as dominant beings and women as submissive. This way of educating is related to the androcentric vision. In this sense, the thesis defended in this research work is the following: *the concept of the fang family promotes differential socialization through the transmission of gender roles that turn women into submissive, strengthening the patriarchal system on which this socialization model is based.*

This article is structured mainly in three parts. The first corresponds to the state of the question, which is the theoretical foundation in which the terminology of gender roles and differential socialization is addressed. In the second part, the defense of the thesis is



presented, where a series of arguments that evidence the differential socialization in the concept of fang family is presented. The last part is the exposition of the conclusions reached with this research.

## 2. State of the matter

The existing literature on differential socialization and gender roles is vast. However, in the African context, a number of problems are encountered when dealing with these concepts, mainly due to the scarcity of bibliographical sources on this subject. Over the years, sociology, anthropology and ethnography have studied the concept of the African family, sometimes comparing it with other family models such as the Western family. However, the same academic interest has not been shown in gender roles within African societies in general.

Due to the differential socialization model, there is, as mentioned above, a specific way of educating boys and girls. All of this is what causes boys to be socialized differently from girls, who end up learning certain values, beliefs or behavioral patterns established to serve men. Before going deeply into this topic, it is convenient to lay the theoretical foundations on key terms to better understand this issue. In this sense, it is convenient to offer some conceptual approaches about the family, differential socialization and gender roles, in order to study the concept of the fang family.

The family is one of the first institutions in the socialization of people. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the fact that, in the family, people end up assimilating from an early age, everything that is told or taught to them. Socialization is determined by the family, which imposes or decides how to educate its sons and daughters.

Even though there are different family models depending on each culture, there is a common fact in all of them, which is that "the family is the first context where we begin our development, where we establish our first social relationships with different people and begin to develop an image of ourselves and the world around us" (Musitu & Cava, 2001, p. 11). Therefore, it is a fundamental nucleus for constructing the identity of people based on their sex.

We learn to be boys or girls, men or women, based on the expectations of the people who had to socialize us within our family. It should be noted that it is not an education common to all families, mainly because "Each family is a world and has its individual characteristics that make it different from another" (Meil Landwerlin, 2006, p. 105). All this means that education is educated differently according to the type of family in question, although ultimately, the fundamental objective of this education is to socialize people.

The recipes of how people should be educated are predicted by culture, which is in charge of providing families with the necessary tools so that those who are going to be part of society act according to certain standards. The expectations of parents are very important in establishing differential socialization, assigning specific roles for men and others for women. The process of differential socialization that begins with the family is reinforced by the school, where the boy or girl may realize that certain things are required of them because of their sex, which they must do because socioculturally this is what identifies them.

For this reason, socialization is defined as "a process through which children develop habits, skills, values and motives that make them responsible and productive members of society" (Papalia, 2005, p. 231). Therefore, it is a process linked to education, since it is the moment in which the child learns language, behavior, culture, etc. He also begins to see how the father performs certain functions that the mother does not. One of the important aspects of



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

this first phase of socialization is that the child learns to identify with his or her sex, based on the roles he or she must play. In this sense, socialization is defined as:

The process through which people acquire the values, beliefs, norms, and forms of conduct appropriate to the society to which they belong. To this definition we could add the concept of social interaction, since it is through social interaction that we learn and reproduce cultural, social, religious, gender, etc. patterns (Musitu & Cava, 2001, p. 115). (Musitu & Cava, 2001, p. 115).

As the researchers mentioned in the previous quote point out, socialization has to do with the way in which we acquire all the information we need for ourselves, and that throughout our lives this information is perfected. Therefore, the family plays an important role in socialization because it is the crucial moment where identities are built, where boys and girls assume different roles. According to some researchers, "the socializing agent par excellence is the family" (Martínez-González, 1996, p. 88), because it is the nucleus where individuals assimilate the values, beliefs and behavioral patterns inculcated by adults in their community.

The family is the germ where differential socialization takes place, therefore, a construction of the masculine and feminine. Gender roles occupy such a preponderant place in the construction of identities. And this does not necessarily depend on whether it is a Western, African or Asian family model, in all of them there is a common component, and that is that people are socialized in such a way that each one functions according to the behavioral patterns that are socially assigned to them. The great influence exerted by the family in socializing individuals in a differentiated manner, it is argued that:

The family is the vehicle that transmits cultural patterns through several generations, while at the same time allowing for their modification. Among its objectives are: the protection and continuation of upbringing; the teaching of behavior and interaction with society; the acquisition of a gender identity; the inculcation of social, ethical and moral values; the shaping of a personal, family and social identity (Ares-Muzio, 2002, pp. 18-19).

The transmission of gender roles by the family is thus a component of socialization in which we learn to function in a certain way. This way of constructing identities through socialization is not alien to the concept of the fang family, where even though primary socialization is not exercised solely by the parents, it ends up determining how these individuals will be.

The problem that underlies the above, and which will be developed below, has to do with differential socialization, which reinforces social inequalities and aggravates female subordination in the Fang culture.

### 3. Thesis defense

After laying the theoretical foundations of this research, it is convenient to recall that the thesis defended is the following: the concept of the fang family promotes differential socialization through the transmission of gender roles that turn women into submissive, strengthening the patriarchal system on which this model of socialization is based. When speaking of gender roles, it should be noted that "they are those social and behavioral norms



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

established and perceived as belonging to men and women according to the social construction of masculinity and femininity in society" (Myers, 2006, p. 980).

Based on this approach, it is prudent to note that differential socialization largely shapes gender roles within the concept of the fang family. While the category of gender is not the only one to establish differential socialization, it determines the fact that women become dominated by men. In this sense, the family constitutes one of the great institutions that Africans possess and on which society fundamentally rests. Based on the above, the following argument is decisive in pointing out that:

Reality shows that an anthropological understanding of the family is a prerequisite for seriously considering its impact on harmonious human development and the growth of society, which is necessarily linked to this human reality (Santelices-Cuevas, 2001, pp. 183-198).

For this reason, it is imperative to understand gender roles in the concept of the Fang family as part of the larger African family. So much so that:

To speak of the traditional African family is to speak of a large family. This is defined as the group of people coming from a common living ancestor, gathered in the same place - generally the concession -, subjected to the same chief - the oldest of the oldest generation (father or uterine uncle) -, responsible for the economic life - he is the manager of the collective goods - and for the cult given to the telluric powers and to the ancestral spirits of which he is the priest (Maurier, 1966, p. 195).

Thus, socialization does not depend only on the parents, but extends beyond this circle. The education of boys and girls is carried out by the whole community where each one identifies with what he or she should do according to his or her sex. The Fang, as part of the African culture, are not far from the reality that can be observed in African villages. Regarding the value of the family in the Fang ethnic group, some authors point out a fact that seems important to emphasize, because it shows in detail the meaning of family for the Fang.

The fán family tends to be broader and offers a complex structure; the extent of kinship in the norms of social interaction tends to be much greater. This stems from the inclusion of the primary family in larger kinship groupings. The Fán family constitutes a social group distinct from the European family; and kinship relations are conceived in a more diverse way than in Europe (Nzé-Abuy, 1985, p. 9).

The Fang patriarchal system is set up so that men take care of and protect women, considering them inferior in many aspects, such as reasoning capacity, management of household economic resources, etc. As has happened elsewhere, patriarchy is the manifestation of the fierce authority of men over women.

This patriarchal government that, in principle, has been lived and is lived in other societies, according to some feminist postulates, "is characterized by the authority of men over women and their children imposed from institutions" (Castells, 1998, p. 159). In this sense, the Fang institution that has imposed this authority of men is the family. In fact, in the Fang family system described above, the man has an active role since he is the one who provides the woman with what she needs for survival.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

The Fang patriarchal system is the result of men's authority over life in society. Thus, we see that "the Fang family orientation has always been, until today, patrilineal or from the father's line [...], the children succeed each other and follow the father's line" (Mibui, 2005, pp. 91-92). As the Fang family orientation is constituted in this way, men become the leaders of their communities or villages, in which they arbitrarily decide, from an androcentric perspective, the way in which each of the individuals who are part of these communities should function.

Education is a very important factor that has helped to maintain the submission of Fang women. In this sense, it is sensible to admit that the Fang patriarchal system that marks the relations between men and women is the product of a process of assimilation and learning of certain behaviors that are not isolated, since they have an impact on the behavior of individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that "[...] the panorama of a latent patriarchal culture imposes the dissociation of men and women in order to assign to the former the privilege and condition of being a subject, and to women the condition of being an object" (Scott, 2005, p. 16).

In view of this, the Fang patriarchal system presents several manifestations where women are constructed from the male perspective, in which they comply with all the cultural norms of oppression, domination and exclusion established or agreed upon only by men. The concept of the Fang family perfectly promotes differential socialization based on whether one is male or female. Community balance depends to a large extent on each person fulfilling the role assigned to him or her. Therefore, from the time babies are born, parents behave differently depending on gender. Thus, for example, girls are raised differently from boys.

The education of girls is the task of the mother, but it is the father who says how the girl should be educated, who, in turn, is responsible for educating the boy. One of the main problems that this type of education has caused is that more importance is given to boys than to girls when it comes to educating them. Although everyone goes to school, there is a very high probability that girls do not finish school. All this is the result of the socialization model inculcated in the family. This differential socialization model, which transmits gender roles in the concept of the fang family, has led to the fact that:

Many times the traditional family, including its women, has been accused of being the main channel of transmission of the patriarchal principles that have governed fang society: girls assimilate that they must serve men, they must learn what things please men (Pérez-Armiño, 2018, p. 55).

It is evident that this assimilation of which Pérez Armiño speaks, is transmitted in the family and then reinforced in the school, because it is also important to emphasize that the school is the second agent of socialization where the differential socialization that begins in the family is increased. Gender roles are assimilated from childhood and based on this, gender relations become a factor that allows girls to have an unequal education in the sense that they are educated to serve men, while men are educated to support women.

From the point of view of gender relations, one of the fundamental characteristics of the fang family concept is differential socialization where "parents encourage the adoption of gender roles through the experiences they offer their sons and daughters (choice of toys, for example)" (Monjas-Casares, 2004, pp. 11-12).



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

According to the approach outlined above, it is the parents who encourage the transmission of gender roles. However, in the concept of the Fang family, the socialization of children does not depend solely on the biological fathers and mothers, as would occur in the Western family model. In this respect, it can be pointed out that in the African Fang family, the fathers and mothers are all those who intervene in the education of the children, who can be uncles, grandparents, aunts, even people of the same tribe who do not have a blood relationship but who share the same totem with a certain family. On the question in the Fang culture there are mainly four types of fathers or mothers.

First, there are the mbeïñ, which refers to the progenitors, that is, the biological father and mother. Secondly, there are the mbala, who are the non-biological fathers and mothers. They can be considered stepfathers or stepmothers. In fact, in Fang culture there is a very popular saying that goes like this: muan ase muan mbeïñ, muan ane muan mbala. It means that the child does not belong to the parents, but to the caregiver. This is to show that it is not worth having offspring if one is not capable of taking care of them. Thirdly, there are the esehe nvong abot, the aunts or uncles on the mother's or father's side. Fourthly, there are the esehe kibot, it is anyone who is the age of your biological father or mother, even if he or she is not from your tribe or ethnicity, he or she is your father or mother, because he or she is the age of your parents. Therefore, they are part of the children's education.

As the Equatoguinean society is multiethnic, what is observed is that, in all the ethnic groups of the country, a certain domination of men over women has prevailed, mainly due to a long-lived strong sociocultural construction. The presence of the sexual division of labor in the concept of the Fang family at the time of transmitting gender roles is undoubtedly evidence of differential socialization. The sexual division of labor is the patent of the Fang family model, which shows that girls, by the mere fact of being girls, must perform certain tasks and boys others. Parents are aware that gender roles must be exercised by their children; in fact, it is at home, in the family, where gender roles begin to be assigned according to the sex of the offspring.

The separation of spaces, public and private, is totally established, so that girls are always assigned the private space, while boys assume the public space. This way of educating children is not a product of the present, but already since the traditional Fang communitarianism this type of education promoted by the families was carried out. Accordingly, Nvé Bengobesama argues that:

When the children came to the use of reason, they shared life with the elders in the abaa, with whose coexistence they learned many things of the men's working life: sewing the nipa for construction, weaving the pots and fishing baskets and preparing any kind of craft work (Nvé-Bengobesama, 1981, p. 201).

As can be seen, the author cited above maintains that the children were the only ones who had access to that place. At no time does he mention the girl because it is clear that the girl's place was in the kitchen. Within the concept of the fang family, this public space is always reserved for men, so that they can make the appropriate decisions for their own families, thus making them the only ones with the capacity to decide and act on the destiny of their respective families, the sons and daughters remain exclusively under their coverage. Thus, the sexual division of labor and the assignment of gender roles is inculcated from the family nucleus.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>



In the concept of the fang family, it is observed that, with the assignment of gender roles, the sexual division of labor is created, which is manifested in the following terms:

- When girls are young, they are subjected to primary socialization, which is the result of what they learn in the family. Mothers (aunts, cousins, grandmothers, great-great-grandmothers, tribal mothers, etc.), are in charge of teaching girls that, because they are women, they must know how to cook, wash or iron in order to please their husbands when they have to get married. This means that it is imperative to know how to cook, wash, iron and keep the home clean, so that you have a good husband and he feels at ease because otherwise he would not marry.

This way of socializing girls has made, for example, the fang man not interested in cooking, because he has learned that it is a woman's exclusive role. It is a shameful act to find a man in the kitchen preparing food, because culturally it is frowned upon mainly due to the way in which, in this sense, men have been socialized. Moreover, women assume that it is their obligation to feed their husbands and children. Within the concept of the fang family, it has been naturalized that women should do the housework and men should be the providers of food to their households. Precisely, the result of this is that men do not perform domestic functions, not because they cannot, but because they have been taught that it is the role of women.

Thus, "the gender role is formed by the set of norms and prescriptions dictated by society and culture about feminine or masculine behavior" (Lamas, 1995, p. 4). It is not strange that it is viewed with disdain for a man to engage in cooking, because it is not a behavior assigned to men but to women, and the family should see to it that this role is fulfilled. However, this is a bit contradictory because it is not possible to proclaim equality in some areas while leaving others.

It is important to emphasize that for Equatoguinean women in general, it is important to have a family and to take care of it. In fact, women are the pillar of the African family, because they are responsible for the education and care of their children during the absence of the father, who is away from home working. Often, the role of the woman in the education of the children is such, because she is in charge of transmitting sociocultural values to them, which are usually reinforced by the father. It is worth noting the complementarity that exists between women and men when it comes to educating their children. However, the education of children is always determined by the man. In other words, it means that:

The man creates an educational model, the woman reproduces it. And when the mother revolts against this education system, she receives violence from the father. The woman is the one who transmits, but the real power is in the hands of the man. She is really the one who educates, but the person who tells her "educate like this" is him [...]. In the Fang ethnic group, the man is in charge. It doesn't matter what the woman says anything. And in fact, when dad shows up at home, everybody shuts up (Melibea-Obono, 2016).

What is clearly evident is that the children's education is dictated by the father and executed by the mother.

- On the other hand, the education of boys is totally different from that of girls. As far as household chores are concerned, boys are taught to do some things such as, for example, fetching water from the well for the house or, on some occasions, washing



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

the house itself, although the latter task is usually taken on by girls. The differential socialization of which the boys are the product, makes that those are educated to dominate or command over the woman.

The reality established by the differential socialization fostered within the Fang concept of family is the result of their own patriarchal structure that underpins all these behaviors. Consequently, there is thus a close relationship between differential socialization, gender roles and the sexual division of labor. The common point is that they are promoted from the family which is evidently patriarchal.

Considering that the fang family promotes a system of differential socialization, the result of assigning gender roles to women and men, means that men become dominant. Furthermore, it is not an isolated fact to consider that the sexual division of labor considerably aggravates the subordination of women, who end up being presented by the Fang patriarchal system as useless, because, even when their domestic work can be made visible and valued, it is totally undervalued due to several factors, especially cultural ones.

Gender roles in the concept of the Fang family are asymmetrical, thus, "In its ordinary functioning, men and women share the bed, while work and recreational activities are carried out separately" (Oyono Nzang, 2013, pp. 36-37). The family socializes from an early age and this allows everyone to assume their own role. In the case of men; they will have throughout their lives an active role, instilled and learned from an early age, unlike what happens with women, who assume a passive role and behave accordingly. While it is true that it is accepted that they attend school, what is still not being achieved is that they learn like men or just like them.

Cultural factors continue to be a constraint for women to feel empowered, therefore, the learned submission, the result of differential socialization with respect to gender roles, considerably marks the behavior of Fang women. It is probably good to rethink a more egalitarian family model, since anchoring oneself to cultural values is extremely correct, as long as they allow people to act, grow and live as such. All this because, "the family is the most important socialization agent in the life of an individual, not only because it is the first agent, but also because it is the link between the individual and society" (Rodríguez-Perez, 2007, p. 92). The result is that each individual ends up assuming and growing according to how he/she has been educated.

Gender roles do not escape the concept of the fang family, they are the engine of inequality and promote the submission of women. Men are spared from domestic work not because they cannot do it, simply because this is not the role with which they have been socialized. Therefore, it is necessary to depatriarchalize the culture in order to build another, more egalitarian model of socialization. The foundation of the fang patriarchal system that promotes differential socialization with the assignment of gender roles, makes men dominant over women, because "gender roles found the basis of a system of social, personal and economic segregation between the sexes, in which men belong to the superior category maintaining power over women" (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 37-38). To refuse to assume that the concept of the fang family does not promote differential socialization and therefore the assignment of roles, is to pretend to hide an evident reality that promotes the subordination of women.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

## 4. Methodology

The purpose of this section is to present the techniques and instruments used in this research. In order to carry out this research, we have opted first for the quantitative methodology. To this end, we first proceeded to a systematic review of the existing literature on this subject. It is very important to focus on the latter, since the literature review has allowed, according to the manuals and academic articles used, to argue about the differential socialization and the assignment of gender roles within the concept of fang family. We have worked with the qualities of human beings that are knowledge products. Moreover, since it is a pedagogical, anthropological and sociological research, we dare to affirm that it is the methodology that best fits this research. Opting for this qualitative methodology has been remarkable for this research, since it is a type of research in which:

Researchers are interested in understanding the meanings that individuals give to their own lives and experiences. The point of view, the meaning that actors give to their behaviors, or to their lives, is the subject of observation and research. Here value is given to subjectivity in the understanding and interpretation of human and social behaviors. (Anadón, 2008, pp. 198-211).

In this sense, in order to consolidate our research, the descriptive method was used. A descriptive study such as this one, "[...] is based on a rigorous contextual description of a fact or a situation that guarantees maximum intersubjectivity in capturing a complex reality through the systematic collection of data that makes an interpretative analysis possible" (Pérez, 2000, p. 29). In other words, the descriptive method has allowed a better understanding of the nature of gender roles in the concept of the fang family and its differential socialization system. In this sense, a quantitative approach supported by the descriptive method is necessary, and implies that the researcher has an overview of what he/she intends to know.

In addition, it should also be noted that in order to better understand the issue to be developed, the technique that has been used is the survey, while the data collection instrument has preferably been a questionnaire to gather information on this topic. The questionnaire that has been used as an instrument of data collection is the one that has facilitated the obtaining of the data that are handled in this research, in order to reach conclusions. Taking into account that this research is carried out in Equatorial Guinea, the population on which this work has been carried out is the Fang of the aforementioned country. However, knowing that the Fang are a majority ethnic group in our society, the sample selected was 402 citizens in the city of Bata. This is a very representative sample because the majority of the Fang tribes are represented in this city. Therefore, the data obtained with this sample are perfectly generalizable to the entire Fang population of Equatorial Guinea.

## 5. Analysis and discussion of results

The results presented below are the result of a survey of a very select population. We believe that these data, generated through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), provide a well-founded picture of gender roles and differential socialization within the concept of the fang family.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Sí	205	51,0	51,0	51,0
	No	197	49,0	49,0	100,0
	Total	402	100,0	100,0	

Table 1. Do you think that gender roles in the fang family concept contribute to women's subordination?

According to the results obtained from this question, 51.0% of the respondents admitted that gender roles contribute to the subordination of Fang women. However, we were also struck by the 49, 0% who think that these gender roles are not the cause of women's subordination.

What has really been found is that most of the surveyed group does not know what gender roles are, however, after explaining that it referred to behaviors, behaviors to be performed by men and women, they began to admit that these gender roles exist.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Through the school	69	17,2	17,2	17,2
	Through a patriarchal system	182	45,3	45,3	62,4
	Through the family itself	151	37,6	37,6	100,0
	Total	402	100,0	100,0	

Table 2. Where is differential socialization and gender roles promoted?

Gender roles, as well as differential socialization, are the result of the Fang patriarchal system, as confirmed by 45.3% of the group surveyed. Gender roles are a manifestation of the Fang patriarchal system that fosters above all differential socialization, resulting in subordinating the feminine to the masculine.

All of this generates behaviors that are seen as normal, but which in reality are the product of what has been taught in the family. It is also important to highlight that 37.6% of the people surveyed believe that the family is the seed of gender roles and differential socialization.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Sí	205	51,0	51,0	51,0
	No	197	49,0	49,0	100,0
	Total	402	100,0	100,0	

Table 3. Do you think that differential socialization limits women's personal development?

If we have evidenced anything throughout this research, it is that within the concept of the Fang family, boys and girls are socialized differently. Thus, 51.0% of the people surveyed consider that these roles and the way people are socialized within the concept of the Fang family limit women's personal development by confining them to the private sphere, where they dedicate themselves to domestic chores and caring for children. In contrast to this position, there are 49.0% who reject that differential socialization limits women to the private sphere, where they devote themselves to domestic chores and caring for children.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Sí	321	79,9	79,9	79,9
	No	81	20,1	20,1	100,0
	Total	402	100,0	100,0	

Table 4. Do gender roles, products of differential socialization, foster the sexual division of labor in the fang family concept?

For 79.9% of the people surveyed, gender roles encourage the sexual division of labor, some have stated that because they see that they must do certain tasks that have been assigned to them. Thus, for example, women are engaged in ironing or cooking, while men are simply looking for sustenance for the family. The result of this differential socialization is, as we have seen above, the confinement of women to the private sphere represented by the home. This is due to the Fang patriarchal system which, with this way of socializing, creates a differential society to which the Fang family is no stranger. In addition, although 20.1% think that gender roles do not promote the sexual division of labor, this is probably because they do not really know what gender roles are, since they are topics of recent incorporation in the study of the social reality of Equatoguinean society from the point of view of gender relations.

## 6. Conclusion

The differential socialization system observed in the concept of the Fang family encourages the transmission of traditional gender roles, where the man is generally educated as a dominant being, while the woman must show obedience, submission and weakness. Although the family is one of the major institutions of the Fang ethnic group, it is the main



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

transmitter of the roles of dependence that women assume within it. In this sense, this research has started from the thesis that the concept of the Fang family promotes differential socialization through the transmission of gender roles that turn women into submissive, strengthening the patriarchal system on which this model of socialization is based, with the purpose of analyzing and better understanding a subject that has very little literature, since they are current social issues that until now had not been raised in the light of gender relations, based on the component of differential socialization.

The thesis presented has been argued on the basis of some evidences such as the presence of the sexual division of labor which is the manifestation of the patriarchal system that creates gender roles and that at the same time are sustained by the fang patriarchal system. However much apology one may want to make of the Fang family model, which at the same time represents the conception of the African family, there is something inescapable, and that is the presence of gender roles that are fostered by the differential socialization that is carried out from the family. Therefore, it is an evident fact that in the concept of the Fang family there is a segmentation between men and women, which is reinforced at school, thus provoking the social inequalities established from the first socialization, which inexorably leads to the differentiation of roles and spaces.

A society where this type of socialization that favors one gender while undervaluing the other, preferably female, institutionalizes patriarchy. Moreover, it pays obeisance to it by not promoting inclusive models of education for all. In view of this, it is important to be forceful in abolishing this system of segregation, which can be fought exclusively through education, but it must be an egalitarian education.

While with the sexual division of labor, girls continue to be educated or socialized to dedicate themselves only to the care of their sons and daughters and to please men, it will be difficult to break the patriarchal system, therefore, the solution is to change the current differential socialization model to give way to one more committed to exploit and value the skills and abilities of people that do not depend on one's gender.

With the current differential socialization system of the fang family model where everyone educates (parents, uncles, cousins, biological brothers, tribal brothers, grandparents, etc.), gender roles are aggravated, which cause girls to be socialized to develop behaviors such as dependence and submission, repressing their cognitive capacity because they are confined to the private sphere where they are exclusively dedicated to raising children and serving men.

As gender roles are a sociocultural construction present in the concept of the fang family, it challenges us to study the way in which they foster social inequality, based on differential socialization. For this reason, it is relevant to carry out a series of studies aimed at making these situations visible in order to promote changes that seek to establish a more egalitarian system between the sexes. Education and the promotion of opportunities are an ethical and moral requirement for the development of people's capabilities regardless of their sex and gender. Holding on to customs and traditions should not imply undervaluing anyone, but rather fostering the development of the human person.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN: 2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

## Bibliography

- Anadón, M. (2008). La investigación llamada "cualitativa": de la dinámica de su evolución a los innegables logros y los cuestionamientos presentes. *Investigación y Educación en Enfermería, XXVI(2)*, 198-211.
- Ares-Muzio, P. (2002). *Psicología de la Familia. Una aproximación a su estudio*. La Habana: Féux Varela.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *La dominación masculina*. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- Castells, M. (1998 ). *La era de la información*. México: Siglo XXI.
- Ki-Zerbo, J. (1972). *Historia de África Negra 2 Vols*. Lisboa: Europa-América.
- Lamas, M. (1995). La perspectiva d<sup>e</sup> género. *Revista de Educación y Cultura de la sección 47 del SNTE*, pp.14-20.
- Martínez-González, R.-A. (1996). *Familia y Educación*. Oviedo: Servicios de Publicaciones Universidad de Oviedo.
- Maurier, H. (1966). "Religión y desarrollo: Tradiciones Africanas y Catequesis". *Cuadernos Mundo Negro 4*.
- Mbiti, J. (1990). *Entre Dios y el tiempo. Religiones tradicionales Africanas*. Madrid: Mundo Negro.
- Meil Landwerlin, G. (2006). *Padres e hijos en la España actual*. Barcelona: Edita Fundación La Caixa.
- Melibea-Obono, T. (15 de Diciembre de 2016). "En España me llaman "la negra", en Guinea Ecuatorial "la españolita". Obtenido de Recuperado el 10 de julio de 2020, de [https://www.abc.es/cultura/cultural/abci-trifonia-melibea-obono-espana-llaman-negra-guinea-ecuatorial-espanolita-201612121313\\_noticia.html](https://www.abc.es/cultura/cultural/abci-trifonia-melibea-obono-espana-llaman-negra-guinea-ecuatorial-espanolita-201612121313_noticia.html)
- Mibui, R. E. (2005). *Historia de Guinea Ecuatorial: período pre-colonial*. Madrid: Gráficas Algran.
- Monjas-Casares, M. I. (2004). *Ni sumisas ni dominantes: Los estilos de relación interpersonal en la infancia y la adolescencia*. España: Ministerio de Trabajo y asuntos Sociales.
- Musitu, G., & Cava, M. J. (2001). *La familia y la educación*. Barcelona: Ediciones Octaedro, S.L.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>

- Myers, D. G. (2006). *Psicología*. Buenos Aires: Médica Panamericana.
- Nvé-Bengobesama, C. O. (1981). *Tradiciones del pueblo fang*. Madrid: RIALP, S.A.
- Nzé-Abuy, R. M. (1985). *Familia y matrimonio fán*. Madrid: Anzós S. A.
- Oyono Nzang, J. E. (2013). *El hombre en busca de su Dios*. Amigo del Hogar.
- Papalia, D. (2005). *Psicología del desarrollo*. México: McGraw-Hill.
- Pérez, G. (2000). *Investigación cualitativa, retos e interrogantes II, técnicas y análisis de datos*. España: Editorial la Muralla.
- Pérez-Armiño, L. (2018). "Y el sujeto se hizo verbo (aunque siempre fue objeto). La mujer fang en Guinea Ecuatorial y el impacto colonial". *Anales del Museo Nacional de Antropología, XX*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, pp. 30-59.
- Rodríguez - Pérez, A. (2007). Principales modelos de socialización familia. *Foro de educación nº 9*, pp. 91-97.
- Santelices-Cuevas, L. (2001). La familia desde una mirada antropológica: Requisito para educar. *Pensamiento Educativo. Vol. 28*, pp.183-198.
- Scott, C. E. (2005). Sobre Los lazos de amor. Psicoanálisis, feminismo y el problema de la dominación de Jéssica Benjamín. *Gaceta Universitaria: Temas y controversias en Psiquiatría*, pp. 16-19.





## Author

**PEDRO BAYEME-BITUGA** obtained in 2017 his Graduate Degree in Humanities, in the profile of international cooperation and Development from the Faculty of Humanities and Religious Sciences of the National University of Equatorial Guinea. In 2020, he obtained his Master's degree in Humanistic and Social Studies from the Universitat Abat Oliba-CEU in Barcelona. He is a doctoral candidate in Humanities for the Contemporary World, in the research line of History and Society, in the doctoral program of the CEU International Doctoral School (Universitat Abat Oliba-CEU of Barcelona).

He is currently a full professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Religious Sciences of the National University of Equatorial Guinea where he teaches Sexuality, Gender and Power, and Scientific Research Methodology. His main research topics include feminist and cultural issues of his context. In addition, he is a co-founding member of the group pódium humanitas. He is the author of several articles published in journals of great scientific caliber such as Revista Cátedra, Academia.Edu, etc. He has directed several Final Degree Projects related to his lines of research.



[Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Revista Cátedra, 4(2), pp. 84-100, May-August 2021. e-ISSN:2631-2875

<https://doi.org/10.29166/catedra.v4i2.2924>