

Sex and Violence in Ivory Coast: A Socio-Anthropological Study of the Phenomenon of Sexual Abuse by Children at Abengourou

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze the social factors of the emergence of sexual violence in Abengourou. In short, it is a question of understanding the process of social construction of sexual violence as a social problem in Abengourou. To do so, a survey based on a dual qualitative and quantitative approach to a category of persons led to the following results according to the interviews. The populations of the Indenie Djuablin (Abengourou) have a clear knowledge of the violence in general and on the sexual violence against the children in a specific way. There is indeed a mechanism for denouncing and reporting violence against children in the town of Abengourou.

Keywords: social construction, Sexual Violence, Children

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence against women has been perceived for centuries as an attack on the property of men or the honor of families rather than a crime against women. The importance and significance of this violence depends on the actors who impose their conception and definition in a given social context, period and culture. As Bonetti [1] points out in his book on the construction of social problems in France, these questions have given rise to clashes, debates, analyzes, forms of various actions, changes in demonstrate that these problems are not legitimate in advance and can be posed and treated differently. The place accorded to each of these problems varies according to the period and the country, and has only a distant relation with their acuity [1].

The issue of sexual violence is regularly at the heart of French political and media news. For example, the verdict set out in the recent collective rape trial in the Val de Marne sparked the indignation of French feminist movements and revived the debate on current policies. Indeed, on 11 October 2012, the Creteil Assize Court acquitted ten men and sentenced four others to sentences ranging from three years suspended to one year. They were all prosecuted for the collective and repeated rapes of two girls. Considered scandalous, the reactions to this verdict were not slow to be heard. Associations fighting sexual violence seek to raise awareness and mobilize quickly by creating a petition to call for political action against violence against women and rape in particular. These social movements claim the elaboration of a "framework law". In other words, a comprehensive management of this violence and the establishment of an awareness campaign. In 2011, there are 150,000 victims of sexual assault [2] in France. According to some authors, the increase in the number of complaints testifies to women's freedom of speech [3]. Driven by associations and the media, this violence is now more openly denounced [4]. But beyond the

numbers and cases "shocks", French women's movements ask the government to provide the necessary means to effectively fight against violence against women, including sexual violence.

A study conducted and published in 2013 on sexual violence in West Africa by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has denounced that in Côte d'Ivoire, one in three women is the victim of violence perpetrated by their intimate partner or ex-partner. Indeed, two rapes or attempted rapes are reported each day. The number of cases of sexual violence was 776 in 2011. It rose to 731 in 2012 and 444 in the first nine months of 2013. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the number of cases of violence based on the gender grew from 711 in 2010 to 1976 in 2011 and 2648 in 2012 across the country. In 2012, according to the Abengourou school and university health service, 85 cases of sexual violence against children were identified in Abengourou. They were between 12 and 17 years old. In Abengourou, the Regional Director of National Education and Technical Education mentioned 94 cases

of pregnancies in the first quarter of 2014. These figures do not include cases that have not been declared. The trivialization of sexual violence by the population is a problem that reflects the status of women and children in Côte d'Ivoire. There are cultural taboos on the problem of sexual violence. Victims are afraid of being rejected by their families and communities. There are several consequences of sexual violence on children: feelings of deep anxiety, shame, anger, and depression, HIV / AIDS etc. However, conventions promoting gender equality, education and the prohibition of sexual violence against children have been ratified by Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, the VBG platform contributes to the fight against sexual violence and prevention and response actions are ongoing. Despite these efforts, the situation remains critical. Children especially girls continue to suffer daily sexual violence in Abengourou.

What are the local social factors favoring the emergence of sexual violence in Abengourou? The purpose of this paper is to analyze the social factors of the social construction of the emergence of sexual violence against girls in Abengourou.

METHODOLOGY

A field survey was conducted in Indénié Djuablin precisely in Abengourou. It took place from February 17, 2016 to March 23, 2016. It mobilized two methodological approaches; the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach and consisted of semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire administered to stakeholders. The interviews focused on the levels of knowledge of the populations and policies of prevention of sexual violence against children. The data collected was the subject of a content and statistical analysis that enabled us to grasp the ideologies of the emergence of sexual violence against children. As part of this paper, the theoretical approach is the constructivist perspective. Indeed, this approach has its roots in the sociology of social problems [5] and in symbolic

interactionism [6]. This process initiates an undeniable change in the analysis of social problems insofar as it emphasizes the dynamic and claiming character of the process by which a social problem is constructed [7,8]. This new perspective shifts attention from the objective conditions of a social problem to its construction process. Constructivism postulates that all reality is the result of a process of construction in which the individual interacts with his environment [9,7] as opposed to theoretical approaches that examine social problems as a reality. Objective [10]. It is a question of taking a critical distance with so-called "objective" knowledge. From then on, a constructivist analysis considered that the people themselves, participate in the construction of social problems perceived as such. "Constructivist studies therefore require in-depth descriptions of the relationships between individuals and events, language, perception, and the institutional and cultural context" [7]. The Constructivist's own is precisely to account for the different constructions of reality that actors develop, to study their conditions of production, the "realities" they produce (institutions, ideologies, etc.), the effects, whether intended or not, that they induce [11]. In this study, the constructivist paradigm allowed us to understand the phenomenon of sexual violence against girls in Abengourou as a social construct. Indeed, the different actions implemented to deal with the issue of sexual violence in Abengourou, rather than to act on the actors perpetrators of violence in a perspective of elimination of the phenomenon, are presented as a sort of legitimization of action not tending to blame but to register the phenomenon in a movement of latency-resurgence.

RESULTS

Preventive actions against sexual violence

To prevent children in Indénié-Djuablin from being victims of sexual violence, several prevention actions are carried out by the population, the NGOs and the state structures in charge of the issue.

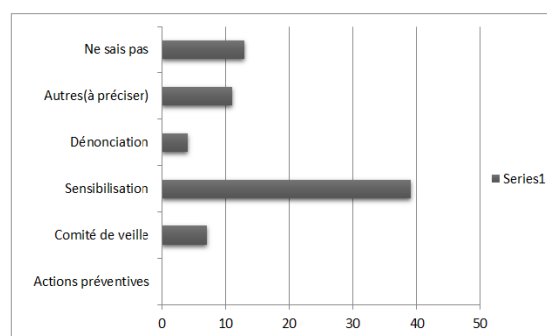


Fig-1: Preventive actions against sexual violence
Source: Our 2016 survey

Translation of the response modalities on the graphic

- Ne sais pas: do not know
- Autres (à préciser): others (to be determined)

Dénonciation: denunciation
 Sensibilisation: sensitization
 Comité de veille: Watch Committee
 Actions preventives: preventives actions

When reading figure 1, among the main actions of prevention of sexual violence, we have the existence of a watch committee, awareness and denunciation. But in this preventive strategy, awareness-raising actions come in first place, ie 69.60% of prevention activities. Several actions are being taken by communities to prevent cases of sexual violence in Indénié Djuablin. Some people "give advice and raise awareness about the consequences of sexual violence". Others "organize meetings between girls called super go" for sex education of children.

However, the majority of interventions recognize that in the face of sexual violence against children in Indénié Djuablin, "nothing is done because we tend to handle this in the royal court". Clearly, when a case of sexual violence occurs, people refer to the

traditional legal system. As far as awareness is concerned, it is done at times. This argument is reinforced by the taboo developed around sexuality in this region of Côte d'Ivoire. According to T.N, a student of the final class "Nothing is specially done against sexual violence against children, because sexuality is a taboo for them". Faced with this situation, the prefect has set up an association to fight against this scourge and even plans to create schools only for young girls. There are also women's associations fighting against sexual violence. DRENET plays an important role in setting up a listening center.

Actions to be taken in case of sexual violence

When the preventive actions show their limits and the populations are faced with a case of sexual violence, several possible remedies are offered to them.

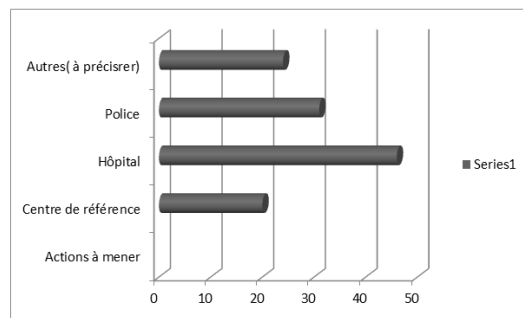


Fig-2: Actions to be taken in cases of child sexual abuse
 Source: our 2016 survey

Translation of the réponse modalities on the graphic

Autres (à préciser): Others (to be determined)
 Police: police
 Hôpital: hospital
 Centre de référence: Reference Center
 Action à mener: Action to be taken

The first resort of the populations in case of sexual violence on a child is the hospital. Indeed, sexual violence against minors leads in the majority of cases to injuries. This is testified by D.L, father of a child victim of sexual violence in these words: "When my daughter was raped, she was bleeding so I immediately sent her to the hospital". This statement confirms the results of this study with 82.10% of cases of sexual violence where the victim is driven to the hospital. After the hospital care, the victim or the parents or the hospital resort to the police with a proportion of 55.40% of the cases. In addition to these two major actions, victims of sexual violence are taken to a referral center for cases of sexual violence.

As a result, other actions are carried out for the well being of the victim. It is a psychological care, the removal of the child in the environment in which he or she lived before, the preservation of evidence of sexual violence. This preservation of evidence sometimes causes parents to cover the victim's body with a sheet. When the parents of the victim are not informed, the care structures inform, comfort and advise the victim. Lastly, care structures encourage the victim, listen to him and attempt legal action to prepare him for the harm suffered by the victim. According to the populations when a child is the victim of sexual violence, it would be necessary: "to carry out investigations and to imprison the culprit", "to bring the

victim to the hospital". To deal with this situation, the Director of the Agnibilékro Social Center said: "We must take the victim to the hospital for a medical consultation and get out of there with a medical certificate attesting to the bedridden state of the child. Victim. Then, complain to the gendarmerie; to address

the social structures for the social care of the child and to contact a psychiatrist for the follow-up of the child".

Knowledge of populations about the local existence of a mechanism for reporting and reporting sexual violence.

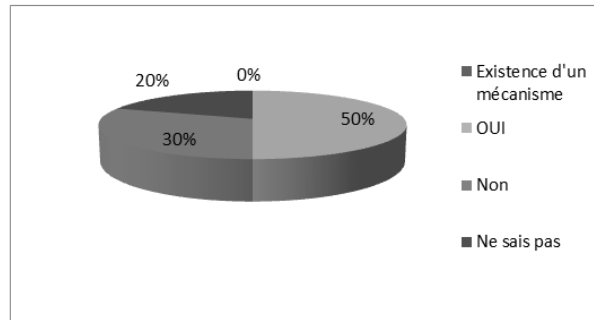


Fig-3: Mechanism for reporting sexual violence

Source: Our 2016 survey

Translation of the response modalities on the graphic

Existence d'un mécanisme: Existence of a mechanism

Oui : yes

Non : no

Ne Sais pas: Do not know

In Indénié-Djuablin, there is a mechanism for denouncing and reporting cases of sexual violence. This mechanism is known by the majority of people interviewed during this study. Indeed, half of the population surveyed know that there is a mechanism for denouncing and reporting cases of sexual violence perpetrated on children in Indénié Djuablin. But the other half of the population claims that there are no mechanisms for caring for child victims of sexual violence. This category is divided into two sub-categories: one states that the mechanism does not exist at all and the other says it does not know if it exists or not.

The mechanism of denunciation and reporting cases of sexual violence against children does not work because "The parents prefer to settle amicably with the opposite camp, in Bétié the chieftaincy has an influence on the populations so in case of violence on a child, everything is settled at the royal court or amicably "(LGB). The use of chieftaincy in resolving cases of sexual violence against children is an obstacle to the

proper functioning of the reporting and reporting mechanism of sexual violence against children in Indénié Djuablin. Although the mechanism of reporting and reporting cases of child sexual abuse is unknown, it exists and works. According to the Social Center: "We have a constellated reference mechanism of NGOs and every month we have a meeting of the platform and when we have cases, NGOs refer to social structures and we in turn, we direct them. . But they are in the circuit, as soon as the case presents itself, they inform us and we begin the procedure so that the child can benefit from the services and the care. The police and gendarmerie are also informed because they play the role of justice to the extent that there is no courthouse in Bétié".

Awareness of the existence of laws protecting children from sexual violence

In Côte d'Ivoire, there are laws that protect all citizens. In this sense, there are also laws that protect children.

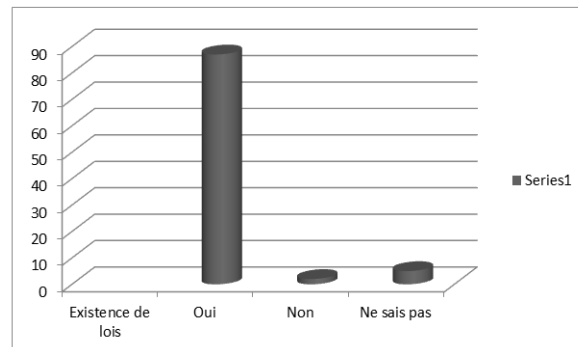


Fig-4: Existence of laws
Source: our 2016 survey

Translation of the response modalities on the graphic

Existence de loi: existence of law
 Oui; yes
 No: no
 Ne Sais pas: do not know

Almost all 92.9% of the population say that there are laws in Côte d'Ivoire against sexual violence. In addition, a small proportion of the population testifies that there are no laws against sexual violence in Côte d'Ivoire. This is what K.K.N testified in these terms: "If the laws existed against sexual violence in

Côte d'Ivoire, we would not see all these forms of sexual violence against children".

Knowledge of populations about the existence of specific laws protecting children from sexual violence.

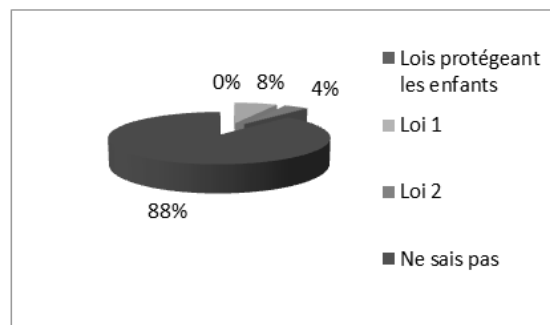


Fig-5: Laws protecting children
Source: our 2016 survey

Translation of the response modalities on the graphic

Lois protégeant les enfants: Lawsprotectingchildren
 Loi: law
 Ne sais pas: do not know

By reading figure 5, 88% of the populations do not know any specific laws of protection of the children in Ivory Coast. This lack of knowledge is supported by interview data. It is in this sense that K.L testifies in these terms: "If there were laws to protect our children from violence, we would see them in their applications. In fact, the laws exist theoretically but nothing concrete in the implementation of these laws. This lack of knowledge is linked to the fact that these laws are not popularized.

DISCUSSION

For psychoanalysts, violence is posited from the outset as a principle bound for life. It is in this sense that the United Nations recognized in 2010 that the main cause of experiencing or subjecting violence is to have already suffered. Bantman P, a French psychoanalyst, believes that it is common in our day for families to operate in a way in which each conflict becomes vitally important, and can escalate into violence. In some families, people are unable to accept each other's point of view and to show tolerance. Also,

he discusses the impact of the economic crisis and unemployment on society and family organization as a cause of violence against children. We talk a lot about exclusion, precariousness. This situation has a certain impact on family functions and gives a feeling of anxiety even when we are not directly concerned. A recent survey on the morale of the French showed pessimism about the future. All these factors contribute to maintaining a degree of insecurity, which in them does not induce violence, but are, as we know, factors of risk.

In 1989, the UN will put in place the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which will be ratified in 2001 by 191 states, 19 of which require states to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children against any form of violence, abuse, physical or mental abuse, neglect or neglect, abuse or exploitation, including sexual violence while in the custody of his or her parents or one of them or his legal representatives or any other person to whom he is entrusted [12]. Walker [13] analyzes the process of government definition of the issue of violence against women in Canada. The author uses the feminist perspective that defines the problem from the broader context of gender politics and power relations. The author examines how feminist mobilizations have succeeded in placing the issue of violence against women in the public sphere of action. He sees the government response as a way to lead the struggles of women's movements. He reports that the problem of domestic violence, initially defined by women's groups, has been significantly altered when it was taken over by the state. The government response has reduced the scope of social change by broadening the real aspects of the problem; we are now talking about family violence. This new concept includes child abuse. From then on, the social causes of domestic violence are put aside. Studer [14], based on the constructivist perspective, analyzes the process of defining the concept of battered women in the United States. The author shows that the emergence of the problem and its recognition can be attributed to the efforts of the groups and organizations that make up the social movement against domestic violence. His analysis reveals the importance of interactions within groups and between those who make up the movement. She takes the example of the professionals within the movements who have considerably modified the definition initially proposed by the women's groups as well as the care of the victims during the creation of the shelters. This thesis suggests that these interactions, not always having a positive influence, redefine, modify and recreate the question of battered women.

For his part, Mitsh Bush [15], Makes a comparison between the United States and India on feminist mobilizations against violence against women

that led, on the one hand, to reforms in the police and judicial treatment. in the United States, and on the other hand, the change in the ideology and organization of the movement that led to the reform of similar policies in the treatment of violence in India. Using field notes and secondary sources from both countries, this study examines how the two movements have redefined violence against women in families as a matter of public interest. This study then looks at how the movement requires policy reform in each country. These requirements are based on two conflicting goals: the protection and empowerment of women. The study reveals that the capacity of these movements to support the construction of violence as a social problem, requiring both the protection and empowerment of women, diminishes when reforms are adopted. Indeed, the implementation of public action falls under the aegis of the criminal justice system, which is historically oriented around the treatment of individual deviance. In other words, the institutionalization of the problem can diminish the ability of these movements to control the social construction of domestic violence against women. Lavergne [16] analyzed the process of constructing violence against women in conjugal contexts as a socio-social problem in Quebec. The author focuses on the mechanisms of subjective construction of the problem by focusing on the definitions and meanings attributed to it. Lavergne [16] examines the discourse of the groups that initiated the process and those who took part in its construction. The objective in this research is to study the emergence of the problem of conjugal violence in Quebec and the evolution of its definition and management. The study reveals, as a first step, that women's groups from the feminist movement in Quebec are the first to define violence against women in wedlock as a social problem. Secondly, it turns out that the growing presence of women in government and the existence of several government agencies specializing in women's affairs have been an important factor in the emergence of the problem. However, the author notes that the discourse on the definition of the problem has not always been linked to preferred solutions. She takes the example of the discourse on social inequalities that remains non-existent in the solutions advocated.

In the case of sexual abuse of children, Manseau [17] questions "the places where the very notion of sexual abuse is defined, where managers and stakeholders coexist, where perspectives and issues have tendency to differ. This is an analysis of the process of defining sexual abuse since the implementation of the Youth Protection Act. Manseau deduces that sexual abuse "is a form of political construct". In this regard, the data reveal that stakeholders have some leeway in defining and identifying the problem. However, the author demonstrates that this construction process materialized

outside the people directly affected by the issue; no children, no parents were able to speak in this debate. It is important to underline that a child protection movement quickly developed in Quebec, and devoted a great deal of effort to raising awareness of this phenomenon [7].

CONCLUSION

In total, this text is intended to be a contribution to a sociology of health and sustainable human capital in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, the scientific stake of this text was the highlighting of some ideological supports of the construction of the sexual violence made to the children and the mechanisms of preventions. This study shows that the causes and consequences of sexual violence in a specific way are known by the population. Moreover, it can be emphasized that there is a mechanism for denouncing and reporting violence against children in Indénié-Djuablin. In addition, the study reveals some of the responsibility of the victims of sexual violence, because the majority of the interviewees recognize that there is sexual violence especially in the case of the rape because the girl provoked the rapist is by his clothing indecent either by taking money from him and not wanting to give anything back. In fact, when a child is the victim of sexual violence, the community prefers the settlement out of court to protect the prestige of the perpetrator to the detriment of the victim. And, recourse to customary courts favors this fact. This situation is an important factor in the emergence of sexual violence against children in Indénié Djuablin.

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