

AROUSAL, EXPERIENCES, AND PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THE NORMS' CONFLICTS IN AFRICAN POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT:

CASE STUDY OF THE SUCCESSION PRACTICE IN CAMEROON

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More than a half-century after its independence, Cameroonians, like other African people, are experiencing many conflicts of norms in their succession practices. Among other conflicts, one can mention:

1. "Residual" or Interreligious conflict between Christians, Muslims, and Animists.
2. "Virtual" conflicts between Anglophone and Francophone people.
3. But the main source of conflicts is the "Ordinary" or Interpersonal conflicts between ancestral and modern laws (of French or English inspiration), because both are legally accepted.

VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN ANCESTRAL AND MODERN LEGAL NORMS

MODERN LAW'S PRINCIPLES

1. Several persons have access to the inheritance.
2. Girls and widows are not parts of the inheritance. Rather, they can inherit.
3. Girls and boys are equal.
4. The death nullifies the marriage bond. Consequently, the widow is not obliged to enter into levirate marriage.
5. The heir doesn't have to assume the rights and duties of his predecessor. It is optional



ANCESTRAL LAW'S PRINCIPLES

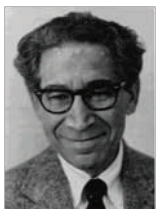
1. One person receives the inheritance to be used for the wellbeing of the family.
2. Girls and widows are parts of the inheritance.
3. Girls and boys are not equal
4. Widows have to remarry with a member of the family of her deceased husband.
5. The heir enjoys necessarily the rights and assumes the duties of his predecessor.

THREE QUESTIONS SHAPE OUR STUDY:

SEEING THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN ANCESTRAL AND MODERN LEGAL NORMS RELATED TO SUCCESSION,

1. What do the victims of such conflicts experience from psycho-emotional point of view?
2. How do they manage these experiences of conflicts?
3. In which way can these experiences and their management contribute to the debates on social psychology?

THEORY



Léon Festinger

The cognitive dissonance theory allows us to postulate that victims experience cognitive dissonance and associated emotional states. Through an administered questionnaire, 1013 (382 women and 631 men) Cameroonians answered the first two questions. Transcription of 20 interviews and analyses are in progress.

VICTIMS' PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Dissonance cognitive and related emotional states			Grouping aspect		
Indicators	Qty	%	Indicators	Qty	%
Uncomfortability			PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCOMFORT		
Embarrassment					
Opposition					
Anger against oneself			NEGATIVE AFFECTS RELATED TO ONESELF		
Critic towards oneself					
Shame					
Negation					
Disgust					
Frustration			NEGATIVE AFFECTS RELATED TO ONESELF AND TO OTHERS		
Deception					
Culpability					
Affliction					
Regret					
Surprise			NEGATIVE AFFECTS RELATED TO ANXIETY		
Scorn					
Hostility					
Aggression					
Anxiety					
worry			POSITIVE AFFECTS		
Nervousness or strain					
Sympathy					
Optimism					
Goodness					
Interest					
Serenity					

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

1. Respect and enhancement of ancestral law.
2. Respect and enhancement of modern law
3. Proselytism.
4. Avoidance of situation which would exacerbate victims' psycho-emotional experiences.
5. Confusion between some aspects of the ancestral and modern legal norms.
6. Social sharing of the feelings.