

Land Tenure, Parental Marital Status and Child Labor in Cocoa Farming in Diégonéfla-Lahouda (Côte d'Ivoire)



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ABSTRACT: The aim of the present study was to assess the variability in the degree of child labor constraint in cocoa farming at Lahouda in the sub-prefecture of Diégonéfla in Côte d'Ivoire, according to the land tenure status and marital type of their parents. 50 children, 20 girls and 30 boys, all attending school and aged between 10 and 16, were interviewed using a questionnaire and a semi-directive interview. The results show that the children of farmers who do not own cocoa plots are subject to heavy labor, while those of farmers who do own plots are not. The results also show that the children of polygamous cocoa farmers are in binding labor, while those of monogamous farmers are in non-binding labor. To achieve this, Côte d'Ivoire needs to include farmers in social security policies and regulate work and sharecropping contracts in cocoa farming. In addition, it needs to raise awareness among polygamous cocoa families about household financial management.

KEY WORDS: Child labor, parents' land tenure status, parents' monogamy, parents' polygamy.

I. PROBLEMS

Côte d'Ivoire, whose economy has been essentially agricultural since its rise to independence, gives pride of place to cocoa cultivation. Today, cocoa is grown by approximately one million smallholders, mainly in the southern half of the country (Gboko & al, 2021). The forest areas of the Centre-West, favoured by their rainfall and vegetation, record the highest production (Assi, 2021; Touboui, 2021).

Cocoa accounts for around 14% of Côte d'Ivoire's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and contributes over 40% of its export earnings and over 10% of its public revenue (Gohoun, 2022). In social terms, some 6,000 farm managers run the production apparatus, providing a living for around 6 million people from cocoa-growing revenues (Adomon, 2014). As a result, Côte d'Ivoire remains by far the world's leading cocoa producer, with annual production estimated at over 2.2 million tonnes despite climate change, cocoa diseases such as *swollen shoot* and the loss of its forest rent (Hani, 2024; Ruf & al, 2020).

Côte d'Ivoire's privileged position in cocoa production is partly underpinned by the expansion of planted areas as growers seek to maximize production and increase family income (Fountain & Huetz-Adams, 2022). To achieve their ends, the use of cheap, free family labor that involves children is common (Bonny et al., 2004; Djè, 2017). Indeed, studies carried out in Côte d'Ivoire on household living standards indicate that 71.6% of working children aged 5 to 17 are in the agricultural sector (Amani et al., 2010). The Comité National de Surveillance du travail des enfants, meanwhile, reveals that 1,622,140 children in 2014 were involved in work to be abolished (CNS, 2014). À Monde Afrique (2021) adds that the number of children working in cocoa fields is estimated at nearly 800,000 in Côte d'Ivoire. Yet cocoa cultivation is generally practiced in the traditional way, using small farming equipment such as the daba and the machete, and making use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicide treatments, fungicides, insecticides and growth regulators. It is under these working conditions that some children, day or night, fall prey to insects and reptiles (Gbongue, 2019).

According to Bonny et al (2004), some children are integrated into the cocoa production cycle at a very early age on the cocoa plantations of San Pedro, Abengourou and Tiassalé in Côte d'Ivoire. Still others start working at an early age, for example around 4 or 5, and continue to do so throughout their childhood, to the detriment of schooling (Magloire & N'guessan, 2005).

In Côte d'Ivoire, child labor in cocoa farming involves clearing land, carrying heavy loads, exposure to phytosanitary products, using sharp tools, working with dangerous machinery and long working hours (Fountain & Huetz-Adams, 2022). Also, malnutrition, tuberculosis, bone lesions, headaches and neck pain are illnesses suffered by some children who engage in activities not suited to their level of physical and psycho-affective growth (Bonny et al., 2004). Social and psychological disturbances, including alcohol and drug abuse, violence, disintegration of the family structure and low self-esteem, induced by abusive working conditions for child laborers are also reported by authors (Thorsen, 2012). In fact, these activities entail physical, psychological, social and health risks for children and are therefore in violation of national and international legal texts in force in Côte d'Ivoire (Yao, 2021).

In fact, international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proscribe all restrictive activities likely to hinder the education, socialization and harmonious development of children. This

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recommendation is supported by the fact that, for the UN, a child is any human being under the age of 18 who has specific needs for normal physical and mental development (SWAC/OECD, 2009). In order to comply with this recommendation, Côte d'Ivoire is stepping up its regulatory measures and actions to combat dangerous and even compulsory child labor. Examples include the ratification of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on the minimum age for admission to employment and the worst forms of child labor respectively, the signing of decrees and orders and the creation of the National Child Labor Monitoring Committee (SOSTECI, 2013).

Despite efforts to combat hazardous or exploitative child labor in Côte d'Ivoire, it persists (ILO, 2021, 2024a). Indeed, study reports highlight that although Côte d'Ivoire has managed to reduce the national child labor rate from 31% in 2016 to 22% in 2021, and that of the Bas-Sassandra district over the same period from 24% to 22%, there are still 22% of children involved in child labor (ILO, 2024b). Under these conditions, if a significant number of children continue to be made vulnerable by abusive work, we can expect a lack of able-bodied arms and thus a failure of Côte d'Ivoire's socio-economic development prospects. Identifying the factors at the root of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire, with a view to eradicating it, would help the development and fulfillment of children and communities in cocoa-growing areas, especially those with high production rates.

It's true that the demands accompanying child labor arise, for one reason or another, in varying degrees (Schlemmer, 2006). In other words, the consequences of child labor are as varied as its forms, which are themselves linked to multiple determinants. Determinants generally cited to explain child labor include culture, school dropout, family deterioration, parents' socio-professional status and family poverty (Amani et al, 2008; Djè, 2017).

According to Yao (2021), child labor in the cocoa fields has both historical and cultural dimensions, which consider children to be wealth and to contribute to their own survival and that of their families. In this sense, some authors agree that children work and have always worked because their work is part of their initiation to adult life (Baux, 2007; Delaunay, 2013). However, we need to distinguish between educational work that helps children to integrate psychosocially, and work that is dangerous or unacceptable and harmful to them (Kobiane, 2006). This difference between working children leads us to establish a link between children's work and the psychosocial characteristics of the parental unit, if we agree that the latter is the foundation of all the child's psycho-affective and social development. Parents in the central-western cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire vary in terms of age, nationality, ethnic group, socio-economic level, marital status, land tenure, etc., and are therefore more likely to be involved in child labor.

If we consider the land tenure status of the parents, we can distinguish between planters who own the cultivated plots because they acquired them by inheritance or purchase, and those who do not. In distinguishing these two categories of growers, we note that the owners are practically employers, while the non-owners are either employees or sharecroppers. However, in most cases, the contract between these two categories of growers is verbal and not formal (Assi, 2021). In this case, for employees or sharecroppers, the possibility of losing their job from one day to the next without social protection or compensation, or the reality of a non-guaranteed or unstable wage, can be their daily reality. One of the excuses for this work reality is that the employers themselves have performance constraints linked to an annual production whose entire income is only received over 4 to 5 months (Adomon, 2014). Given the precariousness of their economic activity, employees and sharecroppers sometimes find it difficult to meet a number of their family's needs.

In cocoa-growing areas, some students, faced with the precariousness of their parents' jobs, form an association to offer services such as clearing undergrowth, picking and carrying pods during the vacations, for a derisory salary. Some students even have sharecropping contracts alongside their studies, with the encouragement of their parents, which they carry out on days off and vacations. These students' wages often contribute to the schooling expenses their parents have to bear. It is therefore understandable that the impoverishment of families motivates child labor in Côte d'Ivoire (Amani & al, 2008; Magloire & N'guessan, 2005).

Financial insecurity, leading to a loss of self-esteem, can cause employed or sharecropping parents to feel mentally insecure, even psychologically insecure. As a result, they may seek to enhance their self-esteem through their children. Moreover, the International Labour Office (ILO) reveals that the absence of occupational health and safety measures is a factor in child labour, in the sense that it exposes parents to work-related accidents, who in the event of disability use their children as substitute labour (ILO, 2021). This is why, according to the same source, the ILO has initiated an approach called the WIND approach, which aims to encourage improvements in the living and working conditions of players in the cocoa-growing value chain. Côte d'Ivoire supports this approach, given the precarious living conditions of cocoa farmers (ILO, 2021). So we are tempted to ask whether, in addition to physical insecurity, the financial, social and psychological insecurity linked to the work of certain parents in cocoa farming might not have an impact on their children's working conditions.

The heterogeneity of families in cocoa-growing areas can also be seen in their different marital statuses. Extended, nuclear, monogamous and polygamous families make up the cocoa-growing community, just like the Ivorian population. As for polygamy, its polygynous form, defined by Nguimfack (2014) as a marriage in which one man has two or more wives, is the one practiced in Côte d'Ivoire.

In these polygamous families in cocoa-growing areas, it's not uncommon for activities to be shared between wives and their children. In reality, each member of a household contributes to its income. For example, several wives, likely to bear numerous children, constitute an invaluable workforce for the head of the household, given the amount of work required to grow cocoa. In concrete terms, the children are allies of their mothers, supporting them in their various tasks. We see a kind of competition at work between siblings of different mothers, which reveals the solidarity that each child shows to his or her mother. Moreover, Raulin (1969), following his investigations into men's rights, concludes that in rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire, polygamy is a way for men to have many children to help with farm work. In this sense, Koaci (2022) maintains that, some planters use several wives to procreate numerous children and constitute a work force. In these situations, we need to find out whether the polygamy of the parents is a source of the amount of work experienced by children.

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We can see that the land status and marital status of parents are factors likely to have an impact on the nature of child labor in cocoa fields. The impact these factors can have on the nature of child labor can be seen in the light of two theories: Abraham Maslow's needs theory (1943) and Kurt Lewin's field theory (1935).

The theory of needs developed by Maslow (1943) is based on the fact that motivation is always linked to the satisfaction of human needs. Motivation triggers goal-directed behavior in order to reduce the tensions generated by needs. According to Maslow, needs are hierarchically classified into five categories: physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and achievement needs. As for Lewin's field theory (1935), it postulates that the behavior and conduct of an individual or group take on their meaning in relation to the living space or field. This field is a totality, i.e. it's made up of the whole formed by the individual or group with its needs (motivation, attitude, perception, aspiration, etc.) and the various external objects or people with which it is in relation. This field is a system of forces in equilibrium, as each object or person has a value in the eyes of the individual, according to his or her personality. When there is a need, the balance breaks down, creating tension or anxiety. In this way, the behavior of an individual or a group is determined by the way they see the world around them.

Maslow's theory of needs enables us to explain that employed parents or sharecroppers with precarious, socially insecure economic activities seek either to feed themselves, or to fulfill themselves through their children's earnings or services. It is also possible that the uncertainty associated with the employment of employed parents or sharecroppers creates tension or anxiety to the point where they seek support through the work of their children. In contrast, plot-owning parents may feel less threatened financially and psychologically, and certainly do not seek support from their children through work.

Similarly, we can draw on Maslow's theory of needs to say that children's work in polygamous families can be a means of integration for them, given that each member has to contribute to the household income. And by working more, each child not only supports his or her mother, but also enhances her self-esteem through his or her contribution to the work.

Maslow's theory of needs helps us to understand that, to satisfy their various needs for food, support, integration, esteem and fulfillment, parents use their children's work, or their children use work to satisfy their own needs. However, this theory doesn't explain how the tension or anxiety felt in the face of a situation could give rise to a certain behavior. This is why, in addition to Maslow's theory of needs, we referred to Lewin's field theory (1935) to support the fact that the character of children's work is impacted by the parents' land status and marital types.

Drawing on Kurt Lewin's field theory, we can argue that it is possible for the job uncertainty of employed or sharecropping parents to create tension or anxiety that they offload onto their children through work. Similarly, using this theory, we can say that discrepancies between the wives of polygamous families that spill over to the other members can create a climate of tension, and the children would perceive their environment as harmful, including any activity with which they are associated. This would not be the case for children whose parents own the land, and are less threatened by the loss of their plot. The children of monogamous parents, who certainly live in households less prey to rivalry between members, would experience a psychological stability free of risks at work.

These considerations lead us to make the following hypotheses:

HO1: children of parents who own cocoa plantations have non-binding jobs, while those of parents who do not own cocoa plantations have binding jobs.

HO2: children of polygamous planters have a demanding job, while those from monogamous planters have a non-demanding job.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Description of variables

We have two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables concern the parents' land tenure and marital status. As for the dependent variable, it concerns the nature of the child's compulsory or non-compulsory work.

Our independent variable parents' land tenure status is apprehended through the ownership status of the cultivated plot. It is qualitative in nature, and we assign it two modalities: owner parents and non-owner parents. A parent is said to be an owner if the cultivated cocoa plot has been acquired as property and he/she works on it on his/her own account. On the other hand, a parent is said to be a non-owner if the cultivated plot is not his property and he works on it for a third party as an employee or sharecropper. Our marital status variable refers to the number of the father's wives in the household. This variable is qualitative in nature, with two modalities. The polygamous family is when the father of the household has at least two wives. A monogamous family is when the father has only one wife.

Child labor, our dependent variable, is assessed by the nature of the child's work. It is qualitative in nature, with two modalities: compulsory work and non-compulsory work. The child's work is said to be constraining if he or she does cocoa work in the fields during the school year and on vacations. His work is non-binding if he doesn't work in the cocoa fields during the school year, but only on vacations.

2.2 Sample

The region of greatest cocoa production is the Centre-West of Côte d'Ivoire (Kouadio et al., 2021). We chose as our study site the rural locality of Lahouda, located in the Centre-West, 15 km from the sub-prefecture of Diégonéfla in the Goh region, in the forest zone of the Oumé département. It comprises the core village of Lahouda and its 11 campements. With an elementary school and three private secondary schools, the core village welcomes pupils from all over the locality. Our choice was guided by the fact that this locality is mainly agricultural, with cocoa cultivation dominating. It is home to an ethnically heterogeneous population, so our exchanges with it were easy. What's more, as we're already familiar with the area, it's easy to get around.

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Our study population comprises students working on cocoa plantations in the Lahouda locality. Some are engaged in strenuous work, while others are engaged in non-strenuous activities.

We chose those aged between 10 and 16, considering that at this age, they can express themselves correctly. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire has decreed, by Law No. 2015-635 of September 17, 2015 on education compulsory schooling from 06 to 16 years of age. Our sample was constituted using the accidental sampling technique, as we did not have an exhaustive list of pupils engaged in cocoa farming activities in Lahouda, nor that of their parents. We therefore interviewed 50 students, 20 girls and 30 boys, encountered by chance, accidentally and available for our survey. Nevertheless, we selected those students who met a number of previously established criteria:

- They are all of Ivorian origin. Their parents are not immigrants.
- Their parents do not grow cocoa occasionally or temporarily, and are therefore permanent producers.
- They are all regularly enrolled in school. They are not children who have dropped out of school or who do not attend school.
- They live with at least one of their biological parents. They do not live with guardians.

This sample was then subjected to data collection instruments.

2.3 Data collection instruments

To collect our data, we used an identification questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The identification questionnaire consists of four parts. The first part concerns the identification of the subject. It concerns age, sex, level of education and number of siblings. The second concerns the parents' land tenure status, and comprises a closed question with three response modalities and two open questions. The third concerns the parents' marital status, and includes two closed questions with two response modes each. The fourth concerns the degree of constraint associated with the child's work, and comprises one closed question with two response modes and three open-ended questions.

The semi-directive interview enabled us to gather information and explanations on the degree of constraint felt or experienced at work by the children. This interview was conducted with 10 children chosen at random from our sample. It focused on the following themes: the subject's opinion or perception of his work; the way he experiences work (is it pleasant, relaxing, fun, easy or, on the contrary, is it unpleasant, stressful, difficult, tiring, dangerous); does he think his work prevents him from going to school or studying; the reasons that lead him to work. Details of his parents' attitude towards his work (do his parents force him to work or not) and his solutions in relation to his parents for avoiding demanding work are also discussed.

The above-mentioned questionnaire and semi-structured interview yielded data that were processed using Pearson's chi-square χ^2 and content analysis.

III. RESULTS

Table 1 . Distribution of children according to their parents' land tenure status and the nature of their work

Parents' land tenure status	Character of the work				Total
	Binding labor	%	Non-binding labor	%	
Children of owner parents	05	6.3%	14	73.7 %	19
Children of non-owner parents	22	71%	09	29%	31
Total	27	54%	23	46%	50

Source: data from our survey

The Pearson chi-square χ^2 test used to process our data shows that there is a significant difference between the proportions of the labor trait of children whose parents are plantation owners and those of children with non-owner parents. Indeed, at $ddl=1$, the calculated chi-square (calculated $\chi^2 = 9.456$) is significant at $P < .01$. Consequently, H_0 is confirmed.

Taking frequencies into account, we observe that the proportion of non-binding work for children of owner parents (73.7%) is higher than for those with non-owner parents (29%). In addition, we find that the proportion of constraining work for children of non-owning parents (71%) is higher than for those with owning parents (26.3%). These results corroborate our H_0 . In other words, whether children's work is binding or not depends on their parents' land tenure status.

Content analysis of the subjects' testimonies reveals that the character of children's work differs according to their parents' land tenure status. Children whose parents own their plantations seem to work at their own pace and when they want. Their parents encourage them to give higher priority to their studies than to cocoa work. Instead, they rely on the employees at their service. Here's an example from "Y", a 16-year-old boy, whose mother and grandmother own their field: *"It's when there's no school that I*

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go to the field. I go with my friends to set rat traps or to pick oranges or avocados. When it comes to cocoa work, I help my uncles collect the dried beans and put them in the sacks; this is especially when the other uncles are still in the field and it wants to rain. We do it quickly so they don't get wet. It's easy to do..... It's not tiring". On the other hand, "N", a 13-year-old boy whose father works for a third party, thinks that his father's desire to please the third party imposes chores on him and his brothers. This is what he expresses with "every day we go to the field. My dad isn't happy with everything we do. He says that it's because my brothers and I don't help him that the man who owns the field says that the field isn't working..... He wants to rip it out of his hands". These testimonies lead us to understand that children whose parents own the plantations have a non-binding job, whereas those whose parents work for other people have a binding job.

Based on Abraham Maslow's theory of needs, we can say that non-owner parents, whether employees or sharecroppers, may feel anguish linked to performance difficulties and salary and social treatment. Such feelings create a lack of tranquillity and mental insecurity, which they would seek to compensate by overloading their children with work. In other words, to satisfy their financial needs or to secure their jobs on the plantations, these parents would force their children to work. Conversely, parents who own their children's land, not feeling threatened by an employer's evaluation or justification of their salary, would experience mental peace and not use their offspring's work to satisfy a need.

Kurt Lewin's field theory helps to explain that the tension generated by the financial or psychological insecurity of non-owner, employee or sharecropper parents prevents them from seeing the constraint experienced by their children at work. We can also add that the imbalance felt by the latter gives rise to adaptive behaviours that consist in using their children's labour or neglecting them during cocoa production.

Table 2 . Distribution of children according to their parents' marital status and the nature of their work

Parent's type of marriage	Character of the work				Total
	Binding labor	%	Non-binding labor	%	
Children of monogamous parents	10	25.6%	29	74.4%	39
Children of polygamous parents	07	63.6%	04	36.4%	11
Total	17	34%	33	66 %	50

Source: data from our survey

The Pearson chi-square test applied to the above data indicates that our HO2 hypothesis is verified. Indeed, at ddl=1, the calculated chi-square (χ^2 calculated = 5.52) is significant at $P < .05$.

When we look at the proportions, we see that 74.4% of children with monogamous parents benefit from non-binding work, compared with 36.4% of those with polygamous parents. Most of the children undergoing constraining activities come from polygamous parents (63.6%). Thus, children of polygamous planters are engaged in constraining work, while those from monogamous planters are engaged in non-constraining work.

Analysis of the interviews also leads us to argue that the character of children's work is linked to the matrimonial type of their parents. This is the case of the girl "O", 14, from a polygamous family, who declares that she works hard because she is obliged to support her mother in the polygamous household: "I help my mother load the cocoa in the field. It's a lot of work, but I have to do it, even if it means I can't study. If I don't help her, she'll be sad because my father's other wife and his children help her". On the other hand, for "S", aged 12, from a monogamous family, seems to be supported by her mother who does not subject her to difficult and unpleasant tasks. This is what she confirms to us with "when I go to the field with my mother during cocoa picking, she tells me to sit down to watch the luggage because if I walk around the insects will bite me. But I prefer to walk around and pick ripe cocoa to eat. Sometimes she also says that instead of walking, it's better to come back to the village with my big sister to study my lessons". The content of these interviews corroborates our hypothesis that children of polygamous parents are forced into hard, abusive work, unlike their peers whose parents are monogamous.

Abraham Maslow's theory of needs helps us to understand that it is possible for children from polygamous families to engage in workloads like other family members to satisfy their need for integration. As polygamous households are often large, we are tempted to argue that their basic or subsistence needs may be numerous, and the children's arduous or demanding work could be used to meet them.

As for Kurt Lewin's field theory, it allows us to explain that in polygamous families, the conflictual climate generates tensions that lead parents and their children to adopt inappropriate behaviors at work. Indeed, the lack of solidarity between co-wives and between children creates a climate of competition and comparison, in which children feel torn between themselves and lament at work to alleviate their anguish. Parents in the same tug-of-war situations would not perceive the risks to which their children are subjected in cocoa farming activities. In addition, the divergence between wives, which has repercussions on the members of the household, affects children, who may perceive their family environment as harmful, including cocoa-growing activities. This would not be the case in monogamous families, where the formation of clans between its members would seem unjustified and

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would certainly not give rise to enough competition and rivalry at work. And if children were to venture out on their own, their activities would be less likely to involve tension.

IV. DISCUSSION

Our study aims to show the impact of planters' land tenure status and marital type on the character of their children's work. The results of our research indicate that children engaged in strenuous or arduous cocoa production activities are more likely to have parents who do not own the plantations they cultivate, while those whose work is enjoyable are more likely to have parents who do. These results also show that the number of children with demanding jobs and polygamous parents is higher than that of their counterparts with monogamous parents. We can therefore argue that the character of children's work is influenced by their parents' land tenure status and marital type.

The results relating to our first objective, which aims to show that children whose parents do not own their plantation are more likely to be involved in hard labor than those whose parents do, are in line with those of studies by the Sustainable Development of Fruit Tree Crops Program (STCP) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) (2002). Indeed, the results of these studies indicate that, out of a sample of 67 Ivorian sharecroppers interviewed, only 25% of their children in the cocoa fields were enrolled in school, the majority of whom had never been to school and were obliged to work on the plantation, whereas 71% of the children of local farmers were enrolled in school. Our results corroborate those of other research indicating that situations of uncertainty and market imperfection justify the early involvement of offspring in socio-economic activities among many migrant parents who are self-employed in the informal sector (Abalo, 2001; Diallo & Koné, 2001). Our results are also in line with those of Cacao Life (2024), who explain that, due to a lack of land, women and their children do not have their labor force recognized, and have low and unstable incomes on cocoa farms.

The results relating to our second objective, which is to determine the influence of child labor in the locality of Lahouda in Côte d'Ivoire and the land tenure status and marital type of their parents. It distinguishes between compulsory and non-compulsory child labor, in order to dispel the notion that any child involved in cocoa farming is de facto exploited. It also focuses on children's perceptions of their work, in order to identify the psycho-affective and social impact it has on them. However, the small sample of 50 children, the single locality of Lahouda and the two variables (parents' land tenure status and marital type) considered in our study are not sufficient to provide an exhaustive account of child labor in cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire. The Pearson chi-square test also fails to verify the strength of the relationship between the independent variables, parents' land tenure status and marital type, and the dependent variable, child labor character.

CONCLUSION

Child labor in cocoa farming is a concern for the Ivorian government, which, like the rest of the world, with the help of its development partners, has set up a legal arsenal to eradicate it. However, children continue to work in considerable numbers on cocoa plantations, especially in the Central-Western Côte d'Ivoire region, an area of high cocoa production. Among those who do work, it is noticeable that some perform non-binding educational tasks, while others are confronted with abusive or binding work. This is why we wanted to find out what could justify the difference in the level of constraint experienced at work by child workers in cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire. To address this concern, our investigations led us to focus on psychosocial determinants relating to the children's parental unit, which is supposed to socialize them. In considering these psychosocial determinants, we formulated two operational hypotheses. The first postulates that the children of parents who own cocoa plantations have non-binding jobs, while those of non-owners have binding jobs. The second states that the children of polygamous cocoa farmers are in binding work, while those of monogamous farmers are in non-binding work.

The results relating to our hypotheses were confirmed. Consequently, in order to protect the children of cocoa-growing communities from compulsory work that hinders their schooling, Côte d'Ivoire would do better by including farmers in social security policies and regulating work and sharecropping contracts in cocoa farming. Côte d'Ivoire should also regulate rural land tenure to make it easier for farmers to acquire cultivable plots. It could also provide the means to mechanize cocoa farming in order to reduce the number of workers in this sector. Furthermore, if Côte d'Ivoire wants to reduce the number of children assigned to work at the expense of their studies, it should sensitize polygamous cocoa families on household financial management and the management of family conflicts.

At the end of this work, we understand that the variables land tenure status and marital type of parents, taken into account in the present study, make an interesting contribution to our knowledge of the determinants of harmful child labor in cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire. Nevertheless, given that these variables alone are not sufficient to explain the constraint felt by children at work, we intend to extend our study by taking into account the relationship between parents' social representation of school and the character of their children's work.

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