

# TITLE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MEN AND THE TREND OF UNIONS BREAKDOWNS IN CAMEROON

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**Background:** In Cameroon as in many African countries, involvement in marital relationship by men constitutes the last stage of their transition process towards adulthood. The residential and financial autonomy of the young man as well as some exterior signs of wealth are among the main conditions of validity and of social acceptance of marriage (Nzie, 2013); as for the common belief, material and financial belongings are proof that marriage will last. It therefore appears that duration and stability of marital relationship in Cameroon are mainly determined by the man's socio-economic conditions (Kuate, 2002).

**Objectives:** Since tendencies of couple dissolutions in Africa as well as sources of these tendencies are still very less documented, this work aims at addressing the influence of men's socioeconomic situation on couple dissolutions tendencies in Cameroon. More precisely, this study aims to describe tendencies of couple dissolutions in Cameroon, then to enlighten sources of the observed changes in relation with the temporal variation of the socio-economic status of men in Cameroon, and finally to draw up the socio-economic profile of divorced men and examine its evolution through time.

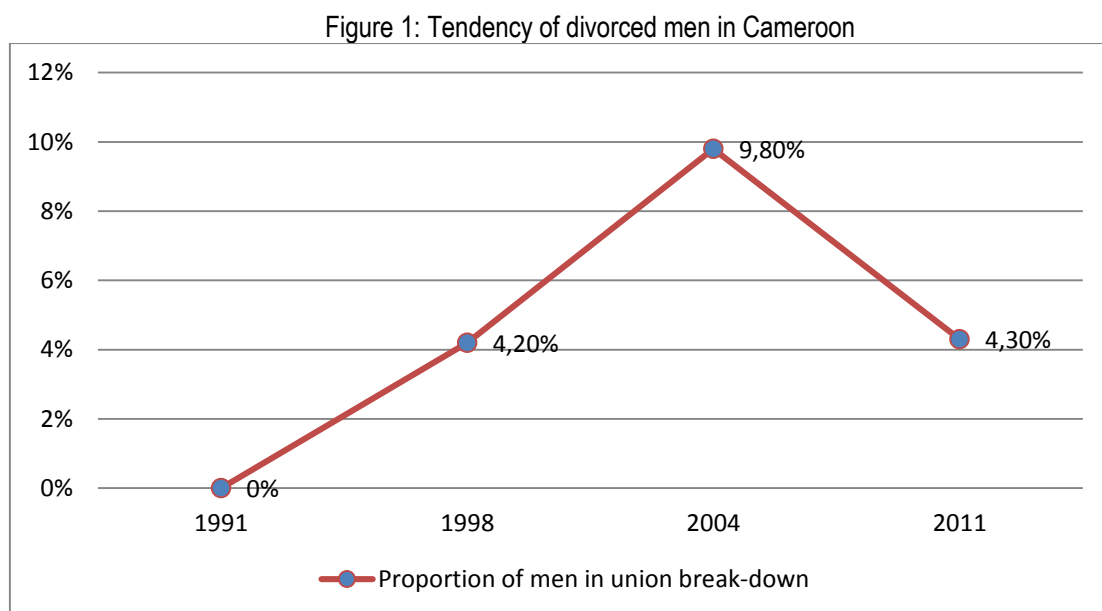
**Data and methods:** We will use data of the four (04) Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) achieved in Cameroon since 1991. We will also make use of the method of decomposition as well as the Factorial Analysis of Multiple Correspondences (FAMC). Within the decomposition methods and as classification variables, we will resort to socio economic variables such as men's status of activities, type of employment, levels of wealth and of education achieved. This will help seeing if the observed variation is due to the variation of men's socio-economic conditions (structure effect) or if the observed change is attributed to change in individual behavior toward marriage. FACM will be used to draw the socio-economic profile of divorced individuals at different periods by projecting men's matrimonial status and their socioeconomic status on a plan and examining the closeness between variables modalities and the status of divorced individuals.

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**Overview of some results:** It comes out that the proportion of divorced men in Cameroon from 1991 to 2004 is increasing and has even doubled within two surveys periods; but from 2004, it starts dropping to reach the level of 1998 in 2011 (figure 1). Such a tendency follows the evolution of the socio-economic situation of the country that has been characterized by a long period of economic crisis (from 1987 to 2006) during which many men lost their jobs and consequently their socio-economic conditions dwindle out. However, as from 2006 with the IMF assistance, the macroeconomic level of the country did change as there were more employments in the public and private sectors. Nevertheless, on the contrary to our hypotheses, couple dissolution mostly occurred to men with a good socio-economic situation. This can be explained by the fact that marriages amongst high social class people are mostly arranged marriages and are based on economic interests (Nzie, 2013).



Source: Analysis of Cameroon's DHS data of 1991, 1998, 2004 and 2011