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A Gender Analysis of Intra-Household Division of Labor in Cameroon Using Moser's Triple Roles Framework

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author RAB designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors FAA and BMJE managed the literature searches and the analyses of the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of intra-household division of labor for overall household wellbeing is common knowledge, especially among development practitioners from the developing world. While division of labor acquired a newer impetus as a consequence of a strong and emerging gender narrative a few decades ago, its momentum seems to have been torpedoed by the comfort of gender mainstreaming; reducing the role of gender analyses in agricultural extension and sustainable development initiatives. We briefly revisit the gender evolution, and empirically apply Caroline Moser's triple roles framework in order to rekindle the role of gender analyses in understanding and promoting targeted extension services and sustainable development. A cross sectional, empirical

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survey was carried out in the North West region of Cameroon from 7-30 October 2014. Two rural and urban divisions were purposively selected. One division had difficult road access, while the other was fairly accessible. Eight villages (four rural and four urban ones) were randomly selected from both divisions. Gender analyses using Moser's triple roles framework were carried out separately in all villages, with groups of 30-35 self-selected men and women, facilitated by trained enumerators; and complemented with focused group discussions and key informant interviews.
Wide differences between the productive, reproductive and socio-cultural roles in rural and urban communities were unveiled; with even stronger differences between men and women based on gendered results. As expected, more women were engaged in reproductive activities than men, irrespective of setting. Strong bias against women evident in the gender literature was not reported. The results emphasize the implications of regular gender analyses for development effectiveness. There is need for consistent gender analysis as prelude to improving agricultural extension initiatives, achieving gender balanced sustainable development of rural and urban areas in developing countries and upgrading development effectiveness. Context-specific aspects should be considered in informing gender based development actions and policy.

Keywords: Gender; triple roles framework; division of labor; development effectiveness; Cameroon.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the gender concept and its analysis for sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. In general, the concept of gender designates the differences between men and women emanating from the social construction of reality, grounded in norms of behavior [1]. Gender roles are clearly distinct from sex roles, as the latter encompasses differences between men and women which are essentially biological [2]. However, because gender roles are context – specific, different strategies (and analytical tools) may be necessary to achieve equitable outcomes for women and men in different environments [1,3]. An understanding of gender relations, issues and roles allows development agents to carry out social and economic development in a manner that they address different practical and strategic needs of men and women, and other gender groups such as boys and girls [3,4]. For this to happen, gender analysis should precede development efforts. We conceptualize and define gender in this context as the differences between the activities of women and men, as defined by the society in which they live.

Gender analysis is a method used to identify, analyze and understand the differences in terms of activities (i.e. gender roles) and/or relations (gender relations) between women and men, which aggravate or promote social and economic inequity; in order to better inform development policy and implementation; and effectively deliver services such as agricultural extension [1,2]. Gender analysis therefore not only uncovers underlying reasons for any socially constructed roles and differences between gender groups particularly between men and women. It also allows development efforts to better address gaps for different groups in society [4]. In order words, gender analysis is done on the premise that even rural communities are not completely homogenous in terms of development needs; but remain collectives of physical homogeneity built on need diversity. Gender analysis therefore makes it possible for development practitioners, policy makers and planners to identify different (or common) needs of those who constitute communities as spatial units. By generating information on who does what, who accesses and controls what; and who needs what; gender disaggregated data can provide answers to observed division of labor and socio-economic positioning; provide bench marks for monitoring and evaluation; and above all enhance the performance of development projects; by improving resource mobilization, allocation and utilization [5,6]. Integrating or institutionalizing gender and implementing gender analysis should therefore be contemplated by development practitioners who wish to improve development effectiveness.

1.1 A Condensed History of the Gender Concept and Tools for Analysis

The gender concept is relatively new [7]. Although the origin of the gender concept is traceable to the 1940s [5], its consolidation seems to have taken place in the 1960s, which coincides with increasing critique of inequalities between men and women, that led to the exclusion of women's interests, experiences and identities across societies at the time [8]. The theoretical and empirical literature seem to

converge on the premise that development efforts in the 1960s (especially in developing countries) were largely suboptimal, partly due to an overly-concentration on men; as a result of feeble understanding of the role women could play in the development process [3,7,8]. Women were almost invisible, if not for their traditional roles as mothers and wives in the family. This paradigm however changed in the 1970s, particular at the heels of Ester Boserups' pioneering work, demonstrating the role women could potentially play in Africa's Economic Development [1]. Increasingly, it became clear that no or insufficient inclusion of women in the development process could seriously slow down economic advancement and reduce development effectiveness. This led to the development of the notion of Women in Development (WID) in the 1980s. Essentially, WID specifically targeted women in development programs; by including packages which were assumed to address the problems of women. A typical example was the up spring of many women-specific income-generation projects.

The Harvard Analytical Framework (also known as the Gender Roles Framework) was developed by the Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with USAID's Women in Development Office in the early 1980s; in order to facilitate analysis and subsequent implementation of the WID approach [9]. In spite of this framework, the WID approach depended on a feeble understanding of women and gendered relations. Women were treated separately from men. As such, many WID programs were inefficient, or even counter-productive, as they operated on insufficiently analyzed gender dynamics and underrepresentation of their family and community connections. Fundamental structural inequalities such as access and control to land, credit markets and skills marred the success of WID - focused projects.

The failure of the WID approach led to the development of Gender and Development (GAD) in the late 1980s. It was assumed that GAD will address the shortcomings of the WID approach. In essence, GAD was more inclusive, recognizing men and women as complementary gendered beings [1,9,10]. Furthermore, GAD recognized that women are not a homogenous group; but would be different based on context – specific factors such as age, ethnicity, nationality and religion. As such, unlike WID, GAD embraced the rightful position of gender parity.

The last waive of the gender revolution was known as gender mainstreaming [11]. It was articulated by major events in the early 1990s, particularly the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in 1995. Therefore the United Nations system adopted this approach to mainstreaming gender, given the conference's resolution for women and girls to exercise their rights and freedoms; participate in decision making and earn equal pay for equal work like their male counterparts. The ultimate goal was therefore to achieve gender equality [1,11]. In the aftermath of the Fourth UN conference on women, gender mainstreaming was considered as the panacea for gender equality, advancing women's rights and promoting gender – sensitive research, in order to incorporate (or mainstream) equality goals into policies, projects and institutions [11].

The drive towards inclusive, gender – sensitive development was accompanied by the burgeoning of gender analysis tools such as Moser's Triple Roles Framework (TRF); the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM); The Women's Empowerment Framework (WEP); The Social Relations Approach Framework (SRA); Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework (CVA); the People-Oriented Planning Framework (POP); and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker.[1] The next subsection briefly revisits the Triple Roles Framework applied in this research [2,3,10]. In the next sub section we succinctly re-visit the triple roles framework which we applied to understand the gender division of labor in Cameroonian households.

1.2 Caroline Moser's Triple Roles Framework: A Recap

The triple roles framework (TRF) developed by Caroline Moser has been widely applied in gender analysis, as it supports extensionists in particular and development practitioners in general, to quickly and adequately capture division of labor within households and communities, especially in developing countries [12]. Moser introduced the idea of categorizing (women's) tasks into three categories, namely reproduction (household-related and child care); production (farm work or engagement in other economic activities); and socio-cultural (community based) functions [9]. Her initial goal was to consistently demonstrate the extent to

[1] *For further discussions on these gender analysis tools, see for instance UNWRA (2011).*

which most women in developing countries often pick up multiple roles simultaneously, as compared to men, who are often less engaged in household activities, but more engaged in production and community – oriented ones [12].

According to Moser, *reproductive roles* include child bearing, caring and domestic tasks aimed at supporting household wellbeing. Typical examples include cooking, fetching water, washing and attending to children, the sick and elderly. Given that these tasks are rarely paid for, they are often not considered as 'real work', and therefore do not often feature in the household economic equation. *Productive roles* constitute activities aimed at producing consumable or marketable goods and services. In practice this would involve farming, petty trade and all forms of income generating activities. Although both men and women are often involved in such activities in many developing countries, Moser opined that the work load of women is likely to be higher, as they carry out such activities alongside reproductive functions. In addition, their contributions are likely to be less valued and less visible than those of men, whose access to and control over productive resources is often favored by patriarchal systems largely prevalent in many developing countries [4]. The last category expounded by Moser was the *community* (or socio-cultural) role. According to her, this encompasses all forms of work meant for the general wellbeing of communities such as social events, group and political participation and community resource management [9,12]. Such activities and their frequencies are either voluntary or prescribed by community based rules and regulations. Nevertheless, Moser hypothesized that power relations are likely to be unbalanced, as men are likely to dominate women (e.g. by taking up positions of power in such institutions and activities), while women's contribution would often go unnoticed [10,12].

For the extensionist, the relevance of the triple roles framework is probably heavily embedded in its capacity to unravel any existing unequal labor distribution between men and women. This is likely to generate knowledge that the extension agent can use to make informed decisions, for instance on what needs to be changed (or not) so that innovative technologies can be adopted at household level; and who should be involved in a specific village –based training or not, based on hands–on, context – specific knowledge of who does what [9,13]. In addition, the triple roles framework could stimulate reversal of paradigms amongst men, when they observe for instance that women are overburdened especially with unpaid reproductive and community based functions [7, 9,10].

The relevance of the Caroline Moser's TRF in understanding "who does what" can be further enhanced by other tools such the 24 hour activity profile, social mapping, livelihoods matrix and other gender analysis frameworks such as the Harvard framework [10]; distinguishing practical from strategic needs [2]; sharing and discussing the results in plenary sessions with participants and jointly establishing the way forward at the end of such exercises [12]. Overall, the information generated could stimulate behavioral changes; facilitate timing and effecting targeting of extension programs; involve both men and women in crafting gender-sensitive extension packages, and in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects [9,10,12].

Moser's framework has been frequently criticized for failing to address differences for instance of age, class, ethnicity; and therefore treating women as a homogenous entity. Moreover, this framework does not take into account men's gendered needs, or the ways in which they may intersect with those of women [1]. Nevertheless, it is considered successful in unraveling gendered interrelationships necessary to address social and political inequalities; providing a dynamic picture of the underlying causes of poverty and inequality; and putting gender issues right at the centre of development [9].

Based on these advantages, we combined the 24 hour daily profile and Moser's TRF to better understand the division of labor in Cameroonian households. Comprehension was upgraded by sharing of results during plenary sessions at the end of each exercise. The study area and methodological steps are presented in section two. The results are then presented and discussed in section three. Section four concludes the paper.

2. METHODOLOGY

This subsection presents information on the methodology implored in the empirical study from Cameroon. The background of the study area will first be succinctly presented. This will be followed by step by step information on sampling and data collection.

2.1 The Study Area

Cameroon is a resource rich country in central Africa. It currently faces numerous development challenges, ranging from poor governance, rampant corruption and high unemployment rates, through widespread poverty to rising natural disasters, terrorism and political unrest [4]. The record unemployment and underemployment rates of around 30% and 75% respectively are largely responsible for widespread poverty in the country [14]. Agriculture is still the life wire of the country, accounting for about 30% its Gross Domestic Product. Subsistence agriculture is dominant in the rural areas, where poverty is concentrated [15,16]. A major challenge for the Cameroon government in general and development practitioners in particular is therefore how to sustainably reduce poverty through improved development effectiveness, especially in the rural areas of Cameroon.

This empirical research was carried out in North West Cameroon, the third most populated region in the country. The Northwest region (NWR) has urban and rural growth rates of around 8% and slightly above 1% respectively The NWR is flanged to the north by Nigeria, to the south by the Western Region, to the east by Adamawa Region and to the west by the South West Region [16]. Over 80% of North westerners depend on subsistence agriculture for survival. The region's poverty rate of 51% is 11 percentage points higher than the national average. The poor in this region account for 13% of the total number of rural poor in the country [4&16].It is characterized by two seasons: the rainy season which traditionally runs from Mid-March to October, and the dry season from November to Mid-March. Annual rainfall varies between 1300mm and 3000mm; with mean monthly temperatures of around 15℃ and 27℃ in the high altitudes and low altitudes respectively [4, 14,16].

2.2 Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

Momo and Ngoketunjia divisions are two of seven divisions constituting the North West region of Cameroon that were selected purposively for this empirical study. The two divisions were intentionally selected because they host both urban and rural communities. This sampling approach allows the researchers to examine and compare gendered reproductive, productive and socio-cultural roles independently and cumulatively in the two selected divisions, and identify any existing similarities or dichotomies between rural and urban communities. In fact, independent (and cross) analysis facilitate identification of context – specific gender discrepancies for the different (rural and urban communities in the) divisions. At the same time, combined analysis should provide some clue as to the general division of labor in the research region. As such, suggestions specific to each division as well as for the entire sample can be made, based on the results of the differentiated and combined analyses.

In each division, two subdivisions (, one urban and one rural) were purposively selected. Bamunka and Balikumbat subdivisions respectively were selected in Ngoketunjia division for the research; while Mbengwi and Batibo subdivisions were selected in Momo division. Selection was based on the capacities to best represent both urbanity and rurality [4]. Furthermore, four villages (two urban and two rural villages) were randomly selected from each division. This resulted in following villages from Ngokentunia division: The urban villages of Bamessing and Bamunka villages in Bamunka subdivision; and the rural villages of Balikumbat and Bafanji in Balikumbat subdivision. In Momo division, the villages of Tubai Nyen and Njinibi were selected from the urban Mbengwi subdivision; and the rural villages of Enyoh and Effah from Batibo subdivision.

In each village, a group of 30 to 35 self selected men and women were independently subjected to the Triple Roles Framework. We opted for self selection, since the exercise was mainly for research purposes, and not part of any planned needs assessments, baseline studies or project planning – as is often the case. Participants were informed before the analysis was commenced in each village, to avoid arousing false hopes or expectations. The triple roles framework was then applied simultaneously but separately for men and women. Separated analyses were necessary to avoid distortions in the data that could emanate from influence especially of men who are likely to dominate such exercises; if done together with women. Ensuring anonymity was also important to avoid any negative consequences (especially on the women) for being honest.

The triple roles framework was carefully explained to participants at the start of each exercise. Local definitions and conceptualize-tions of each role where deciphered with

participants at the beginning of each exercise, as a means of triangulation. Participants then implemented the tool under the guidance and facilitation of the research team, constituted of the principal researcher and trained postgraduate students.

Participants were then asked to outline their activities and the duration of these activities on a typical 24 hour day. These activities were generally defined through a consensus by the participants. This was particularly important in the urban areas, where participants were involved in multiple forms of productive activities. Once a consensus was reached and the different 'roles' clarified, participants were then asked to count the number of hours allocated for reproductive, productive and socio-cultural activities separately and recorded in a separate cardboard paper prepared prior to the exercise; containing three columns namely the category, the number of hours and the summary of activities in each category. The sum total of the hours distributed above should amount to 24 hours. The research team supported the group members in this process. A manual calculator was used for this exercise.

Once the exercise was complete, each group of participants was allowed to discuss what they could make from the results as well as the methodology. Plenary sessions were organized in each village as a last exercise in order to share and discuss the results. Key informant interviews were conducted later on, on the same days of the exercise with community members who had deeper knowledge on the issues of interest. Essentially, key informants provided in-depth information to clarify any issues resolving from the exercise, which were not satisfactorily explained during the group and/or plenary sessions. The research was carried out from 7th - 30th October 2014. The condensed data was then extracted by the team for further analysis later on. All the original results were allowed with the participants in the different communities. Copies were shared with extension officers in the respective communities.

The summary results by gender, community type and by division are presented and discussed in the next section.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the empirical results from field research in Cameroon's NWR are presented and discussed. We compare the outcome of results for the entire sample with gender – related ones, in a bid to illustrate possible misunderstandings which are likely to emerge when gender analysis is absent in the development process. The results of each research division are presented and discussed by rural and urban respondents; before summarizing for the entire sample. This is followed by the gendered results. Changes in trends observed in the different results are highlighted.

3.1 Context – Specific Definitions of Reproduction, Production, and Socio-cultural Roles in Cameroonian Communities

Table 1 presents a summary of productive, reproductive and socio-cultural roles as defined through focus group discussions in the selected communities in Cameroon. The Table demonstrates striking similarities between Caroline Moser's initial definitions and conceptualization with the empirics from Cameroon. Nevertheless, there are also context–specific conceptualizations that fundamentally differ from the original gender theorizing. For instance, while Moser's original conceptualization assumes that women's productive roles tend to be less visible and blurred by their heavy reproductive functions [3], the latter seems to be a justification for why men should generally get more involved in productive activities than women. In all the research communities, men generally acknowledged the importance of the reproductive functions of women for household wellbeing. In addition, both men and women were generally of the opinion that the functions performed by each of them were rather a coordinated division of labor based on competence, rather than a form of gender bias. In summary, from an empirical perspective, the link between sex and gender roles in Cameroonian communities seems to be understood as a modicum for effective division of labor rather than gender bias as generally echoed in the topical literature.

3.2 Mean Time Allocation for Productive, Reproductive and Socio-cultural Activities in Cameroonian House-holds

Figs. 1 and 2 present comparative analyses of the mean number of hours which Cameroonian households in urban and rural communities allocate for productive, reproductive and socio-

cultural activities. In general, the bulk of time is allocated to reproductive activities, irrespective of research community, that is, be it in urban or rural areas (overall over 11 hours). This is followed by productive and socio-cultural activities (around 8 and 5 hours respectively). This suggests that about 46% of the daily activities are reproductive; compared to 33% and 21% for productive and socio-cultural activities respectively.

The time allocated to socio-cultural activities was consistently higher in the rural areas of Ngokentunjia and Momo divisions than in the urban areas. This is normal, given that local participation in community based activities is often institutionalized and enforced more easily in rural areas, which tend to be more homogenic in structure and function than in cosmopolitan (urban) areas. This difference was only statistically significant at the 10% level in Ngokentunjia division (P=0.08). Key informant interviews suggested that rules guiding behavior are strongly enforced in the rural areas of Ngoketunjia division, as compared to Momo division. This is probably responsible for the large difference between socioeconomic engagement in urban and rural areas in the two communities. Such a conjecture however needs further research for firm conclusions to be made.

It is worth mentioning that the mean number of hours for reproductive activities was 1.5 hours longer in the urban than in the rural communities in Momo division. We assume that this difference is probably accounted for by the time that parents expend to prepare children for school and pick them up at the end of each school day in urban areas in Momo division, compared to its rural communities, where social cohesiveness, mechanic solidarity, unity, 'we' feeling and familiar networks are still fairly strong, allowing children to go to, and return from school with friends and neighbors; without any fear of insecurity or vices such as kidnapping, child theft or accidents which often characterize many urban, organic African communities, in which stricter division of labor is the rule [5,17]. In addition, it was observed that the traffic was heavier in urban than rural areas. This is likely to increase the time required to drop off and pick up children from school.

The results presented and discussed above present certain trends that can support community development efforts; or at least explain to some extent why poverty is widespread in rural communities in Northwestern Cameroon. For instance, less than 40% of all the household time is devoted to productive activities. Nevertheless, the results do not indicate which gender group is more involved in reproduction, production and socio-economic activities. Understanding the distribution of workload at the household level is crucial for targeting innovations and services whose adoption can contribute to poverty reduction. Based on this philosophy, we then analyze the data from a gender perspective. The gendered results are presented and discussed below.

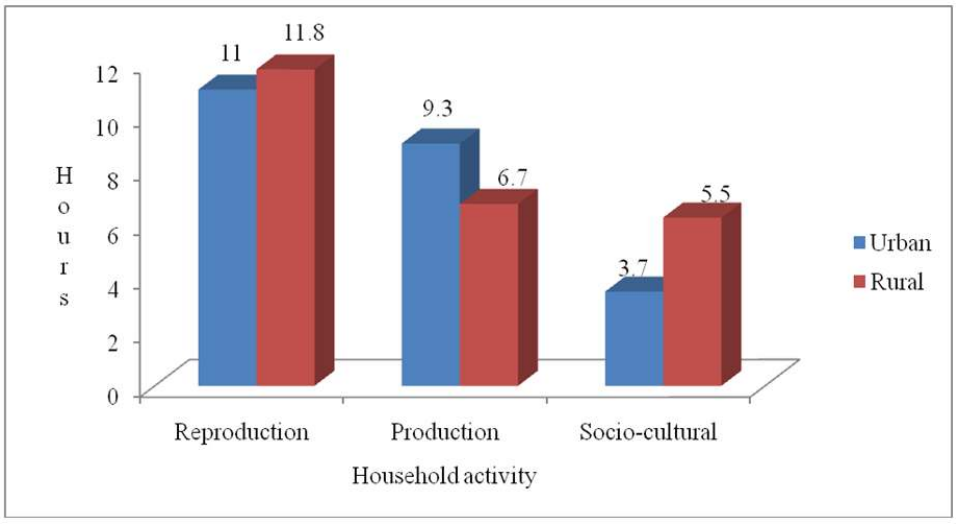

Fig. 1. Mean time allocation for productive, reproductive and socio-cultural activities in ngoketunjia division in northwestern Cameroon

Note: p=0.46; 0.41 and 0.08 for productive, reproductive and socio-cultural activities respectively

Table 1. Moser's triple roles framework and contextual interpretations in Cameroon

Roles	Moser's Definition/ Conceptualization	Contextual Conceptualization
1. Reproduction	Definition: Childbearing and caring as well as domestic tasks that support the household's wellbeing (e.g. cooking, cleaning, fetching water, washing, and attending to the sick and elderly members. conceptualization: These responsibilities are rarely considered 'real work,' are rarely paid, and are performed primarily by women and children	Definition: Domestic chores (cooking, cleaning, fetching water, baby sitting, caring for extended family and in-laws; preparing children for school; "discussing" with spouse Conceptualization: There is no need to value such work because they are important for the family wellbeing. Men sometimes support the women
2. Production	Definition: Activities that produce goods and services for consumption or trade (growing crops for sale or household consumption). Conceptualization: Both men and women can be involved in these activities. However, women often carry out these roles alongside their reproductive roles in a household farm or home garden, which makes their contributions less visible and less valued than men's productive work.	Definition: Activities that produce goods and services for household consumption, income trade and savings. Conceptualization: Both men and women can be involved in these activities. Women often carry out these roles alongside their reproductive roles. This is why it is *prima facie* for men to get more engaged in productive activities.
3. Socio-Cultural	Definition: Socio-cultural roles are mainly community work, such as social events, activities, community resource management, and/or participating in groups or farmer organizations. Conceptualization: These activities are often voluntary. Men tend to participate more often in political affairs of the community (e.g., serving as a chair of the farmers' association), whereas women contribute their time for free for a social good (cleaning school backyard).	Definition: Socio-cultural roles are mainly community work; but also include church activities; social events such as (condolence) visits, socialization (e.g. drinking with friends for networking) Conceptualization: These activities are obligated by societal norms of solidarity and reciprocity; and are enforced by local institutions. Men are generally stronger and therefore do energy – demanding tasks, while women who are 'weaker' and mostly occupied with 'house chores' do what they are good at (e.g. preparing food for community events).

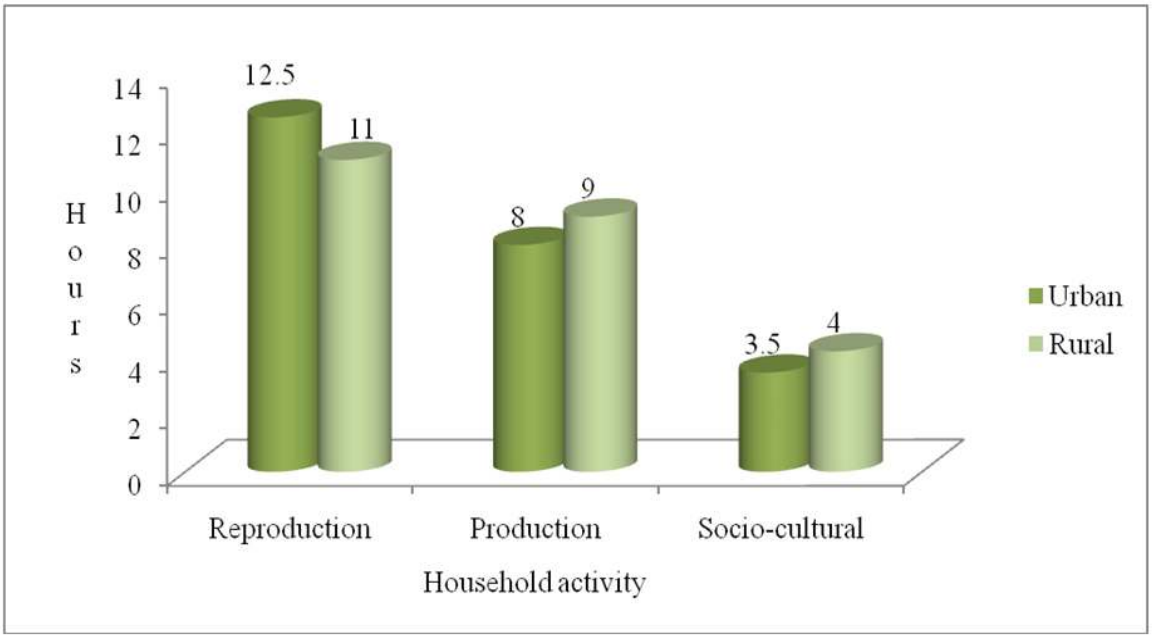

Fig. 2. Mean time allocation for productive, reproductive and socio-cultural activities in momo division in northwestern Cameroon

Note: p=0.07; 0.08 and 0.90 for productive, reproductive and socio-cultural activities respectively

Figs. 3 and 4 present the gendered division of labor in the sampled rural and urban areas in Ngoketunjia and Momo divisions in the NWR of Cameroon, captured through focused group discussions. In general, the greatest chunk of time was spent on reproductive activities, irrespective of gender (women and men), community type (rural or urban), or division. Nevertheless, as expected, women spent more time on reproductive activities in rural and urban areas (3.5 hours and 2 more hours respectively in Ngokenjia division; and 6 and 3 hours respectively in Momo division). Men spent more hours on production activities in the urban areas, and socio-cultural activities in both rural and urban communities respectively. These results completely resonate with theoretical constellations (see for instance 3&9). However, and interestingly, women tended to be more involved in productive activities than stipulated in the literature (e.g. 1.5 hours more than men in rural areas of Momo division; and very similar hours to men in urban areas of both divisions).

Key informant interviews suggested that a high proportion of men in Momo division engage in palm wine tapping and selling; and motor taxis to generate income. The men who sell palm wine in the neighboring urban areas spend a good chunk of the money (and time of course) consuming alcohol with the income from palm wine sales. Men involved in motor bike transportation businesses often have daily savings activities which are accompanied by drinking as part of socialization. These activities probably account for the fact that women (who spend most of their productive hours on subsistence farms) end up spending longer hours on productive activities than their male counterparts. In addition, the need for survival in urban areas seems to drive both men and women to engage more or less equally in production (or income generation) activities. Such diversions from the state-of-art emphasize the need for context – specific analysis over gross assumptions drawing from the topical literature. They also signal evolutions in the gender front which deserve to be included in a gender n arrative, one which since its conception has assumed high underrepresentation and weak participation of women in the development as the *raison d'être* for the grounding and promotion of gender issues.

Table 2 presents summative statistics for the gender division of labor for the entire sample. The results suggest a number of patterns. Firstly, time allocated for reproductive, productive and socio-cultural activities are generally not statistically different between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, women tend to engage more time for reproductive activities than men

across urban and rural communities. This time difference is compensated by the men through their longer engagements in socio-cultural activities than women (almost double and triple in rural and urban areas respectively). Secondly, men in urban areas generally spend less time on socio-cultural activities than their counterparts in rural areas (around 5 compared to 7 hours respectively). This must be understood within the backdrop of stronger financial and insecurity demands in urban than rural areas; which push urban men to work almost one hour longer than their rural counterparts. In addition (and strangely), men take up more reproductive functions in urban than rural communities. While this could easily be understood as changing roles due to narrowing biases in urban areas, key informant interviews seem to suggest that this may also be linked to more access to key transportation resources (such as cars and bikes or the finances needed for that), which make it imperative for instance, for men to drop off and pick up children from school in urban areas.

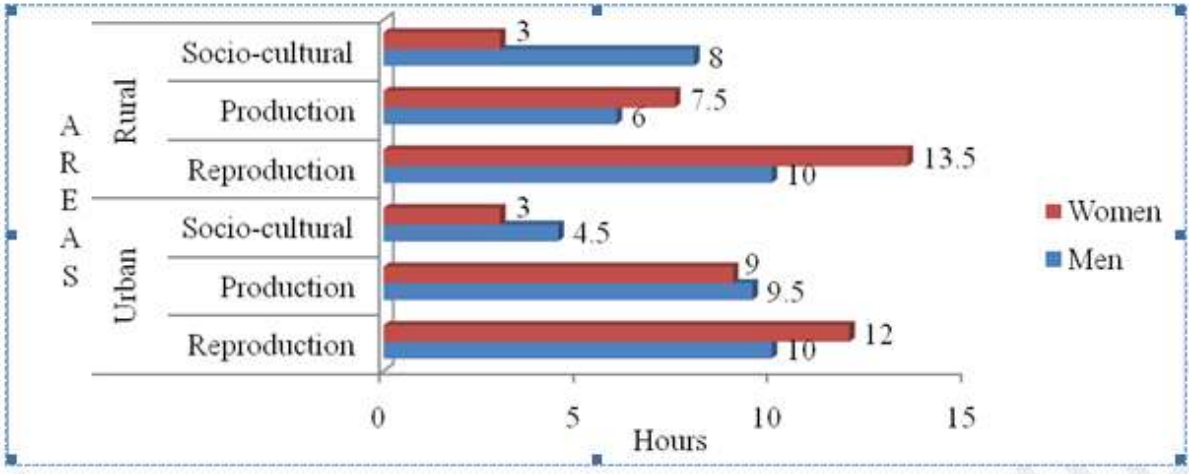

Fig. 3. Distribution of workload by gender, work and community type and in ngokenjia division in northwestern Cameroon

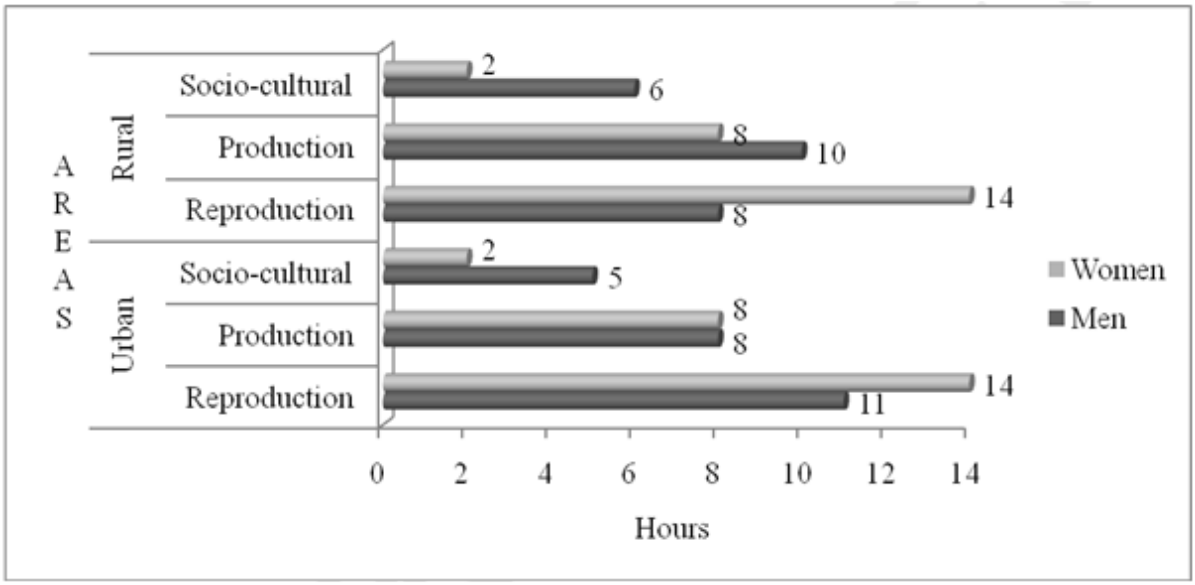

Fig. 4. Distribution of workload by type and gender in momo division in northwestern Cameroon

Table 2. Summary division of labor by gender for rural and urban communities in Cameroon

Gender	Activity	Area	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error Mean	p-value
Men	Reproduction	Urban	10.5	1.000	.500	
		Rural	9	2.000	1.000	0.22
	Production	Urban	8.75	2.217	1.109	
		Rural	8	2.828	1.414	0.69
	Socio-cultural	Urban	4.75	1.708	.854	
		Rural	7	2.582	1.291	0.09
Women	Reproduction	Urban	13	1.000	.816	
		Rural	13.75	1.258	.629	0.49
	Production	Urban	8.5	1.633	.500	
		Rural	7.75	.500	.250	0.23
	Socio-cultural	Urban	2.5	1.000	.500	
		Rural	2.5	1.000	.500	0.99

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Development practitioners in general and agricultural extensionists in particular are constantly searching for innovative methods and approaches that can improve on development effectiveness. The slow pace of technology adoption and development effectiveness which accompanied the independence of many developing countries; and increasing awareness of socially constructed differences between men and women in the developed world seemed to have favored the grounding of the gender concept. Gender issues, fundamentally construed as the socially constructed differences between men and women quickly became an established concept in development lexicon. The evolution of the gender narrative - from women in development through gender and development to gender mainstreaming - was accompanied by the development and consolidation of a number of gender analysis tools and frameworks. One of the early entries which have stood the test of time is Caroline Moser's triple roles framework. Moser categorized division of labor into reproductive, productive and socio-cultural components; emphasizing the fact that women participation in the first component tends to blur their contribution to household wellbeing. Perhaps, and even more important in the entire narrative was the revelation that understanding and including women's practical and strategic needs was crucial to enhancing development effectiveness. The issue of who does what is therefore central to development planning, as it allows for gender specific needs to direct the process of development. We apply Caroline Moser's triple roles framework to unravel the division of labor among Cameroonian households in its Northwest Region. Results of gendered analysis suggest a dominance of women's participation in reproductive activities; and men in socio-cultural ones in line with the topical literature. However, more similarity than divergence was observed on the time allocated by men and women generally on production activities, especially in urban areas. In addition, paradigms reversals were observed, as men recognized the importance of, and participated in reproductive functions predominantly carried out by women. Both men and women reported that their participation especially in socio-cultural activities was intricately linked to biology; with men taking up tougher jobs linked to masculinity and women lighter activities. These results are crucial for the advancement of the gender narrative; which originally was founded to raise awareness of male dominance over the female folk. Context – specific differences in division of labor were also observed between the communities. This suggests that gender analysis should remain context – specific, if it should adequately inform development processes. An expansion of case studies and the use of other gender analysis tools are however crucial to make stronger conclusions. Until a better narrative emerges, it seems logical to conclude that analyzing the gender division of labor amongst households in developing countries holds potentials to enhance development effectiveness.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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