

LAND ACCESS AND HOUSEHOLDS WELLBEING IN CAMEROON: DOES GENDER MATTER

Author: Eric Patrick FEUBI PAMEN

This paper was prepared during a post-doc visiting fellowship of Eric Patrick FEUBI PAMEN from the University of Yaounde 2-Soa (LAREM, Cameroon) fund by the United Nations Institute for Development Economics (UNIDEP) within the framework of the 2017 Tajudeen Abdulraheem visiting fellowship for policy researchers in development policies. The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between land access and household wellbeing in Cameroon. The main research question of this study is: What is the effect of land access on household's wellbeing in Cameroon?

1- BACKGROUND

Land access is vital to generate income to move out of poverty, to produce food in order to address food security concern. Land is also a factor of social exclusion or inclusion and an economic growth driver. In Cameroon, concern with inclusive growth has been nurtured by the recent 2000s international crisis implications. They are the food, climate, financial and economic crisis. It is noteworthy that those crisis occurred against a somewhat paradoxical background of a period where Cameroonian authorities just from the completion point in 2006 of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were struggling to improve on economic performances in the country in the meantime in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finally, Cameroon didn't achieve the MDGs by the 2015 deadline. In September 2015, Cameroonian authorities moved to the 2030 United Nations (UN) development agenda with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2063 development agenda of the African Union (AU), with an emphasis on an inclusive approach of economic growth in order to address wellbeing concern. One of the main driver of inclusive growth in developing countries stand to be agriculture. But an agricultural-based structural economic transformation needs some inputs constraints among which land stands to be one of the major one.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land tenure security and full and equal access of women to ownership, property rights and land titles in Cameroon could be seen not only as an assets as others but also as an engine for economic growth that can be engaged in the UN-2030 and the AU-2063 development agenda.

DISCLAIMER :

This is a policy brief, and hence it represents the synthesis of a reflection. The messages delivered in this brief can be useful in decision making, sustaining the debates, moving ideas forward. The views and opinions expressed in it are those of the authors and is the product of professional investigation. It is not necessarily meant to reflect the official policy, position or opinions of IDEP, neither its Member countries nor its staff members. Any errors are the fault of the authors. Copies of papers can be requested from IDEP Library by writing to: Knowledge Management and Library Division, African Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Rue du 18 Juin, Dakar, Senegal. Please request papers by number and title.

African Institute for
Economic Development
and Planning

Rue du 18 Juin
BP 3186, CP 18524
Dakar, Senegal

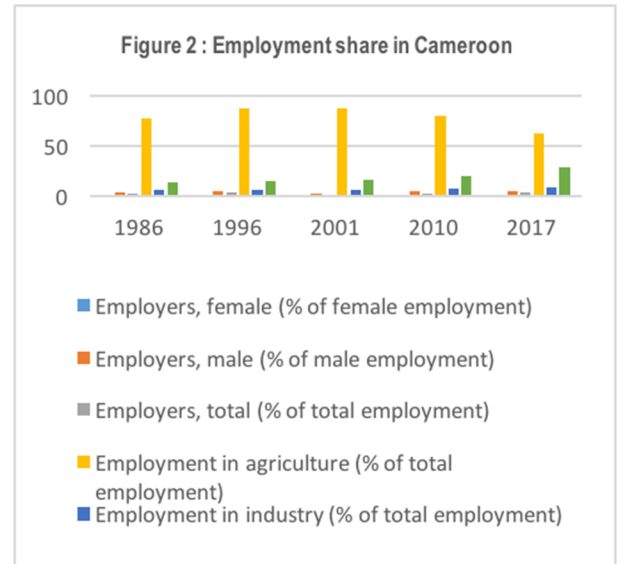
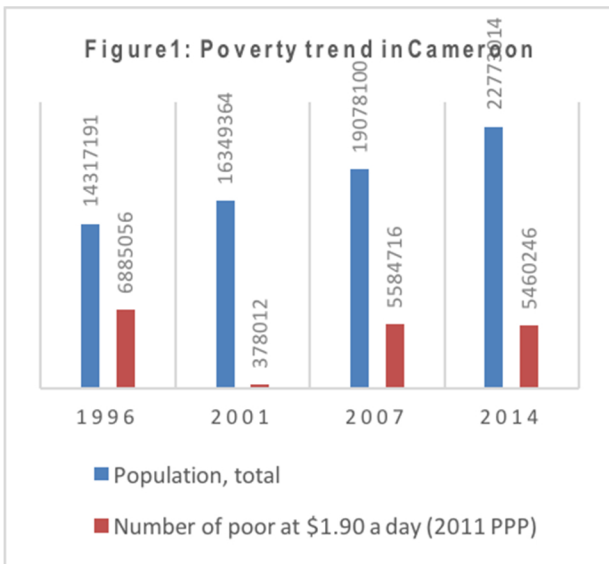
  @IDEP_OFFICIAL

In Cameroon, land as an asset, an input or an income source is not equally possessed by any individual or household with respect to gender and place of living. This is the result of some cultural norms and behavior that as in many countries are gender related and extend beyond biological differences. They are namely; the family role of men and women, their social responsibility, their allocation of work time and risk management, their right and access to reproductive resource such as land. In this view, land tenure are more secured for men than for women in Cameroon (figure 2).

2- CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Land market and land access in Cameroon seem to be complex to easily or explicitly address the special needs of disadvantaged groups such as women, orphans, newcomers, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and others, in an inclusive framework. If even those disadvantaged groups because of some labour market failures and imperfections are more involved in agricultural and others pastoral activities that need land as the main input, without special or target policies their rights and land tenure can be easily defeated by stronger interests that can be harmful for economic growth, households social and economic wellbeing and their social inclusion.

Source: ILO (2017) & WDI (2017)



In fact and according to OECD (2014), as quality jobs creation is a necessary step towards inclusive growth in developing countries like Cameroon, fast growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in those countries has helped lifting hundreds of millions of people out of acute poverty. However, that fast growth has also widened income gaps between the better-off and those who have been left behind with no or bad jobs. Then for countries to facilitate a structural transformation that fosters both employment and growth through policies that keep demand high while boosting productivity in low productivity sectors and facilitate movement of labour to high-productivity sector, they need a significant development of the potential of agricultural productivity. That is for instance through mechanization and improving investment practices or by providing credit support and land tenure security to smallholders. In manufacturing-based economies, productivity improvements and upgrading can be better fostered by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises involved in agriculture to facilitate access to finance coupled to land tenure security to sustain food production. IFPRI(2017) shows that global food prices fell for the fifth straight year in 2016 due to increasing supply. But in Africa and according to FAO (2016) crop prospects and food situation report, dry-weather-reduced outputs in North and Southern Africa more than outweighed production gains in East and West Africa, resulting in an overall reduced aggregate cereal production in 2016 for example. Moreover, the low harvests in Southern Africa severely stressed food security conditions, while conflicts, notably in Nigeria and in South Sudan, continued to severely erode productive capacities and acutely intensified food insecurity in the affected areas and neighbouring countries. In Cameroon that share a large border with Central African Republic and Nigeria, influx of refugees is putting strain on host communities within the various regions of the countries.

The number of refugees from the Central African Republic, who mainly entered East, Adamawa and North regions, was estimated in October 2017 at 274, 000. In addition, about 86, 000 refugees from Nigeria have entered the Far north and North regions since May 2013. Insecurity along the borders with Nigeria also led to the internal displacement of more than 200, 000 individuals. The number of food insecure people is currently estimated at 2.6 million, more than twice the level in June 2015. Such situation leads to reinforcing pressure on land demand to feed people. Innovative approaches to land management, tenure policy, housing provision and food security are more and more presented like challenge for policy-makers and others stakeholders as far as agricultural policy is concerned both in international (UN 2030 and AU 2063) and national development agenda. In fact, Cameroonian authorities are on the same path with the Rural Sector Development Strategy Paper (RSDSP) on implementation since 2005 and the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) of 2009. Securing land rights can then be a tool of improving house hold's wellbeing through agriculture and others pastoral activities.

Therefore, we assume that land rights from a gender perspective could be more useful in developing country like Cameroon that need agricultural structural transformation to address social inclusion concern.

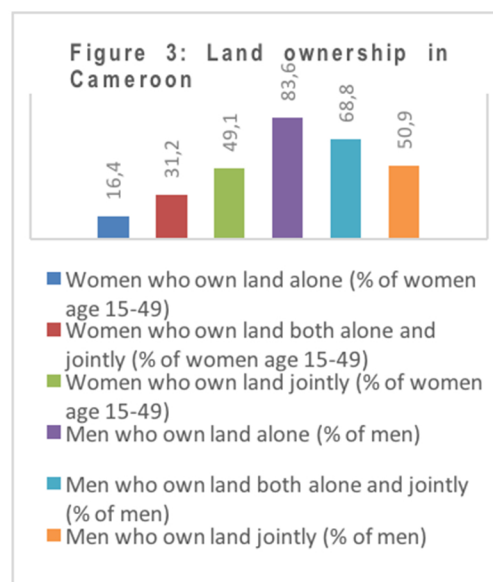
3- POLICY ISSUES ARISING AND ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH THEM

We use the multiple component analysis to capture characteristics of land owners and a bivariate probit model to capture the effect on wellbeing. With our sample size of 11,391 heads of household obtained from data of living conditions surveys, our main results show that land access is easier in rural area (72.86%) for female household head than in urban area (29.85%). They are mostly widowed (49.03%), married women in polygamy regime (12.77%) and divorced or separated (10.62%). Those women are uneducated (50.03%) or have fulfilled only primary school (33.66%).

They are engaged in informal activities or in the primary sector. Those women are aged 40-49 years old, have access to financial services and most of them in rural have poor housing characteristics. Only about 23.03% of male household heads do not have access to land in rural area. 65.67% of those owning land do not have land certificate and they have just completed primary education (39.66%). They have poor housing characteristics and difficult access to drinking water and electricity. In urban area, 32.107% of male household head area have access to land. They achieved more than secondary school and are married monogamy or just living together. The latter achieved higher education. Land owner without land certificate (62.45%) are mostly those working as self-employer or low scale workers. Only 7.53% of male household head has a land certificate in urban area. In addition, land access has a positive effect on the household wellbeing. Owning land for a household head increases up to 1.86 the probability to be non poor, than for household where the head does not have access to land. Living in rural area with access to land is not a significant guarantee to escape from poverty. Having access to land in rural area give only 20% of chance to the household head to be non-poor, than a household head having access to land in urban area. Households headed by a woman owning land, regardless the type of document for the ownership, have 13.9% of chance to be non-poor than those headed by a man.

4- ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR ACHIEVING BETTER POLICY OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Land possession by female-headed households have a relevant impact on the wellbeing of the household as a whole in term of income and consumption. And being land-less increases the probability of being poor and vulnerable.



Source: WDI (2017)

OTHERS PUBLICATIONS

POLICY BRIEFS

MENGISTIE, Belay Tizazu. Prospects and challenges of floriculture industry in the context of agricultural transformation in Africa : Evidence from Ethiopia. IDEP Policy Brief N°000. IDEP, 2018, 3p.

WORKING PAPERS

Contribution du Ministère de l'Industrie et des Mines du Sénégal à la table ronde de l'Institut Africain de Développement Economique et de Planification (IDEP) sur l'Industrie verte. Industrie verte en Afrique : expérience du Sénégal [en ligne]. IDEP Working Paper N°000, 2018, 58p.

FAYE, Makane. Which big data for Africa ? [en ligne]. IDEP Working Paper N°000. IDEP, 2018, 22p.

RESEARCH REPORTS

FEUBI PAMEN, Eric Patrick. Land access and households wellbeing in Cameroon: does gender matter? [en ligne]. IDEP Research Report N°000. IDEP, 2018, 35p.

MENGISTIE, Belay Tizazu. Prospects and challenges of floriculture industry in the context of agricultural transformation in Africa : Evidence from Ethiopia [en ligne]. IDEP Research Report N°000. IDEP, 2018, 32p.