

Tsinfem Market In The City Of Dschang: From Specialization To Diversification Of Products And Activities

Djeugap Guedia Amélie Mermoze, Department of geography, University of Dschang, Dschang, Cameroon,

Anakayan Michele Chrystelle. Higher Teacher Training School of Yaounde-Cameroon

E-mail: dgameliemermoze@yahoo.fr

Abstract— In Cameroon, the study of markets is mainly limited to that of Douala and Yaoundé large metropolises. The present study focuses on a medium-sized town market of Cameroon, the Tsinfem market in the town of Dschang. Different activities of the Tsinfem market, and the diversity of products marketed there are examined. Thus, in the town of Dschang, from August 2008, observations, interviews and questionnaire surveys were carried out with traders, hairdressers, pushers and night guards. The main results showed that the Tsinfem market when it was created was specialized in the sale of domestic animals. Subsequently, the list of marketed products expanded to include a wide variety of other food products as well as many manufactured products. At Tsinfem market, the trade is the main activity (85%), other activities including tailoring, hairdressing, motorbike transport, rickshaws and night guard.

Keywords—Tsinfem market, activities, food products, manufactured products.

INTRODUCTION

Markets in cities serve collection and redistribution points. They provide jobs and ensure food security. Whether central or peripheral, markets may or may not be specialized in terms of products sold [1]. They are used for the sale of agricultural products among others, whether they come from urban, peri-urban or rural areas.

Knowledges about markets of medium-sized towns in Cameroon are old, compared to those of metropolises like Lagos [2, 3]; Douala [4] and Yaoundé [5, 6, 7].

What are marketed products and related activities of the Tsinfem market since its creation till today? The answer to this question is the subject of this work.

The study on the Tsinfem market is a contribution to the revitalization of this research domain through new knowledges and illustrates a case of a medium-sized city, neglected since a long time in the scientific literature.

Methodology

This study focuses on the Tsinfem market, located in the Dschang commune in western Cameroon. The city of Dschang is located in the western highlands, between 5°25 and 5°30 North latitude, and 10° and 10°5 East longitude. Its climate, formerly tempered by its vegetation, becomes increasingly hot, with temperatures reaching 31°C in certain months.

The present study is carrying out since 21 years. It begins at the year of creation of the Tsinfem market in 2003.

The approach to obtain data on the types of products sold in this market is mainly qualitative, based on observations and interviews.

The interviews were carried out to traders and municipal agents (mayor and deputy mayors), pushers, night guards and motorcycle taximen. Most of the sought informations concerned the circumstances of the creation and construction of the Tsinfem market. Concerning the pushers, the night guards and the motorcycle taximen, it is the oldest who were chosen with the help of the traders for interviews.

Sampling by questionnaire took into account that some traders who supply the Tsinfem market with products live in town while others come from the countryside. In town, 63 people were interviewed in their shops as well as all permanent poultry sellers. Twenty-nine traders from the countryside were surveyed. In total, 92 traders, 10 tailors and 23 hairdressers were surveyed.

The data obtained were processed by three software programs: CSPRO (Census Processing), SPSS (Social Package for Statistical Sciences) and Excel, the first of which made it possible to enter the questionnaire and transcribe the data in digital form. These entered data were exported into SPSS and Excel software, respectively to make tables and to construct graphs.

Results

Saturation of markets in Dschang downtown and creation of the Tsinfem market

Dschang downtown markets A and B were born with the creation of the city of Dschang in 1903. At that time, there were only administrative structures and a very small population. New markets developed with the increase of the urban population, in turn due to the natural increase of the population, the rural exodus and the creation of the University of Dschang in 1993.

The increase of Dschang population was accompanied by a strong demand for certain products. Thus, both markets A and B of the downtown of Dschang have become large centers for the collection and distribution of products, precisely manufactured products in market A and food products in market B. The lack of space resulting from the increase of population has pushed traders to set up along urban roads, thus obstructing the traffic. These markets being at the limit of their possibilities no longer met the requirements of traders coming from surrounding villages and towns. It is the reason why Tsinfem market was created by the urban commune of Dschang to sell livestock products. The sale of animals has therefore been banned in Dschang downtown.

Diversification of products sold: between necessity and complementarity

The peripheral position of the Tsinfem market seem strategic. The creation of the Tsinfem market to sale animals did not happen at random. In fact, there was no specific place for animals to be installed at market B in the downtown. Each time after the market, the streets of Dschang downtown were disgusting, what left a bad image of the city. That situation regularly forced the hygiene department of the municipality to supplementary work.

The diversification of products marketed at the Tsinfem arose from the moment when the purchase/sale of animals was accompanied by the demand for other items/activities. Thus, to satisfy customers demand, certain traders combined the sale/purchase of animals with other food products, as well as manufactured products. The presence of traders from surrounding villages for the sale of food products including animals, as well as those from Bafoussam with manufactured products, has intensified trade. After selling their products, merchants bought manufactured ones to return to the countryside.

A market dominated by food products

At the Tsinfem market, several products are sold. There are most traders for food products (85%) compared to those interested by manufactured products (15%).

A wide variety of manufactured products is found, namely kitchen utensils, hardware, clothing items,

stationery, bicycle and motorcycle spare parts, pharmaceutical, cosmetic products, etc.

Kitchen utensils are sold outside shops, generally at the big market day. They include pots, plates, etc. In hardware stores, you can find house building materials such as iron, cement, sheet metal, paints, etc.

As for clothing, at the Tsinfem market, clothes and shoes sold are imported from China for the majority. These are outfits for men, women and children. Outside of the shops, second-hand goods are sold at the market big day, in shoots or on mats on the ground. As for the fabrics to make the outfits, they are sold mainly in sewing workshops.

Stationery is rare in Tsinfem and generally sold only on the day of the big market. Only one store was intended for the sale of spare parts for bicycles and motorcycles. Pharmaceutical products are also available there. These products are generally displayed in small boxes. Cosmetic products, including toilet milks and soaps, were sold in shops, but also by street vendors.

At the Tsinfem market, animals and animal products of several types are sold. Thus, sheep, goats, pigs, game, poultry, eggs, fish and shellfish are found there. Marketing of poultry products and by-products and live poultry was dominant. Goats, pigs and sheep from rural and urban areas were sold only at big market days. As for shellfish, they are sold out of stores in small boxes. The fish is sold there fresh or dried. The fresh fish there consists mainly of mackerel. Game is sold there every days by hunters.

The crop food products sold at the Tsinfem market consist of tubers, cereals, fruits and vegetables. Despite the NOSO crisis which led to a reduction in the quantity of macabo coming from the South-West region, the sale of tubers and roots occupy an important place in this market. The main species commonly encountered there are potatoes, bananas, cassava, macabo, taro, yams and sweet potatoes. Cassava is sold in the form of sticks, tapioca and flour. The yam is present in two varieties: yellow and white, already cooked or raw.

At the Tsinfem market a varied range of cereals is sold, including corn, rice and wheat. Corn is sold in hulled form, in flour or on the cob, fresh or dried. As for grain corn, it is sold dried by traders mainly from the countryside. The price of corn, very low from September to November, can double or even triple from April of each year. Fresh corn, available all year round, is abundant on the market from May to september.

Rice is significantly inexpensive compared to other commodities. In this market we can distinguish between Cameroonian rice and imported rice. Cameroonian rice comes largely from the North Cameroon region where, thanks to SEMRY's modern

farming methods, yields have been improved. Imported rice is very diverse in quality and variety (packaging, color, grain shape).

The wheat sold at the Tsinfem market is a cereal that until recently was almost exclusively imported, even as its transformation into flour seems to be done locally in Cameroon. The wheat bran used in livestock is sold there in all the feed mills.

Several varieties of beans are also sold at the Tsinfem market. They are found there in different sizes and colors, fresh or dry.

Groundnuts are sold in shelled or whole state. Unshelled groundnuts can be found at the Tsinfem market in their fresh state.

As for fruits, they are less seen at the Tsinfem market compared to the downtown. They are also very diverse and include oranges, papaya, guavas, pineapple, safou, lemon...

Vegetables include eggplant leaves and other green vegetable species. We can also mention okra, garlic, peppers, carrots, cabbage and other condiments used in the preparation of multiple sauces.

Related activities of the Tsinfem market

Sewing and hairstyles

Hairdressing and sewing are two activities that are practiced at the Tsinfem market. Hairdressing is carry out by men (86.95%) whereas sewing is done by women (90%) (table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of hairdressing and sewing activities at the Tsinfem market by gender

Activity	Number of women	%	Number of men	%	Total	%
Hairdressing	20	86.95	3	13.05	23	100
Sewing	9	90	1	10	10	100

Source: field survey

Sewing and hairdressing are carried out by people aged 20 to over 40 years old. The rate of hairdressers decreases as age increases. Hairdressers aged between [20-30[and [30-40[years represent 65% and 30% respectively, and only 5% are 40 years old and over.

Half of the dressmakers are aged between [30-40 [years. From the age of 40 and above, they are less represented (20%) than those aged 20-30 [(30%).

Between [20-30 years [, the rate of tailors is half that of hairdressers. From the age of 30, the rate of dressmakers dominates that of hairdressers.

Motorcycle taxi driver activities

Motorcycle taxi is the most used means of transport within the city of Dschang. This mode of taxi is recent since it is used from 1991. Today, "motorcycle taxis"

abound in this city and are used in all sectors of activity. At the Tsinfem market, this is the only form of taxi. The customer waiting point is located at the entrance to the market (figure 3). The payment varies depending on the day of the week, time of the day and load, among other things. Travel by motorbike is preferred by traders and customers with small loads.



Production: Djeugap, January 2018

Figure 2: A location point for motorcycle taxis at the Tsinfem market

Intercity transportation

At the Tsinfem market, a transport agency has existed for several decades, linking Lebialem to Dschang on one hand, and Dschang to Buea/Limbé on the other. The said agency was initially based in Dschang downtown before being forced to leave for the Tsinfem market due to the same raisons which led to the creation of this market.

Pousher and night guard activities

Pousher activity is remarkable at the Tsinfem market. The average age of pushers is around 20 years. Every morning, they occupy a space waiting for a service request. Pushers generally transport housewives' goods from the market to the neighborhood, or from one point of the market to another. Services are paid from 50 CFA francs and the daily income varies depending on the day of the week.

Guarding is done at night by men aged 45 to 55 years. Each guard takes care of a defined area and is paid by each of the sellers. Pay is mainly done by the traders installed in the shops. Thus, at the end of the day, traders accept in their stores items from those without shop. Those traders selling on open-air stalls pay or not to the shop owner depending on the agreements.

Discussion

The decongestion of the downtown was the reason given to justify the creation of the Tsinfem market. This reason seems more a pretext than a reality. Indeed, even if there was a need to decongestion the downtown, it emerges from our investigation that the Tsinfem market in Dschang was born from the

concerns for securing public domains. Because the space on which the Tsinfem market is built was being allocated to individuals for their private activities by the administrative authorities without the agreement of the Mayor, a Mayor of the main opposition party at that time.

This study focused on the evolution of the diversity of products sold in the Tsinfem market and related activities. This market created for the sale of livestock products is now full of various other products and activities. Indeed, the unemployment of city dwellers and the proximity of the residence of certain actors favour their establishment as traders or others. The choice of this market for the sale of livestock products is linked to its peripheral position in relation to the city center which requires a minimum of sanitation.

In the Tsinfem market, food products, including animals, account for 86% of traders. This domination is explained by their necessity, because they are essential in daily life. On the other hand, manufactured products are dispensable and are only used temporarily, hence the lower rate of persons involved on. The marketing of poultry dominates that of other animals because, it seems, the demand by consumers is high. Indeed, their small size makes it easier for a whole animal to be purchased for a family. In addition, the chicken is the animal whose flesh is widely used during festive events, which events in the study area are organised very frequently. The presence of a high number of local chickens in the months of march to may can be explained by the prohibition of animals divagation during this period, which is that of sowing in the study area. For this reason, animals are confined or sold for those who do not have the space or time to take care of them. This market created for the sale of animals, excludes cattle. On the other hand, in the town of Fada N'Gourma in Burkina Faso, cattle are identified on the livestock market [8].

At the Tsinfem market, the prices of food products follow the law of supply and demand. The results of the present work corroborate those of [9] and [7] who show that prices of food products have no official regulation and only respect the law of supply and demand. At the Tsinfem market, food products occupy an important place. The sale is wholesale or retail and is more intense at the big market day. The products sold, consisting of cereals, tubers and legumes, come mainly from the countryside. The same observation was already made by for Douala markets [9, 10].

The observation that at the Tsinfem market hairdressing is a more practiced activity than sewing would simply reflect the greater needs for hairdressing by the populations surrounding the market. The low rate of tailors could be due to the importation of ready-to-wear outfits from foreign countries including China. Hairdressing and sewing are activities most done by women than by men. This sex difference would be due to a traditional conception according to which

certain activities are those of women. In general, the proportion of young girls and women who learn hairdressing and sewing is higher compared to that of men.

Sixty-five percent of hairdressers are aged between 20 and 30 years. These are young girls who left school very early to engage in working life or educated women who carry out this activity as a secondary activity. On the other hand, only 30% of hairdressers are aged between 30 and 40, and from the age of 40, very few people (5%) take care of hairdressing or sewing (20%). The drop in the number of hairdressers and tailors at this age would be linked to the low financial profitability of those activities, which leads to their abandonment for the benefit of others more profitable activities. The abandonment of hairdressing with increasing age could in addition be explained by the fact that this work is done while standing up, what became difficult with aging.

The development of the motorcycle taxi activity near the Tsinfem market was not avoidable, because the motorcycle outside the downtown is the only form of taxi in Dschang. The small size of the city disadvantages the circulation of automobile taxis. Indeed, the underdevelopment of the city means that auto taxis are only available on a few roads, especially those paved. On the other hand, motorcycle taxis drop off their customers at the agreed destination.

Conclusion

Originally created to relieve congestion of the downtown of Dschang and specializing in the sale of livestock products, several other activities have been added to the development of the Tsinfem market. Apart from livestock products, trade has expanded to non-animal food products and manufactured products. To this were added related activities such as sewing, hairdressing, motorcycle taxis, inter-urban transport, pushing and night guard.

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