



Fish Marketing in Cameroon: A Case Study of Yaoundé Markets

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Background and Introduction

Fish like most seafood is a very rich source of protein for millions of people Worldwide. Generally, fish is consumed in all corners and parts of Cameroon as an important source of animal proteins in the diet of both rural and urban households indicating a good future for the fishing sector. Production is usually on small scale. However, the present local fish production is not sufficient; resulting to Cameroon highly dependent on import from other countries. What this entails is that excess production from other parts of the world is traded in Cameroon. Therefore, market studies for aquaculture and fish products in Cameroon are of utmost importance because marketing is a vital function of any business as it may be disastrous to produce any commodity which could not be sold. Yaoundé the capital city of Cameroon where WorldFish Program is currently coordinating an inter-center initiative aimed at sustainable management of the humid forest was highlighted as focus for this study. This study was based on the artisanal sector.

Research Objective

The main objective of this research was to study fish marketing in Cameroon, notably in Yaounde. Specifically, the study intended to:

- Identify freshwater fish prices sold in Yaounde Market.
- Determine the sources of freshwater fishes sold in Yaoundé.
- Estimate prices per species
- Identify the Fish marketing chain and distribution channel

Methodology of the Study

Two sources of data was needed for the study: primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaire administration, interviews, discussions, and personal observation in the field. In the study, data were collected from sellers and producers. The secondary data was obtained from consultation of documents of related studies.

A representative sample was drawn from the fish marketing population. The research sample included producers, retailers, dealers in fish and aquaculture products selected in the study localities, and specialized persons in the various levels of the market channel.

Topology of Fish Market

There are six important markets that make up Yaoundé city where fish are sold. These markets are: Mvog-mbi, "Marché de femmes", Elig-edjoa, Etoudi, Mokolo, Mvog-ada (fanta citron) and Briqueterie. Two important aspects of these markets were looked into. These aspects are the geographical location and specialization of these different markets that characterized consumption of fish in the town of Yaoundé (Table 1). Fresh fish are of two categories: fresh life fish, which constitute mostly of life *catfish* (*Siluriforms*) and fresh dead fish, which are "kanga" (*Heterotis niloticus*), *tilapia* (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and "captain" (*Lates niloticus*).

Sources of Fish Sold in Yaoundé Markets

The commercialization of the different types of fish sold in Yaoundé comes from different sources. Fresh life fish comes from the river Nyong in Akonolinga and it's environ i.e Ayos, Mbalmayo etc... While the fresh death fish comes from Tibati from the north of the country and Akonolinga (Nyong river). The smoked/dried fish comes from two principal ponds: the river pond/dam (lakes) of Lagdo in the North of Cameroon and Mappé in the western province of Cameroon (Table 2).

Cost and Price of Fish Sold in the Markets

Cost plays an important role in determining the price of any product sold in a market. Cost varies depending on the kind or type of fish. The fish were classified into three sizes: large, average and small. An average cost of a kilogram of fresh life Catfish was 1510 F CFA (2,30 Euro) and the selling price of the retailers was 1855 F CFA (2,83 Euro). 1 euro~655 fcfa

Table 1: Location and Specialization of markets

Name	Category	Council Area	Type of fish sold
Mvog-mbi	Periphery market and central market	Yaoundé 5	Smoked/dried and, fresh life and dead fish
"Marché de femmes"	Periphery market	Yaoundé 1	Smoked/dried
Elig-edjoa,	Periphery market	Yaoundé 1	Smoked/dried
Etoudi	Periphery market	Yaoundé 1	Smoked/dried
Mokolo	Periphery market	Yaoundé 2	Smoked/dried
Mvog-ada (fanta citron)	central market	Yaoundé 5	Fresh life fish
Briqueterie	central market	Yaoundé 2	Smoked/dried

Source: Survey data

Table 2: Sources of Fish Sold in Yaoundé Markets

Source	Characteristics of fish	Market Name
River Nyong	<i>Heterotis niloticus</i> - Fresh dead fish Catfish - Fresh life fish <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i> - Fresh dead fish <i>Parachana obscura</i> - Fresh life fish	Mvog-mbi and Mvog-ada
Lagdo dam/lake	"Dansanki" - Smoke/dried fish <i>Machairon</i> - Smoke/dried fish <i>Cyprinus carpio</i> - Smoke/dried fish <i>Lates niloticus</i> - Smoke/dried fish Catfish - Smoke/dried fish <i>Heterotis niloticus</i> - Smoke/dried fish <i>Brochet</i> - Smoke/dried fish	Briqueterie, Mokolo, Etoudi, Mvog-mbi, Elig-edjoa and Marché des femmes.
Mappe dam/lake	Catfish - Smoke/dried fish <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i> - Smoke/dried fish	Briqueterie, Mokolo, Etoudi, Mvog-mbi, Elig-edjoa and Marché des femmes.
Tibati	Catfish - Fresh dead fish <i>Cyprinus carpio</i> - Fresh dead fish <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i> - Fresh dead fish	Mvog-mbi

Source: Survey data

Fish Marketing Chain and Distribution Channel

Fish marketing chain is not as complex as other food marketing chain since it is a highly perishable product (Figure 1). The chain of distribution of fresh fish is relatively short as compared to other products due to the nature of the product and the conservation methods.

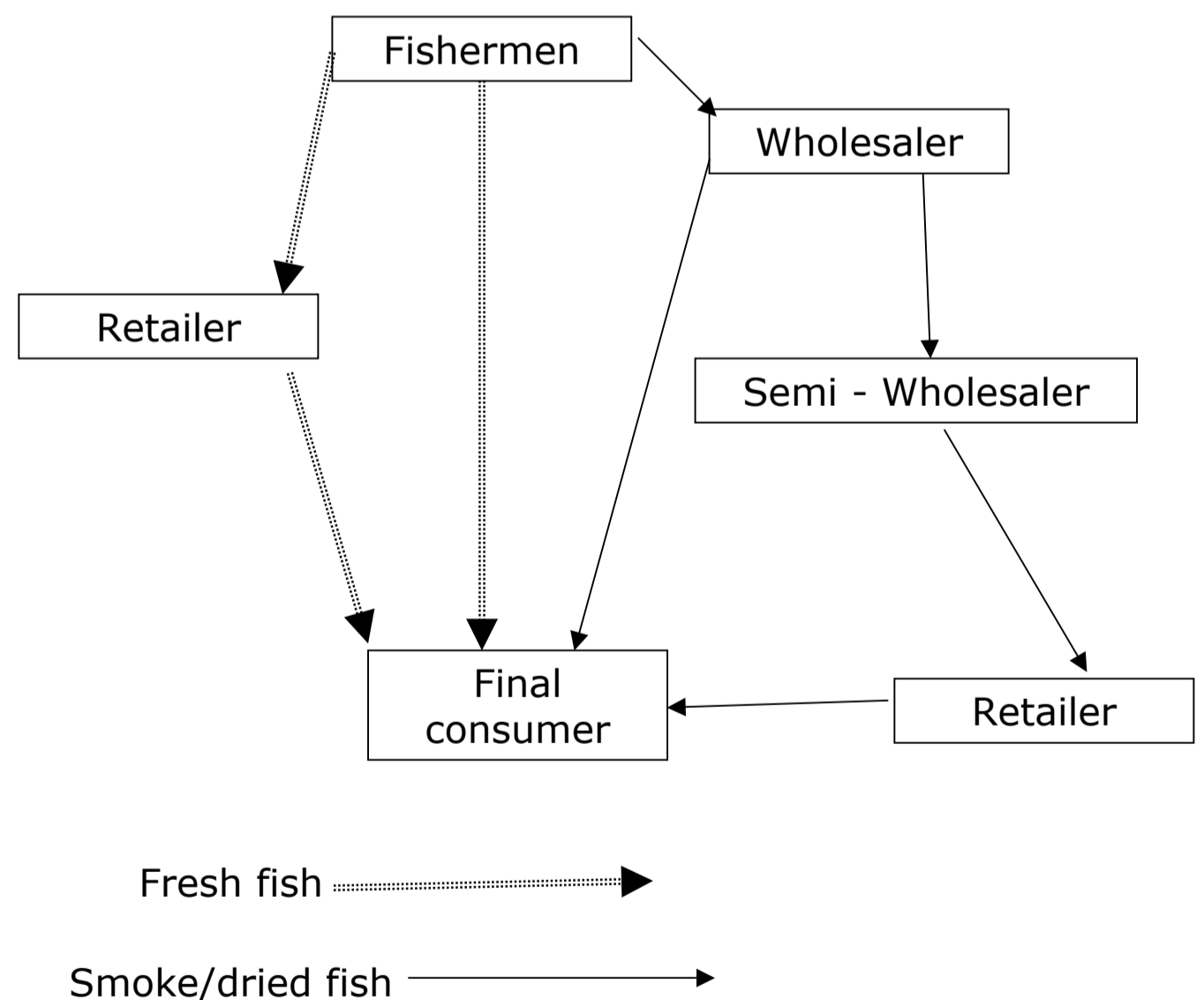


Figure 1: Diagram showing fish marketing channel in Cameroon.
Source: Author

Conclusion and Recommendations

The importance of fish cannot be over emphasised because of its role as a rich protein source and income generation for rural households. Artisanal fishes which today are under the threat of extinction due to many reasons; abandonment of the sector by the state to the local fishing communities leading to exploitation and unsustainable management of indigenous species. This therefore implies that, research institutions and development organisations-most especially those which have carried or are today carrying out research on fishes, have to make results available to the local and regional communities as well as, sensitize them on the advantages of consuming, producing and preserving indigenous fish species.