

# Ngaoundere commercial accommodation from 1974 to 2018: location factors

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**Abstract**—Commercial accommodation is a showcase for tourism, as it provides accommodation for travelers who are looking for new sources of exploration. Nevertheless, the construction, the setting up of a hotel establishment in a region, must be boosted by certain factors which from near or far can favorably attract a large number of tourists. Capital of Adamawa, the city of Ngaoundere has real tourism potential necessary for the establishment of commercial accommodation establishments. This study aims to present the advantages favorable to the creation of said establishments. Its ethnic and cultural diversity, its picturesque sites are undoubtedly undeniable factors in the establishment of tourist accommodation in this capital city of the region of the "water tower of Cameroon".

**Keywords**—commercial accommodation; ngaoundere; location factors; tourism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cameroon long before its independence in 1960, already attracted a large number of tourists. In order to organize the tourism sector, the High Commission of the French Republic in Cameroon created the Tourism Services in 1950 by order No. 1645 of April 23, 1950 [1]. From that date, remarkable efforts were made both by the government and by economic operators in the building of commercial accommodation and the promotion of tourism.

Commercial accommodation or even commercial accommodation establishment is a technical term which refers to all the spaces in which customers are accommodated and fed for remuneration. In other words, the accommodation establishment is a commercial structure which offers furnished rooms or apartments for rent, either to a passing clientele or to a clientele who makes a stay characterized by a weekly or monthly rental but which, with some exceptions, does not take up residence there [2]. It also acts as a crossroads within a city, and thus allows the expansion of the city. The city of Ngaoundere then became a focal point and meeting point with other countries deriving from the peoples of the Lake Chad basin. Commercial accommodation is therefore a meeting point and a sign of a very great material civilization of an era and often a showcase of an urban civilization.

New techniques and new modes of comfort have been developed with the aim of customer satisfaction. In order to identify this research work, it is fair and legitimate to clarify certain terms and words that could be confusing to understand.

### A. Conceptual clarification

It is important, before any reverberation, to start, as Emile Durkheim says [3], with a definition. It is with this in mind that, before entering our subject, we found it right and legitimate to begin by defining and operationalizing the concepts the understanding of which could give rise to confusion. It is for this reason that we have chosen three concepts namely, that of "accommodation", "commercial accommodation" and "location factors".

Generally speaking, accommodation comes from the verb to host, which means to lodge, to welcome. It is an establishment that can accommodate people for several days [4].

Accommodation is considered everywhere else as the tourist offer that accommodates visitors, passing tourists. According to Félix Damette "the hotel industry is an activity (...) in its own right, it is the sector that best shows what is changing, of economic transformation, and today, of internationalization"[5].

Accommodation in Cameroon is identified as the tourist offer par excellence. Thus, it is "an accommodation service that a country provides for visitors to meet their housing demand"[6].

Commercial accommodation is a building fitted out with the aim of temporarily accommodating people offering services with reception open most of the time, or even without interruption. Commercial accommodation or commercial accommodation establishment is a technical term which refers to all the spaces in which customers are accommodated and fed for remuneration. It allows travelers to pay for accommodation and food while traveling [7]. It meets needs such as: sleeping, eating, working, having fun, communicating. It can also be defined as the act of housing individuals for certain remuneration.

TABLE I. CLASSIFICATION OF TOURIST SITES OF CAMEROON

Nature of the tourist site	Region										TOTAL
	AD	CE	ES	EN	LT	NO	NW	OU	SU	SW	
Lakes	21	4	6	5	3	2	4	12	3	7	67
Falls and waterfalls	13	8	7	0	2	-	2	5	5	13	55
Mounts and passes	10	5	3	9	3	4	1	10	3	11	59
Caves	9	4	4	4	2	1	-	4	4	-	32
Rocks	2	4	1	2	1	2	-	2	10	1	25
Reserves	2	2	5	2	1	-	1	-	2	3	18
Monuments	10	11	3	6	6	4	2	2	15	9	68
Beaches and banks	21	4	7	5	3	3	4	12	8	7	74
Parks	2	1	3	3	-	3	-	-	1	1	14
Crafts and markets	10	22	6	19	18	7	8	12	4	6	121
Chiefdoms and Sultanates	10	5	8	25	8	6	8	12	4	6	92
Architectural remains	5	5	3	5	7	2	1	-	8	8	44
Dams	2	1	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	9
Ranches	5	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	12
Bridges	5	2	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	5	19
Zoological gardens	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Botanical gardens	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Plantations	2	8	3	7	10	2	5	10	10	6	63
Mining reserve	2	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Camp	3	-	1	1	-	3	-	1	3	3	15
Climate center	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Others	-	5	4	14	3	2	-	-	2	-	30
TOTAL	134	96	65	110	72	46	39	87	88	91	828

Source: MINTOUL

A factor is defined as an element which contributes to a result. Layout is defined as the action of setting up, that is to say of setting up something, materializing the layout of a building to be constructed. Ultimately, a location factor is anything that can lead to setting up something, an idea or a building. In our context, the location factors can be defined as the advantages favorable to the construction of commercial accommodation in a region, in a place. We can therefore ask ourselves the question of knowing what are the assets of establishments in the construction of commercial accommodation sites in Ngaoundere? In other words, what are the factors favorable to the construction of tourist establishments in Ngaoundere? The problem that emerges is that of the role played by this city in the construction of commercial accommodation.

#### B. Presentation of the study area

Created around 1830 at the sources of Mayo Mbibar and on the site of a Mboum village by Ardo Njobdi, this city will be built gradually around the current Lamido palace. Ngaoundéré (nag-a-ndere) which means "the mountain at the navel" in the Mboum language is located between 7 ° 03 and 7 ° 32 North latitude and 13°20 and 13 ° 54 East longitude [8]. It enjoys a Sudano-Guinean climate nuanced by its altitude. Precipitation levels are greater than 1400 mm. The rainy season lasts for seven to eight months, reminiscent of an equatorial climate, and the dry season for four months, meaning a Sahelian climate.

The annual average temperature is 28 ° C, the thermal amplitudes are strong. The maximum is often reached in January with 9°C and the minimum is between March and April [9].

A crossroads city connecting the South and the North of the country, Ngaoundere is the site of the creation of vast networks of exchanges between Cameroon and neighboring countries. Like many other cities in the country, it has experienced in recent years an urban growth which makes it a popular place for tourists, and above all a place favorable to an investment in terms of quality hotels. In addition to this important strategy, this city is made up of populations of multiple origins. There are among others the Mboum, Foulbe, Dii, Gbaya, Haoussa, Bornouan [10]. Given its geographical position and its economic and migratory dynamics, this city welcomes every day, a large mass of populations from diverse and distant horizons [11]. All these favorable factors over time have allowed the construction of several hotel institutions.

According to the tourism law in force in Cameroon since 1998 and its implementing decree of 1999, an accommodation establishment is a commercial structure that offers furnished rooms or apartments for rent either to passing customers or to customers who carries out a stay characterized by a weekly or monthly rental which, with some exceptions, does not take up residence there [12].

Information gathered in TABLE 1 allows making a classification of the tourist sites of Cameroon. Adamaoua has 134 tourist sites and surpasses all

other regions in terms of sites, which could be a great attraction in terms of tourists. The city of Ngaoundere has more than half of the tourist sites in the Adamawa region. True archipelagos of chiefdoms, lakes, passes and waterfalls, this city have everything to attract a large number of tourists.

### C. Theoretical frame

Speaking of the context of the establishment of certain infrastructures, we see commercial accommodation as a kind of enterprise for the destruction of customary values. The establishment of paid accommodation has played a major role in cultural mixing. Several tribes finding themselves in Ngaoundere, end up mingling and even losing their cultural identity.

- Environmental determinism is a point of view that emphasizes the direct effect of the physical environment on the house, ignoring or underestimating other factors (historical context, cultural specificities, social organization, etc.). For proponents of this approach like Amos Rapoport, environmental considerations, as defined by the availability of building materials, construction techniques, locations and climatic conditions, represent the most important element in shaping architecture. It also seeks to explain the physical characteristics of the house, including its exterior form, interior plan, decoration, specific building elements (doors, windows, and roofs), location on site, etc., demonstrating influence of environmental factors. This theory is important for our work because the availability of construction materials, construction techniques, sites, is necessary first of all for the establishment of commercial accommodation in the city of Ngaoundere.
- Cultural tourism in Cameroon is studied by historian Onomo Etaba, who divides Cameroonian cultural heritage into tourist regions and highlights practical cases that can be applied to the cultural heritage enhancement project. It is a type of tourism very popular with tourists who come to visit Cameroonian crafts, architecture, traditional festivals and music. When these tourists come to Cameroon to visit these cultural beauties, they stay in hotels, hence hotels and types of tourism.

### D. Methodological approach

A precise methodology was adopted for the development of this work. We have carried out a survey of certain hotel construction sites, and it was made in several stages which we cannot refrain from presenting here. We made a direct observation. This is an essential step in research work. By this we mean going to the field of study to see, observe, better still, to engage in the field as an "actor". It was an opportunity for us to go to some of the people in

charge of commercial accommodation and to obtain the information necessary for the preparation of our article. Thus the observation that we made about the factors of establishment of commercial accommodation in Ngaoundere, allowed us to understand, scrutinize, analyze, and better conduct our investigations. This is how this observation allowed us to see and understand the factors that pushed economic operators and the Government to place particular emphasis on the construction of hotels in Ngaoundere. Thus, after the reading phase in the libraries (CAPS, FALSH / UN, Antropos / UN, the Region, etc.), we conducted interviews and distributed the questionnaires. Finally, we did an analysis and interpretation of the data before starting our writing.

### E. Expected results

Our research based on the factors of establishment of commercial accommodation in Ngaoundere has produced results which facilitate the reason why this city is in essence an essential place for the construction of hotel establishments, and therefore a city courted by tourists. We therefore proceeded with questionnaires that we gave to managers and owners of commercial accommodation, interviews and reading certain archives.

The city of Ngaoundere has significant attractive potential which attracts many people. Indeed, this region combines many natural and cultural assets; the only concern is that it is highlighted in order to meet the expectations of tourists and visitors. Tourists in fact give meaning to tourist places through their operation. When the latter undertake a trip, it is precisely because they want with the minimum of risks and unforeseen events, to escape from their daily life, to discover elsewhere, to change air, in the best case, to meet the other, to discover if necessary "the charm of these cities with their magical and bewitching universe"[13]. These attractions made it possible to gradually build hotels to accommodate all these visitors. These assets are geographic, economic and cultural.

## II. GEOGRAPHICAL ADVANTAGES

Cameroon offers a mosaic of landscapes and the city of Ngaoundere also has some. The richness of its tourism product is based on many attractions thanks to the diversity of tourism resources. Every tourist has their own motivation; some may be drawn to nature, others to the countryside. Indeed, according to statistics from the Cameroonian Ministry of Tourism, the country recorded 817,000 tourist arrivals in 2012, against 604,052 in 2011, an increase of more than 200,000 tourists. In addition, a reading of government figures shows that between 2008 and 2012, Cameroon almost doubled the number of tourist arrivals on its territory, from 487,000 to 817,000 tourists. This corresponds, underlined the Minister of Tourism, Maïgari Bello Bouba, in January 2013, to an envelope of 181 billion CFA francs, an increase of 26.8% compared to 2011 [14].

The city is located in the north of the region on the Adamawa plateau. It is an important crossroads of regional trade since it is an obligatory passage for road transport between the cities of the south of the country and the cities of the far north. The railway from Douala ends in this city. The city is distinguished by a mountain on which sits a rounded rock, which makes people say that Ngaoundere is the navel of Adamaoua (Ngaou means "mountain" and Ndere "navel" in M'boum language, the language of the first inhabitants.) [15].



Fig. 1. A view of Mont Ngaoundéré. Source: Photo taken by Ndo Bitée Il Serge Thierry, on November 15, 2014 at 5.30 p.m.

This photo represents one of the assets of Ngaoundere, since it is this mountain that gave the name of Ngaoundere to the city.

The climate is almost temperate since this zone of wooded savannah is located in height. Temperature variations are rather significant in the dry season. The year is divided into two seasons: a dry season and a rainy season. The dry season is marked by a dry wind coming from the north such as the harmattan which turns into a dry and hot wind. As for the rainy season, it is marked by sometimes violent and intermittent rains.

Indeed, foreign and national visitors, tourists are seduced by the beauty of its site and its climate. Climatic conditions which make the stay of foreigners in Ngaoundere pleasant. The city and its surroundings have indeed some interesting tourist sites which can justify a trip and thus facilitate the creation of a large number of renowned hotels to attract as many tourists as possible.

The surroundings of Ngaoundere are rich in archaeological sites that certainly bear witness to an occupation preceding the conquest of Islam or, more recently, before the colonial conquest. There are several places that have not been the subject of archaeological excavations strictly speaking but which reveal to passers-by, often tourists, fragments of pottery on the surface of the ground or mounds of remains of ditches protecting against hippos.

The Mabimi site (which means "hippopotamus lake" in the local language) has never been the subject of archaeological excavations to date, but several furnace sites can be seen on the surface of the ground suggesting a period of occupation where metal

smelting was an important activity in the sector. If today it seems of no great importance, it is nonetheless the richest place in terms of archaeometallurgy that can be found on the Adamaoua plateau [16]. Another site at the northern edge of the Pilot Dairy Project model farm bears witness to ancient occupation simply by outcropping fragments, but erosion and overgrazing are likely to destroy these sites even before their content has been found has been explored.

Ngaoundere is also a springboard for visiting the rest of the Adamawa region and also the Eastern and Central regions, due to its position at the center of an important land, rail and air communications network. There are historical monuments that capture the attention of tourists such as the Lamidat de Ngaoundere to name just one.



Fig. 2. A view of the Lamidat de Ngaoundere. Source: photo taken on facebook in 2015.

This photo represents the *lamidat* of Ngaoundere, one of the prominent figures of tourism in the city. The lamidat is a traditional chiefdom, and would exist according to some sources in Cameroon since the 17th century. The lamidates were formed as a result of the Islamic conquests some 250 years ago [17].

In addition, the city of Ngaoundere is an important commercial crossroads between the Littoral, Eastern, Central regions, other regions of the Far North and certain neighboring countries. In Ngaoundere, there is an important station which today is the terminus of the Camrail Douala - Yaoundé - Ngaoundere line. This metric gauge line is widely used for transporting goods (serving Chad through the port of Douala) and a passenger train runs there (departure each evening in each direction, journey time 13 to 15 hours). Many improvements are made to the rail network. Trains are more regular and less late. Thus, the geographical position of this city offers it a potential market in the hotel sector.

Passenger buildings at Ngaoundere station have double glazing with plasma screens, air-conditioned waiting rooms, shops, bar and restaurant green spaces, a cash machine, tiled toilets and secure parking. This passenger station has had a facelift, turning into a kind of shopping center, popular with the population. Day and night, lovers and other strollers, storm the 22 public benches that dot the esplanade, with the complicity of travelers from and to the South or the North of the country, who appreciate the

changes that have taken place in this terminus of the Cameroon railway. "It's an idyllic setting, you don't envy the big western cities", affirms Audrey and Amane, a couple of students, come to take a breath of fresh air. No more potholes and quagmires that littered the forecourt in the near past. Now it's time for cobblestones, over the entire extent of the 5050 square meter esplanade. The face of 1974, when the terminal was created, has given way to a modern station. Suddenly, it is the image of the whole city that has benefited from it. It is currently considered the most beautiful passenger station in Cameroon and one of the most beautiful in Africa south of the Sahara. She is a wonderful gift for the city of Ngaoundere.



Fig. 3. View of part of the Ngaoundere station. Source: Publication on the net of the Ngaoundéré station, November 2012.

### III. A RENOWNED UNIVERSITY

The University of Ngaoundere is one of the largest in Cameroon by area. The university was established in 1993 as part of the university reform. There were around 12,000 students in 2007 and 15,500 in 2008. Student numbers have grown rapidly in recent years and also welcome Chadians, Central Africans and a few students from other countries. There are just over 30,000 students for the 2015/2016 academic year. It should be noted that since 2009 there has been a university in Maroua. This brings the number of public university institutions in the far north of Cameroon to two. It has 12 establishments including six large schools and six faculties.

It is one of the most distant universities from Yaoundé, and it suffers from this state of affairs, especially in terms of infrastructure and equipment, since its library is very sparse. To remedy this, the faculties are organizing themselves, like the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences (FSJP) and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FSEG), the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Human Sciences (FALSH) who have created their own documentation center for second and third cycle students.

The University has an internet connection with a local Internet Service Provider (CAMTEL); but the computer network is not yet widespread in all departments of the institution. In order to compensate for this deficit, the institution is completing the establishment (May 2010) of its information and

communication technology development center (CDTIC) which houses, among others:

- A radio;
- A cyber café;
- A server room;
- A Meeting room;
- A training room;
- A restaurant;
- A reprography service;
- A maintenance service;
- A development service;
- The French-speaking digital campus of Ngaoundere.



Fig. 4. Central view of CDTIC. Source: Photo taken by Ndo Bitée Il Serge Thierry, November 25, 2013 at 3:30 p.m..

But in recent years, the computer network has been spread throughout the campus, thanks to a significant bandwidth of more than 21 MB [18] which can supply the entire University.

On the strength of this University, which has attracted a good number of students and tourists, and which has made the city known throughout the world thanks to its multiple framework agreements and conventions that it maintains with foreign universities, the creation of this University gave a real boost in the influence of the city, by attracting as many tourists as possible. This could therefore facilitate the creation of renowned merchant accommodation in the city.

### IV. CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ASSETS

Cameroon has an exceptional cultural heritage by its quality, its diversity, its abundance and the chronological extent that it discovers. It has, in fact, a significant potential of particularly rich and vibrant cultural material goods. This allows him to have the privilege of being seen as Africa in miniature.

This city of study has a great cultural diversity which manifests itself through religion, its history, its mode of dress, the organization of festivals.

#### A. Cultural assets

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism focused on culture, cultural environment, values and lifestyles, local heritage, traditions and also participation in the organization of festivals.

Traditional festivals are attractive and attract people. These cultural festivities are talked about through events that continue to attract more and more large crowds. The Cameroonian population is a mosaic of nearly 250 ethnic groups with different customs and traditions whose lifestyles still exist in Adamaoua, the intact conservation of traditional chiefdoms. These are unique places to visit where many tourists visit traditional chiefdoms which are real social institutions. Auxiliary to the administration, the other essential role of the chiefs is to preserve the safeguard of the continuity of the tradition.

The city, traditionally, is organized around a Fulani chiefdom called Lamidat. At its head is a Lamido, spiritual and temporal leader. Generally, all chiefdoms have a large mosque at the entrance to their courtyard, a sign of triumphant Islam. Most of the Lamibe in Ngaoundere are Métis, Mboum and Peul, in homage to the natives who are the Mboum and for better cohesion with the newcomers, the Foulbe.

The cultural area of the city of Ngaoundere, in northern Cameroon or the north, extends from the high plateaus of Adamaoua to Lake Chad, passing through the plains of Benoue and Diamare, not to mention the Mandara Mountains and the other mountainous areas of the Cameroonian ridge...

This northern cultural sphere, in fact, presents at least two fundamental characteristics. By "indigenous" in "indigenous" cultural background expression, the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius [19], speaks and thus identifies the peoples living and occupying this part of the country, before the Peul revolution. This is particularly the case of the Mboum of Adamaoua, with the very refined musical art of the Fali and Bata of Benoue, the Guiziga and other "kirdi" populations (Painnes ", according to the name of Peuhl), some of whom elements or groups echo the famous Sao civilization.

An Islamic-Peul cultural background in the Peul Revolution, launched from Sokoto, in the very first years of the 19th century by Shehu Ousman dan Fodio, having resulted in the creation of vast and powerful territorial entities called "lamidas" (in Garoua, Maroua, Ngaoundere, Tibati, Banyo etc ...) under the dynamic supervision of the scholar Modibo Adama, gave birth to a new Muslim society whose concrete manifestations are:

- The art of living;
- Clothing and socio-cultural organization;

Artistic expression: cultural crafts and "court" music, with the introduction of instruments of Arab, Hausa and Sahelian origin from West Africa such as: algaïta, flutes, giant trumpets or "gagahi", Sahelian percussions ("talking-drums or kalangou" and many other membrane drums etc...). Fortunately for the populations of the north, the Islamic-Peul cultural element, of which the fantasia (animated by riders riding bridle down, on feast days, on superbly

harnessed thoroughbred mounts) constitutes one of the most important events spectacular, could not erase the "traditional" or autochthonous "element, shows, dances, festivals and ritual events Nyem-Nyem (including the annual festival of Galim-Tignere, has become a must-see event!) Mboum Fali, Gbaya, Guidar, Massa, Toupouri, Matakam, Mousgoum, Moundang, etc..., are always celebrated with the same secular brilliance, while preserving their specificities and their originality.

Regarding the specificity of the province of Adamaoua, it is according to corroborating written and oral testimonies, considered as the point of convergence, meeting and dispersion of our great Bantu and Sudano-Sahelian cultural traditions. And as for the large cities and metropolises of the "Grand - Nord", each of them organizes a major annual festival, especially during the tourist season which runs from November to May, constituting an opportunity conducive to a cultural and artistic development in none other, punctuated by a thousand and one strongly colored and diversified attractions, such as the "Lamidat Festival" of Ngaoundere (FESLAM), the "Great Cultural Week" of Garoua, the Maroua festival; not to mention the traditional festivals of a number of sultanates and chiefdoms in the region of Kousseri, Mora and Mokolo.

#### *B. Economic advantages*

Speaking of economic advantages, although several industrial projects have all capsized one after the other, most often because of the botched prospecting and market analysis work, the incompetence of the administration and the cumbersome nature of the bureaucracy [20], many projects have emerged and have evolved over time: the extraction of tin in Mayo-Darle [21], the cultivation of wheat in Wassande, the dairy project in Ngaoundere, and many others of less importance. In 1974, the construction of the railway line which was to go to Kaïtia in Chad stopped at Ngaoundere, and the city then became Terminal du Transcamerounais n ° 2, where 95% of North / South exchanges transit, and towards Chad [22]. Likewise, Ngaoundere also benefited from the passage of the Ngaoundere-Toubo Road through the construction of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline [23]. Several projects have been created to give the city a certain reputation, in particular projects on the mining potential (tin, titanium, bauxite) and energy (Mbakaou dam in particular), the exploitation of which would undoubtedly make it possible to alleviate the figures of the sub-development [24]. The agro-industrial sector (dominated by bakery and milling) is the most representative, with a real eruption of buildings and hotels over the past ten years, leading to the rise of the tertiary sector.

#### V. CONCLUSION

At the end of this research work, it should be remembered that our objective was to show the assets necessary for the establishment of commercial

accommodation in the city of Ngaoundere. To achieve this objective, two main parts marked our study. First, we displayed the geographical assets by making a real presentation of the captivating landscape and the geographical location of the city as well as its renowned University; second, we spoke of the cultural and economic assets of the said city. It emerges that, by virtue of its geographical location, its cultural and economic assets, Ngaoundere is a city that can contribute to the development and establishment of commercial accommodation establishments. With a much diversified history, a very appreciable climate, this metropolis abounds within it a plurality of archaeological sites which can push the economic operators to invest in this tourist field. We can then speak of a tourist city par excellence. It is certainly true that all its factors have participated from near and far in the establishment of several hotel establishments, but another problem emerges from these establishments, it is that of knowing these merchant establishments are competitive at the national level at one hand and on the other hand in the international arena. In our future research, there is therefore reason to wonder about the architectural quality of the city's accommodation, as well as the service offered.

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