

Spice commodity chains unraveled: Investigating wholesalers, marketplace vendors, and consumers in Shijiazhuang City, Hebei, China

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Cultivation of cardamom, star anise and cinnamon in China accounts for large portions of the world's share annually. However, as these spices reach markets and consumers away from their sites of cultivation, the mechanisms and actors which move these spices are blurred into obscurity. This study attempts to trace these three spices, to elucidate some of these end processes, and to better understand the roles of the actors involved. This thesis offers a case study of Shijiazhuang city, located in Hebei, northern China. The study identifies five distinct nodes that contribute to the distribution of spices within the city. I explore how spices are moved to, between and within each node. In addition, the study highlights the importance of strong social connections and family social capital for entering into this trade and operating wholesale and neighbourhood marketplace stalls.



Author's Image: Typical stall setup at Ta Tan Nong Mao Large Neighbourhood Market