

Migration, Markets and Men Traders: The Case of Malian Migrants in Kumasi Central Market (Ghana): 1930-1948

Dougnon Isaie¹

¹FLASH, University of Bamako, Department of Social Sciences, Bamako, Mali

isaie.dougnon@gmail.com

Considering its historical and economic importance in colonial West Africa, the Kumasi Central Market may be taken as an appropriate site to re-think the relationships between men migration and markets spaces occupation on one hand and the disputes between migrants and natives over the control of these spaces on other hand. This paper tries to analyse how Malian migrant men traders were able to occupy huge space in Kumasi Central Market and how native competitors responded to this occupation. From all migrant professions, trade is one that demands the maximum of mobility, human contacts and contest with other groups. The competition between them becomes often violent conflicts. The political management of these conflicts by the colonial and native City Council officials is often made at the expense of less integrated and more stigmatized migrants as it is the case actually in many African urban spaces. Based on colonial archives and ethnographic data this paper provides contextual analysis of trade migration and transport between Mali and Ghana; it discusses also the extent to which gender issue was important in terms of women traders access or exclusion to market spaces which were controlled by men in colonial Kumasi.