Adaption und Kreativität in
Afrika – Technologien und Bedeutungen in der
Produktion von Ordnung und Unordnung

Michael Stasik / Alena Thiel

MARKET MEN AND STATION WOMEN: CHANGING SIGNIFICATIONS OF GENDERED SPACE IN ACCRA, GHANA

Michael Stasik / Alena Thiel
MARKET MEN AND STATION WOMEN:
CHANGING SIGNIFICATIONS OF
GENDERED SPACE IN ACCRA, GHANA

Contact:

Richard Rottenburg (Co-Spokesperson)
DFG Priority Programme 1448
Adaptation and Creativity in Africa

University of Halle
Social Anthropology

Reichardtstraße 11
D-06114 Halle

Ulf Engel (Co-Spokesperson)
DFG Priority Programme 1448
Adaptation and Creativity in Africa

University of Leipzig
Centre for Area Studies

Thomaskirchhof 20
D-04109 Leipzig

Phone: +49 / (0)341 973 02 65
e-mail: info@spp1448.de

www.spp1448.de

MARKET MEN AND STATION WOMEN: CHANGING SIGNIFICATIONS OF GENDERED SPACE IN ACCRA, GHANA

Michael Stasik / Alena Thiel

University of Bayreuth / SPP 1448, Project "Roadside and Travel Communities" and GIGA – German Institute of Global and Area Studies / SPP 1448, Project "Translating Urban Modernities"

CONTENT

Abstract

It is impossible to understand the gendered relation between women and public space without taking into account its other, that is, male engagements with and in space. Our joint paper contrasts the public spaces of a market and a bus station in central Accra, Ghana. While the former is historically associated with female entrepreneurship, masculinity is deeply inscribed in the activities defining the latter. However, recent developments gradually undermine this gendered divide. Evermore men enter into the predominantly female occupation of market trade. Simultaneously, the public space of the bus station, complementary to many of the market's economic activities and to its gendered significations, is increasingly shaped by intensive negotiations between male station personnel and 'intruding' female entrepreneurs over the scarce resource 'space'. By focusing on interpersonal claims to entrepreneurial places in these two locations, we contest that structural determinants such as trade liberalization and employment strictures sufficiently explain the complex renegotiation of gendered entitlements to space. We illustrate how the configurations (and co-constructions) of gender and space are exposed to on-going, often subtle shifts, which are impelled by dialectically grounded transformations of quotidian spatial practices and social relations. Expanding upon the notion of viri-/uxorilocality, we explore shifts in the gendered strategies of newcomers establishing their presence in the two spaces and the extent to which these practices may alter gendered spatial significations.

Introduction

In the gendered configurations of public space in urban Ghana, the market place and the bus station make for a veritable match of complementarity. Market places have long been unambiguously associated with femininity and female entrepreneurship. Bus stations, in turn, connoted masculinity and male economic pursuits throughout. At the same time, however, both spaces are closely intertwined and marked by reciprocal services and functions. As noted several decades back by Hill: 'Ghanaian market and transport systems are so intimately related that market places and lorry parks often appear to merge' (1984, 10).[1] This somewhat symbiotic, in emic terms well-nigh naturalized complementarity of the market's feminine and the station's masculine space correlates with the deeply gendered roles of its central figures; that is the saleswoman and the bus driver respectively, and ultimately with the larger structures of 'gender duality' manifest for example in the Ghanaian chieftaincy system, but also in the divisions of responsibilities related to household reproduction (Overå 2007, 544; Pellow 1977, 125).

Though firmly inscribed in the historically rooted syntax of social practices, discourses and imaginaries, recent developments beget a gradual undermining of these gendered segregations of urban public space. Public spaces that long since served as marked 'bearers of gender' (Elson 1999, 611) are progressively recast under processes of social and economic change, yielding evermore blurred boundaries between gender roles, as well as therewith associated entrepreneurial and spatial practices. In view of these developments, the questions we seek to answer in this paper target processes of re-signifying gendered public spaces. Specifically, we ask which (gendered) strategies non-conventional actors employ to stage claims to the public spaces of markets and stations and how they consolidate these claims in the everyday; and, to what extent these strategies impact on the gendered construction of public space?

Figure 1: Station or market? (photo: Stasik)

---

1   In the Ghanaian English vernacular bus stations are referred to as 'lorry parks'.

Overå (2007) provides an incipient description of these processes on the part of men entering the female sector of retail trade in Ghana. Tied into broader frames of analyses of the social consequences of macro-economic restructuring and its 'collateral' thrusts of informalization, she makes a strong case for explaining these crossings of occupational gender divides as born out of economic predicament and employment strictures, stating that '[t]oday's meagre formal job market forces men to cross gender barriers and enter female domains' (2007, 557). According to Overå, it is economic liberalization and the subsequent cutback in formal employment opportunities that spurred the influx of ever more men into the predominantly female occupation of market trade. Drawing on the case of female taxi drivers in South Africa – thus on the reverse side of the informal economy's 're-gendering' processes –, Khosa (1997) pursues the same line of economic reasoning. In his argument that women enter the taxi industry not by choice but 'by force of economic circumstance' (1997, 31), one senses a rather strong propensity for economic determinism inclined to disregard the scopes of agency on the side of those who live through the changes.

In this paper, we propose less of a causal analysis. Following the approaches of Moore (1986, 168 ff) and von Bülow (1992), we argue that shifting constellations in the 'genderization' of space and the therein-inscribed divisions of labour cannot be reduced to mere reflections of changing economic parameters. In so doing, we do not mean to attenuate or even disregard the social (and gendered) ramifications of economic strictures. Economic changes do set the stage for large portions of everyday life and for how people deal with and (re-)formulate their engagements within the realities of economic frameworks. What we contend, though, is that within urban Ghana's economies of the so-called informal, women and men do not only (re) act upon economic change, trying to endure its 'gendered consequences' via 'poverty-driven' strategies for adaptation (Overå 2007, 557). But their own strivings, actualized in changing practices, attitudes, and modes of interactions, also induce change onto economic structures and therewith entangled gender relations and spatial divisions. By crossing occupational gender divides, Ghanaian women and men not merely opt for a 'choice of last resort' (Khosa 1997, 19), but venture new chances, assess and conquer new and potentially more lucrative markets, and – by ways of these provisional yet collective actions – turn harbingers of the reconstruction of culturally sedimented gender relations and therewith entangled spatial constituents.

In this, we follow Massey's (1999) claim that the concept of space should be formulated primarily in terms of social relations – with social practices being understood as inherently spatial, and vice versa. In that perspective, space is not conceived of as static or neutral, but as 'an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification' replete with a 'simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism' (Massey 1994, 3). For, 'the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it' (*ibid.*, 4). On the one hand, the conventions and symbolic representations of gender roles arising from women and men's repeated enactments of claims to particular spaces reproduce extant sets of gendered significations of space. At the same time, these significations are also in a constant mode of being creatively altered in the everyday processes of cross-gender interactions, in which different spaces are 'placed in relationship to one another in such a way that new social effects are provoked' *(ibid.).* In other words, '[t]he spatial organization of society […] is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result' *(ibid.).* The same holds true for the spatial organization – and renegotiation – of gender roles.

We proceed by juxtaposing the public spaces of markets and bus stations in central Accra. In order to carve out the reciprocally constituted shifts in gendered practices and the related

strategies of spatial production, we trace forth in time the changing forms of interactions, coalitions and conflicts between women and men as they enfold within markets and stations. By adopting the terminology of *uxorilocality* (married couple residing at matrilocal residence) for men following (their) women into markets and *virilocality* (at patrilocal residence) for women following (their) men into stations, we proceed to disentangle the everyday relational aspect of the growing commixture and jumbled complementarity of male and female occupations and therewith associated spatio-entrepreneurial realms in Accra – thereby complicating the notion of 'the "feminisation" of poor young men who do "women's work"' (Overå 2007, 560), or a 'masculinisation' of women entering male-dominated economic realms. Returning to Massey's (1999) argument that gendered spaces are constructed out of everyday social and economic practices and relationships, we present our conclusions on how the practices of newcomers and conventional actors in stations and markets overlap and impinge on each other at crosscutting levels, thereby exposing the significations of their respective spatial orders to constant scrutiny. It is this mutually constituted fluidity in the production, and the reproduction, of spatial orders, enhanced through their embeddedness in various scales of economic, political, ideological, etc. contexts, that potentially new significations of gendered public spaces emerge.

Reading gender relations across the grain: women in African transport and men in African market trade

The observation that African marketplaces are highly gendered social realms dates back to the academic literature of the 1950s (cf. the comprehensive review in Mintz 1971), with the discussion of specific gender dynamics in trade seeing their highest productivity in the 1970s and 1980s. For urban Ghana alone Clark (1984, 1986, 1994), Pellow (1977), and Robertson (1983, 1984) provide in-depth ethnographic accounts. However, in this body of literature, the general attitude towards male participation in or contribution to the market remains limited to the social and economic subordination of women traders to men controlling the flow of resources as well as attributing differential status to male and female work, paralleling 'the division between household and outside world' (Pellow 1977, 125). As Harts-Broekhuis and Verkoren (1997, 214) point out, 'numerous studies of markets and marketing have been carried out in Africa (…) generally though, these studies have concentrated on (specific groups of) female traders in certain localities without relating the findings to the trader population as a whole. Consequently, the position of the female traders relative to their male counterparts is frequently neglected.' Especially in view of the predominant cultural image of strong female traders *(Mama Benzes)*, representations of male participation in trade remain limited to their activities outside formally recognized marketplaces (Ellis and McGaffey 1997; Hart 1973). Recent studies on African transnational traders, especially in China (Haugen 2012; Müller 2011; Pliez 2010; among others), consider both men and women traders.

There is a relative wealth of academic writings on women and transport in Africa. The bulk of this literature, however, is concerned with women's constrained mobility in light of insufficient and inefficient (male-run) informal public transport systems (cf. Asiyanbola 2007; Bryceson and

Howe 1993; Doran 1990; Hanson 2010; Law 1999; Malmberg Calvo 1994; Porter 1988, 1995, 2002; Urasa 1990) and with gender-specific travel patterns (cf. Asiyanbola 1999, 2002; Fadare and Morenikeji 2001; Oyesiku and Odufuwa 2002). Where active female incursions into the domains of African transport are explicated, these are presented as salient exceptions and, as in Khosa's aforementioned study of female taxi drivers in South Africa, completed with an inference about the 'hostile male-dominated world of taxi driving' (1997, 32), or of the worlds of driving in general as it may be.[2] The emphasis on male agency (and its concomitant of female marginality) somewhat pointedly reflects the realities of gender relations common across African transport systems. Africa's traffic and transport are indeed thoroughly male-dominated terrains. Neither do women usually drive or own public transport vehicles, nor do they partake in the managing of transport systems per se.[3]

Located at a focal intersection between our two fields – hence between the spaces of the (male) station and the (female) market – are studies dealing with head porters who provide for the 'link' between roads and travel hubs, on the one hand, and shops and markets, on the other hand (Asomaning *et al.* 1996; Opare 2003; Ntewusu 2012, 76–102; Wilson and Mittelmark 2013). A notable study, in which the conjuncture of gender, roads, trade and the sphere of the informal economy is made explicit, are the contributions in the volume edited by Grieco, Apt and Turner (1996; see also Grieco *et al.* 1995). Revolving around various issues related to female traders and the organization of transport services in Accra, they show that the complex interactions taking place between the gendered systems – and spaces – of trade and transport are capable of valorising new practices and modes of cooperation in which non-conventional actors take up much active and constitutive roles. Other relevant studies include the rich ethnographic accounts of Kumasi-based female traders contracting with (male) road hauliers by Clark (1994) as well as the largely descriptive portrayals of Ghanaian trade and transport systems in the 1960s produced in the compendious yet instructive series of papers by Hill (1962, 1965, 1966, 1984).

Shaping gendered space: a historical retrospect on the emergence of markets and stations in Accra

Following Massey (1999), we understand the social construction of space within the overlapping and interlacing dimensions of economy, gender and the public as resulting from a constitutively fluid and variable set of practices. Its historicity, then, cannot be understood as a singular and directed shift from one end of the spectrum of gendered practices to the other. Instead, it is the very spaces of markets and stations as constituted by the social practices and relations with and within them that undergo continuous gradual transformations. The following is an illustration

---

2   The scolded role of women in the male-dominated world of driving is depictured vividly in Theresa Dahlberg's documentary about a female taxi driver in Dakar, 'Taxi Sister' (2011).

3   For some years, circulating stories relating to the etymology of 'mammy wagon' – a common designation for light trucks across Anglophone West Africa – gave rise to assumptions that it is 'mammies' (read: women) who are the real yet concealed owners of many a fleet of vehicles. At least for the case of Ghana, these stories were debunked by Hill (1963, 8) who traced them back to some exhilarant narratives produced in Gunther's *Inside Africa* (1955).

of some of the main turning points and their creation of particular gendered orders within the public spaces of stations and markets in the history of Ghana and the Gold Coast.

The joint history of our cases provides a striking case for illustrating the fluctuating constitution of gendered public spaces. In the 17th century, men controlled the trade in imported commodities in exchange for slaves, gold, and ivory (Rivière 1987), while women (and children), early sources make mention, engaged in the semi-stationary trade in foodstuffs and other locally produced daily consumables as well as 'small luxury items' such as beads and cloth, either in the shade of their houses (Daniell 1856, 1) or at distant regional markets (de Marees 1965[1600], quoted in Nypan 1960, 2). Also the installation of Accra's central marketplace, *Makola*, was marked by male interventions. Most substantiated among the disputed claims about the origins of *Makola*, Ntewusu (2012, 2013) provides evidence for the market's 19th century roots in the settlement of Muslim migrants under Chief Braimah and their installation of male cattle traders in the present Cow Lane area of Accra. Building on the growing trade in cola nuts in this location, a market hosting local female traders gradually emerged in the location.

With the expansion of Accra's surface and population, the colonial authorities needed to develop urban infrastructures (Amoah 1964; Quarcoopome 1993). Since about the years of the First World War, the Gold Coast colony underwent a 'road revolution' (Wrangham 2004; see also Heap 1990). Complementing, and partly competing with, the expansion of railway transport, motorized vehicular traffic grew exponentially in number and in socio-economic significance. By the late 1920s, the numbers of commercial cars aggregating in the CBDs of coastal towns, above all in Accra, reached a level of teemingness and congestion, at which representatives of the colonial administration felt compelled to intervene by means of legal – and spatial – regulation. Hence the establishment of bus stations as a univocal transfer of a British-bred model for social control, with the first station being established in the centre of Accra in 1929. The construction of Accra's chief wholesale and retail market *Selwyn Market* (*Makola* #1) in 1924 (cf. Robertson

Figure 2: Aerial view of Selwyn Market (reproduced from Amoah 1964)

1983, 468 ff) followed similar rationales. Archival sources[4] leave no room for doubt that colonial interest was above all in the control of diseases beside the facilitation of revenue collection, when – oral history suggests – the then market queen was asked to determine traders' spatial needs in the process of planning the new market structure. After closing their shops for the day, it is recounted, the traders came to align their petroleum lamps for counting the number of shops that would be needed. Naturally, in this narrative, the lamps not only illuminated the entire marketplace at nightfall, but corresponded exactly to the number of traders who later on claimed the built shops.

The public spaces of bus stations were invariably run and controlled by men. It were men who organized the transport conduct: as clerks inserted by the colonial authorities for the supervision of the stations and the collection of the newly introduced station levy, and as drivers, fare collectors, apprentices, and representatives of the emergent local drivers' associations. Furthermore, as oral histories collected from among today's oldest station veterans indicate, also the growing range of jobs ancillary to the transport sector (e.g. mechanics, spare parts dealers, 'chop bar' providers), most of which were based inside or contiguous to bus stations, were an all-male trade. Though, female hawkers peddling fruits, vegetables and ready-cooked food used to pass through the station, there were no 'stationary' (that is settled) forms of female entrepreneurship. In this regard, it is intriguing to note that head-load portage – today an (almost) exclusively female occupation commonly assumed to have been a female activity ever since – in fact used to be an all-male profession as well.

Porters – called *'kayakaya'* in their male and *'kayaye'* in their female designation – provide for head-loaded transport of goods and produce between bus stations and whatever place of destination they are appointed to arrive at, usually somewhere inside or nearby the market. According to Ntewusu (2012, 65–72), this work was performed by male northern migrants; with the Zabarima nearby monopolizing portage in Accra from the 1930s to the 1960s and the Kotokoli taking over from the 1960s and up to the late 1970s. As further materials found by

Figure 3:
Male-run 'chop bar' at the
Sunyani lorry park (reproduced
from Redmayne 1938)

4   PRAAD (Accra HQ), Records CSO 20/1/9 "Regulations for the protection of food sold in Accra markets"; CSO 6/6/183 "Seizure and destruction of unwholesome foodstuffs"; ADM 11/892 "Collection of market dues by chiefs or land owners".

Ntewusu (2012, 73) indicate, many of the Zabarima *kayakaya* who chose the bus station as their prime base of operations combined portage with petty trade, catering for passengers' needs for fast moving goods (e. g. batteries, combs) and non-durables (e. g. drinks, food), thus exactly for the same kinds of 'petty products' peddled by today's predominantly female station hawkers.

For the case of the market, the colonial administration's preferential training of men for positions that had become useful for the colonial authorities began to gradually reverse the gender divisions in indigenous trade. Women coming to occupy more advantageous positions in the trade with higher-value goods were thus an indirect consequence of the withdrawal of male labour force from the retail sector, beside the factor of post-Depression growth (Robertson 1984, 30). As summarized by Pellow (1977, 75, quoting from Smock 1977, 183 f): 'Colonial supervision helped eliminate restrictions on trade items that women could carry while also enabling them to trade in more distant rural markets. Central markets were established in towns, enabling women to rent stalls, regularize, and expand their trade'.

Although women did not occupy any however 'formal status' in the lorry business, they left their imprints in more inconspicuous yet quite far-reaching ways. Related to their increasing presence in the public space, female traders accounted for growingly large portions of passengers. Representing a quintessential clientele, they were capable of exerting leverage on drivers, pushing them to infringe colonial law and discharge outside the station. As AbdouMaliq Simone points out, '[w]omen's urban roles have been crucial to ensuring spaces of operation in the city outside of colonial impositions and designs' (2004, 173). This surely was the case with regard to the influence female traders wielded on drivers' spaces of operation in colonial Accra. With the end of the Second World War, new stations proliferated at an increasing pace, permeating Accra with a growingly dense netting of inner-city and intra-city transport hubs. Most of the newly opened stations were systematically located contiguous to newly opened marketplaces, thereby accommodating (female) traders' needs for accessible means of transportation while simultaneously ensuring a steady inflow of clients. Stations at other locales – usually located at

Figure 4: Map of central markets and stations in Accra; dots representing stations, circles representing markets (source: openstreetmap.org; graphic: Stasik)

Makola Market, citadel of Kalabule, is grazed to the ground by the A.F.R.C.

Figure 5: Makola Market 'Citadel of Kalabule' (reproduced from Oquaye 1980)

important intersections of the urban grid of roads –, in turn triggered the emergence of varied forms of satellite markets.

The complementary yet disjunct construction of the two gendered public spaces of markets and stations began to blur at the onset of various major transitions that commenced in the late-1970s and early 1980s.

The poor economic performance of previous military and civilian governments set the stage for Ghana's last successful coup-maker Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings to enter the scene. Following his first putsch of June 4, 1979, Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) singled out scapegoats for Ghana's economic decline to mobilize popular support, and during the so-called 'house-cleaning' campaigns performed a violent descent on these groups of potential opponents in the political, military and civilian realms. It were above all market traders who fell victim to the AFRC's rhetoric that shunned excessive private accumulation. Alleged practices of hording said to impute artificial price hikes were presented as the major cause for the country's rampant inflation.[5] This 'kalabule'-rhetoric, framing female traders as 'human vampire bats' (Clark 2001), culminated in the destruction of the country's urban markets, with Accra's main market *Makola* #1 being blazed to the ground on August 18, 1979 (Awuah 1997; Robertson 1983).

One of the few elder traders willing to talk about the traumatic experiences of the destruction of *Makola* remembered the events as follows: 'They were asking everybody to bring the 50 notes to the bank that was the biggest bank note at the time. This way, they realized that there were many in the market who had this note. At the time I was pregnant, my husband (...) had

---

5   The allegations of artificial price hikes allegedly caused by traders' hording strategies have been refuted by Clark (1994) and Robertson (1984), who both doubt that traders at the time could have had the necessary capital strength to orchestrate such a calculated intervention meant to impinge on the national economy. Paraphrasing Clark (1994), the fact that traders managed to get back on their feet speaks less of their economic power than of the effectiveness of their mutual support networks.

Figure 6: Kalabule rhetoric
(sources: Daily Graphic, August 30, 1979)

just died and I had to earn money. One night, the soldiers came to the market and plundered everything. The next morning, one man wanted to climb into the market to save some of his wife's goods. They just shot him there.'

These events graphically illustrate how factors of change cannot be reduced to their structural effect on subsequent events and developments. The eviction of women from the public space had important symbolic causes, and consequences. The outright misogynist 'kalabule'-rhetoric – and its violent translation into politics – bore a peculiar symbolic dimension as a (male) military junta perverted the notion of a main task of women's housework (house-cleaning) into an instrument of violence aimed at women in the public realm of marketplaces.

While making scapegoats of (female) market traders, the June 4 revolution proved rather favourable towards (male) transport operators. Rawlings ascribed commercial drivers a stabilizing role in his militarily induced socio-economic cataclysm. By giving extensive patronage to the country's largest drivers association, the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), he actively fostered their enterprises while in turn counting on the political support of its members.[6] This system of clientelism proved largely successful. As Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi (1994, 132) notes, the GPRTU became a 'prosperous organ' of Rawlings' revolution, with many of its members featuring prominently in political mobilisation activities (see also Ninsin 2000, 130).

The support from highest levels of political authority was conveyed already during the first days of the revolution. On July 7 – thus only three days after seizing power and about a month before the destruction of *Makola* –, Rawlings ordered that a centrally located yard owned by a local industrialist should be seized and transformed into a new central bus station. This token of military force used in order to strengthen the spatially inscribed presence of the male-run trade of transport in the urban arena thus stands in stark contrast to the military-back forces that were put to use for the destruction of major markets sites and the violent eviction of female traders from the realms of Accra's public space.

Yet despite the apparent divide that marked Rawlings' political bias towards men and women's respective roles in the relations of production and the therewith entangled entitlements to public space, the rule of the AFRC and, following Rawlings second coup in 1981,

6   For example, state funds were used to supply GPRTU members with wear parts and to subsidise the acquisition of vehicles for the association, while its senior members were included in national transport committees.

Figure 7: 'Trading in front of 31ˢᵗ Dec. Market' (reproduced from Government of Ghana [Ministry of Local Government] 1993)

the PNDC came to represent a fundamental turning point in the history of both markets and stations as clearly gendered economic domains. For, the regime's radical transformations stipulated a momentum of perforation of the spatial segmentations that hitherto delimited the gendered realms of stations and markets. A considerably – though anything but politically intended – effect of the destruction of markets was the dispersal of expelled traders, primarily women, into alternative vending spaces, such as onto busy streets and roadsides downtown, and, not least, inside the city's major bus stations.

A number of interrelated structural factors fed into these developments. While the drought years of 1982/84 temporarily reduced rural-urban migration in Ghana (van der Geest 2011; Anarfi and Kwankye 2003), the overall trend in mobility from Ghana's northern regions to the southern cities remains strong. Anarfi and Kwankye (2003, 15) attribute this to the 'high population growth rate in Ghana within the last three decades [which] has generally increased the domestic supply of labour, and in areas like the Upper East Region, put pressure on the available cultivable land, thereby encouraging migration'. Cuts in agricultural subsidies and looming ethnic conflicts in the northern regions further catalysed processes of rural flight, whereas the sustained economic inequality between Ghana's north and south accounted for their durability. The expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983 (the so-called 'Agege returnees'[7]) – many if not most of which initially sought refuge in Accra –, added further pressures on the growing imbalances of the urban labour market. More generally, in the course of the 1983 Economic

---

7   In the early 1908s, the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of goods and people and the Nigerian oil boom attracted large numbers of regional migrants to the West African country. In 1983, in view of economic down-turns, Nigeria passed its Expulsion Order deporting huge numbers of allegedly illegal migrants. Between 900,000 and 1,200,000 Ghanaians were sent home under what was said inhumane conditions returning to a country severely hit by famine and drought (Adepoju 1985, Afolayan 1988, Brydon 1985).

Recovery Programme of the IMF and World Bank orchestrated Structural Adjustment policies, formal employment structures were cut back drastically. During these years, Accra's informal sector began to take on the function of a 'sponge', 'absorbing', so to speak, a great many people driven out into the loose grounds of informal economic engagements, including activities that carried contrasting gendered significations.

The accumulating economic hardships had diametrical effects on our two fields. With growing rates of migration to the cities and multiplying systems of internal remittances (of city dwellers providing their upcountry kin with goods and money), also the rates of travels increased significantly – creating a growing demand for transport services. Hence Ghana's transport sector in general and the country's major bus stations in particular experienced a relative economic upturn, with the latter turning into enclave-like locales of condensed economic activities. Another factor in this development relates to what older station folks today refer to as the 'Urvan factor' that is, the tremendous increase of the numbers of imported second-hand cars of the early 1980s (in turn spurred by trade liberalization; see Yeboah 2000, 74–6), most popularly the Japanese-produced *Urvan* model which could easily be converted into a passenger bus. With more and more male petty entrepreneurs investing in the transport sector as vehicle owners, related niches proliferated as well. Men signed up as drivers and station personnel. Female vendors, traders and hawkers, in turn, stricken by increasing competition over decreasing purchasing power in the markets, were attracted by the growingly lucrative trades associated with the stations.

Makola Market[8], already hit hard by the population's economic hardships, on the other hand, experienced the increased competition of labour flowing in from Nigeria and the rural areas devoid of alternative income generating opportunities besides trade. Recent developments further increased the number of newcomers in the trade business. Since the early 1980s, the Euro-American supply centres procuring Ghana's commodity markets were gradually replaced by the new Asian destinations, first Taiwan and Bangkok and later in the 1990s Dubai and Hong Kong, before the mainland Chinese commodity hubs of Guangzhou and Yiwu became popular in the early 2000s (Marfaing and Thiel 2013b). With this new influx of cheap consumer goods since the late 1990s, supplemented by the goods brought along by newly arrived Chinese traders in Accra around the same period, gendered access barriers to the trade business dissolved dramatically. The success stories of many a male street vendor turned international businessman further motivated more young men to start a career in trade, abandoning their learned profession, such as masonry, shoe making or carpentry, to start selling at higher personal gains.

While these historical developments account for the broader coordinates that framed the transformations of gendered constellations of public space, they do not sufficiently explain the changing dynamics of access and the therewith-related (re)construction of spatial significations. In the next sections, we thus provide greater ethnographic detail on the newly gendered ways of accessing the public spaces of markets and stations. In so doing, we further develop our argument that gender and the public space not only make for historically specific and necessarily fluid phenomena but are also shaped by creative interactions and coalitions formed across gender divides in the everyday.

---

8   The new *'Makola'*, the '31st December Market' named in reference to Rawlings' second coup, was reconstructed on the site of a former transport company. A car park, equally named after Rawlings, was opened in the location of the former market.

Venturing across gendered spaces: access, consolidation and commixture

Negotiating virilocal patterns at the bus station

Up to the late 1970s, the ways men gained access to the station-related trades and businesses were substantially different from the ways the first women entered its space. Most men came in unsolicited, volunteering their labour where labour was in demand. Women, in turn, did not enter on their own terms. If they entered at all, they were brought in by men, usually a brother, uncle, father, or other male relative who already established himself at a more senior level of the station's (male) hierarchies – thus restaging a *virilocal* pattern of socio-economic reproduction. The most common occupation of these first generations of women was to serve food to the male station workers and passengers. Their presence in the station can thus be seen as an extension of 'ideal gender division of labour' in private space onto the public space of the station: men serve as main breadwinner via transport work, while women complement the husband's income with petty trade, and, on a more symbolic level, with the complementing role of providing for food. However, by the late 1970s, these patterns of women's dependency on men brokerage for accessing the (male) station space began to change. As the following vignette illustrates, these changes can be delineated by three successive stages.

Gitty is in her sixties. Born in Kumasi, her husband – formally a driver on the Accra-Kumasi route – brought her to Accra in the early 1970s. At the roadside of a main thoroughfare where the Kumasi-bound cars departed, he arranged for her a small chop bar at which she sold homemade food to her husband's colleagues. As, during the 1979-revolution, the roadside-loading buses got relocated to a newly created bus station, her husband, by then a senior station clerk, invested in a small kiosk structure at the new yard, in which Gitty continued her food service, now running a 24-hours business. In order to manage the wearing shifts, she called on her sister's (yet unmarried) daughter from Kumasi for help. While Gitty's entry into the station space followed a pattern of virilocality (with the wife locating at the husband's site), her niece's mode of entry – brokered from women to women – represents the first new stage of changing female access. However, by and large, men remained in charge of women's settlements in the station as well as their entitlements to space, capital and labour. In much the same vein, competition between men and women remained subtle and 'female intrusions' into the male dominated domain of the transport yard were not perceived as obtrusive.

This changed with the second stage of non-virilocal female claims on station space. From about the mid-1980s onwards, more and more women came in by 'associating' (usually via befriending) with settled female traders. In so doing, they set up a small stall, a plastic chair, a bench or the like next to a fixed structure of a female trader – and from there continued expanding on their own terms. With regard to Gitty's chop bar structure, the successions of incoming female associates can be traces back via the bricolage assemblage of vending tables arranged right in front of her store: with a first line of tables fixed to her store's outer walls, a second line of smaller tables in front of the first row of tables, followed by a line of small plastic chairs in front of these, and a wooden bench placed in front of these yet again more cramped chairs – each of which hosts a female associate that Gitty allowed to settle at the margins of her store, and under her matronage.

Figure 8: A bricolage of vending tables in front of Gitty's (photo: Stasik)

While the thereby created 'agglomerations' of female economic presence inside the station began evoking resentments on the side of male station workers, many of whom considered the growing crowds of female traders inside the station yard an obstacle to their transport operations, it also served to strengthen women's abilities of assertiveness by enabling collective mechanisms of protection against potential threats of expulsion. At the same time, most of these arrangements implied only loose forms of cooperation, allowing each female entrepreneur to elaborate new forms of economy operation independently. This combination of increasing (female) social cohesion and economic self-reliance – coupled with the opportunities offered by what many refer to as the station's 'fast market' – attracted female entrepreneurs of diverse backgrounds to the station yard. While many a newcomer was of rather precarious backgrounds (such as single mothers or young rural migrants) and beforehand only 'roamed the streets' as a hawker, also formally more established, and more successful, vendors began venturing businesses inside the yard.

Adwoa, for example, one of Gitty's many loose associates, came to the station about ten years ago. Before that, she was selling second-hand children's clothes at a small stall in front of her house in a residential area. She discovered the potentials the relocation to the yard could offer when she came to the station as a passenger, seeing the many travellers who, as she said, 'all travel with money'. Though she was anxious about venturing into the unknown terrain of the station, not least because of its reputation of being a 'place of thugs', the prospects of increasing her sales outweighed her reservations. She began exploring the station's market by ways of sporadic forays as a hawker, carrying a selection of her wares all the way from home. After a few initial trials, she met Gitty, who offered her to store her clothes overnight against a small weekly fee. Within less than a month, Adwoa established herself as a station seller. As she further explained to me, besides the need of taking turns in sweeping and paying her storage fee regularly, the main requisite for remaining inside the yard was 'to be free with my business sisters' – denoting an attitude which implies forging solidarity and social support

Figure 9: 'Cash & carry' station vendors (photo: Stasik)

(especially amongst female entrepreneurs) while at the same time maintaining a substantial level of autonomy and granting autonomy to others.

As the presence of female-run businesses based inside the station yard continued to increase – oftentimes on well-nigh exponential terms –, the entrepreneurial links to transport-related trades began decreasing. The entrepreneurship of permanent female station dwellers changed and diversified the repertoire of the station's ancillary micro-economy; with hair salons, manicure parlours, boutiques, and a varied range of sales outlets being established by women in order to cater for the growing presence of female customers. The mode of increasing female densification inside the yard was further eked by the establishment of so-called 'cash and carry'-practices, by which settled female vendors 'portion out' small shares to (female) hawkers to 'carry' inside the station yard, or to 'cash out' and deduct commission on sold shares in order to strategically expand vending space via a moving fleet of peddlers.

Finally, the third stage of changing modes of female access is represented by sorts of 'unsolicited intruders'; that being female semi-stationary hawkers who 'squat' free spots inside the yard without any attempted bonding with established station folks whatsoever. Seizing on the opportunities offered by the growingly dense, multitudinous and confounded socio-spatial arrangements, these ambulant vendors premise their practices of commercial 'intrusion' on the flexibility to occupy any emergent and potentially lucrative free spot clear at will and to clear from it (or from the station yard) again at any time if circumstances so require. Indirectly enabled by the low gatekeeping functions of the loosely structured forms of collaboration and control among established female entrepreneurs, the proliferation of 'intruders' began undermining the conditions of female solidarity. These increasing degrees of fragmentation and 'congestion' of the stations' space led to intensifying forms of competition and conflict. Cutting across formally sedimented segregations of gendered niches of trade, the newly emergent lines of conflict bear witness to on-going shifts in the configuration of group alliances and dissociations. In other words, the questions of who quarrels with whom and who in these quarrels seeks backing by whom gradually ceased to correlate with groups formed along gendered practices of trade.

Figure 10: 'Squatting' vendor in front of a bus (photo: Stasik)

Salient corollaries of these shifts are rumours and narrations marked by denigrating connotations. Instilled both by male and by female station folks, they are in particular aimed at, though not limited to, the latter groups of 'intruding', semi-stationary hawkers. One such circulating story depictures itinerant water sellers as witches, who are said to intrude into stations for testing their latest concoctions (believed to be blended with human blood) amidst the anonymous crowds of travellers by selling them disguised as under-priced drinking water. In a related though more sweeping form of malicious narration, female sellers who roam about the stations' premises, especially those toiling in the less lucrative of trades, are defamed as being sex workers. Men are not spared from them either, with many a story depicting the station's young male day labourers as ill-disposed vagrants prone to larceny, drug abuse and violence.

Underlying these narratives is a particular assumption about the value of the station's space, which in turn bespeaks of changing conceptions of who is eligible to claim and make use of its space and resources. What these stories reveal is an articulation of the struggles for what Clark frames as the 'power of location' (1994, 35), that being the commercial identity as construed in the framework of spatially derived hierarchies. In the growing commixture of gendered actors and economic activities inside the station's space – unfettered from the confines of virilocal dependencies –, women no longer fend for their inclusion but most actively engage in the contest for, and the defence of, privileged positions within its hierarchies. The question is no longer *whether* they have a stake in the lucrative ventures of station businesses, but what means they are capable (and willing) of deploying in order to safeguard and expand their interests.

Emerging uxorilocal patterns at the market

In contrast to the spatial confines of the bus station, markets in Accra have not only moved along with the geographic expansion of the city throughout urban history but more recently also extended their own surface, annexing ever more residential space in their vicinities. From the perspective of Acrca's urban planners, while in the early 1990s the boundaries of Makola Market still matched the officially allocated market area[9], the marketplace has since by far outgrown the core business district, literally merging formerly distinct markets with street

---

9   Interview with Town and Country Planning Department, Accra, December 22, 2011.

vendors filling the interjacent streets and squares. In view of this, recent newcomers' claims to economic space trigger responses from established traders in two respects.

On the one hand, traders in boutiques and market stalls do not view newcomers as competitors for space as such – although it is often alleged that street vendors block the entrances to the shops and markets for deliveries and not least potential customers. Yet, shop and stall owners in the market compete with newcomers in their own income generating activity – that is selling. This is in contrast to the station where 'intruders' engage in a completely different kind of work. On the other hand, actual competition for space is particularly fierce between street vendors. Street vending in the Makola Market area is on the increase, despite municipal efforts to delimit it. Whereas in 2011, at the beginning of our observations, street vendors within and along Makola's Okaishie section were claiming sidewalks adjacent to shops with one line of benches and shelves, while few other vendors roamed the streets, in January 2014 very similar arrangements to the bus stations had been set up, with additional rows of squatters and roamers evermore protruding into the street and increasing crowds of mobile hawkers trying to find buyers for textiles or petty household items.

Accra's market traders mainly define space in terms of its economic potential including, for the case of street vendors, its relative protection from the daily raids of municipal task forces. The redistribution of access to attractive selling space within relatively exclusive 'networks of accumulation' (Meagher 2006) makes for the reproduction of gendered orders of access where, so far, female relatives and acquaintances received preferential treatment. In *Makola*'s publicly administered stalls and its surrounding wholesale boutiques, women traders pass on marketing skills to their female (classificatory) kin from a very early age onwards. Spending large parts of their youth in the market, these aspirants would thus gain commercial experience with the years by taking over increasing responsibilities in the business in return for accumulating capital, including access to selling space, released by the matron upon the newcomers' venture into their own affairs (Clark 1994; Marfaing and Thiel 2013a). Within these gendered arrangements, reproduced across generations through the normative prescription to redistribute acquired wealth to newcomers, men in the market, Overå (2007) thus notes, practically could not get access.

With the upcoming trade in cheap, Asian-produced consumer goods, however, a completely new 'brand of traders' (Darkwah 2007) has emerged that circumvent 'networks of accumulation' in their aspiration to start and expand their trade. With the liberalization of access to international trade – both in terms of regulations and advances in technologies of travel and communication – and the influx of substantial numbers of foreign entrepreneurs in the market, new social groups and actors are today acting as wholesalers. In this new constellation of suppliers selling indiscriminately also small amounts of commodities, young male (as well as females lacking access to the relevant 'networks of accumulation') traders' problem of accessing affordable goods without the intervention of an established trader have been gradually resolved. These newcomers access goods for sale but are devoid of the social relations providing formal selling space. Yet, they find creative means to mobilize female support in their quest for places of economic opportunity.

A learned shoemaker, Daddy, realized that the retail of imported low-cost sandals in Accra allowed him to hugely increase his income as compared to continuing his craft. However, as an internal migrant from Kumasi he was completely devoid of any relation in the market let alone the support of kin when he first arrived in Accra. While his savings allowed him to relatively easily rent a push cart, employ a night watchman for his goods, and buy few selected stocks from a nearby Chinese wholesale boutique, finding a suitable selling space within the

already crowded streets around the market proved extremely difficult. Daddy had just arrived in Accra two months prior to our first meeting in February 2011 and accordingly had not yet consolidated the claim to 'his' space. Thanks to this fact, during the many conversations and accompanying trips for stocking up from the Chinese wholesalers, we could observe this key informant's strategies of mobilizing support in the social environment of the street market. In an effort to convince the first comers in his desired location to tolerate his presence, Daddy continuously performed demonstrations of what he would call 'good character' and determination to improve his life through hard work. Especially regarding the elder female street traders in the area, Daddy made sure to repeatedly underline his humility and deservingness of their 'support', that is, their tolerance of his presence. With regard to the impact other male actors had on 'his' market – above all, the municipal task force, the watchman of an adjacent business, and a local policeman – Daddy found monetary arrangements in order to eradicate potential obstacles to his venture. Based on these relationships, Daddy was able to quadruple his business capital in the period we followed him. This, in turn, allowed him to further expand his business. During the Christmas period of 2011, he decided to start selling in the adjacent bus station as well, targeting wholesale buyers from the entire sub-region.

Female support for men entering the market today also disrupts the gendered convention of supporting female rather than male offspring. Daniel and his brothers, for example, deal in slightly used shoes brought from Togo and Benin in an area, which is subject to daily raids of municipal task forces deployed to clear the sidewalks of informally squatting traders. Upon arrival of the municipal truck, hundreds of ambulant traders rush to gather their goods and escape the uniformed men. Daniel and his brothers, however, continue with their business unimpressed and simply point to the boutique 'their sidewalk' is attached to. The boutique owner, their extended kin and classificatory mother, feels morally obliged to give the youth a chance to start in life, and thus provides relative security from raids, but also from competing traders who seek to encroach on the young men's place. The mechanism of bringing female kin into the market thus becomes extended onto male newcomers. When we revisited this group of informants in 2014, they had extended their business onto multiple and more attractive spots in the shade of a wall by occupying this site whenever the original 'tenant' came late in the morning. At the new spot, the initial towel used to display the shoes had been exchanged for shelves, benches for clients, and a large umbrella; stationary installations made possible through the payment of bribes to local authority. As in the case of Daddy, this observation suggests that female intervention is limited to facilitating initial access. Further expansion in the exploitation of space, however, is dependent on other, predominantly male arenas of power.

On another instance, we observed a newly-emergent uxorilocal pattern of interaction, which took place in the boutique owners' section of the market. In the case of this former mechanic, the gendered expectations of men to provide household income were turned upside down when his wife started to incur large profits in the early days of the China trade. Realizing the potential of the sourcing destination, she took the decision to set up a trade business for her husband, renting shop space in a newly constructed storey building (immediately adjacent to an internationally connected lorry station) and providing all other necessary starting capitals to engage in the import and wholesale of Chinese goods for wholesale traders from the entire sub-region.

These recent forms of men's influx into the market have not capsized gendered significations of the public space of markets. Although male-run traders associations are very visible in the public sphere (e. g. the Ghana Union of Traders Associations on the issue of foreign nationals in Ghanaian retail), media coverage, political representation and urban rumours continue to represent trade as an overall female activity. On the ground, there is no advantage in 'performing'

one's masculinity in the marketplace where, as Daddy's case has shown, humility is gratified, while overtly aggressive behaviour would be sanctioned by first comers. Thus, not surprisingly men in trade adjust to the gendered order of the market by adapting their marketing and retail strategies to their surrounding female colleagues, for example, by copying their ways of announcing prices. Yet, at the same time, male traders also develop their own entrepreneurial strategies, for example in the use of technology, with the sale from push carts being an exclusively male domain. This practice alters the very character of the market, as carts are not only highly visible features in the urban environment but may also be moved easily and therefore allow to occupy sidewalks in front of entrances, junctions and other temporarily available selling spaces. In that sense, men have their bearing on the construction of the public space of the market – both immaterially (in terms of social relations, e. g. relationships of matronage or exchange) and materially (in terms of the market's appearance or navigation).

Flirting as a means of consolidation

The ongoing intensification of the competition over scarce space as observed in our field sites since 2011 forces our informants to turn to more creative strategies for securing continued access to economic space. Coming back to Daddy's case, it illustrates how gender dynamics play into contestations of public space in the everyday. Daddy's main tool for securing the support of those senior to him, and thus more 'entitled' to exploit the public space for their economic activities, is flirting. This includes the maintenance of gendered but non-sexual relationships with classificatory mothers, aunties and sisters. But it also includes going out with the young girls sent by wholesale shops to collect overdue payments. Besides possibly delaying the payment for the crucial week or two until stock is completely sold out, it also secures the warning of approaching police raids by those positioned more strategically.

Generally, (male) newcomers classify elder women in the market as mothers or aunts, yet compliments and joking are crucial elements in the upkeep of beneficial relationships. Daddy would demonstratively ask for advice from the elder traders around his selling spot, point out their experience and character as good mothers and business women. In their everyday interactions, the due respect would be demonstrated in choosing the kinship term invoking the well-balanced, relative position of the interlocutor vis-à-vis Daddy and the by-standers. Such efforts reproduce on a daily basis the positive sentiments that make seniors tolerate one's presence until one's own seniority becomes solidified.

Similarly, inside the stations' spaces, there is a growingly strong component of flirtations and sexually-connoted innuendoes. For instance, many a seemingly business-related encounter between a male station worker and a female vendor is accompanied by wittingly suggestive jokes and coquetries – from both sides of that encounter that is. Virtually any occasional encounter on the yard can prompt these sorts of ribald flirts, be it during the purchase of food, during an enquiry for the price of a given product or service, or simply while watching someone bringing off a bargain. What oftentimes lurks behind a veil of 'sweet talk' is the attempt to establish intimate bonds in order to protect or promote ones trade, however cursory that bond may or may not prove to be. The pattern of exploiting gender (and sexuality) is much common among female sellers seeking (male) patronage by, for example, engaging male station personnel in 'reciprocal amorous exploits' – be it for securing additional support for continued access or for strengthening one's ties in the fluid social networks of the station. Also many a man seeks accomplices for his causes by means of flirts with settled women, hoping for her brokerage in

order to further his job opportunities. In instances when a branch needs a fill-in driver or an additional labourer, she might seize on her ties to (male) branch executives and vouch for his suitability. In yet other instances, she might simply hire him for her own works. Marking an important turn in the station's gender relations, women thus come to serve as gatekeepers for male labourers both into formally female and male-defined station trades.

However, things can, and in fact very often do, become (much) more convoluted once the involved woman or man performs another flirtatious act with a neighbouring male or female station dweller respectively. For, what before was fuelled by dynamics of cross-gender attractions, in an instant turns into similarly gender-specific tensions triggered by jealousy, envy and caginess. Often a time, these 'second-order flirts' form part of deliberate and scheming efforts for causing intrigues, sowing distrust among business rivals and competitors. In the worst case (or the best case, as seen from the perspective of the plotter), this may well amount to an effective form of sabotage. These intricacies do not result from any however obscured forms of transactional sex relationships (Hunter 2002), but from the increasingly complex modes of establishing presence as a gendered person in the growingly confounded constituent of the station's formally clearly (male) gendered space (see Weiss 2009, 44).

Conclusions

We set out in this article to explore the gendered strategies of access to the public spaces of stations and markets in urban Ghana. Having noted that these spaces are associated with male and female economic activities respectively, we established that early access of actors of the opposite gender was mediated by close kin already established in the respective place. The first station women were brought in by either their husbands or other close male relatives. Similarly, elder females in the market who usually provided daughters and nieces with starting capital, including selling space, have recently extended this practice onto young male relatives.

These kin-based modes of newcomers' inclusion have been gradually undermined. While in the second wave of female intrusion in the station, kinship relations still played a mediating role, subsequent waves represent looser forms of association between newcomers and mediating female veterans alongside completely unsolicited forms of intrusion.

Equally, in the market, the kinship-based model of securing access to selling space has been extended to include male newcomers. On the one hand, obligations towards female offspring are now also invoked by (grand-)sons and nephews. On the other, women have been observed to provide their husbands with selling space, thus creating an uxorilocal pattern of interaction. Eventually, the third wave of female intrusion in the station through loose forms of association is mirrored in the market practice of coming in unsolicited by securing the benevolence of established senior females. Especially, these unsolicited forms require constant efforts to consolidate newcomers' claims to economic space in the everyday. Flirting has been presented as a key strategy in this respect, both in the more 'platonic' guises of establishing kinship-analog relations across generational lines as well as a means for mobilizing clearly sexually-connoted relations (in turn prone to create tensions of a different kind).

Despite these commonalities, whereas new patterns of access have emerged in the station, with station women gaining increasing seniority and therewith the ability to mediate access for other female newcomers, male market actors have not (yet) gained this capacity to a noticeable

extent. In other words, whereas female traders in the station have consolidated their position since the 1970s to become mediators of subsequent waves of female intrusion, this development has not been paralleled in the market.

Our third question concerned the impact of these new strategies and patterns of interaction on the gendered construction of public space. In the station, despite the increase in female autonomy, male hostility towards the agglomerations of female presence in a growing variety of businesses speaks of the fact that, by and large, men are still in control of signifying the station space. Equally, in the market, women remain the key gatekeepers to mediate initial access to space. At the same time, specific changes have occurred in the everyday production of spatial significations. In the market, male elites have come to play a key role in the long-term consolidation and expansion of spatial access while specifically male technologies such as push carts impact on the image and spatial organization of the market place. Simultaneously, in the station, female brokerage of male jobs and careers represents a particular transformative potential.

In view of this, if we ought to make comprehensible the gendered organization of space in an urban arena – such as in Accra's central markets and stations –, explanations framed in terms of large-scale economic structures are prone to overlook the everyday relations and practices through which the values and meanings of spatial orders are established, contested and changed.

To be sure, we do not mean to erase economy from the picture, let alone structure. The depiction of the historical variability in the gendered signification of space shows that external factors have a decisive bearing on the gendered spatial orders of Accra's markets and stations. However, what we suggest is relativizing the leverage of these higher-level factors. Macroeconomic structures – and strictures – may well direct the force of incipient or on-going changes of gender relations, reinforcing or refracting their trajectories. Yet, they do not determine the position women and men hold in the relations of production, and neither do they account for the impulses of women and men who cross culturally sedimented boundaries of gendered niches of trades.

Instead of explaining shifts of gender relations in and with space with reference to the abstract coordinates of economic predicaments, we have here zeroed in on the everyday activities and interactions by which gendered articulations of spatial orders are circumvented and negotiated. By ways of this grounded approach, we have traced forth the subtle, gradual processes of male incursions into the female spatial domains of markets and female incursions into the male spatial domains of stations. Whereas the first crossings were predominantly mediated by kinship (or its classificatory substitutes) – which we framed by the notions of uxorilocality and virilocality respectively –, subsequent pursuits of men accessing markets and women accessing stations substantially confounded, and complicated, these patterns. In order to gain continued access and consolidate their position, newcomers mobilize forms of social relationality outside the frames of kin-networks. This happens, for example, through elaborations of alternative networks of support created by means of befriending, flattering or flirting but also through engagements with more formal corridors of power. Yet others seek to circumvent the gate-keeping role of established actors altogether, particularly through utilizations of mobile modes of entrepreneurial activity (e. g. push carts in the market and 'squatting' or 'cash and carry' in the station).

While these shifts triggered a gradual dissolution of virilocal and uxorilocal relations in respective locales, they have not led to an inversion of the gendered significations of the public spaces of Accra's markets and stations. That is to say, neither are there now 'feminized stations' nor 'masculinized markets'. Female incursions into the formerly male-dominated spaces of stations are predominantly (though not exclusively) of a spatial character, with most 'station

women' tending to reproduce the gendered roles ascribed to female economic activities; that is, above all, vending and trading. The transport sector is still run and controlled by men, and, as yet, a female bus driver is still an unheard-of case in Ghana. And although male incursions into markets appear farther-reaching in that they pertain not only to spatial claims, with 'market men' challenging the gender-based exclusiveness of once female-only entrepreneurial activities; by and large, market trade, as well as the marketplace as such, still remain associated with femininity.

Nonetheless, on an interpersonal level, the new spatial constructions – engendered by changing practices and therewith shifting claims to entry and consolidation – enable both men and women to engage in the two public spaces, and at the same time are constituted through these very actions. As gendered spatial significations result from the practices that take place in the respective spaces, hence from the actions and interaction of individuals and groups of individuals, the introduction of new practices brought about by incursions of new individuals induce changes to the spatial significations as well. And though these changes might evolve only gradually, the (gradual) consolidation of new actors in a given spatial domain bears witness to the on-going changes insofar as these newcomers are not reckoned as being 'out of place'. In other words, while social actions are embedded in gendered significations of space, gendered significations of space are contingent upon social actions, and actors. Being exposed to on-going, often subtle shifts, which are impelled by dialectically grounded transformations of quotidian spatial practices and social relations, the 'genderization' of urban space, or, more precisely, of gendered significations of the public spaces of markets and bus stations in Accra, represents a highly contested, complex and volatile social process. In this sense, the gradual incursions of men into markets and women into stations, with their advancing consolidations in the respective spaces, clearly point towards a processual undermining of the spaces of markets as marked bearers of economic activities of women and of the spaces of the stations as unambiguous domains of economic pursuits of men.

References

Adepoju, Aderanti. 1984. "Illegals and expulsion in Africa: the Nigerian experience." *International Migration Review* 18 (3): 426–436.

Afolayan, Adejumoke A. 1988. "Immigration and expulsion of ECOWAS aliens in Nigeria." *International Migration Review* 22 (1): 4–27.

Amoah, Frank E. 1964. *Accra. A Study of the Development of a West African City.* MA diss., Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

Anarfi, John A., and Stephen Kwankye. 2003. "Migration from and to Ghana: a background paper." *Working Paper 4, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty*, Brighton: University of Sussex.

Asiyanbola, R. Abidemi. 1999. "Women intra-urban travel pattern: a case study of Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria." *Ife Social Science Review* 17 (2): 62–72.

Asiyanbola, R. Abidemi. 2002. "Gender differences in intra-urban travel behavior: a preliminary survey in Ibadan, Nigeria." In *Urban Mobility for All*, edited by Xavier Godard and Innocent Fatonzoun, 29–35. Lisse: A. A. Balkema.

Asiyanbola, R. Abidemi. 2007. "Intra-urban transportation, gender and psychological distress in developing countries: Nigeria", International Journal of Agricultural Sciences, Science, Environment and Technology 5 (2): 26–51.

Asomaning, Vida, Fred Amponsah, Memunatu Attah, Nana A. Apt, and Margaret Grieco. 1996. "Bearing the weight: the centrality of head loading in a petty trading structure." In *At Christmas and On Rainy Days: transport, travel and the female traders of Accra*, edited by Margaret Grieco, Nana A. Apt, and Jeff Turner, 59–82. Aldershot: Avebury.

Awuah, Emmanuel. 1997. "Mobilizing for change: a case study of market trader activism in Ghana." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 31 (3): 401–423.

Bohannan, Paul, and George Dalton. 1962. *Markets in Africa.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Bryceson, Deborah F., and John Howe. 1993. "Rural household transport in Africa: reducing the burden on women?" *World Development* 21 (11): 1715–1728.

Brydon, Lynne. 1985. "Ghanaian responses to the Nigerian expulsions of 1983." *African Affairs* 84 (337): 561–585.

Clark, Gracia 1984. "Pools, clients and partners: relations of capital and risk control between Kumasi market women." Paper presented at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Los Angeles.

Clark, Gracia 2001. "Gender and profiteering: Ghana's market women as devoted mothers and 'human vampire bats'" In *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, edited by Dorothy Hodgson and Sherul McCurdy, 293–311. Oxford: James Currey.

Clark, Gracia. 1986. "Shifts in gender and ethnic identification with specific trading roles in Asante." Paper presented at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Los Angeles.

Clark, Gracia. 1994. *Onions Are My Husband: survival and accumulation by West African market women.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Daily Graphic (Ghana). 1979. "A fitting monument to kalabule", August 30.

Daniell, William F. 1856. "On the ethnography of Akkrah and Adampé, Gold Coast, Western Africa." *Journal of the Ethnological Society* 4: 1–32.

Darkwah, Akosua. 2007. "Work as duty and work as joy: understanding the role of work in the lives of Ghanaian female traders of global consumer items." In *Women's Labor in the Global Economy: speaking in multiple voices*, edited by Sharon Harley, 206–220. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.

De Marees, P. 1965 [1600]. *A Description and Historicall Declaration of the Golden Kingdome of Guinea…, in Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Reprint. New York: AMS Press.

Doran, Joanna. 1990. "A moving issue for women: is low cost transport an appropriate intervention to alleviate women's burdens in southern Africa." *Gender Analysis in Development*, Discussion Paper No. 1, Norwich: School of Development Studies.

Ellis, Stephen, and Janet MacGaffey. 1997. "Le commerce international informel en Afrique sub-saharienne : Quelques problèmes méthodologiques et conceptuels. " *Cahiers d'études africaines* 37 (145): 11–37.

Elson, Diane. 1999. "Labor markets as gendered institutions: equality, efficiency and empowerment issues." *World Development* 27 (3): 611–627.

Fadare, S. O., and Wole Morenikeji. 2001. "Gender-bias in intra-urban trip patterns in Niger State, Nigeria." *International Journal of Transportation Studies* 1 (1): 73–85.

Government of Ghana. 1993. *Accra Planning and Development Programme: Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area*. Ministry of Local Government, Department of Town and Country Planning, with UNHABITAT.

Grieco, Margaret, Jeff Turner, and Edward A. Kwakye. 1995. "Informal public transport and the woman trader in Accra, Ghana." Paper presented at the 7th World Conference on Transport Research, Sydney.

Grieco, Margaret, Nana A. Apt, and Jeff Turner. 1996. *At Christmas and On Rainy Days: transport, travel and the female traders of Accra*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Gunther, John. 1955. *Inside Africa*. New York: Harper.

Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel. 1994. "Associational life, civil society, and democratization in Ghana." In *Civil Society and the State in Africa*, edited by John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, 125–148. Boulder: Rienner.

Hanson, Susan. 2010. "Gender and mobility: new approaches for informing sustainability." *Gender, Place & Culture* 17 (1): 5–23.

Hart, Keith. 1973. "Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11 (1): 61–89.

Harts-Broekhuis, E. J. A., and Otto Verkoren. 1997. "Gender differentiation among market-traders in central Mali." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 78: 214–221.

Haugen, Heidi Østbø. 2012. "Nigerians in China: a second state of immobility." *International Migration* 50 (2): 65–80.

Heap, Simon. 1990. "The development of motor transport in the Gold Coast, 1900–39." *Journal of Transport History* 3 (2): 19–37.

Herskovits, M. J. 1952. *Economic Anthropology*. New York: Knopf.

Hill, Polly. 1962. "By air to Niamey" Working paper, University of Ghana, Legon.

Hill, Polly. 1963. *Statistics of Ownership of Mammy Lorries in Ghana*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Hill, Polly. 1965. "Notes on the Kumasi cattle and sheep (and goat) markets." Working paper, University of Ghana, Legon.

Hill, Polly. 1966. "Landlords and brokers: a West African trading system (with a note on Kumasi butchers)." *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines* 6 (23): 349–66.

Hill, Polly. 1984. *Indigenous Trade and Market Places in Ghana, 1962–64*. Jos: University of Jos.

Hunter, Mark. 2002. "The materiality of everyday sex: thinking beyond 'prostitution'." *African Studies* 6 (1): 99–120.

Khosa, Meshack. 1997. "Sisters on slippery wheels: women taxi drivers in South Africa." *Transformation* 33: 18–33.

Law, Robin. 1999. "Beyond 'women and transport': towards new geographies of gender and daily mobility." *Progress in Human Geography* 23 (4): 567–588.

Malmberg Calvo, Christina. 1994. "Case studies on the role of women in rural transport: access of women to domestic facilities." SSATP Working Paper 11. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Marfaing, Laurence, and Alena Thiel. 2013a. "New actors, new orders: the changing norms of market entry in Senegal's and Ghana's urban Chinese markets." *Africa* 83 (4): 646–669.

Marfaing, Laurence, and Alena Thiel. 2013b. "Petits commerçants chinois en Afrique et saturation des marchés ouest-africains: déconstruction d'une rumeur (Dakar-Accra)." *Migrations Sociétés* 149 (25): 137–158.

Massey, Doreen. 1999. *Space, Place, and Gender.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Meagher, Kate. 2006. "Social capital, social liabilities, and political capital: social networks and informal manufacturing in Nigeria." *African Affairs* 105 (421): 553–582.

Mintz, Sidney. 1971. "Men, women and trade." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13: 247–69.

Moore, Henrietta L. 1986. *Space, Text, and Gender: an anthropological study of the Marakwet of Kenya.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Müller, Angelo. 2011. "New migration processes in contemporary China: the constitution of African trader networks in Guangzhou." *Geographische Zeitschrift* 99 (2/3): 104–122.

Ninsin, Kwame A. 2000. "Informalization and Ghanaian politics." In *Ghana: changing values, changing technologies*, edited by Helen Lauer, 113–137. Washington, DC: Council for Research on Values and Philosophy.

Ntewusu, Samuel A. 2012. *Settling In and Holding On: a socio-economic history of northern traders and transporters in Accra's Tudu: 1908–2008.* Leiden: African Studies Center.

Ntewusu, Samuel A. 2013. "One hundred years of Muslim community in Accra: a historical study of Tudu from 1900 to 2000." In *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara*, edited by Pade Badru and Brigid Maa Sackey, 67–98. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press.

Nypan, Astrid. 1960. *Market Trade: a study of market traders in Accra.* Achimota: Economic Research Division, University College of Ghana.

Opare, J. A. 2003. "Kayayei: the women head porters of southern Ghana." *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 18 (2): 33–48.

Oquaye, Mike. 1980. *Politics in Ghana, 1972–1979.* Accra: Tornado Publications.

Overå, Ragnhild. 2007. "When men do women's work: structural adjustment, unemployment and changing gender relations in the informal economy of Accra, Ghana." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (4): 539–563.

Oyesiku, O. O., and B. O. Odufuwa. 2002. "Gender perspectives in travel behaviour of motorcycle passengers in Nigerian intermediate cities." In *Urban Mobility for All*, edited by Xavier Godard and Innocent Fatonzoun, 13–19. Lisse: A. A. Balkema.

Pellow, Deborah. 1977. *Women in Accra: options for autonomy.* Algonac: Reference Publications.

Pliez, Olivier. 2010. "Toutes les routes de la soie mènent à Yiwu (Chine) : entrepreneurs et migrants musulmans dans un comptoir économique chinois." *L'Espace Géographique* 2: 132–145.

Porter, Gina. 1988. "Perspectives on trade, mobility and gender in a rural market system: Borno North-East Nigeria." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 79 (2): 82-92.

Porter, Gina. 1995. "The impact of road construction on women's trade in rural Nigeria." *Journal of Transport Geography*, 3 (1): 3–14.

Porter, Gina. 2002. "Living in a walking world: rural mobility and social equity issues in Sub-Saharan Africa." *World Development* 30 (2): 285–300.

Quarcoopome, S. S. 1993. 'A history of the urban development of Accra: 1877–1957', *Research Review (University of Ghana)* 9 (1/2): 20–32.

Redmayne, Paul. 1938. *The Gold Coast Yesterday and Today*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Rivière, Thierry. 1987. "Commerce et Politiques du Royame d'Accra 1600–1680." MA diss., Université de Paris I Pantheon–Sorbonne.

Robertson, Claire. 1983. "The death of Makola and other tragedies." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 17 (3): 469–495.

Robertson, Claire. 1984. *Sharing the Same Bowl: A socioeconomic history of women and class in Accra, Ghana.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. 2004. *For the City Yet to Come: changing African life in four cities.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Smock, Audrey C. 1977. "Ghana: From Autonomy to Subordination." In *Women, Roles, and Status in Eight Countries*, edited by Janet Z. Giele and Audrey C. Smock, 173–216. New York: Wiley Publications.

Urasa, Irene. 1990. *Women and Rural Transport: an assessment of their role in sub-Saharan Africa.* Geneva: International Labour Office.

Van der Geest, Kees. 2011. „North-south migration in Ghana: what role for the environment?" *International Migration* 49 (s1): e69–e94.

Visualsociety.com. 2011. "Northerners in Selwyn market, 20th century." URL http://ghanahistoricalarchive.visualsociety.com/2011/03/07/selwyn-market-2-20th-century-accra (accessed December 2011).

Von Bülow, Dorthe. 1992. "Bigger than men?: gender relations and their changing meaning in Kipsigis Society, Kenya." *Africa* 62 (4): 523–546.

Weiss, Brad. 2009. *Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops: global fantasy in urban Tanzania.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Wilson, Angelina, and Maurice B. Mittelmark. 2013. "Resources for adjusting well to work migration: women from northern Ghana working in head porterage in Greater Accra." *Africa Today* 59 (4): 24–38.

Wrangham, Elizabeth. 2004. "An African road revolution: the Gold Coast in the period of the Great War." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32 (1): 1–18.

Yeboah, Ian E. A. 2000. "Structural adjustment and emerging urban form in Accra, Ghana." *Africa Today* 47 (2): 61–89.

www.spp1448.de