



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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TITLE: THE KONKOMBA YAM MARKET

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ABSTRACT:

My research focuses on the yam market in Ghana –world’s second largest yam producer-, where the production of yam is largely dominated by the Konkomba, although it was not until the last decades that they began to be involved in trade.

The Konkomba were an acephalous group who were placed by the colonial administration under the authority of Dagomba and Nanumba chiefs during the colonization.

Formerly, yam trade was in hands of these two groups together with the Asante; nonetheless, from the 50s onwards the Konkomba developed a network that coordinated Konkomba farmers and traders as a way of getting a better price for their produce. Different markets were developed following a growing demand, but the big push in Konkomba yam trading came in 1981, when a war between Nanumbas and Konkombas in the Northern Region of Ghana led to the creation of the Konkomba Yam Market in Accra. This market is organized by sheds which belong to clans. Nobody can sell yams without an agreement with the owner of a shed. Konkombas retailers, middlemen and farmers not only sell to consumers but also to other markets in the city and the region, and export to countries like UK and USA.

My aim is to present the first results of my fieldwork in this market, describing its organization and the different roles of the people involved in it, taking especial attention to women, whose role has been completely overlooked in the studies of the Konkombas.

AUTHOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

María José Pont Cháfer graduated in Anthropology and English Studies from the UNED (Spain). Master in International Relations and African Studies from the UAM (Spain), she is currently a doctoral student in Social Sciences (comparative research in Anthropology, History, and Sociology) in the Centre Nobert Elias at the EHESS (France).