

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Ian B. Edwards for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on April 30, 2003.

Title: The Fetish Market and Animal Parts Trade of Mali, West Africa: An Ethnographic Investigation into Cultural Use and Significance.

Abstract approved: **Redacted for Privacy**

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David McMurray

While much research has examined the intricate interactions associated with the harvesting of wild animals for human consumption, little work has been undertaken in attempting to understand the greater socio-cultural significance of such use. In addition, to properly understand such systems of interaction, an intimate knowledge is required with regard to the rationale or motivation of resource users. In present day Mali, West Africa, the population perceives and upholds wildlife as a resource not only of valuable animal protein, in a region of famine and drought, but a means of generating income. The animal parts trade is but one mechanism within the larger socio-cultural structure that exploits wildlife through a complex human-environmental system to the benefit of those who participate. Moreover, this informal, yet highly structured system serves both cultural and outsider demand through its goods and services. By using traditional ethnographic investigation techniques (participant observation and semi-structured interviews) in combination with thick narration and multidisciplinary analysis (socio-cultural and biological-environmental), it is possible to construct a better understanding of the functions, processes, and motivation of those who participate. In a world where there is but only a limited supply of natural and wild resources, understanding human-environmental systems is of critical value.

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The Fetish Market and Animal Parts Trade of Mali, West Africa:  
An Ethnographic Investigation into Cultural Use and Significance

By  
Ian B. Edwards

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APPROVED: **Redacted for Privacy**

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Ian B. Edwards, Author

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# **The Fetish Market and Animal Parts Trade of Mali, West Africa: An Ethnographic Investigation into Cultural Use and Significance**

## **Chapter 1**

### **An Introduction: Mali, Me and being a PCV**

In 1997, I arrived in Mali as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV), assigned to the Natural Resource Management Sector. As such, the current environmental concerns of the country colored my introduction to Mali. Deforestation, erosion, desertification, as well as biodiversity and wildlife conservation are significant issues in Mali where the vast majority of the rural population is engaged in agricultural activities.

As a trainee, I was run through a cookie cutter-like program of natural resource management based on Western (North American) perceptions and practices. When I was installed as a full fledged Peace Corps volunteer in the town of Manantali located in the western Kayes region, I was told to design and implement environmental education programs for both children and adults. I was expected to reiterate many of the western environmental perceptions and practices in which I had been trained. Needless to say, this was not exactly what I ended up spending the majority of two and half years doing.

It was as a Peace Corps volunteer that I came across what I have termed the animal parts trade of Mali: the socio-cultural and socio-economic system that facilitates the acquisition, transportation, and eventual sale of wildlife to be used for a variety of culturally sanctioned practices. Living in the town of Manantali, I observed rural hunters harvesting wildlife not only for protein, but also for the economic value of various animal parts that serve the needs and well being of the population at large. These animal parts were then transported to local, regional and national markets to be sold and subsequently used in the preparation of culturally based medicines and magic. I found myself in an ethical dilemma. One part of me, the natural resource manager, was appalled and

demanded that I take action to halt the apparent wanton consumption of wildlife and resulting threat to biodiversity. Another, larger part of me, the anthropologist, posed a very simple question: How can I presume to attack the consumption of wildlife and potential threat to biodiversity without understanding the culturally immersed reality in which it exists? The anthropologist in me won out and I spent the majority of my two and half years trying to understand the- who, what, where and why of wildlife use in Mali<sup>1</sup>.

When I was installed in the town of Manantali, I did what most new PCVs do for the first couple of months: get to know the community. Getting to know the township was eye opening. In a few short weeks I was demystified of grandiose images of Africa, where giraffes, wildebeest, and elephants roamed. The environment was hot, at times oppressively humid and nowhere did I spy charismatic-mega-fauna strolling about. I rented a hut from a local family, conveniently located behind one of the local schools and near the central market square where women sold whatever their garden plots produced. Those first months I would wander about the town taking it all in, talking to people, while trying to understand where I had ended up.

The town was essentially broken into three sections; the “village” (where the market was located and I resided), the “dam” (where a nearly 2 kilometer hydroelectric-dam was constructed in the 1980’s), and the “city” (where pre-fabricated-European-style-modular-housing was set-up for those who built and run the dam).

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<sup>1</sup> I am proud to note that much of the information gathered in the course of my informal ethnographic investigation was used to help design a culturally based environmental education program for the local school system and community at large.

The construction of the dam forever changed the face of Manantali. Prior to its construction, Manantali was a village of about 200. When the dam was built, it displaced nearly 14,000 people that lived in what would become the reservoir (the vast majority of these people were relocated to the town of Manantali and other nearby villages).

However, when the reservoir was inundated a small population took up residence in what was then a newly created reserve. Known as the Bafing Faunal Reserve (BFR), the land was allocated and further isolated through the construction of the Manantali dam. Partly due to its initial near-pristine state, and further protected by national demarcation, the area known as the Bafing is possibly the most diverse and viable ecological zone in Mali.

Close to 200 Malinke live within the BFR. For the most part the Malinke of the BFR tend gardens and small-scale agricultural plots hacked and burned out of the forest. Malinke men when they are not tending their plots (some of the time) or drinking tea (most of the time) are avid hunters and regularly contribute wild animal meat, known to many as bushmeat, to the family cooking pot. However, supplying protein, as I came to understand, was only one of many valued uses.

On market day everyone who had something to sell was to be found peddling his or her wares, goods, and services in the market square. I remember strolling about, trying to find "AA" batteries, when I came across a group of men who were selling various wild animal parts. I was shocked and amazed. Lying at my feet were the heads of eagles, snake skins, antelope horns, and other items I could only guess at. Summoning up my courage and recalling my meager vocabulary, I introduced myself and asked what it was

that they did. "Marabaga," was the resounding reply. The stupid look on my face clearly explained that I did not have a clue what the men were talking about.

At first, communication was difficult, but after months of embarrassing myself with my poor grammar and pronunciation I slowly began to pick up the local vernacular (a mix of Bambara, Malinke and French). Though I continued to butcher the language, drawing laughs, raised eyebrows, and looks of bewilderment, I came to know these animal parts vendors and many other local townsfolk. I also came to learn the meaning of "Marabaga" (animal parts).

Nearly every market day, I would sit and visit with these men, practicing my language skills and learning a great deal about Malian wildlife use in the process. The "Marabaga men" as I came to call them, opened my eyes to the informal, yet highly structured trade in wildlife parts. While the "Marabaga men" sat and waited for the occasional hunter (mostly those belonging to the Malinke ethnic group from the BFR) to arrive with supplies (i.e., animal parts), local people would approach and purchase various items, such as the tooth of a hyena, a piece of lion skin, or some odd looking paste that I was told was monitor lizard grease.

The lizard grease (reduced fat) was actually purchased by a woman I had come to know, who informed me that it would make her child "grow up fast." On numerous occasions I would sit and watch as the woman would rub her baby down with the lizard grease, applying an even coat to all the child's body. Most people seemed to come and purchase various animal skins, all of which were sold by a standard measure and price. Some of the skins that I had seen sold by the "Marabaga men" were turned into amulets

known as “grigris” that have a wide range of uses such as protection and various forms of personal enhancement. Other animal parts were sold and used to cure fevers, lesions, breaks, household arguments, marital affairs, and sexual disorders. It seemed if you had an ailment, disorder, or issue, the “Marabaga men” could fix it.

After having built a rapport with several of the “Marabaga men” I came to meet a few of their suppliers, traditional Malinke hunters from the BFR. For nearly two years I spoke with and learned a great deal from these and other locals. All the while I had to reassess what I had been taught as a natural resource manager and anthropologist. Prior to leaving for Mali I reviewed all manner of environmental literature and came across numerous references to bushmeat, the harvesting of wild animals for food, and other issues related to desertification, but nothing about the apparent trade and use in wild animal parts. I’ll never forget what the local government agent assigned to the BFR told me when I ventured to inquire about wildlife harvesting and use, “We are Muslim. We do not use wildlife.”

None of the “Marabaga men” or those hunters that supplied them considered themselves Muslim. They were the first to point out to me that Islam may be the official religion, but traditional beliefs were still prominent in society. After all, to be a “Marabaga man” requires that one sell items that are not associated with Islamic practices; rather, the animal parts are sold and used for traditional medicine and magic. The fact that the men stay in business suggests that traditional beliefs are still recognized and valued.

Furthermore, the informal trade in animal parts that I had observed in Manantali, was not an isolated cultural phenomenon. Located in Bamako, the capital city of Mali, is the entity known simply as the “Marabaga Yoro” or “fetish market”. Being centrally located and catering to the largest and most diverse population in the country, the fetish market of Bamako acts as the hub for the animal parts trade in Mali. However, I did not necessarily realize this at the time. The “Marabaga men” had told me about the Bamako fetish market, relating tales of having traveled to the capital to sell large stock piles of animal parts. But to actually stand in the Bamako market and see over thirty vendors selling all manner of heads, limbs, skins, and conspicuous vials of murky liquid, is something else entirely. To put it mildly, it was overwhelming.

Though I had seen the fetish market many times during my brief stays in Bamako, I had never taken the time to look further into it. The majority of my time had been focused on the motives and needs of those who harvest wildlife in the region of Manantali. The fetish market seemed to me to represent the end of the line for the animal parts, a point of distribution. From my conversations and observations as a volunteer, I pieced together a rough idea of the system that facilitated such wildlife use. It was simple and is modeled after a typical supply system.

A supply system is a group of elements (i.e., components, units, individuals) that functions through a series of interactions to serve a demand. Demand in this case is oriented toward select species of wildlife that hold value. The value of any given species (or part of) is rooted in cultural ontology and belief and as such is highly relative. In order to meet, or serve, this demand, fixed in cultural values, a system exists. It was only

through my contact with the “Marabaga men” of Manantali that I was able to glimpse the system they represented.

Much like the tip of an iceberg, the “Marabaga men” were the most visible aspect of something that is much larger. Through this group of five men, I was given a vantage point to sketch the system in which they hold prominent roles. In addition to the “Marabaga men”, there were hunters who harvested and middlemen who transported animal parts. These elements (hunters, middlemen, and animal part vendors) are oriented toward maintaining and supplying wild animal parts while serving their own purposes at the same time. I refer to this as the system of supply. The demand that this supply serves is seen in the myriad of uses observed and reported by the clients that purchase animal parts from vendors, which I call the continuum of associated use. Both the system of supply and continuum of associated use, when brought together, complete the overarching system of culturally based wildlife use in Mali.

Given the unregulated and unmonitored status of the use of wildlife in Mali, there is a concern as to the sustainability of such trade and practices. This concern has been voiced by national agencies as well as non-governmental organizations. Foremost it is a concern to those who base their livelihoods on the animal parts trade. Hunters and animal parts vendors alike have raised questions as to, “where did all the animals go?” Without a fundamental understanding of the values and interactions associated with the animal parts trade of Mali, how can one impose a management scheme or conservation strategy- to do so is unethical and severely limits the efficacy of any program of action.



Such concerns rise in importance when one reviews the current literature.

Though they serve their own purposes, the majority of research that has been conducted on wildlife use in West Africa has been oriented around the bushmeat trade. Though it holds many similarities, the animal parts trade is truly unique and does not adhere to the same form or function as the bushmeat trade. From reviewing this literature it became quite clear to me that most researchers were interested in aesthetic species, their numbers, and at best a generalization as to the use and cultural value of such species. Such shortcomings may be a result of focusing on the quantitative while giving the qualitative a cursory glossing over. But I believe that reality is in the nuts and bolts, not in how many nuts and bolts there happen to be.

### **Purpose of the Research Project:**

I want to propose that an understanding of the socio-cultural complexity of the animal parts distribution systems in Africa should accompany any larger biological-environmental analyses of the crises affecting African fauna. Concentrating solely on the charismatic mega fauna may be a good way to raise money and awareness in the West, but it runs rough shod over indigenous cultural beliefs and practices. That is unethical and immoral, perhaps even racist; and may create new problems instead of solving old ones. I do not dispute that African biodiversity is being threatened. What I want to draw attention to in this study, however, is the fascinating and complicated uses to which many of the slain animals' parts are put. I will show that the animals do not, as is commonly thought, just end up as fur coats, in foreign zoos, or on menus at local bushmeat

restaurants. These more typical explanations for declining wildlife numbers suggest human waste or luxury consumption alone account for the uses to which the animals are put. Instead, I want to show in this study that fauna harvested in Mali (and I suspect other nearby regions of West Africa) form integral components of large, complicated social and cultural networks. The parts are highly valued because they fulfill a variety of very important cultural needs.

I came to Mali with strong convictions about the overriding necessity to address local threats to biodiversity. I left with an appreciation of the centrality to Malian culture of the animal parts trade. My transformation took place gradually after having lived in Mali on and off for almost three years total, and after having begun to apprentice to what the locals in the Bamako fetish market call an "animal parts master" (Marabaga Karamogo). Under his tutelage I learned about the many uses of animal parts, from ingredients in routine medicinal prescriptions to elements in magical potions. I also became familiar with the intricate and sophisticated systems of supply which radiate out into the Malian hinterlands and which include a large array of suppliers, both amateur and professional.

Descriptions of the supply and demand systems, which have built up around the animal parts trade, in conjunction with explanations of the myriad uses to which the parts are put, form the body of this thesis. An appreciation of the sophisticated and intricate systems and practices I am outlining here will, I hope, cause national and international researchers to come to respect the local, cultural value of African fauna. It is also my intention to make institutions and NGOs concerned with African wildlife conservation

aware of the need to carry out ethnographically-based, qualitative research into local, human-environmental synergistic systems. Privileging the biological-environmental over the socio-cultural threatens to disrupt not only the livelihood, but the whole way of life of countless local people. In the end, it will not solve the crisis of African faunal decline, it will only substitute one tragedy for another.

### **My Ethnographic Method:**

Years ago, as an undergraduate major in anthropology, I recall the fateful day when one of the department professors introduced the name Clifford Geertz and what has widely become known as the “cockfight story” (From *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973). The story underlines a lesson that I have taken to heart since the day I first came to learn of his research methodology: Geertz taught us that by paying close attention and by spending lots of time with a people, we could begin to uncover layers of meaning in relation to an event. He called this “thick description,” which is a tool that lends an all-important cultural texture to a given event or series of interactions.

Geertz is a master of narrative, providing a rich background in which he places people and their daily actions. Such description is invaluable when it comes to disseminating culturally specific information for others to consume. One would be hard pressed to try and explain the meaning of any cultural phenomena without the use of in-depth descriptive narratives. Moreover, those who attempt to describe social groups, human-environmental systems, interactions and meaning without the aid of such

invaluable tools fall well short of presenting a culturally sound, let alone, sensitive account.

Like Geertz, I too believe that rigid scientific methods must give way to more interpretive, narrative-based analyses where human activities and meaning are involved. I think the study of the value of wildlife and its use can best be accomplished through in-depth, qualitative ethnographic investigation. The basis for such an ethnographic approach lies in participation, conversation, and observation. Through these methods, one can begin to form a clearer cultural understanding. Due to my previous experience in Mali, I spoke Bambara (the most predominant language in the country) as well as French (the colonial language used to converse across dialectic barriers). With these languages I could directly approach vendors in the fetish market as well as the Artisana, talk to them and take notes. These notes were then reviewed and expanded upon through a nightly iterative process. Thanks to my apprenticeship, I also managed to participate in the life of the fetish market and animal parts trade.

Though it may seem overly simplistic, there are clear benefits to such an approach. For one, it allows the researcher the ability to move with the research. By this I mean, instead of following a strict routine of in-depth structured interviews with specific individuals, it allows for the unexpected and unpredictable. In other words the research and its approach must be adaptable<sup>2</sup>. Case in point: my initial plan to interview vendors of the fetish market as well as the Artisana did not pan out as I had hoped. Soon

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<sup>2</sup> Initially I had planned to include another aspect of the animal parts trade in Mali, the Artisana. The Artisana is a formal entity that can be described as an artists' market. In the Artisana there are jewelers, woodcarvers and leatherworkers, all three groups of vendors use wildlife though they vary greatly in degree. For the purposes of my research I was interested in the leatherworkers of the Artisana because they derive a living from fabricating various tourist goods out of wildlife.

after I started approaching vendors of the Artisana, asking them questions about their use of wildlife, how long it took to make a crocodile skin purse, how was it prepared, the typical barrage of ethnographic questions, it became blazingly clear that I was making people very uncomfortable and suspicious.

Many vendors of the Artisana would listen to my carefully composed description of research and promptly tell me that I should leave because I was a “spy” trying to stop their business. However, many more vendors of the Artisana would completely ignore my attempt to engage them as they continually tried to sell me the wares of their trade. It was clear to me after several attempts to engage vendors of the Artisana that either I was going to be perceived as a “spy”, or strictly as a “tourist”. The fundamental connection between the two is that as a “spy” I was a threat to the vendors’ livelihood and as a “tourist” who does not spend any money; I amounted to nothing more than a waste of time from their perspective.

This was in direct contrast to my general reception in the fetish market. It is rather interesting to note that one might think it would be the other way around. It should have been much easier to engage vendors of the Artisana than those of the fetish market. After all, the Artisana is oriented toward tourists while the fetish market is perceived as being so culturally immersed as to be unapproachable by outsiders. To my surprise it was quite the opposite. The fetish market was warm and inviting in comparison to the Artisana and due to this “easy access” I focused on the fetish market rather than the Artisana.

Approaching vendors of the fetish market was as simple as walking up and introducing my research and self. The vast majority of fetish market vendors were readily engaging and extremely gracious in divulging information and knowledge pertaining to wildlife and its traditional use. Vendors that perceived me as a threat or a nuisance were left alone and I focused my attention on those not only willing to talk but in some cases fighting over who got to talk first. Within the first week I was not only accepted into the social dealings of the fetish market vendors, but also granted the position of an apprentice to one of the highest ranked vendors of the market.

Being accepted as an apprentice to a vendor of the fetish market was key to gaining insight into the elements, interactions and functions of the market as well as providing a milieu for identifying and interviewing other associated individuals. By other associated individuals I mean those people who come to the fetish market to purchase items, and those that supply the market. Incidentally, it is worth noting that had a Malian wished to learn about the traditional use of wildlife, or rather from a Malian perspective chosen to be a fetish market vendor, they would have approached a vendor seeking an apprenticeship in much the same manner that I did.

On any given day I would arrive in the fetish market in the morning and sit and talk with my key informants and other participating vendors until mid-afternoon. Throughout the day I would take notes on what was discussed with each vendor (and/or associated individual) as well as other observations: vendor sales, costs of supplies, vendor inventories, uses of parts, any and everything that I saw, heard and did. It is from these comprehensive notes and observations that I pieced together my analysis of the

elements, functions and interactions of the fetish market, as well as the complementary services, or culturally based needs, that wildlife parts and products fulfill in the urban setting of Bamako, Mali.

### **The Layout of this Thesis:**

Given the detailed and in-depth nature of this research, a user-friendly format structure, based on descriptive narratives in conjunction with wildlife and cultural analysis, has been developed to help maintain reader interest as well as facilitate the transfer of the newly acquired knowledge and information. Having outlined the research project, methodology, and approach in the introduction, chapter two, *Welcome to the Fetish Market*, offers a description of the market, including elements, interactions, relationships, governing rules, and insight based on my time as an apprentice to a well-positioned fetish market vendor.

Chapter three, *The Continuum of Associated Use*, offers a look beyond the surface identifying a wide range of uses and demand. This continuum is based on conversations with informants and provides insight as to the demand, context and reality of wildlife use. Within this chapter a distinction is made between those clients seeking items to be used for culturally sanctioned purposes, and those that do not. Each is discussed independently as insider demand (i.e, traditional and culturally based), and outsider demand (i.e., serving foreign interests).

Prior to an in depth discussion of the associated uses identified as making up cultural or insider demand, special attention is paid to the various choices and decisions

clients of the fetish market go through. A systems perspective has been included along with a narrative to properly align the reader. Within the realm of items related to serving cultural demand, there are three types of associated use: medicinal; ambiguous reports (i.e., perceived as medicinal, magical or an act of sorcery); and items used for magic and sorcery. The latter part of this section is reserved for describing several examples of each type, lending insight to cultural demand and use.

Where local peoples have created and help to maintain cultural demand, at the same time there exists outsider demand. As such, a section has been included to discuss the very real issues of outsider demand. The major topics included in this section revolve around the increasing popularity of the fetish market as a tourist attraction, exotic live animal trade geared toward western nations and collectors, and the specialized systems that exist to support such. A supplementary section has been included with a brief analysis of trends identified through the comparison of cultural to outsider demand.

Chapter four, *Maintaining and Serving Demand: The Systems of Supply*, is reserved to discuss the complex systems of supply that exist to serve demand. Just how do the species and items sold in the fetish market get there, where do they come from? In answering these important questions, special attention is paid to the socio-cultural and economic significance of wildlife supply systems. This is accomplished through detailed systems diagrams accompanied by descriptions of the roles and services provided and facilitated through the fetish market. The formulation of those systems diagrams included is based off of the point of view of a fetish market vendor (also included). As identified through conversations with informants and expanded upon based on my unique



position and perspective as an anthropologist and apprentice to a fetish market vendor several sub-systems have been documented.

The first sub-system, inherent to maintaining a steady supply to meet cultural demand is identified and described as opportunists; those who tend to be informally trained and derive the majority of their living through other means (i.e., farmers). Within this locally perceived category, a further division is seen between, opportunist children and their adult counterparts. Though given the label as opportunists, they provide, as a group, a steady supply of small-scale wildlife.

Professionals on the other-hand are highly trained and skilled at what they do. As such, the services and means associated with them illuminate another sub-system of the over all supply of the fetish market. Professional suppliers, include those individuals who are typically referred to as traditional (similar to those identified within the Bafing Faunal Reserve), as well as secular hunters (non-traditional hunters) that tend to be Muslim. All professional hunters tend to supply, in comparison to opportunists, large-scale wildlife.

Given the different approaches and needs of opportunists in comparison to professionals the two groups of suppliers remain separate and distinct. Furthermore, professionals tend to view opportunists as illegitimate hunters without the training and knowledge to harvest large-game. As long as opportunists are content to harvest small-game, most professionals are happy. Though I have never seen nor heard of a violation of this informal convention, I suspect that if an opportunist were to harvest a large-game

animal, professional hunters would seek some form of restitution for infringing on what is decidedly off limits to opportunist suppliers.

In addition to documenting and describing the various interactions involved in opportunist and professional supply, a section has been included to relate the unique functions of middlemen, without which, the over all system of supply would be greatly impeded. Similar to the roles and functions of middlemen is the specialized distribution of several items found within the fetish market. Though similar to middlemen, specialized distributors are discussed within their own section, as they tend to reflect formalized systems of production and delivery, rather than informal systems of supply.

Once each of the sub-systems is outlined and discussed, an attempt is made to bring all the independent actions together. The end result of this is a composite, or comprehensive systems diagram illustrating the over-all system of supply that exists to maintain the fetish market. The inclusion of this compound systems perspective allows the reader to not only visualize the complexity of such wildlife use systems, but allows insight as to how the fetish market serves both cultural and outsider demand. This all-encompassing system is what I have come to term the animal parts trade of Mali.

Chapter five, *Entering Dialogues in the Literature*, commences with a discussion of the varied terminology encountered in the course of this research, both in the field and in texts. Several observations are made with regard to the current literature and information pertaining to wildlife use, Mali, and West Africa in general. A division is described within the bodies of work reviewed and reflects two different camps; the socio-culturalists (representing qualitative and emic research), and the environmental-

conservationists (representing quantitative, species oriented research). This division is first outlined in continuum of disciplinary perspective and is then outlined and illustrated through the use of a specialized chart. Through this content analysis, the reader is able to review the current literature as well as identify the new niche I have attempted to carve out of interdisciplinary discordance. Finally, three bodies of work are selected based on their relevance to the research undertaken. Each text is given a general summation followed by a discussion of points where research has overlapped, where they have diverged, as well as any insight they offer the current research inquiry.

The final chapter, Conclusion: A Better way, is concerned with presenting the current research in the scope of the larger-picture; just what have I done, and why it is important. The main points of the research project are briefly reiterated focusing on some of the complications that exist within the world of wildlife and resource management. One means of meeting these issues head on is to adapt a cultural component to research pertaining to human environmental systems. However, without the vested concern and interest of other scientists and researchers, socio-culturalists and biological-environmentalists will continue to beat about the same bush, only further obfuscating the fundamental importance of culture to wildlife.

In addition, several narratives, discussions, charts and tables are included as appendices to lend a better understanding of the complexity of wildlife use in Mali. Along with some illuminating stories, a discussion of threatened, protected and endangered species identified in the fetish market is included for those interested in the greater legal implications of the wildlife trade. Other appendices depict inventories of all

species and items sold, their various forms as well as their Bambara, Latin and English names.

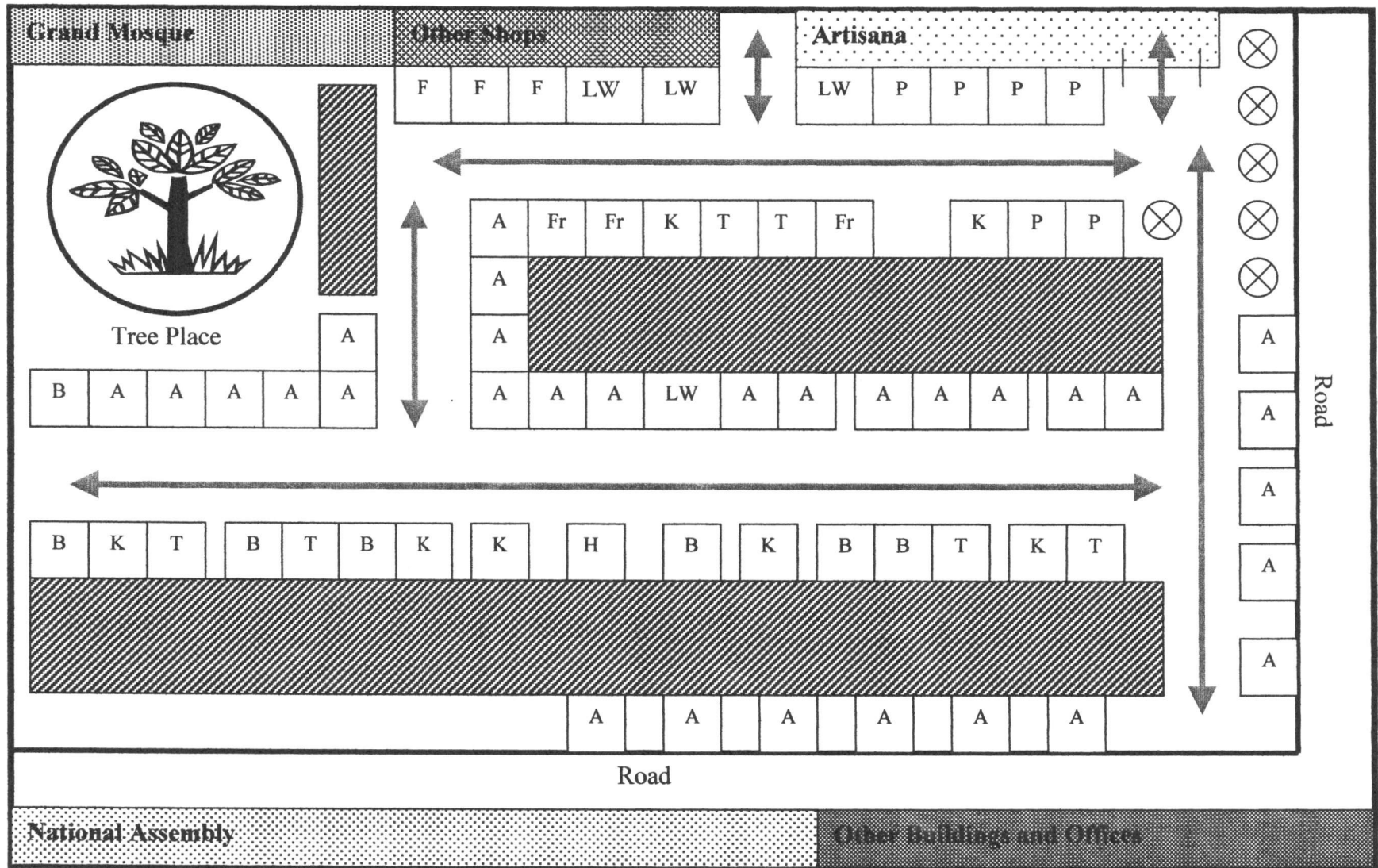
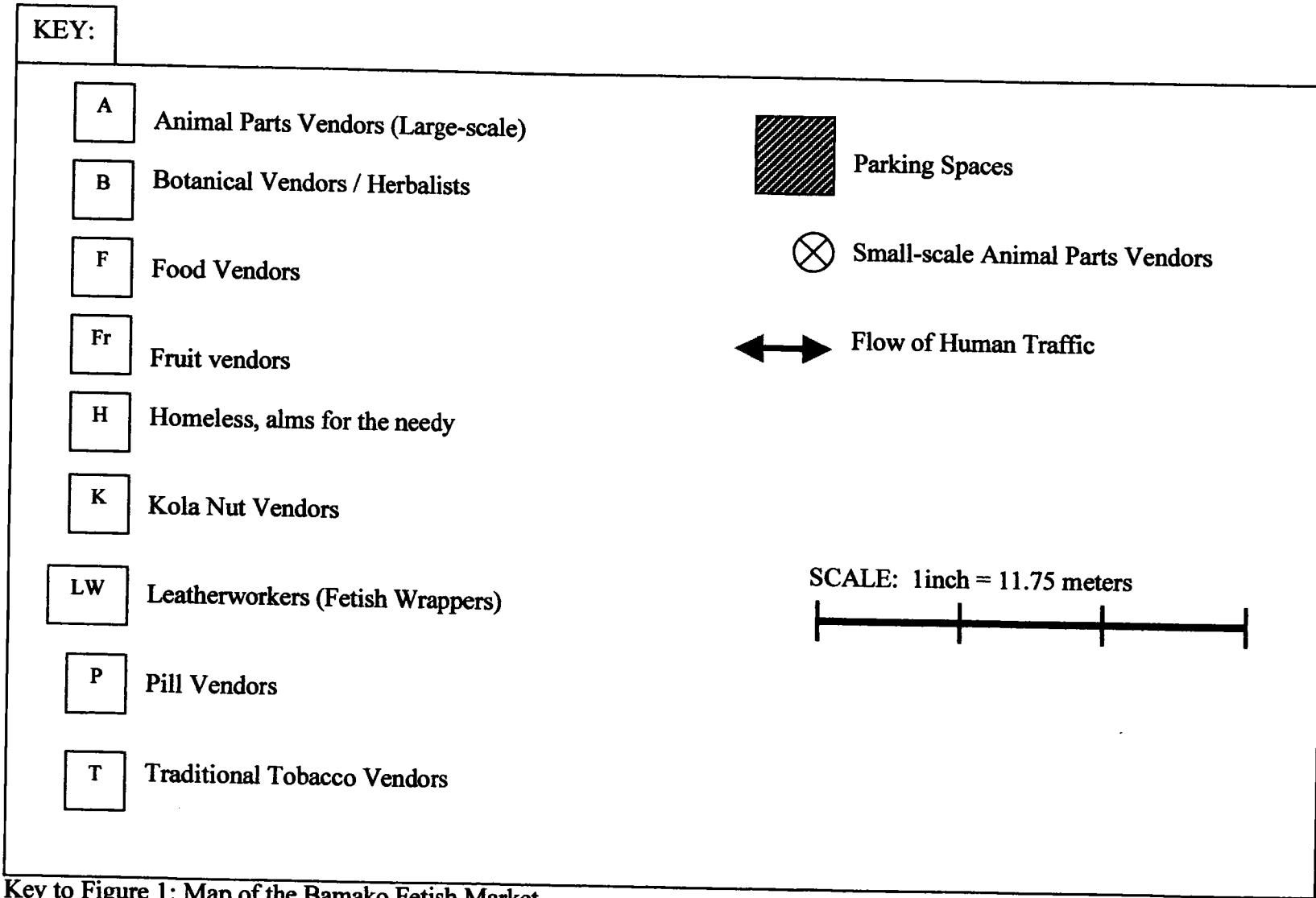


Figure 1: Map of Bamako Fetish Market



Key to Figure 1: Map of the Bamako Fetish Market

## Chapter 2

### Welcome to the Fetish Market

That first day that I walked into the Fetish Market, nearly six years ago, left an everlasting image etched in my mind: sleepy men selling python skin from the shade of jerry-rigged awnings. After a five-year hiatus, I returned to find the Fetish Market pretty much as I had left it. I had hoped that I might find some of the men that I had worked with before; however, none of them were to be found. But as luck would have it a few vendors recalled some of the men I had worked with previously. Knowing some of the same people and speaking the local language of Bambara lent me immediate access to some of the vendors, though there was a significant barrier underlined by the fact that I was an outsider.

As mentioned before, I was lucky enough to be taken in as an apprentice to a very well positioned vendor. But this did not happen immediately. My first day collecting data I made the acquaintance of a man titled Professor Dembele who took a serious interest in my research. Our first few conversations were eye opening as he readily discussed with me subjects not addressed by other informants. Instead of telling me that some item was magical or medicinal, he tended to go the extra distance and explain how it was used or prepared. I in turn readily answered his questions about where I came from and why I was so interested in his work. It was clear to me from those first few days of interacting with Professor Dembele that he was far more than just a run of the mill vendor. I would soon learn that Professor Dembele was much more. He was a "Marabagaw Karamogo," (animal parts master) but not all of this was very clear to

me as I first came to collect data in the fetish market. It all came into screaming clarity one fateful morning as I was talking with vendors; the barrier that had somehow distinguished me as foreign and unknown was torn asunder.

I had arrived at the fetish market early to try and catch up with Professor Dembele, as he said that he would like to talk with me about my research. As I arrived it was clear that something serious has happened. Most of the stalls had been broken. Vendors' pallets were tossed and overturned, laying haphazardly on the ground. Out of the normal lot of over thirty vendors only fifteen had anything out to be sold, and even then it was just a single item or two. Everything was in ruin, as if a tornado had hit the place. I asked what had happened to everything? A few of the vendors that I had spoken with the day before explained that only an hour before I had arrived the police of the Artisana had come to shake-down the vendors.

It was explained to me as follows: The Artisana is a formalized place of business where tourists can buy a wide variety of hand made goods including custom leather work, gold and silver jewelry, as well as woodcarving and other locally produced goods. The police work for the governor of the Artisana. They are in his pocket so to speak. For the past couple of months, relations between the Artisana and the fetish vendors had been strained. The police came every morning to collect "taxes" from the vendors. Taxation normally ranges between 100-500CFA (\$ 0.14 – 0.70)<sup>3</sup> per person. Sometimes it can be all the vendors' goods, all their money, or all of the above. No one ever gets taken to jail. Apparently the area where the fetish vendors sell their goods is technically the parking lot

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<sup>3</sup> The local currency is called CFA and is directly related to the French Franc. All dollar figures are given based on the exchange rate at the time of research ( $\$1.00 = 700\text{CFA} / 1000\text{CFA} = \$1.40$ ).



of the Artisana, providing the police with all the excuse they need to collect their "taxes". Recently the police had become more severe and aggressive toward the fetish vendors.

It was as this was being explained to me that whistles could be heard in the distance, out of nowhere about twenty police arrived dressed in dark blue jumpsuits topped off with helmets and batons. Vendors grabbed what few goods they had out and scattered. The police moved in rousting everyone in the parking lot, man, woman or child. Stalls were toppled, animal skins confiscated, and a few younger resisting bodies beaten with batons. I saw blood. My friends who had been explaining what was going on grabbed me by the shirt and hauled me away from the violence. I was dragged by a fistful of my shirt, bumping into one person after another. I never knew where we were headed, but it seemed a safer bet than waiting for the police.

Next thing I knew I was in a very unusual place: I was hidden behind a great wall of junk and animal parts, circular in shape and maybe thirty meters in diameter. In the middle of this circular compound, about two meters in height, was a great West African mahogany tree (known as "jalla" in Bambara). In front of the tree a dozen pallets had been stacked, forming a rough pyramid and throne of Professor Kara Dembele, for he sat upon a matt laid out on the very top. From his position he could see all around the fetish market.

Many people had taken refuge in the circular defense. As I looked around, I found no way in or out; there was no breach in the ram-shackle wall. I looked closer and could see a gathering of people trying to get in, and at that point in the wall it was clear

that a large table had been turned on edge and placed to block the one entrance into the “tree place”.

It was about this time that Professor Kara Dembele noticed that there was a stranger in his circle. Kara called out my name, “Papou, Ny yan” and bade me climb up the stacked pallets. The film, *Escape from Alcatraz*, and the scene where Clint Eastwood is talking to the librarian in the play yard where a series of steps and one’s placement is governed by one’s status in prison, all of that flashed through my mind as I grabbed hold of the wooden pallets and began to climb up to Dembele. The stacked pallets were over two meters in height with other displaced vendors sitting haphazardly on the many different levels; I had to be careful to not step on anyone as I climbed up. I received a few stern looks as I repeatedly excused myself up to the top of the stacked pallets.

Once on top I was able to see where I had been sitting with my friends when the police showed up. Dembele bade me to sit with him and I did as he asked. I sat and we began to talk after sharing a cigarette. He explained much of the same that my friends had concerning the police and the “taxation”. However, in his usual manner Kara shed some more insight on the situation. He explained, “today there is a big meeting at the National Assembly,” which is right across the road from the parking lot the fetish market is located in. Kara pointed from our vantage spot, and I could see the large building across the way. “The police are trying to get all of us to leave because it does not look good,” he said gesturing to all that had taken refuge in the tree place.

We sat and discussed the actions of the police for some while until the subject eventually turned to my continued interest in the fetish market. “You want to know about

my work?" Kara asked me. I started to respond but Kara cut me off, "You will be my apprentice, you will come every morning and I will teach you." A few of the other vendors who were sitting immediately below us seemed to take notice of Kara's invitation of apprenticeship. He continued, "The police will not let us sell today, so we will start now." He then launched into describing the various items and services he provides those who come to the fetish market.

Over the next two months, Kara and I met on a nearly daily basis to continue my education and training as a Marabaga Karamogo (animal parts master). It is important to note that the profession of animal parts master is not the same as a fetish market vendor. The vast majority of vendors are not fetish masters; rather, they are individuals who possess an expanded knowledge of traditional wildlife and botanical use. Kara on the other hand is an animal parts master, a person who has extensive traditional knowledge and is a recognized professional practitioner. His title of Professor Kara Dembele directly reflects his status and position. Recognized as a man of some renown his position within the fetish market is underscored by his namesake. Kara, is a shortened form of "Karamogo", meaning teacher, professor, or master.

It was as an apprentice to Kara that I gained the greatest insight into the operations and functions of the fetish market. To begin with it is important to understand, and remember that the fetish market is a place of business. Though not recognized by government agencies or officials, the fetish market is a highly structured yet informal industry that exists to serve various forms of demand. These types of

demand and uses are laid out and discussed in detail within the chapter relating the Continuum of Associated Use (figure 2, page 33).

As identified within figure 1, Map of the Bamako Fetish Market, several distinct elements, professions, and services have been recorded as being part of the fetish market. There are food, fruit, and kola nut vendors, herbalists selling botanicals, pill vendors selling aspirin and western pharmaceuticals, traditional tobacco vendors, leatherworkers, the homeless and, of course animal part vendors. Though there is great diversity in the fetish market, for the most part research focused on those who play roles in sale of wildlife, its preparation and application. This immediately limits the extent of this discussion to animal part vendors, leatherworkers, and herbalists. Though the local food and fruit were delicious, they offer no extra insight to the use of wildlife.

By looking at figure 1, Map of the Bamako Fetish Market, you can see the layout. Furthermore, I have identified the various types of vendors that are found within the fetish market. For the most part I was concerned with speaking with those that I call animal parts vendors. Previously I have used the term fetish market vendor (or fetish vendor), but due to the multiple types it is now necessary to differentiate. Animal parts vendors (APVs) are those that derive their living primarily through the sale of animal parts even though they may sell other items. There are large and small-scale type APVs. However, due to the highly mobile and itinerant nature of small-scale APVs, it was extremely difficult to develop a rapport with them. Furthermore, not being able to work with small-scale vendors caused me to focus all the more on large-scale APVs who are the backbone of the fetish market. Incidentally, there is no love lost between large and

small scale APVs. The two groups keep well clear of one another; this is in part due to the fact that the parking lot that serves as the place of business is the recognized territory of large-scale vendors. Small-scale APVs are sequestered to the main entrance and beyond, prying a living from the high flow of street traffic.

Besides large-scale animal part vendors, leatherworkers and herbalists perform vital functions to facilitate the proper and effective use of wildlife. Herbalists, those individuals who sell a wide variety of flora and botanicals, hold special significance. First and foremost, all herbalists encountered in the fetish market were woman. No men were ever observed selling botanicals. Second, herbalists sell items that are used in preparing many of the culturally sanctioned medicines as well as in magic and sorcery. In fact, many of the traditional treatments require specific botanical ingredients. As such, herbalists tend to have strong ties to certain animal parts vendors, whom they pass business on to.

On a side note, it is worth mentioning that for the most part only those selling or working with animal parts are male, all other vendors tend to be female. One of my participants explained the sexual division of businesses as being based on the precept that women are not to earn more than men, saying, "men sell animal parts because we can make money doing it. Women sell plants, trees, fruit, and nuts because there is not much money in it" (i.e., if there was money to be made in botanicals, men would be selling them instead of women).

Leatherworkers, also hold a unique role and position within the fetish market. Though, titled "leatherworkers" (a translation from Bambara), they are in fact much

more. To be a leatherworker means that one has a stall where clients bring all manner of items requiring repair. Torn straps on a backpack, a detached sole of a shoe, broken glasses, just about anything. These jobs and others occupy the majority of a leatherworker's time. However, leatherworkers also provide a crucial service in the fetish market, that of "fetish wrapping." "Fetish wrapping" is a specialization of leatherworkers and is required in the proper completion of a fetish or grigri (amulets of protection and personal enhancement). In addition, leatherworkers, also repair broken fetishes, something that can only be done by a trained professional.

Both of these professions and roles, herbalists and leatherworkers, are described in greater detail and later on within a narration of having a fetish made (see, *Making My Fetish*, page 67).

The tree place can also be seen in figure 1, Map of the Bamako Fetish Market. Its location is interesting to note as it is directly behind the Grand Mosque. Both the mosque and the tree place are wells of belief; one oriented towards Islam, the other an amalgamation of traditional beliefs having origins in the various ethnicities and people of Mali. Carrying this to another level one can see that both the tree place and mosque provide a refuge from the outside world, they are places of sanctuary and repositories of knowledge. Within the tree place can be found a few elderly leatherworkers, and other aged men of wisdom and knowledge including, "retired" fetish masters and traditional doctors. From a functional perspective, the tree place is also the warehouse of all large-scale APVs and many of the surrounding herbalists.

This functionality is literally built into the wall that surrounds the great West African Mahogany tree (Jalla, a revered wood) at its center. Come the end of a day, APVs will bring the remainder of their goods and store them in the nooks and crannies created in the mish-mash of all the broken pallets, chairs, tables, mopeds, and scraps that were used to erect the wall around the central tree. All vendors have their designated space, though they are not assigned or labeled; one simply knows where they squirreled away their wares and returns to it. It is a honeycomb of animal parts and other interesting items.

As much as the wall of the tree place serves to store goods overnight, it is also used to stockpile goods over time as well as hide certain valuable items from theft. These might include specialty items that are readily identified as secret, taboo, or rare (i.e., potions of death, human parts, or unique acquisitions like elephant sperm). Keep in mind other "items, goods or wares" may be alive and require tending. My first time in the tree place revealed the trend for vendors to tether live animals, such as monitor lizards, primates and some birds, to the recycled materials of the wall that surrounds it. Everywhere I seemed to look I caught the movement of some animal as it sought shade from the brutal sun.

The question I want to address now is how does this place, the fetish market; meet the demands put on it (i.e., the needs, wants and desires of those who place value in the goods and services the fetish market provides)? If anything, my experience in the fetish market suggests that selling animal parts is no easy business and requires a steady demand and system of supply to maintain its viability. To see what items (faunal species

represented) for sale in the fetish market see Appendix I. To understand how the fetish market meets the needs, wants and desires, of those who place value in the goods and services of the fetish market, it is helpful to commence with an explanation of the various means in which wildlife, sold in the fetish market, are used.



## Chapter 3

### The Continuum of Associated Use

To understand how demand is created, it is useful to know how items purchased in the fetish market are used. Furthermore, examples of such wildlife use lend invaluable insight to the values held by those who make use of the fetish market, its goods and services. From my vantage point as an apprentice to a well-positioned vendor I was able to collect a wide variety of data related to the use of items sold in the fetish market. Most of the data collected focused on the traditional use of wildlife; however, in certain instances other items of a non-wildlife origin are discussed. The inclusion of these other items not only helps to illustrate the extent of vendor inventories, but also some of the remedies, cures, potions, spells and curses that utilize combinations of flora, fauna, metals and minerals as ingredients.

Though other items are incorporated into the local pharmacopoeia, wildlife, its parts, use and associated values are of primary concern. As identified in figure 2, the Continuum of Associated Use, items and their use are divided into four categories. These categories, or types of use, are derived from the information related by informants as well as participant observation. Given their insiders perspective, they offer a better format for describing and interpreting wildlife parts use and allow for certain distinctions to be made.

The first observation to be made is that within the continuum of associated use there are two types of demand. These two categories of demand are defined based on

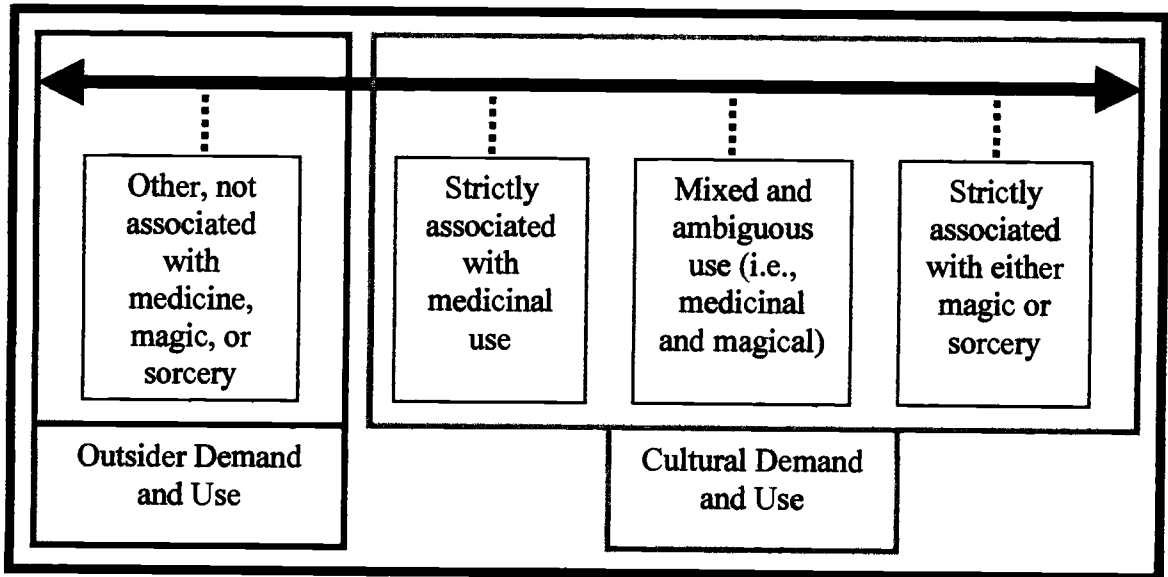


Figure 2: Continuum of Associated Use.

what was reported by informants who purchased items from the fetish market and their use. There is demand created through what I term cultural use as well as outsider use. Cultural use is defined as those items associated with medicine, magic and sorcery. These three associations are in turn represented within the continuum as items used for magic and sorcery, items that were ambiguously described using mixed terminology (i.e., medicinal, magical, and sorcery), and items valued for their medicinal use. When multiple people value the same item (associated with varied uses) it creates demand.

At the far left-most extreme of the continuum is a single and unique category identified as other. This category represents what I call outsider use and it is based on foreign interests and values. Those tourists, ex-patriots and foreign nationals that participate in the fetish market and animal parts trade create their own unique demand; outsider demand. For the most part this is related to the harvesting of live and exotic animals for international trade and the fetish market becoming a tourist attraction.

Though both outsider and cultural demand are met through the fetish market, its goods and services, they are fundamentally distinct. As such, the two categories of demand are dealt with individually.

Before describing the two categories of demand, we need briefly to discuss the ways in general a client goes about determining and then satisfying his or her demand.

What is cultural demand and what does it serve? As outlined in the previous chapter, cultural demand is associated with prevailing societal values. With regard to wildlife, cultural demand is expressed in the varied uses exhibited by a population. It should be clear that use and value are closely related and create demand. Furthermore, they help identify and interpret the nature of the needs, wants and desires inherent to those who purchase goods from the fetish market. Meeting such needs, wants and desires through the use of wildlife is directly related to enhancing and or maintaining personal and societal well-being. Though highly relative, for the purposes of this research, well-being is taken to mean the state of being happy, content or prosperous. Furthermore, well-being is intimately related to meeting the needs, wants and desires of individuals. As such, well-being is highly varied and personal (i.e., what meets the needs, wants and desires of one person, may not suffice for another). Though individual needs, wants and desires may differ from person to person, obtaining well-being is the goal. The fetish market, its goods and services are but one of the many ways in which personal and societal well-being is maintained.

The first criterion that must be satisfied if an individual is to use the fetish market is that they must hold faith in the beliefs and practices associated with the market. To put

this in context, Mali is host to multiple ethnic groups, religious beliefs, and sanctioned means to fulfill well-being. As a result, not every individual perceives the fetish market as a means of increasing or maintaining well-being. For the most part the fetish market is tailored to those who place value in traditional and or Islamic practices. Christians (roughly 90% of Mali is identified as Muslim, with the remaining 10% of the population following Christian teachings [CIA 2002]) utilize the fetish market, but due to their perception of magic and sorcery as being associated with Satan, they tend only to purchase medicinal items. From personal observation and experience I would say that the vast majority of the population support the use of the fetish market because of their religious faith.

Being that traditional religious practices and beliefs have for several centuries been intertwined with Islamic teachings, there is a vast gray area created through the intersection of the two. Islam has come to be associated and connected to just about every facet of Malian culture. Individuals who might appear to be “traditional” are in fact avid Muslims. Case in point: fetish market vendors appear to be members of a traditional market system oriented around the sale of various medicinal and magical items. The observable relationships might suggest that vendors are followers of traditional beliefs that identified many of the wildlife species and originally placed value in their effective use. However, one might be surprised to learn that the vast majority of fetish market vendors are adherents not only to traditional beliefs but Islam. In fact, many vendors of the Bamako fetish market offered several items associated with what are perceived as Islamic practices. Since fetish market vendors sell both traditional and

Islamic items, there was typically never a clear distinction made between the two religious ontologies and their respective practices.

Due to the highly relative nature of faith and one's personal perspective, what is true for one individual is not necessarily applicable to another. The obvious reason for this discrepancy is human free will- granting us the ability to choose what we believe. This ability to choose, to select what best serves ourselves, is fundamental to one's well-being. To help relate the various elements and decisions inherent to maintaining and or enhancing ones well-being through the fetish market, a systems perspective is presented (see figure 3, Well-being Through the Goods and Services of the Fetish Market). The key elements and interactions of the system are identified within each text box. Decisions are expressed through the use of a directed arrow, thus one may track elements, decisions and the path that they follow.

To use the diagram, figure 3, Well-being Through the Goods and Services of the Fetish Market, one starts at the top, with the client, and follows the various paths of choice. Granted that the individual places value in the goods and services of the fetish market there is a division between those who know and those who do not know what they need, want or desire. What is needed, wanted or desired is related to the issue at hand. There are naturally occurring ailments, conditions and disorders, along with those caused through "bad" or "evil" magic and sorcery. Naturally occurring ailments are treated using items associated and perceived as medicinal. Non-naturally occurring ailments require the use of magic and or sorcery to restore the individual to his or her former self.

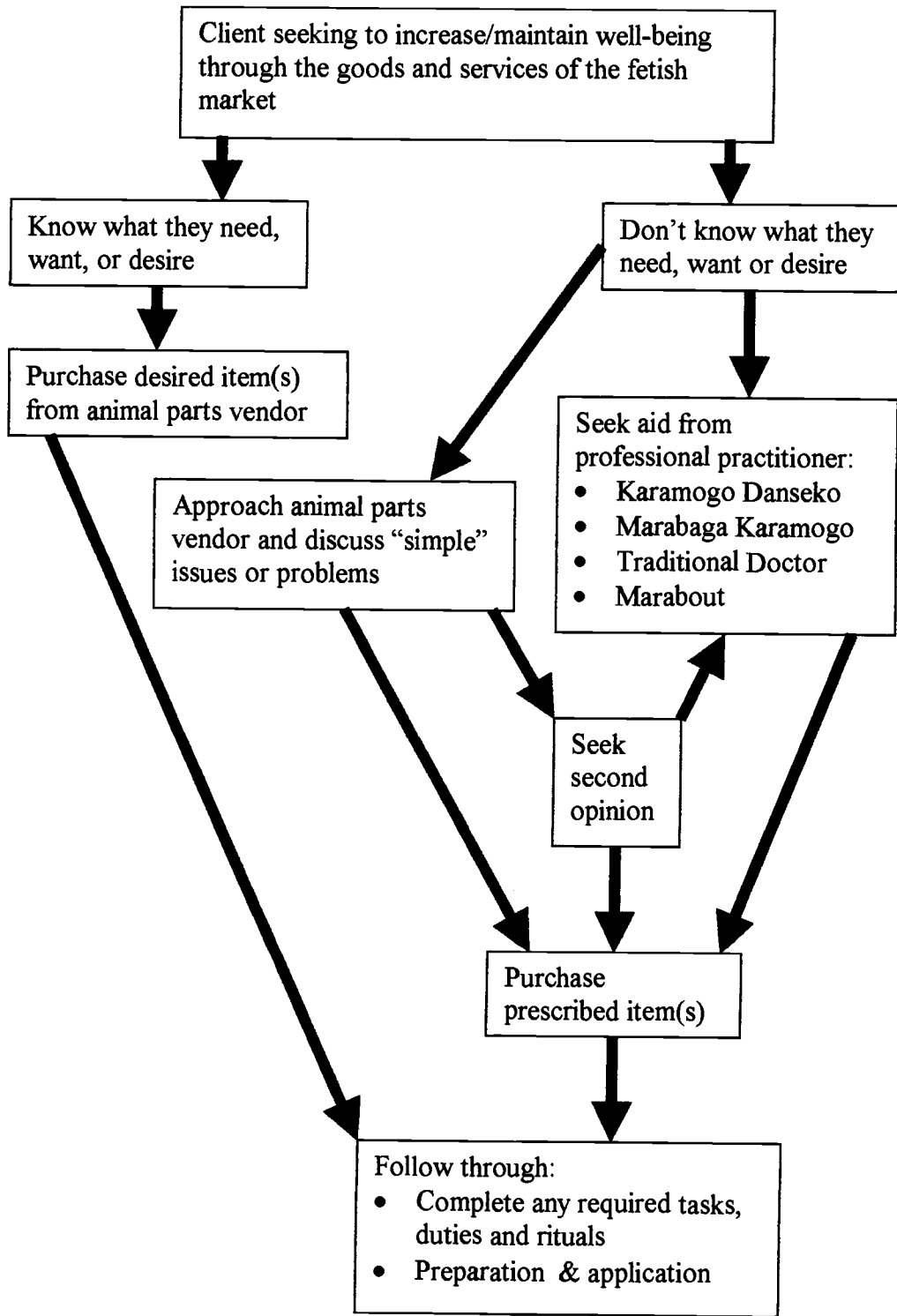


Figure 3: Well-being Through the Goods and Services of the Fetish Market.

In addition, there are those items, associated with magic and sorcery, that are used to enhance and or protect one's self in the form of spells, potions, curses, fetishes, and grigris. As such, the origin of an issue, its nature, along with meeting the needs, wants and desires of the client are all key elements to proper and culturally sanctioned use of wildlife and the fetish market.

First and foremost a client must ascertain their issue at hand; what do they seek? Is it the treatment of a naturally occurring ailment, the need to nullify the work of some evil sorcerer, or the desire to secure supernatural protection and enhancement? The majority of clients that were observed during fieldwork tended to have a preconceived idea of what they were after in the fetish market long before they actually arrived. I came to understand this tendency in clients of the fetish market to already know as an illustration of the innate knowledge of the population at large.

Clients that tend to be regular patrons of the fetish market usually develop relationships with one or more vendors whom they return to in the future. Furthermore, those individuals who tend to return to the fetish market have a greater understanding of what they seek than those who do not regularly make use of the fetish market, its goods and services. In practice, the client, who knows what they seek, approaches a vendor (whom they most likely have a familiar relationship with). Depending on the concern of the client, they may seek advice with regard to their issue at hand. The client then purchases from the fetish market vendor the item(s) they desire. After purchasing the item(s) the client must follow through. Follow through involves completing any required

tasks, duties, rituals, and or any special preparation and application of the purchased item(s).

Clients who do not know what they seek go through a different series of events. Generally those clients who do not know what they seek will either approach a vendor or a professional practitioner. The criterion to make this choice is related to the severity of the client's need. Issues, like a skin rash, earache, unluckiness, sexual enhancement, impotence, and improving one's financial situation are typical. Due to the regularity of such simple issues, they can be readily discussed with fetish market vendors.

More serious issues like an unknown illness, possibly caused by sorcery (i.e. a curse or spell), or the fabrication of a powerful and highly specialized fetish and or grigri require, the skill and training of a professional practitioner. Just as one's personal belief plays an influential role in allowing for or disallowing use of the fetish market, personal beliefs help direct what type of professional practitioner should be utilized.

From personal observations and participant data five types of professional practitioners are available for consultation; Karamogow Dansekow (Fetish Masters / hunters), Marabagaw Karamogow (Animal parts masters, socially recognized fetish market vendors), Marabouts and Koranic teachers (keepers of the written word and to some degree professional healers), traditional doctors (keepers of traditional medicinal and magical knowledge), and physicians trained in western medicine.

In the course of this research as well as a Peace Corps volunteer, I came in to contact with each of these types of professional practitioners. My first experience was during my work with traditional hunters of the Bafing Faunal Reserve where I spoke with



many Karamogow Dansekow. These fetish masters/hunters are a step beyond a traditional hunter as they are instrumental in training hunters to be. Though they actively hunt for both protein and wild animal parts they are supernatural diviners that have a mastery of hunting, folklore, medicine, magic, sorcery, and spirit possession.

It was during my most recent visit to Mali that I was inducted into one of the secret societies of the Karamogow Dansekow. Through this process I was able to witness various forms of spirit-mediumship, divination, as well as diagnostic services. Such services included using alcoholic beverages, drumming, imbibing local botanicals to induce an altered state, as well as consulting various idols and oracles in an effort to ascertain the origin of a client's suffering.

From what several Karamogow Dansekow related to me, a simple life is what is desired. Most diagnostic services performed by Karamogow Dansekow are not performed for money. Rather, it is the duty of the client seeking the aid of a Karamogow Danseko to provide some of the needed goods for the services as well as "gifts" (i.e., wine, beer, local botanicals, tobacco, kola nuts, and roosters). Those goods that are not used in diagnosis are left to the Karamogow Danseko. Due to this trade, Karamogow Dansekow live a simple life largely free from monetary constraints.

Very similar to a Karamogow Dansekow (fetish master/hunter) is the role of a Marabagaw Karamogow, or animal parts master. Typically, a Marabagaw Karamogow is an individual that has undergone training as a Karamogow Dansekow, but instead of adhering to a simplistic life, they adapt their training to serve as a specialized animal parts vendor; a vendor that has knowledge and training above younger and newer animal

parts vendors. Such extra skill helps to secure clients for Marabagaw Karamogow who requires payment for their services. Though a Marabagaw Karamogow may have started out as a fetish master/hunter, their material consumption clearly distinguishes them from their origins.

In terms of diagnostic services performed by Marabagaw Karamogow, they differ from what is offered by a fetish master/hunter. Though many animal parts masters may use the same services offered by Karamogow Danseko, they have adopted Islamic practices to supplement their training. A good example of this is seen in my boss and mentor, Professor Kara Dembele who made use of Koranic fortune telling in conjunction with his other skills as an animal parts master to identify the cause of an illness or personal issue.

Where some Marabagaw Karamogow have adopted Islamic and Koranic practices to their arsenal of diagnostic services, Marabouts and Koranic teachers tend to view such as blasphemy. Based on my observations and conversations with participants, Marabouts and Koranic teachers make use of spirit divination as well as specialized Islamic scripture to identify and treat an illness or personal issue of a client. I must add that though I had some contact with such individuals, I gained little insight as to how such services are performed.

Traditional doctors, though associated with the fetish market, are seldom seen and as a result are difficult to define. From my conversations and observations traditional doctors illustrate the highest level of local practitioners (e.g., Karamogow Danseko and Marabagaw Karamogow). In addition traditional doctors tend to be ethnically specific

(i.e., there are Bambara traditional doctors, Dogon traditional doctors, and many others). Perhaps one of the most distinguishing characteristics of traditional doctors in Mali is that many operate their own private clinics.

Similarly Western trained physicians also tend to own and operate their own private clinics. Though both western trained and traditional doctors rely on their respective means of diagnosis and treatment, the fundamental difference between the two is in the types of medications they prescribe. Traditional doctors rely on local pharmacopoeias (possessing both faunal and floral elements) while western trained physicians make use of pharmaceuticals.

Any client consulting an animal parts vendor or professional practitioner has the option of seeking a second opinion prior to purchasing any prescribed item(s). It might very well be that the client does not agree with the recommended course of action suggested by an initial vendor, or even the converse, where the vendor feels that the client should seek another opinion from either another vendor or a professional practitioner. This "second opinion" feedback loop eventually ends when a client feels that the recommended course of action fits with his or her issue at hand. When that time comes the client will purchase the prescribed item(s) and follow through with any required tasks, duties, rituals, and or any preparation and application.

Based on these possible series of interactions, the following sections relate the three categories of associated cultural demand and use (see figure 2, page 33, the Continuum of Associated Use), that are valued by those who seek well-being through the fetish market, its goods and services. First, medicinal use is related through recounting

several examples of remedies and cures. Then, those examples that were unclear, due to mixed reporting and ambiguous use of terminology are presented.

Finally in this section on cultural demand, items associated with magic and sorcery are described. This section is sub-divided into descriptions of fetishes and grigris, accompanied by a first hand narration of having a fetish made; curses, spells, and potions; as well as other uses.

### **Cultural Demand and Use: Medicinal – Remedies and Cures**

This section is dedicated to the discussion of examples of medicinal remedies and cures identified in the course of fieldwork. Each example is presented in a condensed form, complete with a description of the species, price, parts and ingredients used, as well as insight as to the cultural value inherent to a given remedy or cure.

The skin of the snake identified as the Gabon viper (*Bitis gabonica*), known as Dangalan in Bambara, is a widely known cure for “bad fevers”, including yellow fever and malaria. A few participants, who readily cited the fever curing properties of the snake skin, also identified it as being able to relieve constipation as well as cure AIDS. Regardless of the ailment the skin is prepared the same way in each case. The client purchases a 15cm long section of Gabon Viper skin from a fetish market vendor for approximately 1000CFA (\$1.40). The consumer then must “de-scale” the skin using a sharp knife. After the scales have been removed the skin is burned until it is black (i.e. carbonized). Once the skin is blackened it is typically ground to a powder and mixed into the client’s food.

As one can imagine having a bad fever, being constipated, or being diagnosed with AIDS infringes upon one's well-being. Having a "bad fever" in Mali means having a fever that incapacitates, a fever that puts you in bed for long periods of time. Being incapacitated as such does not allow an individual to perform their normal duties, tasks, and other demanding responsibilities. To put this in perspective, Mali is dominated by subsistence farming and intensive labor systems, when an individual is laid up for days, or even weeks on end, they jeopardize all they have achieved. Though friends and family come to the aid of the sick there are real life demands that are often not met and negatively impact the afflicted individual. Not planting the crop on time, tending to it correctly, or harvesting on time are potential complications that can adversely impact the individual who may have others depending on their ability to perform.

Another example of well-being through traditional medicine can be seen in the use of electric fish (a West African electric catfish, *Malapterurus electricus*) skin, otherwise known as "Tigin N'golon" (electric fish skin). These fish skins (roughly 15cm x 10cm) are sold along side the normal wares of just about any animal parts vendor and cost 1000CFA each (\$1.40). The skins are most readily recognized as possessing painkilling properties and as such are highly valued. However, the observable trend with these fish skins is that they are used predominately with birthing mothers. The fish skin is soaked in water until it is pliable and supple. It is then placed on the abdomen of the birthing mother "to ease her pain."

From conversations with vendors as well as mothers who have used "Tigin N'golon," they all place a clear value on the painkilling properties of the fish skin. The

fact that the fish skin eases the pain of the mother during childbirth, an extremely painful and potentially life threatening circumstance, lends a sense of comfort and control to an otherwise unpredictable and painful experience.

The skin of a hedgehog, complete with quills, is another well-known traditional medicine. The hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*) is known as “N’Duguni” and can be purchased from the majority of vendors of the fetish market for 1000 - 1500CFA (\$1.40 - 2.10). The entire skin, along with its quills, is burned in a fire until black (i.e. carbonized). The skin is then rendered into a powder and mixed with “Kerete butter.”

Kerete is a local tree that produces a nut which is reduced to produce a thick oil, or butter. Kerete is also known as “shea” (pronounced “shay”) and is exported far and wide as a beauty product (it is used to smooth, and moisturize the skin). Once the powdered hedgehog is mixed in the correct portions with the Kerete it is then rubbed into sore joints and tendons to ease pain.

This traditional remedy is associated with the elderly of Mali, those that have worked themselves hard for most of their lives. Many elderly men and women after years of manual labor have severely impacted their joints and soft tissues structures, resulting in arthritis and joint pain. Imagine spending all of your life bent over either the cooking fire or tending the crops. The results can be incredibly disfiguring, painful and limiting to the mobility of the afflicted. The ability to procure such a reasonably priced traditional remedy at the very least helps to ease the suffering of the afflicted and may increase their mobility.

Though this joint pain remedy is associated with the elderly, it is also regularly used by individuals with everyday muscle and joint aches. One can picture the hedgehog-joint pain remedy as the traditional "Ben-Gay" of Mali; it is used by young and old alike to ease chronic joint pain.

It is interesting to note that there are an overwhelming number of traditional medicines oriented toward the treatment of joint pain, arthritis, rheumatism, and other related afflictions. The grease of a leopard (*Panthera pardus*), cane rat (*Thryonomis swinderianus*) or python (*Python sebae sebae*, *P. regius*) are other well known remedies used to treat a wide variety of chronic joint pain disorders. All of them require the user to render the fat of the animal into grease that is then rubbed into painful joints. In the case of using cane rat, the patient must also powder and mix the "red seed", known as "Namankuru bara", into the grease prior to application.

Another medicinal use of cane rat can be identified through the use of its incisors. The upper incisors (two teeth) of the cane rat can be purchased at the fetish market for roughly 250 - 500CFA (\$0.35 - 0.70). However, it is unnecessary to purchase the item when they are so readily available for the taking. All one must do is set a trap and wait and the rat will come. Once extricated, the upper two incisors are ground to a powder and then directly applied to a toothache to stop the pain.

West African manatees (*Trichechus senegalensis*), relatives of the North American manatee, are valued for a their ability to cure ear infections and earaches. Individuals seeking to alleviate an ear infection or bad earache can purchase a small vial of manatee oil from a well-stocked vendor in the fetish market. In this case there is no

consumer preparation of the medication, the runny, and not so pleasant smelling oil is dribbled into the ear to ease pain and treat an infection.

Interestingly, demand for this traditional medicine has encouraged its specialized development. The oil was prepared earlier by specialized suppliers and packaged in recycled medicine vials to be sold "ready for use" in the fetish market. A vial of manatee oil, known as "Ma tulu" in Bambara, is sold for 500 - 1000CFA (\$0.70 - 1.40) and much like other remedies and cures improves health and well-being while being less expensive than western treatments.

Other, medicinal wildlife uses may not require any special preparation as exemplified in the consumption of herons, storks, egrets and other similarly shaped birds. Importance rests in the color of the bird rather than specific species<sup>4</sup>. As reported by participants, "both white and black water birds" were used to cure heart problems. An individual with a known heart condition, or fear of one, will procure the meat of a heron to eat on a fairly regular schedule (i.e. once a week). It is typical for an individual to make arrangements with a person in a position to acquire heron meat to supply it on a regular basis. From my understanding, many individuals with heart conditions approach traditional fishermen, as they are recognized as having the greatest access to the herons. In such an arrangement, the fisherman increases his economic well-being by providing a secondary service to his primary role of collecting fish.

Closely associated with the consumption of stork and other water bird meat for heart problems is the use of land tortoise (*Testudo sulcata*) for chest pain. A decent sized

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<sup>4</sup> Several species were identified including the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), marabout stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*), saddle-billed stork (*Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*), shoe-bill (*Balaeniceps rex*), and spoon-bill (*Platalea leucorodia*).



portion of the tortoise's plastron (chest plate) is required (at least 7cm x 10cm) which can be purchased for 2000 - 3000CFA (\$2.80 - 4.20) in the fetish market; however, it is not stocked with any regularity. As such, many individuals in need make use of informal networks to acquire the needed species. Once acquired the tortoise plastron is burned until black, powdered, then mixed with kerete butter and applied to the chest to ease localized pain. It is important to note that this traditional remedy is to be used only for chest pain.

The ribs of a donkey (*Equus asinus*) are also regularly used to ease pain in one's side. Donkeys ribs are a staple of the fetish market and can be found at just about any vendor's stall. One only needs a single rib that costs 500 - 1000CFA (\$0.70 - 1.40), which is then ground to a fine powder and mixed with kerete butter. Once mixed in the correct proportions it is rubbed directly in to one's side to ease the pain.

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), known as "Mali", the country's namesake, are valued for their ability to cure elephantiasis, caused by parasitic filarial worms (*Wucheria bancrofti*, *Brugia malayi*, and *B. timori*) carried by mosquitos. This disease, while not common, severely impacts an afflicted individual. Though pain is not supposed to be a significant symptom of the disease, mobility is greatly reduced, based on the extreme swelling of the lower limbs. The preparation of the treatment is simple: the sufferer acquires a piece of hippo, any piece will work, but skin with fat is the best, and burns it until black. The carbonized chunk is then reduced to a powder and mixed into food or drink.

Acquiring hippo is tough. Due to the highly valued status of the hippo (i.e. the country's namesake) it is taboo to hunt. Most hippo that is used is not forcefully collected, rather it is harvested in a passive sense. Older, or sick hippos that die are scavenged for valuable parts before the crocodiles and other carrion eaters take them. Some of these hippo parts eventually make their way to the fetish market to be sold. The rarity of hippo results in the relatively high price paid for it, when it can be found. A small piece of hippo skin with fat (the most potent and desirable part of the animal), roughly 5cm x 10cm is sold for 1000 - 2000CFA (\$1.40 - 2.80). Even though the relative price of the hippo skin is high, it is less expensive than any western treatment for elephantiasis.

All of these remedies and cures exist to fill culturally based demand. However, the previous descriptions are just examples of wildlife based remedies, and should not be taken as a full accounting of medicinal values found within traditional wildlife use in Mali<sup>5</sup>.

### **Cultural Demand and Use: Somewhere Between Medicine and Magic**

Going back to figure 2, page 33, the Continuum of Associated Use, there is a middle area, where items in demand possess both magical and medicinal properties as perceived by the consumer. These items and remedies are not clearly identified as either magical or medicinal, and as such are categorically ambiguous. To illustrate, the tooth of

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<sup>5</sup> Though it was not my focus, an extensive flora based pharmacopoeia is drawn on to cure and or alleviate symptoms of an immense directory of traditionally recognized diseases, disorders, and conditions. Based on conversations with a wide variety of participants, it is clear that there are more flora-based remedies and cures (i.e., medicinal uses and values) than there are wildlife based medicines.

a crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) can be purchased for 500 - 1000CFA (\$0.70 - 1.40) from just about any vendor of the fetish market. In practice, the tooth is tied to a broken bone to heal it. Depending on who I asked, this remedy was perceived as being either magical or medicinal. However, the resulting effect of healing a broken bone is valued and therefore a demand is placed on it.

Another ambiguous example can be seen in the use of elephant sperm (*Loxodonta africana*) as a treatment for male sterility. In Mali, infertility is almost always assumed to be a strictly female issue. Elephant sperm is the only wildlife-based example of a traditional fertility remedy oriented toward the male encountered during the course of fieldwork. Much like the differing nature of crocodile teeth being perceived as medicinal or magical depending on who was asked, elephant sperm holds a similar duality. In fact, the majority of all reported sexual issues and their traditional treatment shared the same dichotomous perception.

Based on participant reports elephant sperm is actively collected from bull elephants. As one might imagine, local collection techniques of elephant sperm require that the animal be killed. Once the animal is culled, the gonads are removed, tapped and drained. It should be noted that tales of elephant sperm collection border on folktales and stories of wonder.

Elephant sperm is extremely rare and is very expensive, costing 200,000CFA (\$285.00); possibly the most expensive item sold in the fetish market. Such a fertility treatment is only affordable by those in positions to pay high prices. In Mali, due to the male dominated society, only men would tend to be in such well-paid positions.

Furthermore, such a person would tend to have received an enhanced education in comparison to the population at large and have an understanding of western medicine. It would not be uncommon for such an affluent male to have western medicine diagnose his sterility, but he would then seek out traditional treatment, as it is culturally sanctioned and considerably less expensive than western medicine.

The issue of sterility is significant as family is everything in Mali. No children means no "in-house labor force." Families in Mali rely on their children to help maintain the household and complete daily responsibilities. Due to Islamic polygyny there are, in comparison to the West, immense families to draw on for support. Twenty or more children are common for a man with two or more wives.

Bearing children is fundamental to intra and inter familial well-being. For the man it is essential proof of his virility. This plays a significant role in how other men perceive him, especially when the trend is for older men to marry younger women. For a wife, let us say the second married, to bear children helps to maintain an equal status with the first wife who has already given birth.

Closely related to male sterility are issues of impotence. The following are two examples that fall into that middle zone (figure 2, page 33, the Continuum of Associated Use) as having dualistic properties; participants described them as being both medicinal as well as magical. For mild cases of impotence (i.e., it is not a chronic disorder), an individual can purchase a baboon (*Papio anubis*) penis and testes from the fetish market. The baboon parts are usually purchased dried for 2500CFA (\$3.50) requiring the consumer to simply grind it to a powder, mix in the correct amount of black powder (i.e.,

gun powder, sold for 250 - 500CFA [\$0.35 - 0.70]). Once prepared the remedy is stirred into one's food or drink. As it was so eloquently stated by one of my participants, "The wind gets the baboon excited." Following this logic, the remedy is said to be extremely fast acting (taking effect within an hour) and long lasting in duration.

Putting this in context illustrates several key issues that combine to create demand. As directed through Koranic teachings, a man with multiple wives must support, maintain and please them equally. From conversations with a wide variety of Malian men and women, there is tendency for people to perceive impotence as being strictly associated with older men. However, looking further into it suggests something else. As stated by one participant, "pleasing my wives (3) takes strength, it can be hard sometimes." From other men spoken with there was a general agreement that sometimes pleasing one's wives took a little extra help. All of this goes to suggest that male impotence in Mali is not necessarily strictly associated with older men, rather it seems to be an issue related to fulfilling a religious duty that is supported by the population at large.

Even though the previous impotence remedy holds mixed perceptions as to its nature (i.e., medicinal or magical) it is a basic, well-known treatment and is possibly the first course of action taken when the sexual disorder is encountered. Equally ambiguous in its description, is a much more potent and powerful impotence remedy: prepared using the penises of a honey badger (*Melivora capensis*), patas monkey, (*Erythrocebus patas*), and ram (*Ovis aries*). All three penises can be purchased dried for 2500CFA each (\$3.50 each) from the fetish market along with "the red seed" (known as Namankuru bara), rock

salt, and black powder. All of the ingredients are ground for an entire day into a fine powder. Once ground, the powder is mixed into food or drink. This remedy is powerful and carries with it an element of danger. As cautioned by one of my informants, "you must be careful, or you could hurt yourself," suggesting that misuse, or overuse may cause an individual's penis to become painfully engorged, to the point of bursting. The inherent danger seems to highlight the fact that this remedy is for extreme disorders, rather than run of the mill types.

### **Cultural Demand and Use: Magic and Sorcery**

As outlined within the Continuum of Associated Use (figure 2, page 33) there is a distinction made between those items that are associated with medicinal use, those that were ambiguously described, and those aligned with magic and or sorcery. Just what is magic and sorcery? It is the ability to exert control over a given circumstance or situation through the use of culturally sanctioned items. According to my informants, magic is a fundamental aspect of Malian culture and can be practiced by anyone. Sorcery on the other hand, is described as being reserved for men or women who have undergone the appropriate rites of passage and training. In addition to their being a distinction between who practices what, magic is presented as being limited in its abilities and applications, whereas sorcery is perceived as being capable of granting anything.

Though there may be a clear distinction between magic and sorcery at the level of the practitioner, many times all one has to go on is the result. This poses special problems with regard to the treatment of certain ailments and disorders. Many times an

ailment may appear to be natural in origin, but to the dismay of the afflicted, sometimes these issues are traced back to “bad”(improperly used) magic or sorcery.

As mentioned earlier, medicinal use also tends to be more flora based than magic or sorcery. However, this is not to suggest that plants do not play a role in the realm of magic or sorcery. The cultural reality of magic and sorcery in Mali is hard to miss in the fetish market and draws not only on flora and fauna, but metals, minerals, textiles and even humans. To put it simply, magic and sorcery draw on the widest variety of items and express extensive cultural demand. In what follows, I am going to discuss items that are faunal in origin, though I will mention a few non-faunal ingredients.

This discussion is divided into multiple sections. First, the reader is oriented with magic and sorcery, separating it from the previously described categories of associated use (medicinal use and ambiguous reports). This is done through detailing the differences observed and reported by informants in the fetish market. A brief accounting of several available species is given to lend insight to local perception and value. This is expanded upon with a recounting of local perceptions regarding wildlife and fauna in general (i.e., perceptions of the plant and animal kingdoms). Two local tales are related to help foster an understanding of local beliefs while underlining their importance. Following this introduction to the cultural reality of magic and sorcery, fetishes and grigris will be described along with a narration of the fabrication of my own fetish. This is then followed by descriptions of curses, spells, and potions associated with magic and sorcery. A sub-section, other magical uses, has been included to relate some examples

that do not fall into the previous categories. A supplementary section has been included to help relate the incorporation of human body parts into the local pharmacopoeia.

There are two terms that are inseparable from the realm of magic and sorcery in Mali: fetishes and grigris. The use of these terms, and others like, curse, spell, and potion help to define an item or set of ingredients as being associated with magic and or sorcery. Furthermore, where those who purchase items associated with medicinal use tend to know what specific ingredients they seek, fetishes and grigri tend to require the aid of a specialized or professional practitioner.

### **Fetishes and Grigris-**

Going back to figure 3, page 37, Well-being Through the Goods and Services of Bamako Fetish Market, a client could either approach a well-positioned fetish market vendor (i.e., a man who not only sells but has extensive knowledge in the preparation of a wide range of traditional medicine and magic) or a closely associated professional practitioner. In either case the client would discuss their needs, wants and desires and a solution would be prescribed. Until the client decides that what is suggested as a solution meets his/her needs they have the option of seeking a second opinion as mentioned earlier.

It is crucial to understand that every animal has a basic character, or set of characteristics. These lend insight to local perception and value. Some of these characteristics are based on the perceived behavior of an animal. Some basic examples of associated animal properties include: deer and antelope as related to being well-liked



by others; jackals recognized for their tracking and hunting ability; lions represent fearlessness and the ability to conquer through well-managed risk; primates tend to reflect impoliteness, thievery, and disorder; venomous snakes are associated with being mean and possessing a criminal mentality; and non-venomous snakes (i.e., a python) reflect wisdom and thoughtfulness. Parts of wildlife may also be valued for their specific magical properties much like non-wildlife items.

Through my position as an apprentice to a fetish market vendor I was able to collect many examples of magical use and sorcery and discuss their significance with many buyers and sellers. Possibly the most common form of magic can be seen in the use of the grigri, or fetish. The two terms are used interchangeably by participants and as such are impossible to differentiate. Neither fetishes nor grigris have a standardized form or function. Rather, they can take just about any shape and exhibit a wide variety of functions. From personal observations and conversations six basic categories of fetishes and grigris have been identified, all associated with either magic and or sorcery.

Though fetish use is open to all, some specific fetishes are inappropriate, depending on one's age, sex or ethnicity. Besides these general conditions, the only rule that fetishes seem to follow is the types of ingredients used in preparation.

The natural kingdom as perceived through the eyes of a fetish market vendor, is divided into "animals, birds, and trees", rather than mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, insects, and plants. To a fetish market vendor, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects are all "animals". Birds are perceived as being unique due to their ability to

fly. Trees are equally set aside as special, possibly as a result of their known medicinal values and their inanimate, yet animate, nature.

The most powerful fetishes contain items from each category (i.e., animals, birds and trees). However, this does not mean all grigris are fabricated with each of the three types of ingredients. Common, more basic fetishes might use only a single type of ingredient; whereas more powerful fetishes will tend to use items representative of each category.

Fetishes that use ingredients from each category (i.e., power fetishes) also tend to require the use of a specialized incantation that invokes the grigri. Simpler fetishes (i.e., non-power fetishes) tend not to require an accompanying spell. It is important to note that fetishes and grigris are created through an intensive subjective-objective process, where a person must assay what items are available and balance them against satisfying their need as well as their economic means. This allows consumers to tailor fetishes to their specific needs, wants and desires. The all-important criterion is that the individual believes in the ability of the fetish (and its individual ingredients) to satisfy personal need, want, and desire.

A fetish of protection is possibly one of the most common power grigris to be found in Mali. Due to the fact that each individual can customize their grigri of protection, there are no fixed ingredients. However, there are some basic trends in what these fetishes are designed to protect against; evil people, spirits, and bush devils. "Protection" is used here not just to mean a physical threat to an individual, but also to cover supernatural threats. Threats from evil people cover a wide range of undesirable

behavior (i.e., robbery, physical aggression, blackmail, extortion, etc). In effect this fetish lends a sense of comfort through the perceived control (i.e., repelling properties) of unpredictable human interactions.

Spirits and bush devils are not a laughing matter. Though many westerners might construe the acceptance of the supernatural as a character flaw, in the mind of a Malian, spirit-beings are real; disbelief endangers an individual. To illustrate this, let me present two tales. The first is related to the belief in and power of spirits, and the second exemplifies the nature (and associated fear) of an entity known as the Guinarou.

Years ago, before they started building the dam (in Manantali, located in the western Kayes region) there was a small village. There was a powerful fetish master named Sekou Dembele and he could kill with the sound of his voice. Because of his power he could not live in the village. The other people were afraid of him because Sekou killed those who did not please him. Pleasing Sekou meant that you had to obey all the old traditions. The chief of the village was corrupt and did not deliver proper justice. Villagers who were wrongly accused or had a problem would visit Sekou seeking his justice. Sekou would look into their hearts to see the truth. If they lied they were killed. If they told the truth, Sekou would grant them justice.

Before Sekou died, he foretold that a great tree would grow from his grave. After his death a ronier palm grew on top of where his body was buried. It is a sacred tree. People used to go to this tree seeking justice, as they had done with Sekou. They would bring chickens and sheep and offer them as sacrifices to please Sekou, so that he might grant them justice.

When they came to build the dam, all the villagers were moved, but the tree was still there. They tried to knock the tree down with a bulldozer, but it broke the machine. The sacred tree is still there, under the water, and it is still alive with the power of Sekou.

The tale of Sekou is a story of a spirit that has the ability to grant supernatural justice and vindicate the wrongly accused. Just imagine what it must be like to know that

you are subject to the whims and desires of a spirit-inhabited palm tree! This is not said to make light of the story, but rather to highlight how innate spirit belief is. Similar to this is the belief in the Guinarou.

The Guinarou was born before time. It is not a singular entity, but there are many, all are called Guinarou. They are not human; they are from another place, a place unknown to humans. If he sees you, you will die. His stare is deadly. He is stronger and has more power than all the bush devils in the bush. They even fear the Guinarou.

Every Guinarou lives in a white tree (a Baobab tree). The only way to kill the Guinarou is to cut his tree down and burn it till all traces of it are gone. However the Guinarou hides his home. He has the ability to control light, masking his hiding places with darkness, so that people cannot see into the area where his home may be. People know that they are close to him if the smell of wild goat in rut becomes overwhelming. It makes your eyes water. He has the ability to change his shape, and usually chooses the shape of a dog. But he is usually always black in color. Though he can even change that to suit his needs. He is feared above all others in the bush.

Both of these tales help to place the use of protective fetishes in context. If you are subject to unforeseen supernatural justice or live with the fear of Guinarou, a fetish that is effective against it helps to secure one's well-being.

Another type of power grigri is identified by fetish market vendors as "charm". "Charm" (pronounced "sharm") type fetishes are designed to enhance an individual's ability. What ability and toward what ends is entirely up to the person in need. There is a general trend for "charm" type fetishes to be oriented around economic gain, and enhancing or maintaining social status and prestige. One might think of them as general purpose, broad-spectrum grigri that help smooth the rough bumps of life.

“Pulling” type fetishes, as explained to me by a animal parts master, are used to bring, or “pull”, something to a person. “People want money and power” and the grigri has the ability to bring the user to it, or vice versa. One might think of “charm” type fetishes as being similar, but the difference is found in the desire of the individual.

“Charm” type fetishes are for use in general desires, whereas “pulling” types have a specific application (i.e., a fetish to “pull” money to the user, or “pull” the clients to purchase the goods, or even “pull” the user to the best deals to be had).

Another category of power fetish can be seen in grigris used for marriage. There is a wide-range of these fetishes being used by both men and women. Marriage is fundamental to fulfilling societal and cultural norms in Mali. Men that are not married by the time they are twenty-five are considered deviant, or “something is wrong with them.” The same is true for women. To not be married carries with it a range of associated stigma. Parents play a pivotal role in marriage as well and would appear to completely usurp any control a child might have through our western eyes. The fact is that most marriages are arranged in Mali, and though parents might not initiate interviews they tend to have supreme authority in making a final decision. As a result there are marriage fetishes that are prepared by bride and groom as well as their parents.

Parents who wish their child to marry well will take the means to ensure it through the fabrication of a marriage grigri that is customized to the parent’s exact demands. The potential bride or groom also have at their disposal a wide range of fetishes oriented toward their own interests rather than their parents.

Though it may seem to be simply a specialized version of a “self-protection” fetish, the “return to sender” grigri of power is oriented specifically toward meddling people and has no effect on the supernatural (i.e., spirits, bush devils and Guinarou). As one participant explained, “it does not matter if they shoot at you with a gun or try to blackmail you, this sends it back to them.” In effect this “return to sender” fetish places a boomerang effect on the harmful action and returns it to its originator (similar to the childhood taunt, “I’m Jello, you’re glue, everything you say bounces off me and sticks to you.”). Instead of just being effective against words, it also covers physical harm.

The final type of power grigri is known as a “seat of power” fetish. This fetish is only used by men in positions of power, including village chiefs (known as dugutigi in Bambara), government officials, politicians, and heads of business and industry. These fetishes are designed to secure a man’s seat of power preventing ambitious men from usurping it. As you might imagine these fetishes are highly specialized and position specific. To possess such a fetish is a statement in itself as they are among the most expensive to prepare. One must be in a position of power to purchase the ingredients and pay for the fabrication.

Preparation of each fetish is user specific and is not something that is undertaken lightly. One must be committed as the preparation of a fetish can be very time consuming. This is due to the time needed to discuss and collect the required ingredients, prepare them, fabricate the fetish from the prepared ingredients and finally memorize any associated incantation. To top it off there are many other fetish specific rules and regulations as well as appropriate times to start and finish the project. Putting all these

elements together takes patience, free time, knowing the right people and the economic means to pay them for ingredients and related services.

In the course of fieldwork I developed a special bond with my teacher and mentor Professor Kara Dembele. It was through his teachings that I was able to gain insight as to the significance of many of the previously described associated uses. However, lectures only relate so much. This in conjunction with wishing to document the steps and processes involved in fetish construction, to gain greater insight in to the services of the fetish market, caused me to ask Kara if it would be possible to fabricate my own magical item, a fetish of power. As such, the following narration describes not only the ingredients and items used to construct my fetish, but also some of the services required to make it.

### **An Example - Making My Fetish**

After having undergone a month of intensive training as an apprentice to Kara, I approached him about making a fetish, or grigri, of my own. I desired a fetish to make me the best at what I do, a fetish to make me the best anthropologist that I can be. What better way to understand the culturally immersed realm of wildlife and its traditional use than by applying it to myself?

The first task that Kara and I had to accomplish was collecting all the ingredients that we would need to construct the fetish. Some of the items were readily available from Kara's inventory of traditional magical and medicinal items that he sells in order to make a living. Other items we had to purchase from neighboring vendors who occupy spaces

next to and surrounding Kara's stall. The list of fetish ingredients included: spotted hyena skin, lion skin, leopard skin, some hair of a "white man", the scales of the "diabolical serpent", the nostril of a hyena, a piece of an elephant or camel footpad, the leaves of a tree known as "sana ladon", python skin, "talking branches", the eyes of a vulture, red, black and white threads, and a piece of white cloth. Each and every item listed has a specific reason for being used in the construction of the fetish at hand.

After all the prescribed ingredients of my grigri had been collected and purchased Kara explained that we must find a quiet place out of the view of other people in order to make the fetish. He took me to a special place that is used by vendors of the fetish market to store their goods. It is informally called the "tree place" by all the vendors of the fetish market. It is a wall made of odds and ends that rises approximately two meters in the air and encircles a large mahogany tree. The wall of the "tree place" is roughly thirty meters in diameter and is comprised of broken shipping pallets, chairs, tables, and other discarded items. Imagine all the nooks and crannies that would be found in such a wall. These spaces provide perfect cubbyholes for the vendors of the fetish market to store their goods. Besides providing storage the "tree place" is a locale that is off limits to the general public and as such offered a ready-made "quiet place out of the way of other people" where Kara and I might be able to assemble the grigri.

Kara led me into the "tree place" and we found a spot that was out of the sight of two elderly men who were repairing broken fetish straps and wrappings. The two men were situated on top of a large stack of shipping pallets where they had their leather



working tools laid out. We sat down behind the large stack of pallets that hid us from view. The two men sat on top with their backs turned to us, paying us no heed.

Kara handed one of the men the “talking branches” and told him to “make it”. The “talking branches” are not a specific type of tree; rather, “talking branches” can be found in any tree. They are simply branches that rub together to make a “talking” sound. “Making” the branches involves shaving the spots where the branches rubbed together. Kara then asked the same old man for a piece of white cloth, and he handed over a piece about 10cm x 18cm.

Prior to this Kara had given me advice on the selection of which color/type of fabric should be used in my grigri. The color/type of fabric used in the fetish is very important as it plays a significant role in my outward behavior once the fetish is completed. Red cloth is used by people who have “bad histories” and need to hide that aspect of their lives with regard to their profession. Black cloth is used by people who wish to be overtly mean and aggressive and white cloth by those who wish to be open and honest in their professional dealings.

Kara took the white cloth and began drawing the “sacred designs” on it with a black Bic pen. These writings are very simple, using a system of single and double dashes. The writing can be used to predict the future and/or empower an item to bring a desired effect. From my conversations with Kara, who is a master of the “sacred designs,” I have come to understand the writing as being connected, at least historically, to Islam. The “kings” name went in the middle of the cloth (Masa Soloman, a historical ruler of Mali) and around it, based on the quartered cardinal points (i.e., northwest,

southwest, northeast, and southeast), went other designs representing wealth and prosperity. Kara described the designs as the “law”, saying that once the “law” is written it was forever.

The white cloth was then placed on a bag that served as our worktable, the writing face up. Kara pulled three threads from each bundle of color (red, black, and white). While he sorted the threads, Kara explained that “three is for men, four is for women.” He laid the groups of thread across his thigh and then started in preparing the animal parts.

The first animal ingredient to be used would have been the footpad of an elephant. However, no elephant was available in the fetish market. When we were presented with this issue, Kara explained that as long as we could find a piece of camel footpad the fetish could still be completed. As luck would have it, we were able to acquire a piece of camel footpad while searching for the rest of the grigri ingredients. Kara explained that the footpad of either an elephant or camel would serve our purposes because both animals have similar characteristics. Both elephants and camels are perceived as being very stable and long lived animals. They both exhibit an ability to retain memories, explained Kara. “Elephants always know where water is, and so do camels. They never lose their way. We use the footpad because it represents how the animal always knows the correct path.”

Kara placed the small piece of camel footpad (2.5cm x 2.5cm) in the center of the white cloth, with the rough bottom-surface of the footpad facing down. Kara took his black Bic pen and applied sacred designs to the relatively smooth upper-surface of the

camel footpad. Next came a piece of lion skin (5cm x 5cm) and it was positioned fur-side down, on top of the camel footpad. Again, Kara used his pen to apply the necessary sacred designs of wealth and prosperity to the backside of the animal skin. This process was repeated again using a piece of leopard skin (5cm x 5cm), identified as “panther” by Kara and other animal parts vendors, as well as python skin (5cm x 5cm). Each of these parts/ingredients represents an animal characteristic that is desired in the final product of the fetish, or grigri.

As one might imagine the selection of ingredients to be used in a grigri is a very subjective-objective process. The choice of ingredients is related to one’s knowledge base of such ingredients. To put this in context, each person’s knowledge base is determined by his/her own personal background. This relates to one’s ethnic heritage, religion, and traditional beliefs. Kara identifies and uses specific ingredients based on what his father taught him as well as what he has gathered from other sources.

Kara is a member of the family Dembele, who are reportedly descended from the first fetish master of Mali, a historical figure known as Fakoli. Given his name family name, Kara could have pursued any career he chose, though he followed the path of his father, a fetish master or “Karamogo Danseko.” He underwent years of training as a student of his father and was eventually fully inducted into multiple secret societies. From what Kara related to me in our time together, he eventually came across an American scientist who sought the aid of local hunters. Kara worked with this man for several years, collecting living “scientific animals,” which the American then imported to the United States. It was during this time that Kara became involved with the fetish

market as the American collector came but once a year. During his off-season, Kara would work as an animal parts vendor in fetish market to make money. When he was commissioned to collect “scientific animals” he would make the best of it by hunting other wildlife to supply his animal parts stand.

Though he may have started out as a fetish master in training, Kara ended up becoming one of the foremost collectors and vendors of animals and their parts in the Bamako fetish market. He was so good in fact, that he took on apprentices seeking to learn the trade. It is through this varied history that Kara has become a well-positioned animal parts vendor. As such, he not only holds social status and prestige among his peers but also possesses an immense knowledge of local flora and fauna, its ecology and local use.

According to Kara, lions represent a variety of characteristics that are considered desirable in the construction of a fetish. In general lions are viewed as kings of animals. They are perceived as being sedentary which lends images of stoicism and endurance. Lions are perceived as stoic based on the trend for adolescent male lions to wander about, surviving as an individual. The association of endurance is derived from the belief that lions are strong. These two qualities ensure that, “If the lion is hungry, it eats,” explained Kara. The use of lion skin in my grigri lends the owner the same stoicism and unrivaled surviving endurance; I will get what I wish, just as the lion will eat when he is hungry.

Leopards, one might think, would represent similar characteristics to lions, after all they are both large cat species. Not quite. Leopards (typically referred to as “panthers” in the Bamako fetish market) are perceived as sneaky and dangerous. Their

ability to cause havoc is magnified by high mobility. Though male lions may wander about, they are not perceived as highly mobile. Rather, they simply roam. This is in direct opposition to the perceived characteristics of a leopard who is out for mischief. Though some might construe these attributes as strictly negative, it was under the advice of Kara that we include leopard skin in the fetish. Kara explained, "The lion is stronger than the panther, so the lion is in control. The panther has to be sneaky to get its food. It must travel far and use secrecy. You will not become a sneak, but it is still a good thing to be able to do when you need to." In other words, there is a value placed on the ability to be sneaky when it is needed.

There are two types of python identified by most Malians. One is called "minea tomi" and it is relatively small (usually less than two meters in length, identified as *Python regius*, or ball python). The other is identified as "minea donso" (*Python sebae sebae*) and they can exceed four meters in length. The type of python skin used in my grigri was "minea tomi" and Kara explained its importance with regard to its magical properties. "Minea tomi is very powerful, the snake has magic."

The next ingredient to be used in preparing my grigri was the nose of a hyena (a single nostril) stuffed with the hair of a "white man." Kara explained the value of the parts as being related to finding prosperity. "The nose of the hyena is the most powerful. It can smell money wherever it is. The hair of a white man is put in the nose. White men always are prosperous and have lots of money."

It seems that these two parts are placed together to complete a circuit. The nose of the Hyena is used to track something, in this case money. Without giving the hyena

nose something specific to track, the circuit is incomplete and will not function. By stuffing the hair of a “white man” into the nostril of the hyena, Kara completes the circuit based on his belief that white men are a good source of income.

The “scales of the diabolical serpent” came next in the order of fetish construction. To my western trained eye, the “scales of the diabolical serpent” are nothing more than flakes of the mineral we identify as mica. Kara explained, “the diabolical serpent only lives underground, that is where you find the scales that it sheds. You must be very careful, because if the diabolical serpent sees you, you will die.”

The “scales” are valued for the magical properties they possess and as such add potency to my grigri.

At this point Kara handed the vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*) head that I had purchased to one of the older men sitting up on top of the stack of shipping pallets. Kara instructed the man to remove the eyes and he did so in a matter of seconds, handing back the remaining head, its removed eyes, as well as the shavings of the “talking branches” that Kara had asked him to prepare. Kara set all the returned items out in front of us and looked over them. He then picked up the small packet of “sana ladon” and began to unwrap it. The “sana ladon” is a very unique tree because it is perceived as having two different types of leaves, long and slender leaves as well as short and fat leaves. For the purposes of the fetish at hand, Kara selected about half a dozen slender leaves and then mixed them with the shavings of the “talking branches.”

Kara mixed and mashed the botanicals together, occasionally spitting on the small pile he held in the palm of his hand. The primary function of the botanicals is to bestow

longevity to the fetish, ensuring that its power will not run out prematurely. Kara explained, “the tree parts give the grigri power, they make it last forever. “ After he had mixed and mashed the two types of botanicals thoroughly together, Kara took a small pinch of the mixture and sprinkled it over all the other compiled ingredients. The rest of the botanical mixture was set aside for later.

Kara then took the eyes of the vulture and carefully placed the two orbs under all the stacked ingredients, between the white cloth and the lion skin. The eyes of the vulture are perceived as lending the ability to see far and search out opportunities. According to Kara, there are three types of vultures and the one that we elected to use feasts primarily upon the eyes of other dead animals. Kara explained, “The vulture can see far to find its food and makes the most of what it finds. This vulture eats the eyes and because of this you will take the best of what opportunities you find.”

After sprinkling the botanicals and tucking the vulture eyes away in their prescribed place within the fetish, Kara then carefully drew together the white cloth so as to enfold all the other ingredients. He gingerly tucked in corners and drew the white covering taught over all the various internal parts. Without removing his eyes from the small white packet in his hand, Kara collected up the colored threads in groups of three. He had pre-prepared the threads into groups of one white thread, one red thread and one black thread. He took each bunch of threads and wrapped them clockwise around the white fetish packet. Every turn of the threads Kara spat, or “spoke”, to the fetish. This speaking gives the threads the power to entrap and concentrate the powers and attributes

of the various elements making up the fetish. The threads literally and metaphysically tied the elements of my grigri into one cohesive entity.

Once the fetish was secured with the threads Kara handed the small white packet and piece of spotted hyena skin to the same elderly man who had given us the white cloth, prepared the “talking branches”, and removed the eyes of the vulture. The man took the hyena skin and small white packet without he or Kara uttering a word. Kara just handed the items up and the man took them.

Prior to the day that we actually constructed my grigri, Kara had posed a serious question to me with regard to the final element of the fetish. Kara explained that the final outer covering, or wrap, of the fetish played a crucial part in its overall function. According to Kara, I had a choice in what was to be the outer covering of my fetish, but the choice was limited to just those types of animals used in its construction. In other words I could chose between lion, leopard, hyena, python, or camel. Birds (i.e., the vulture) are not eligible due to the fact that they are not perceived as being an “animal.” Birds are unique because they fly, distinguishing themselves as different because they do no walk or swim as other animals do. After debating the various merits of my choices it was under the advice of Kara that I choose spotted hyena skin (*Crocuta crocuta*). Based on his understanding of my profession, anthropology, hyena skin would serve best because hyenas are highly mobile and travel great distances.

The elderly man handed back a slightly larger packet than given him, as the white packet was now “wrapped” with the skin of a spotted hyena. Kara took the fetish and examined the elderly man’s handiwork, scrutinizing the sewing around the edges. He



handed the fetish to me and had me look it over. "Is good?" Kara asked? I responded in the affirmative and Kara told me to pay the elderly man 1000CFA (\$1.40) for the white cloth he had given me as well as for his skill and time in sewing the grigri together.

After the money had changed hands Kara told me to pay attention and write down what he was about to say, the special incantation that accompanies the fetish.

"Touts Besema Lai."

All is sacred.

"Sa nu kolon kala ni bora san fe ka bi."

The power of magic has fallen from the sky today.

"Dun ni ya cheou gerri na a'kan o'lu ma surro."

Eaten by men, they do not find it.

"Mussow o'lu gerri na a'kan, o'lu ma surro."

Women have taken it, they do not find it.

"Famow gerri na a'kan, O'lu ma surro."

Fathers have taken it, they do not find it.

"Nye Papou Diarra, Ne gerri ni na a'kan, Nye ya surro."

I am Papou Diarra, I have taken it, I have found it.

"Nye ya surro, ni Allah ye, kirya ye, Nye ko Allah ani saba bou."

I have found it, with Allah, he gave it to me, I call Allah and it comes.

After I had written down the incantation required to invoke the fetish, Kara collected up the remaining ingredients (the left over vulture head and the left over botanical mixture made from the shavings of the "talking branches" and the leaves of the "sana ladon" tree) and placed them in a small plastic bag. "All of the remaining ingredients are to be powdered," explained Kara. "I will have a woman do this and give it to you tomorrow," continued Kara. "Do not say the words until I have given you the powder."

Kara went on to explain the need for the remaining ingredients to be powdered. Half of the powder is to be used immediately. Kara instructed me that I would have to mix this half into my bath water; the other half was to be stored in a small bottle with

water. Washing one's self with the powder allows the fetish to become familiar with its master and owner. The second portion of powder (that is stored in a bottle of water) is to be drunk in times of need, when I need extra power to accomplish my needs, goals and desires.

With that Kara said that it was time to go and I collected up my grigri, notebook, and field bag. We got up and exited the "tree place," returning to Kara's stall, which he had left in the care of his apprentice. Kara's apprentice was pleased to announce that he had sold some goods while we had been occupied and promptly handed over the money he had made. Kara and I sat and talked about some of the other items that were for sale.

### **Curses, Spells, and Potions-**

Though perceived as magic, fetishes and grigris are at the same time identified as distinct and separate from the other magical uses. These other uses are identified through what local informants call curses, spells, and potions. The differences between each are impossible to ascertain as participants, in reporting various types of magic and sorcery, used the terms interchangeably. However, regardless of mixed perceptions, a curse is an act of magic or sorcery that is applied to another with distinctly negative effects. A spell is essentially the same as a curse, but is not necessarily intended to harm or hurt. Potions are the most ambiguous as they are those acts of magic or sorcery least defined. From my understanding, potions may be used in preparation of spells and curses, as well as stand-alone as their own unique form of use.

Though clients are more apt to consult with a fetish market vendor, or professional practitioner with regard to grigris, they can also draw on specialized services for potions, spells, and curses. The realm of curses, spells and potions is about as extensive as the perceived range of threats to one's well being. However, there are some interesting themes that arise when one begins to distinguish between the categories (i.e., curses, spells, and potions).

Many magical uses that are identified as curses tend to be oriented around male-female relationships. One of the most readily cited is a curse on an unfaithful wife, which involves reducing the dried penis and testes of a patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*) and then mixing into it the correct amount of black powder. This mixture is then applied (using only a very small amount) to a woman's vagina. It is important that the woman does not know that the curse is being applied, for if she becomes suspicious, she has the means of nullifying it (there is a wide array of nullification procedures associated with this basic and broad-spectrum curse). As a fetish master explained, "if another man touches her, both the other man and the woman will be in much pain."

This curse is very basic and broad-spectrum in its effectiveness. As its application suggests, this curse is associated with men who fear infidelity on the part of their partner. Though there is a general acceptance of male infidelity in comparison to female, such behavior, when practiced by women, is readily identified as a threat by married men whether they engage in casual sex or not.

Another curse goes beyond revenge on behalf of the cheated man through the use of temporary pain. This one seeks to leave the cheating woman with a permanent

disfigurement. Unlike the first male-female curse there is considerable preparation of the ingredients and overall curse. First, a man must find a live soft-shell turtle (*Cyclanorbis senegalensis* or *Trionyx triangus*) and with one stroke cut it's head off. Any more than a single stroke and the animal becomes frightened and loses its unique properties. Next, he must acquire a corncob and cut it to a desired length. Taking the turtle head, he then stuffs it with some hair (or other highly personal item) from the woman to be cursed, along with the cut-down corncob. This packet is then buried under a termite mound and left for four days and nights, when it is collected and burned in a fire. The blackened mass is then further reduced to a fine powder which is then applied to the vagina of the woman to be cursed.

Even if the woman is conscious of the man's actions, she has little recourse. The only means to remove it require the skills of a professional practitioner- who would most likely not perform any curse nullification without the consent of the husband (there are of course specialized and professional practitioners who will perform just about any service for the right price).

This leads to another example of a curse that is not necessarily male-female, though it is associated with family. There is a curse, which for all intents and purposes, is a combination of the first two mentioned. It uses the penis and testes of a patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*) along with a highly personal item of the person to be cursed. The dried penis and testes along with the personal item are ground to a powder and buried in a secure location for a number of days. Each day at sunrise and sunset the curser returns to

the burial site and says out loud the name of the person to be cursed. The powder is then put in the food or drink of the person to be cursed.

One of the reasons this curse is so valued is that it is designed to kill "naturally" so there is no suspicion of wrongdoing. As a fetish market vendor explained, wives jealous of a husband's new bride usually use this curse. However, on occasion parents are known to have used it to end the love affairs (i.e., not viewed as proper marriage material) of their children.

Similar to a curse of "natural death" is another known as a curse of "slow death." This curse was described in detail as being used by ambitious young men wishing to set up a promotion. The first thing the young man will do is purchase a piece of dog and patas monkey skin. Taking the two skins, the ambitious young man places some hair or nail clippings of his boss (or whomever the individual is that obstructs advancement to wealth and power) in the middle, and carefully folds the skins to form a packet. The young man then finds an appropriate spot and digs a hole with his left hand. Placing the packet in the hole, he fills it in again using his left hand. When done he recites a simple incantation, "this is where \_\_\_\_\_ is already buried." For three days he returns to the burial site and recites the spell. Within three months the individual in question falls ill. By the end of the first year the subject will have become too feeble to work and will die soon thereafter.

To give some idea of just how powerful and effective curses can be, let me relate the tale of Diarra. During my fieldwork I came into contact with a number of regular

everyday people. One night while speaking with a bar-keep I had come to know, he recounted this tale:

Diarra has an older brother and they were both born in the same village. The village itself is of importance as the family Diarra historically dominated it, just as the family Traure controlled the neighboring village. Years ago, and no one can quite remember how many, there lived a young man who came from the Diarra village and a young woman from the Traure village. The young man and young woman sought marriage, but the family of the woman made arrangements with another man. The young Diarra man was devastated for he had already negotiated a bride price and had arranged to pay it.

The father of the young man was the ancestor of bar-keep Diarra, and he was very mad at the family Traure and placed a curse on the entire village. Diarra's ancestor invoked a curse that forbade the marriage between any man from the Diarra village and any woman from the Traure village from thenceforth.

Two years ago, bar-keep Diarra's brother married a Traure woman from the neighboring village. By the end of the first year of marriage the new bride was dead of unknown causes. The next year bar-keep Diarra's brother fell ill and also had to be placed in the hospital. Would it surprise you to learn that Diarra's brother was trained in France as a doctor and owned and operated his own private clinic in Mali?

The family has used every means at its disposal to diagnose and alleviate the situation. I asked bar-keep Diarra how he knew that his brother's illness and his wife's

death were not the result of some other dirty work. He explained that it is a lesson; curses are never to be made in vain or without thought to potential complications.

To help illustrate the mixed perception of curses, spells, and potions encountered in the course of fieldwork, I present two examples. The first is known as an “anti-love potion”, the second as a “break-up marriage” curse or spell.

The “anti-love potion,” as described by a fetish master, is used to “end” the love between a man and a woman. Taking a piece of patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*) and dog skin (*Canis familiaris*), wrap the skins around some black powder and place the packet in a fire so that it might slowly burn for three days. When done the packet should be reduced to a fine powder. A single pinch of this powder is then placed in the food or drink of the couple whose love is to be ended. Within a year the relationship between the two people will have ended. This “anti-love potion” is reportedly used by married individuals wishing to be rid of their spouse, jealous wives, and even parents seeking to maximize the family’s social well-being.

Almost identical to the “anti-love potion” is the “break-up marriage” curse or spell. My teacher and employer succinctly described it as being, “used to start a fight between a man and a woman that ends in divorce, or one ends up killing the other.” The person who wants to cast this curse or spell uses a small piece of civet (*Civerrictis civetta*), dog (*Canis familiaris*), hyena (*Crocota crocuta* or *Hyaena hyaena*) and patas monkey skin (*Erythrocebus patas*), wrapping all the skins around a large measure of black powder. The individual then casts the packet into a fire, and at the exact moment the ball of skins explodes, he recites the names of the two people who are to be divorced.

If the spell or curse caster is one of the persons involved, he or she simply utters the name of their partner, being careful not to say their own name, so as to direct the maximum effect of the curse or spell on the other.

Just like the “anti-love potion”, married men or women seeking to be rid of their spouse(s), jealous wives, and prying parents reportedly use the “break-up marriage” curse or spell. Furthermore, it is said to end a marriage within a year. So, besides the specific ingredients and preparation, the results of the “anti-love potion” and the “break-up marriage” curse or spell are remarkably similar.

To offer the flipside, there is a potion that is specifically designed for women to “catch” men through “good sex.” In this case a woman acquires several (approximately ten) “special dried ants” (unidentifiable species) and a small piece of honey badger skin (*Melivora capensis*). These items are burned until black and then further reduced to a fine powder. Once prepared, the woman takes a small amount of the powder and anoints her vagina. “Any man sleeps with her and they will not want another woman,” explained one participant. My teacher further explained that this potion is effective whether or not the woman is young or old, suggesting that older women, whether divorced or simply unwed, acquire a man through “unimaginable sexual relations.” From other conversations I gathered that women seeking to maintain their mate’s fidelity also use this potion.

Parents who seek to marry their young daughters as soon as possible might invest in a simple and sure-fire potion, known as the “fast-marriage” potion. A mother purchases the fat (grease) of a monitor lizard (*Varamus exanthematicus* or *V. griseus*) and



applies it to the nipples of her daughter. There is no question that the young girl will be married by the time she is fourteen years old.

Another potion associated with family also demonstrates the usefulness of a monitor lizard. Called the "man-finding" potion, a married woman acquires the ovaries of a savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*) and places them in a jar that is then filled with water and sealed. Once the jar is sealed, the wife recites an accompanying incantation that empowers the talisman. The resulting effect is seen in the ovaries "pointing," in the manner of a compass, in the direction of the woman's husband.

This "man-finding" potion offers a prime example of the ways in which potions are used in creating other magic or sorcery. In addition, there were a lot of laughs that came from the fetish market vendors when they explained this potion to me. I got the distinct impression that it seemed to be some form of statement to the effect that a husband whose wife used such a device was not really a "man," nor in control of his marriage, two traits that seem to be considered desirable by most Malian men.

Another desirable trend, and this should be obvious to anyone, is to maintain one's freedom. Known as an "escape from prison" potion, it is usually prepared by a non-incarcerated individual like a family member. This free individual acquires the head of the bird identified as "Kouriko" (*Estrildidae*), the nose of a "long-nosed rat" (unidentified species, possibly, *Thryonomis swinderianus*), a pair of "talking branches," a rock from a "caiman's stomach" (*Crocodylus niloticus*), and a small piece of human feces from someone who has recently consumed peanuts, rice or millet. The individual then powders all of the ingredients and mixes them into the food or drink of

the imprisoned. It is extremely important for the free person to recite the proper incantation to invoke the liberating powers of the potion prior to the potion being consumed. Granted that all has been prepared in the correct manner, the imprisoned will be free by the next morning.

On the darker side of things there are potions designed to kill that are associated with taking revenge. Simply known as potions of death, they are a trade secret and highly guarded. Though specific preparation is unknown to me, one example that was discussed with a fetish master and seller of potions of death included the stone from a caiman's stomach (*Crocodylus niloticus*), the stomach of a hyena (*Crocuta crocuta* or *Hyaena hyaena*) and several unidentifiable insects. The potion is in the form of a fine powder and is sold in a small packet. My informant went on to explain that if one uses the entire contents of the packet (hidden in food or drink), the subject will die a painful death, but if one uses only a small amount, he or she can turn the subject into a "slave." This "slave" state is described as being when the subject is under the control of the other and conducts his bidding. It is said that the "slave" does not sleep and only rarely eats being ever ready to do his master's will. Incidentally, this potion is known to be one of the most expensive, costing 200,000CFA (\$285.00) and could therefore only be afforded by the economically well off.

### **Other Magical Uses and Sorcery-**

Throughout my fieldwork there were many types of magical items that were discussed with a wide range of participants. Many of these were described as being a

fetish or grigri in form and function, while others were identified as a curse, spell, or potion. However, a third group was identified through coding, which due to the lack of specific and detailed information can only be called "other magical uses and sorcery." In many cases, what is related here, are simply statements, made by participants, as to the use of a particular item.

One of my personal favorites is the recognized use of camel feces to cure childhood bedwetting. Just as there is a negative association with bedwetting in the United States, it is equally frowned upon in Mali. In Mali, a child who wets the bed, be they male or female, is considered deviant, as the behavior suggests that the individual is unstable. As stated by the mother of a close friend, "children who wet their beds can grow up to be crazy."

The mother went on to explain that when faced with such a situation they will prepare a drink using the feces of a camel. Camel droppings are soaked in a glass of water until the water turns to a tea color. The feces are then strained off and the child is to drink the remaining liquid. "It only takes one time," the mother informed me. The magic, in this case, is not the negative behavior conditioning, but rather, the camel is an animal of the desert and it does not waste water. This water conserving property is the source of the anti-bedwetting remedy.

Another unique example is gleaned from a conversation I had with farmer Traure. While we sat having lunch one day, discussing wildlife and how it is used, Traure offered a secret that had been passed on by his father. "Donkeys have a secret," he said, as if playing a guessing game. "It is inside them. It is yellow. Is bile. It is very hard to collect

because as soon as you kill the donkey it disappears. But, if you are fast enough you can get it. The animal must not die in fright.”

Once the bile is collected, Traure instructs, “you put a drop of the bile in the ground when you plant a seed.” He cautions, “Only one drop per seed, and it will begin to grow. You can watch it grow very fast.” Incidentally, Traure does not use this production system for his entire crop, just special plants in his family’s vegetable garden.

There are several magical uses of rats (cane rats). In Mali, there is a variety of cane rat (*Thryonomis swinderianus*) whose tail is black at the base and white at the tip. By removing and keeping the white section of the rat’s tail, an individual can make an anti-theft talisman. Once the white tail section is dried, it is ready for use. Simply place the white tail section in your pocket, or anywhere else you perceive a potential threat to your belongings. Incidentally, the head of a ground squirrel can be dried and used for the same means.

Another use of cane rat, also associated with theft, can be seen through the use of its feet. A rather enthusiastic traditional doctor by the name of Bucoum, confided in me one night in a bar that he had once used the feet of a rat to turn his friend, who had engaged in illicit sexual relations with his wife, into a thief. It turns out that Bucoum simply trapped a rat, cut its feet off, ground them into a powder and hid it in the food of his friend. As explained by Bucoum, “his family threw him out, they wanted nothing to do with him. I heard that he was killed in Gao (a city in northern Mali).”

To be recognized as a thief, whether true or not, does not bode well for one's social relationships. To actually be a thief places one's physical well-being at high risk for if you are caught, death by beating is not uncommon.

A third magical use of cane rat is identified through the description of it being consumed to enhance one's sexual prowess. In this case prowess is used to mean endurance and stamina. Cane rat is described as being a less potent version of honey badger and can be used by both men and women, young or old. Men wishing to enhance their sexual prowess acquire a dried rat penis and testes, grind it to a powder, and mix it into their food or drink. Women acquire the dried sexual organs of a female rat (entire vagina, complete with ovaries and fallopian tubes). The female rat sexual organs are then prepared and consumed in the same manner as the male version.

Though cane rat is used in association with sexual practices, it is far less common than some of the other better known sexually related aids. The use of honey badger (any part of the animal [*Melivora capensis*]) is always associated with sex. In the words of a fetish market vendor, "when ever you see someone buy Dame (Bambara for honey badger), you know it is for sex. Dame love sex, they cannot get enough."

For a man seeking to fortify and lend his penis "supernatural strength," it is common practice to purchase the penis and testes of a honey badger. The penis and testes are then ground to a fine powder and consumed. Women are also known to use badger, but not for supernatural strength, but rather to enhance their sexual attractiveness. A woman wishing to enhance her sexual attractiveness will prepare and administer the female sexual organs of the honey badger in the same manner as a man.

Similar in its association, but unique in its effect is the use of black cobras (*Naja naja oxiana* and *N. nigricollis*). Considered a strictly male use, when a black cobra is cooked whole and then eaten, it is said to cause a man's penis to grow. Let me be clear, it does not cause an erection, but actually causes the organ to grow, increasing its overall length and girth. "This way," my informant explained, "men can make their penises as large as they want."

Python fat (*Python regius* and *P. sebae sebae*) can be directly applied to a man's penis to keep it erect for hours on end. When I asked my participant why this would be needed his explanation lent some insight: "It is for having a lot of sex. With this you can sleep with a woman for along time."

Coincidentally, it was after a man in his late teens to early twenties had just purchased some python fat, that my participant made his remarks. Furthermore, the client was described, once he had left as a "Kamalen ba", a term given young men who are known "players" or extremely sexually active young men with little regard for responsibility.

On occasion the indiscretions of men get them in a heap of trouble, as seen in the tale of Bocoum's revenge on his friend for cheating with his wife. In that case death was just the final blow to an otherwise drawn out punishment intended to teach the friend a lesson.

There are, however, an inordinate number of other magical items that are associated with outright murder and assassination. One of the first ever related to me described the vomit/spit of geckos (*Gekkonidae*) as being used to kill. This magical use

is rather special due to the fact that it corresponds with a well-known piece of folk tradition: if one ever ingests the vomit/spit of a gecko he or she will die. The two pieces of information help to play off of one another lending an even greater sense of unpredictability. This is due to the fact that geckos can be found in just about any structure in Mali. They are everywhere; just wait until it gets dark and out they come. How can you say that someone was poisoned, or rather just happened to drink out of a cup that a gecko might have spat-in? This is further compounded with the use of "spit" to describe vomit as well as feces.

Other known assassination techniques employ the magical properties of crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*). One case that was related to me described acquiring the bile of a crocodile, rubbing it on a knife, dart, or even bullet and then using that item to kill someone. I was assured that all I had to do was break the skin and the croc bile would work its way to the person's heart killing them within the day.

Another description of an assassination technique involving crocodile focused on the gall bladder (bile is stored in the gall bladder). In this case the murderer must dry the gall bladder, grind it to a fine powder, and secretly mix it into the intended victim's food or drink. My informant added to his description the fact that this particular technique causes the victim to die in extreme pain within three to four days, "they feel like they are on fire."

For relatively fast results one might try the "intestines of a real hyena" (*Crocuta crocuta* or *Hyaena hyaena*). The qualification "real" in this instance alludes to the fact that many vendors sell jackal (*Canis aureus*, *C. adustus*, or *C. mesomelas*) or common

dog (*Canis familiaris*) parts as hyena. Jackal and dog are more common and therefore more readily available for consumption than hyenas. Granted that you have the “intestines of a real hyena” and they are already dried, you grind them to a fine powder and then mix it into the food or drink of the intended victim. Once consumed, the victim has approximately two hours to live.

Other known assassination techniques may involve the head of a Gabon viper (*Bitis gabonica*), the head of an uromastix lizard (*Uromastix maliensis* and *U. geyri*), the left front paw of an aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*), or even a dried lungfish (*Protopterus annectens*). The preparation of each of these is not entirely clear; however, the resulting effect of death is widely recognized by participants.

People who fear that they might be poisoned might invest in a readily available preventative. The bird, known as “Na Ma Tutu” (unidentified species) can be found for sale on occasion in the fetish market and is strictly associated with poison prevention. The bird is sold live to a client who then must personally slit the throat of the bird and drink its fluids fresh. A participant explained to me, if you drink this, no poison can harm you.” This would be of considerable value given the obvious number of ways that an individual can be poisoned.

### **The Magical Properties of Human Body Parts-**

Humans, technically, are part of nature as they are type of fauna. We are mammals, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. In Mali, special properties of human parts are drawn on to help meet cultural demand.



It was during my time working as an apprentice that my key participant let me in on this rather dark side of the fetish market. We had been talking about curses, when my participant reached under his pallet and produced a very used vitamin bottle. It was cracked and had been repaired many times with glue and tape. My participant opened the bottle and passed it to me asking if I knew what was inside. I peered in and saw several eyeballs in various states of decay. "These are the eyes of a crazy man," he said. Continuing, he elaborated that, "They are very powerful and can help you find money."

After displaying his eyes, my participant carefully sealed the vitamin bottle and returned it to its designated place, hidden away under his vending pallet. Next, he produced another well-used container and handed it to me, motioning me to keep it out of plain sight. I pried the lid off and was greeted with a straggly mass of hair. "Kunsigi? (Bambara for hair)" I asked. He leaned in close and whispered, "This is the hair of white men. It is very strong and helps bring you money and makes you powerful." I thought that it was unusual that the hair seemed to require more secrecy than the human eyes. After all, one can loose some hair and never be the wiser, but an eye I think would be sorely missed.

It turns out that the hair is more "hush-hush" due to the fact that it is reportedly "the hair of a white man." From the manner in which my participant described the use of this item, there is a clear association with foreign white men as having magical properties directly related to money and power. Hair just seems to be the most readily available part of tourists and local ex-patriots. There are some folktales that suggest that in prior times

other, less readily available white men parts were in greater demand, resulting in the deaths and disappearances of several French colonial officers and officials.

In contrast, the active collection and use of “crazy man eyes” illustrates another key feature. How these eyes are acquired is varied. Some are described as being the real McCoy, others are said just to be eyes of an undifferentiated individual. One participant recounted that he acquired faux-crazy man eyes by raiding fresh graves as well as the morgue (begging the question- how do you ever really know they are the eyes of a “crazy man?”). The hair of a white man is more readily identifiable as such and cannot be counterfeited.

Other mimicked human parts can be seen in the use of “dead man’s hair and saliva.” Each item is used independently, though they have similar effects. The “hair of a dead man” is reportedly used to stop another person from speaking. Let me clarify, the “dead man’s hair” does not inhibit an individual from divulging specific information (i.e., secrets) it arrests a persons ability to speak.

Similarly, the “saliva of a dead man” is used to “trap someone,” suspending their free will. In effect the victim becomes a “slave” in much the same manner discussed previously. They rarely eat or sleep and never talk. This would be considered useful if the intended victim was perceived as a threat. Furthermore, there are associated uses related to revenge and enhancing ones social status. One participant suggested that to “trap someone” would be considered the ultimate revenge. Another informant cited an example that granted the user, previously unrecognized by the community at large, status and power.

Another demand of human parts can be seen in the use of foreskins and clitorises in the preparation of specialized fetishes and grigris. Foreskins and clitorises collected from male and female circumcision practices are used in fetishes and related to sexual ideals. A foreskin will be placed in a small pouch around a young boy's belly creating a grigri designed to avert any deviant sexual practices that may hinder the child later in life. One mother described the sexual significance of a male child using this grigri as, "he will not be vulgar, become sick or be violent. He will be good."

Clitorises are prepared for young girls in much the same manner as foreskins for boys. However, the resulting effect is quite different. The use of this grigri is said to cause a girl to remain a perpetual virgin. In the words of one informant, "she will always be a virgin." This might be related to the fact that female virginity is considered desirable by men and husbands to be.

### **Outsider Demand:**

Besides supplying traditional-demand, the fetish market is also known as a location to procure specialty animals. It was as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) that I first became familiar with this informal trade system. Within my first couple of months of being a PCV I came to meet David, another PCV who was preparing to leave Mali as I was just settling in. David was a natural resource management technical advisor, carrying the same title as I; however, days before he was to return to the United States he purchased a rather large sand tortoise.

The turtle must have weighed at least thirty pounds and measured two feet in length. It was truly an impressive animal. I recall being rather upset to learn that David had negotiated with a local hunter to capture the animal in order for him to return to the U.S. with it. The impetus for David's actions revolved around starting up an exotic reptile breeding facility to make his fortune; the sand tortoise was to be his first attempt at it.

Setting aside any moral turpitude concerning unethical captive breeding programs, this case helped to open my eyes to the very real yet informal system that was oriented toward the collection of exotic or specialty animals for what can only be termed "outsider demand." Though it is not uncommon to find a Malian family in possession of such an animal, it is the organized harvesting of select species for profit that is of interest, rather than the odd baboon that sits sentry duty in the courtyard of a Malian household.

Another disturbing trend that I initially came across as a PCV was to witness other ex-patriots and tourists purchase goods wholly associated with traditional-use. These items were typically bought in the Bamako fetish market as "gifts," whimsical trinkets, style accessories, or even as decorative materials. The spectrum of outsider use is as varied as the minds of those who purchase the items.

Though it was not a regular occurrence, several times I came across Peace Corps volunteers who had purchased something from the Bamako fetish market as a keepsake or gift- a two-meter long python skin for Sarah's little brother back home who likes snakes. Or, how about a monkey paw for uncle Bob? I cannot recall how many volunteers bought primate heads and paws as gag gifts to take home.

On other occasions while attending open invite ex-patriot parties I witnessed several examples of wild parrots, parakeets, and even some lesser primates that had been acquired through questionable means.

However, it was during my most recent excursion to Mali that I observed two more examples that help to demark the extent of outsider demand. I was sitting with one of my participants, an animal parts vendor known as Diakite, when a pair of women (Diakite identified them as Moroccan or Lebanese) started drawing the attention of all the vendors. The two women were casually sauntering down the fetish strip window shopping when one took particular interest in the hides sold by Sako, Kara's brother.

As I sat with Diakite, a couple vendors down from the dark haired, olive skinned women, I watched one of them pick up a civet skin and carefully inspect it. She held the skin, stretched between her hands, up high above her head, letting the sun highlight the quality. She passed the thoroughly inspected hide to her companion and repeated the process with another civet skin. This one did not cut the mustard and she returned it to Sako, who readily produced a third skin. This third skin was again scrutinized via the sun's rays and passed inspection.

I was fascinated because this was the first time that I had actually witnessed a foreigner purchase an item directly from an animal parts vendor. I heard tales told to me by Peace Corps volunteers, and animal part vendors alike, but I had never actually seen it happen. I tried to think myself small and invisible so as not to draw any attention. Carefully I pulled out my camera and snapped a shot of the women inspecting civet

hides. As luck would have it the photo came out (see figure 4: Photo of Foreign Nationals Purchasing Civet Skins [*Civerrictis civetta*] from an Animal Parts Vendor).

After having selected the two spotted civet skins the younger of the two women negotiated a price. I think this circumstance presented a bit of a language barrier for both parties as I saw the woman extend her hand with a 5000CFA note toward Sako. Sako was insulted by the look on his face and suggested that the woman pay more. I could not follow the exact conversation between the two as I was too far away, but I did manage to observe that the woman paid Sako 7,500CFA (\$ 10.00) for the two skins.



Figure 4: Photo of Foreign Nationals Purchasing Civet Skins (*Civerrictis civetta*) from an Animal Parts Vendor

After the women had left with their newly purchased civet hides, I turned to Daikite and asked, "What do they want with civet skin? Do they use it as medicine or magic?" Daikite's answer was illuminating, "They make rugs and pillows with it." I was shocked I had never contemplated the decorative potential wildlife species might offer ex-patriots and otherwise fashion conscious foreigners fixated on designer looks at budget prices.

It is worth mentioning that this sale actually reduces the overall profit that could have been made from either of the two civet skins. Being that all hides are traditionally sold at 500CFA (\$0.70) per "morsel" (square shaped piece of skin approximately 6cm x 6cm) and that there are roughly 35 "morsels" per civet hide, each civet has the potential to make about 17,500CFA (\$ 25.00). However, in this case it was more advantageous for Sako to accept a reduced price and have that sum, rather than have to sell the hide per morsel to capitalize on his investment. The value of this is that Sako has made more money in this single transaction than he will selling single items (i.e. morsels) for the rest of the day. It is guaranteed money in his pocket rather than potential money to be made.

On another occasion I was sitting with Kara when I took notice of a man who seemed for some reason very familiar to me. He was well dressed in what I call "fonctionnaire attire," a tailored tropical two-piece suit. The use of "fonctionnaire" is used to describe the trend in style shared by government officials and agency employees. Chances are if you see a Malian man wearing such a suit he works for the government, one of its agencies, or at the very least he is a well to do individual with some material wealth.

Kara and I sat and watched the out of place individual. My mind kept telling me that I knew the man who was headed straight for us, but it was not until the man greeted and stepped behind a parked car to speak with Kara that I was able to place his face. It all came back to me as I watched what was obviously the beginning of some shady deal.

The man who was covertly engaged in a discussion with Kara was most assuredly a government employee and a fonctionnaire of the highest rank. For reasons of confidentiality I will call the man Kamisoko. It was as a Peace Corps volunteer that I had first come to know him as a regional head of the Eaux et Forêts service (Water and Forests, an agency charged with managing the natural resources of Mali). Once piecing the identity of Kamisoko together I came to the realization that my presence might have placed Kara in jeopardy with the law and that as I watched, I thought perhaps Kara was being shaken down. None of this could have been further from the truth, as I would come to learn.

After having observed the two men, who tried to hide themselves behind a Peugeot 505, for about ten minutes, the meeting broke up. Kara returned to me, who he had left in charge of his stall, while Kamisoko nonchalantly disappeared. Before Kara sat down I asked, "Was that Kamisoko?" Kara confirmed the identification, but before he could continue I asked if he worked for Eaux et Forêts. Again Kara confirmed my fears, leading me to ask if he had collected any taxes. Kara laughed and said no, leaving me thoroughly confused.

Kara's explanation of the situation helps to lend some insight. "He works for Eaux et Forêts but he comes to me from time to time," started Kara. "Two months ago he



came to me and asked me to find him a juvenile leopard.” “A live one,” I asked? “Yes,” Kara agreed, “he wants them alive because he sells them to zoos in Europe and to western collectors.” My jaw about hit the pile of animal parts at my feet. “You get him live animals?” I asked to get confirmation of this example of exotic animal trade. “I don’t, I just make the arrangements.” Kara continued, “One of my hunters catches the animal and brings it to me. I pay them from what Kamisoko pays me.”

“So, he wants a juvenile leopard?” I asked. Beginning to get a little tired of my questions Kara explained, “No, that was months ago, I already gave it to him. Now he wants a juvenile, female, aardvark.” “Where will it go?” I asked, trying to figure out if the aardvark was bound for a zoo or private collector. “I don’t know, maybe a zoo, I think,” answered a bored Kara.

As if to cement the reality of the deal, Kara pulled from his pocket a wad of 10,000CFA notes. There must have been 200,000CFA (\$ 285.00) sitting in his hand as advanced payment for procuring a female, juvenile aardvark. “He will come back in two weeks and see if I have one yet.” Further explaining his plan of action, Kara said, “Tonight I will go to Kati (a sizable town outside of Bamako) and talk to one of my hunters. If he is able to get me an aardvark I will pay him 20,000, maybe 30,000CFA (\$28.00 – 42.00).” For a rural hunter this would be more money than normally seen in two maybe three months.

The actual means of procuring these specialty animals is seen in the descriptions of professional hunters performing what is identified as a contracted hunt (see figure 7, page 126, System of Professional Supply. Concerning this particular case, Kara came

through approximately one month after being approached by Kamisoko. I was not present for the hand off, but Kara explained that it had taken place in Kati at night without a hitch.

On a side note it is worthwhile to mention the fact that Kara, in his vast background of working with wildlife in Mali, used to collect live specimens for an American scientific institution. To fulfill his word of mouth contract with an American biologist Kara supplied 500 uromastyx lizards (*Uromastyx maliensis* and *U. geyri*), 500 desert monitors (*Varanus griseus*), 100 "desert vipers" (*Bitis nasicornis* and *Echis carinatus*), and 100 jackals (*Canis aureus*, *C. adustus* and *C. mesomelas*) for the sum of 500,000CFA (\$714.00). As reported by Kara, it took an entire year to collect this vast number of live animals.

Besides outside interest in the products and services provided by the fetish market, the fetish market itself, is in demand. Though tourists and ex-patriots may purchase traditional items for non-traditional use there is a much greater number of foreigners that are drawn to the fetish market as a tourist attraction. Tourists are often encouraged by local profiteers to pay for tours with the fetish market as one of their attractions. It has not reached the level where the fetish market is on every tourist's "to see" list, but it is definitely beginning to draw international attention. I saw a tour group go through at least once a week for two months. It is important to note that none of this is organized with the knowledge or consent of those who work in the fetish market. But that does not stop animal part vendors, as they tend to be those under scrutiny, from

making a profit out of it. After all, if an animal parts vendor and their wares are what are drawing tourists, why shouldn't they capitalize off it?

For the most part the tourists that come through remain in group-formation, huddled together in a gaggle of pointing fingers and awe struck expressions. Of these tourists only a few ever approach an actual fetish vendor and seek permission to take a photograph. Most tend to try and snatch the quintessential "cultural" photo by sneaking the chance shutter exposure. It is fine for those that are not caught, but on occasion when an eye-popping tourist is caught taking a picture without permission all hell can break loose.

Case in point: I had just finished an inventory of an animal part vendors goods when a rather small group of three French tourists were spied making their way down the fetish strip (1 male~35y.o., 1 male~40y.o., 1 female~25y.o.). The younger of the men was the troublemaker. He had a large camera bag hung around his neck and was taking pictures of the fetish market at random, swinging his large barreled telephoto lens to bear on unsuspecting vendors. The man never once tried to ask permission. I could literally feel the ambient vibe of the fetish market turn from being relaxed to that of extreme animosity as the photographer strolled down fetish row snapping images. I could hear the shutter of the man's camera clicking away as he came closer and closer. When the shutterbug snapped a picture of me and several surrounding vendors things got ugly. As if some secret signal had been given about a dozen animal part vendors surrounded the small French tourist group.

I tried to intervene to calm things down, as it was clear the tourists had no idea what they had done. I introduced myself to the offender and asked where he was from- Paris, of course. I put on my best cordial face and told him that he must ask permission before he takes pictures in the fetish market. I explained that many of the things that he sees here are sacred and must not be photographed (the standard line I had heard Malians tell other offenders). At this the man became angry and told me flat out that he could take pictures of whatever he wanted.

The vendors heard this and got really upset. The dozen or so vendors who had surrounded the small tourist group now decided to focus all of their attention on the 35 year old photographer. I couldn't help but think, "you've gone and done it now, you pissed off the fetish folk- not the people I would want on my bad side." I could see that the tourists were very scared; it showed in their faces. The woman alone looked as if she was having a severe panic attack as I watched her take short choppy breaths, her eyes bulging. After what seemed an eternity of shouting (and there are no English words to describe the Bambara threats and curses that I heard), the desperate tourist group ended up pushing their way free, running to the safety of the Artisana and its uniformed security.

It was a very eye opening experience for me. Some how I have been able to bypass such animosity with my work with the fetish vendors. To see the fear in the tourists was amusing and terrible at the same time. They did not know what they were getting into. Incidentally, I remained in the fetish market for the rest of the day, collecting some of the most varied and fascinating descriptions of curses, spells, potions

and other means of teaching the disrespectful tourists a lesson. I can only imagine what the tourists must have thought of it all.

This was not the extent of tourist contact in the Bamako fetish market rather it is only an example of the conflicts that may arise as a result. For the most part tourists are viewed as unwanted but at the same time they are valued for their economic contributions. However, those that are involved in exotic or live animal trade are considered desirable contacts as they aid financial security. It is an interesting paradox that suggests that money is the crucial factor, not the cultural insensitivity of tourists and foreign nationals.

### **Trends in Wildlife Trade: Cultural versus Outsider Demand**

Prior to discussing the various ways in which wildlife parts and other items are supplied to the Bamako fetish market it is necessary to look at several trends that were identified in the course of fieldwork and research analysis. First and foremost is the issue of scale.

It was through my Peace Corps work with local hunters that I came to know of the Bamako fetish market. However, it was also clear that the town of Manantali had its "Marabaga men" who sold wildlife on a much smaller scale than that seen in the capital. Conversations with participants suggests that nearly every sizable town has its own "Marabaga men" suggesting that large urban centers like Bamako, Kayes and Gao represent markets of a regional scale. Though the Bamako fetish market may be considered regional in terms of its scale, at the same time it represents a national level

due to its central location; the capital city of Mali. Other evidence of this national scale comes from the fact that rural “Marabaga men” tend to identify the Bamako fetish market as the most desirable location to sell animal parts due to the reported high turn over rates and large sums of money to be made. Furthermore, the “Marabaga men” of Manantali did not go to the closest urban center, Kayes, rather they opted to spend more money and time to get to Bamako to sell their goods.

The fact that rural “Marabaga men” perceive Bamako as the Shangri-La of the animal parts trade lends insight to the potential profitability it entails. As described in the beginning of this chapter there is a continuum of associated use with regard to the items sold through the fetish market. This continuum is expressed to highlight two types of demand: cultural (i.e., for locals) and outsider (i.e., associated with tourists, ex-patriots, and foreign nationals).

The presence of two types of demand requires a brief analysis in order to address the question of which generates more trade, cultural or outsider demand? Such a question is of fundamental importance if proper and effective policy is to be developed in the future. However, given the limited amount of research time (two months), my ethnographic approach as well as unforeseen circumstances I can only make an informed guess based on my observations.

In order to answer this question of cultural versus outsider demand I reviewed my notes on animal part vendor acquisitions and sales. In this case an acquisition is taken to mean any and all wildlife purchased by an animal parts vendor for resale. A sale is when a client purchases wildlife and or its parts from a vendor. Given the limitations of my

data I am able to offer the observable acquisitions and sales of one vendor over a period of two months. Keep in mind these are only those acquisitions and sales that I was witness to, not those reported. As such, all figures are probably lower than they actually are.

In the course of two months (September through October 2002) one vendor made sixteen (16) acquisitions. In total he paid 76,600CFA (~ \$109.00). By definition all of these acquisitions were in reference to wildlife, not other items. During the same period of time the vendor made a total of twenty (20) sales. Nineteen (19) of these sales were to local clients seeking items for cultural use; only one (1) sale was to an invisible foreigner (the individual who initiated a contracted capture of a live juvenile female aardvark for export). The total sum of this vendors "cultural" sales was 65,850CFA (~\$ 94.00), putting the vendor in the red with regard to his acquisitions. However, the single "outsider" sale more than makes up for the difference as it netted the vendor approximately 175,000CFA (~ \$ 250.00). This single outsider sale constitutes the majority of an animal parts vendors profit over a two month period (roughly 73% of his business over a two month period was achieved through a single outsider sale).

Subtracting the monies paid out for acquisitions from that acquired through sales (both cultural and outsider) ensures that the vendor takes home a healthy profit for his labor and time;  $240,850\text{CFA} - 76,600\text{CFA} = 164,250\text{CFA}$  (~ \$ 234.00).

It is clear from this limited conjecture that outsider sales play a crucial role in the over all economic viability of fetish market vendors. However, the vast majority of clients tend to be local people in search of the means to secure personal and societal well-

being. This dichotomy is intriguing and causes me to recall the Artisana. Based solely on observations and a few brief conversations with Artisana vendors, it is readily apparent that the Artisana acquires and sells more wildlife than the fetish market. Furthermore, the sheer numbers of wildlife utilized by the Artisana make the consumption of the fetish market appear insignificant in comparison.



## Chapter 4

### **Maintaining and Serving Demand: The Systems of Supply**

In the previous chapters I have laid out the fetish market as well as identified and described items sold in it as being related to a continuum of associated use. Each of these associated uses has been discussed lending insight to the value each item holds. The inherent value of a given item helps to create demand when it is viewed at a macro level. This demand is served and maintained through a system of supply.

From my vantage point as an apprentice to a fetish master and animal parts vendor I was able to document the means by which supply is maintained. To begin with let me present the perspective of my key participant Professor Kara Dembele.

From my time with Kara and other animal part vendors I have been able to add my own culturally immersed observations and participatory insight. Though it was not evident at first, after several weeks of observing, discussing and noting everything seen and said, there is much more at work than the simplistic descriptions given me. However, let me first describe the basic perceptions of an animal parts vendor with regard to maintaining supply.

Figure 5, Point of view of an animal parts vendor, presents the four readily identified means through which supply is maintained as well as the wildlife used, specialized distribution, and the various demand it all serves (cultural or outsider), based on what animal part vendors described. The four types of suppliers, as perceived by animal parts vendors are: opportunists, professionals, middlemen, and specialized distributors.

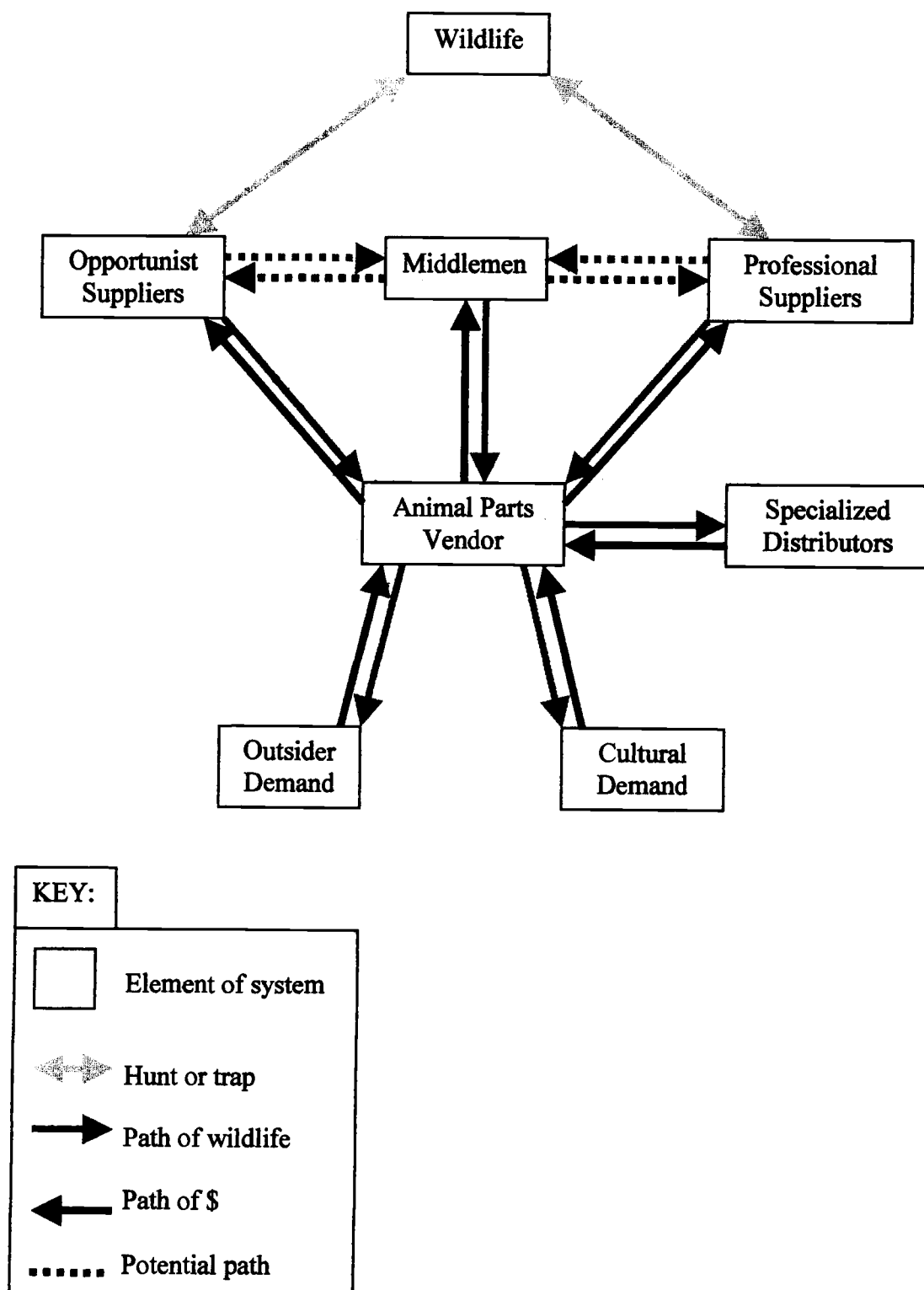


Figure 5: Point of View of an Animal Parts Vendor

Granted Kara, and other vendors did not describe this system of supply using the terms I have given (i.e., opportunists, professionals, middlemen and specialized distributors). Rather these are terms used to describe the types of suppliers identified. Animal part vendors used descriptive phrases to outline the functions of these four types of men. Those that I have labeled opportunists, animal part vendors call "normal people." Middlemen is used in place of descriptions like, "people who buy animals from villages and bring them here" (the Bamako fetish market). Professional suppliers were unanimously identified as "hunters" (with some distinction between traditional and secular types). The remaining category of specialized distributors is used to parallel the acquisition of "special items" that may be faunal or non-faunal in origin.

All of these people are those that Kara and other vendors deal with on a face-to-face level. Kara has little interest in where the goods might be from or how they were acquired, just the price asked. Incidentally, it is worth noting that all the animal parts vendors that I worked with showed no interest in where parts might be from or how they were procured. That, after all, is not the concern of the vendor, but the business of suppliers.

Every day individuals come to the fetish market wishing to sell a wide range of items to animal parts vendors. It is through these varied means of inventory acquisition that one can begin to see other trends that are not so readily identifiable from an animal parts vendor's perspective.

### Opportunist Suppliers:

I had arrived early in the fetish market on a Friday, the day for prayer and sought out and sat down with Kara to begin my day's lesson. Kara leaned over his pallet heaped with animal parts and seemed to mime a version of "ennie-meenie-miney-moe" selecting a rather ratty looking piece of hide. "What is this?" he asked, handing me the very dry, almost parchment like skin. I saw that there was a hint of some fins, "Jege (fish)," I answered in my limited vocabulary. "This is tigin ngolon, poisson électrique (electric fish skin)," corrected Kara. "They live in the river and can give you a bad bite," he explained. The tumblers rolled in my head and I came to understand that this fish was rather unique. From Kara's continued description I learned that it does not have scales like other fish, and lives in the mud at the bottom of slow moving rivers (this species was later identified as an electric catfish, *Malapterurus electricus*). My hand ached as I tried to write it all down before the information was lost in the thriving bustle of the market in full swing on a Friday morning.

Kara sat back a minute while I tried to write down the information that he had given me. I was busily scribbling when I heard Kara speaking to someone. I looked up and saw a boy who was holding a rather cumbersome cardboard box. The boy seemed to be about 13-15 years old and he occasionally had to dramatically grab for the box that constantly seemed to want to leap from his hands. Kara leaned forward from his rickety chair and took the box from the boy, handing it to me. I set my notebook and pen aside and took hold of the flopping box setting it down between my feet to steady it.

Kara gave me a nod and I reached down to unfold the box top that was trying to open itself. Minding my fingers I pulled the flap aside and was met with the golden gaze of two juvenile raptors. Their thrashing stopped as the light poured in and they looked up and out to see my face peering back at them. I turned to Kara and asked, "Nin togo (what's it called)?" The boy who kept his distance from me piped up, "Sege (Eagles)."

I was amazed. I asked the boy how he had come across the clearly juvenile raptors. He explained to me that he had seen the birds' parents build a nest in a tree. He then waited until the parents were gone and used his slingshot (a standard tool of Malian male children) to shoot rocks at the nest until it fell. The boy went on to describe that when the nest fell there had been three eaglets in it. One died when it struck the ground. The remaining two eaglets he boxed up and brought into the fetish market to sell the day after he caught them.

It was clear that though my presence might have sidetracked the boy he was there to make some money. The boy returned his attention to Kara and asked how much he might buy them for. For an animal part vendor, such as Kara, acquisition of such animals is hard to pass up as they have great potential for repaying his investment and beyond, earning himself a good profit.

The key to maximizing potential profit lays in the bartering. This is as much true for Kara as it is the boy selling the supplies. Though the desires of the two are essentially the same, Kara has the means to capitalize whereas the boy has little ground to stand on. It is a buyer's market.

Kara casually asks how much the boy wants for the two eaglets. “Keme woro, keme woro (3000CFA each),” the boy suggested. Kara looked at me then the birds that had returned to flopping about in their box. Perhaps taking into account the vitality of the animals, Kara countered, “Keme nanni, keme nanni (2000CFA each [\$2.80]).” The boy looked dejected and stood silent a moment. Nodding his head in ascent, Kara paid the boy from a wad of very used CFA bills he took from his pocket.

The boy left leaving Kara and me to care for the eaglets. I turned to Kara and asked, “What are you going to do with them?” Kara smiled his bright smile and explained that he would keep the birds alive for a while, hoping to sell them as a magical enhancement oriented towards commerce and trade. If they did not sell within a week he would slaughter them and use them himself. After all, an animal parts vendor can never move enough commerce nor make enough money.

After having purchased the birds, Kara excused himself to add them to his stockpiled inventory nestled in the wall of the tree place. The birds were sold later that week to a wealthy businessman who reportedly paid 10,000CFA per eaglet (a total of \$28.00). It was a day long in the waiting for Kara, as he had not been selling as much as he would like. The fact that he was able to sell the birds for a substantial profit helped to ease Kara’s financial concerns.

Another similar example that parallels the previous acquisition of juvenile raptors was witnessed while sitting and talking with two other participants. The two vendors, known as Duba and Diakite, were discussing the merits of badger penises and various associated uses when a boy approximately 12-14 years old interrupted. The boy greeted

both Duba and Diakite, then turned to me and asked my name. From the observable interactions between the boy (Daoda) and my participants, it was clear they knew each other well. I would later come to learn that Daoda was a regular, as he came to the market about once a week to sell a grab-bag of various animals.

Daoda handed a large plastic bag that sagged with some weight to Diakite who upended its contents on the ground. Out tumbled a wide variety of birds and reptiles in various states of decay. I sat, identified and counted the pile of small animals around our feet. I saw many (15+) chameleons (*Chamaeleo africanus* and *C. senegalensis*), a small sand boa (*Eryx mueleri*), a savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*), finches (20+, *Fringillidae*), gray parrots (3, *Psittacus erithacus*), and a type of king fisher (*Alcedinidae*). Duba and Diakite sat hunched over on their shared bench, carefully picking through and selecting a few items.

Diakite purchased four freshly killed chameleons, the sand boa, and king fisher for a grand total of 1,500CFA (\$2.10). Duba paid 2,000CFA (\$2.80) for two chameleons, the monitor lizard, a parrot and a handful of finches (red and yellow varieties). It is worth mentioning that there was no open discussion of prices in this transaction. Rather, all parties involved seemed to have an innate understanding of relative value. This might be a result of Daoda's regular supply trips to the fetish market over time.

Once the vendors had paid for their supplies and bagged up the remaining items and returned them to Daoda I was able to learn a bit more about where these animals had come from and how they had been collected. Daoda lives right on the Niger River and tends his family's vegetable gardens (his family's primary source of income). His house

is relatively close to the fetish market, being only a three-hour ride in a beat up “bashe” (bush taxi). It is Daoda’s responsibility to sit out in the family’s garden and keep pests away. To facilitate this task Daoda is armed with a pocket full of pea sized gravel and a homemade slingshot called a “manna.” The bag of various birds and reptiles had been collected, or rather harvested by Daoda with his slingshot, over the course of about a week. The money paid to Daoda, he tells me, goes to his family, as they always need the extra income to help make ends meet.

On another occasion a similar transaction took place, though it revolved around a different species of wildlife, and type of opportunist. It just so happens that I was again immersed in my traditional-use lessons from Kara when a very tired and disheveled looking young man approached us. He too carried a cardboard box, though it did not seem to move on its own accord like others that I had seen. The young man, approximately 18-20 years old, seemed to be very out of place. It was clear that he did not know Kara or the fetish market very well as he stood just in front of us and politely waited for us to acknowledge his presence, standard operating procedure for a Malian entering an unknown situation.

Kara looked him over as I took note of the situation. Finally greeting the young man, Kara reached out to take the box. Peeling back a box-flap Kara peeked inside and then immediately handed the box to me. I cautioned a glance inside and found two large uromastyx lizards. They were striking in their coloration and club-like spiked tails. If ever there was a wicked looking lizard, these were excellent contenders.



Before I had a chance to speak with the young man, Kara commenced bartering for the pair of lizards. "How much for them?" he asked in a non-interested voice. The young man offered his opening bid at "Keme woro, keme woro (3,000CFA each, a total of \$8.40)." Kara, non-pulsed at the steep opening, countered with "Keme ani bi durou, keme ani bi durou (750CFA each, a total of \$2.10). The young man became very upset and reached in to take the box with the lizards. 750CFA is apparently not considered a worthwhile bid for this particular species.

Kara, in an effort to show that the lizards were not in great shape offered, "But they are mostly dead," tapping the box. Admittedly, the lizards seemed to have expired as they lay still with their limbs in odd positions. The ploy seemed to work as the man looked at the box of lizards and then to Kara, weighing his options. In a last ditch effort the man mustered his poker face and ostensibly suggested that Kara pay 2,000CFA per lizard (a total of \$5.60). Kara countered with his trump card, saying, "I will give you 2,000CFA for both (\$2.80)," in a voice that carried a sense of finality.

Once Kara paid the young man, I managed to ask him where he had collected the lizards. I had figured that they would have been from somewhere near Bamako, but I learned that they were caught nearly three or four days travel to the north near the city of Gao. I was shocked. This man had traveled all the way from Gao to Bamako to sell the two lizards that he had caught. At first I thought that his voyage was just to sell the lizards, but it turns out the young man was visiting his uncle. From what the young man related to me, I learned that the lizards represented potential money he might contribute

to his uncle's household. The fact that he had not received what he thought the lizards were worth adversely impacted any immediate support he might be able to lend his uncle.

After the young man left, Kara went on to explain that the lizards (*Uromastyx maliensis*) are known as "Gao basa" or "Koro basa" in Bambara. Furthermore, he explained, "you can only find these up north in the desert." From Kara's tutelage I gathered that these species are considered extremely dangerous, as they are perceived as being venomous. Having known many a uromastyx I had been instructed through my western education that the species was harmless, though it might look like it was malevolent. The bright coloration of yellow contrasting with jet-black (sometimes red and black) seems to underscore its reputation as a dangerous animal.

Though it does not help to further illustrate this particular type of supply acquisition, my desire to examine one of the uromastyx lizards inadvertently granted me a significant amount of respect and status among animal part vendors and the fetish market in general. It was after Kara had described the lizards as being dangerous that I asked if it would be alright to take a photo of the lizards, after all they seemed dead and non-threatening. Kara consented and I snapped a few pictures of the lizards in the box. However the lighting was bad, which prompted me to ask if I could take one of the lizards out of the box to photograph it. Again Kara consented, but added, "pay attention." I reached in to remove the more colorful of the two specimens and immediately pulled my hand back as the lizards broke out of their catatonic trances, snapping and hissing at my intrusion. "Pay attention," Kara reiterated, "if they bite you, they will not let go, the poison will get in you and you can die." I became frustrated as

more and more vendors and market shoppers took notice of the white guy trying to grab a notably dangerous animal. I'm sure I offered prime time amusement, but my mind was set on getting a hold of one of the lizards. Each time I would go to reach in the lizards would aggressively rise to meet me. To make matters worse, the crowd was becoming larger and I was becoming all the more conscious of my inept actions.

Picking up a hippo tusk that was out for sale on Kara's pallet I used it to distract the attention of the lizards while I reached in and collared the one I wished to photograph. When my hand, holding the lizard, came out of the box the small crowd gasped and broke up in an instant. I looked to Kara in search of praise and was greeted with his warm smile. "That is good," he agreed and picked up my camera to photograph me holding the thrashing lizard. From that point on I was referred to as "knowledgeable" when it came to wildlife. A recognition and compliment orders of magnitude greater than being known as "the white guy who asks a lot of questions."

On another day, while I was working with Kara and his brother (Sako), who occupied his own independent stall, a rather unique set of interactions was observed oriented around the procurement of a freshly butchered honey badger penis (*Melivora capensis*), complete with testes. I had just sat down to talk with Kara and Sako when a man (approximately 30 years old) walked up and greeted the small group of vendors and myself. He held in his hand an industrial sized tomato paste can (much like a large coffee can). Kara asked the man what he had and was handed the dinged and battered metal container. "Dame fulo (honey badger penis)," Kara stated mater-of-factly and passed the can to his brother.

Passing the can to me Sako asked how much the man wanted for it. Though the opportunist adult supplier opened with a high price of 4,000CFA (\$5.60), through the combined bartering skill of Kara and Sako he was talked down to 2,000CFA (\$2.80). The interesting aspect of this transaction is observed in how the penis was paid for and who took possession. Both Kara and Sako fronted 1,000CFA (\$1.40) each to meet the agreed price. Though it maybe of little significance I recall that when both men presented their half of the needed money, they had more than enough in their own pockets to have bought the penis outright. Furthermore, after the penis was paid for Sako took possession.

It was only after Sako had returned to his own stall, leaving Kara and me alone, that I gathered a bit of insight to the unusual means of shared cost. Apparently Sako did not currently have a honey badger penis in his inventory to sell, whereas Kara had two out for sale on his pallet. Kara went on to explain that since the penis was fresh it would sell quickly and for more than his dried versions. Continuing, Kara described how, "Sako will sell it for 6,000CFA (\$8.40) and give me half (\$4.20)." After lending his insight it was clear that the initial sharing of cost is an act geared toward the perceived guaranteed sale of the penis and mutual gain in profit. Not a bad way of minimizing investment (economic and physical) while maximizing potential profit through another's efforts.

Weeks later, yet another unique transaction oriented around the acquisition of supplies took place. In this example, Kara and I had just completed our noon meal of rice and sauce and were lounging in the shade of his stall's awning, trying to avoid the

burning sun. We were quietly discussing the Coup d'etat in Côte d'Ivoire when a young man, about 20 years old approached us with a very lively adult patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*). The man carried in his hand a length of rope that was tied around the waist of the primate, who would walk two or three paces and then leap with all his might away from his owner. Of course the rope being tied to his waist would bring the monkey up short on his launch for freedom. I came face to face with the animal as the young man greeted Kara and the monkey tried another unsuccessful bounce, the rope went taught, and the monkey landed on me.

I came to learn that the man with the patas monkey was in the army and was being transferred. He had come across the monkey about four years ago when he came to be stationed in the nation's capital of Bamako. I never found out how young the monkey was when he acquired it, but witnessed firsthand the military man's means of being rid of the animal. After the army man had talked with Kara for a bit, it seemed as though they knew each other and I had been thoroughly acquainted with the monkey, Kara asked how much the man wanted for the animal. The military man opened with a quote of 2,000CFA (\$2.80). I was surprised at the lowness of the figure as I had seen just the skin of the same species of monkey be purchased from another vendor for 5,000CFA (\$7.00). Didn't the opportunist supplier realize that what he was selling was worth much more than what he was asking? Things just did not add up.

Kara countered the opening offer with 1,500CFA (\$2.10), which was readily agreed to by the supplier. The monkey meanwhile was excitedly hopping from one surface to another, my lap to Kara's back, bounding this way and that. After Kara had

handed over three 500CFA notes and taken ownership of the lively animal, the opportunist supplier took his leave. Kara got up with monkey in tow and tied his lead to the bumper of a parked car. The car was far enough away so that the monkey was out of launching range of us but still under the protective spread of shade overhead.

“What are you going to do with it?” I asked Kara. Kara explained that in this case he would try to sell the animal alive for around 15,000CFA (\$21.00). I asked who would pay 15000CFA for such an animal, as it sounded like an exaggeration. “There are foreigners that would pay that much,” replied Kara. I had forgotten that every once in awhile ex-patriots and tourists would visit the market and buy that special gift for uncle Bob back home in Kansas, or come across the perfect animal hide to use in home decoration. Exotic pets are not out of line either as I recall from my Peace Corps experience. On several occasions I was invited to ex-patriot dinner parties only to find unique animals caged and on display. African Gray and Green type parrots, galagos (bush babies), as well as Vervet (green) and Red (patas) monkeys. Chances are that some might have come from the Bamako fetish market, or were redirected on their way to it.

Kara laid out his plan of action concerning the monkey. “I will keep it alive for a week and try to sell it to someone with money.” If not, Kara would be forced to slaughter it to sell it piece by piece as “medicine”. By selling the animal as medicine Kara would also retain possession of the animal’s extra parts. In this particular case, the monkey did not last the week. Two days after he had taken possession of the primate Kara butchered the animal to sell piece by piece. The meat was cut up and sold in filet form for 500CFA (\$.70) each. The head, paws, tail, sexual organs of the monkey (male), and its skin were

harvested and cured to be sold through the normal operations. The medicinal meat of the monkey was sold out within hours after having been butchered as it is a well-known treatment for "bad fevers."

Though these examples of patas monkey supply and badger penis procurement are illuminating, the primary reason for presenting these examples has been to highlight an observable trend in what vendors consider "normal people" (i.e., opportunist suppliers). From my two months of daily observations and conversations in the fetish market I began to notice that there was a difference between what animal species children might bring to the fetish market in comparison to what adults supply. See figure 6, System of Opportunist Supply

As the chart suggests, the first two examples presented reflect typical supply through normal, every day children who are capitalizing on opportunistic actions. Though I never found out whether or not the money paid the eaglet supplier remained his, from other conversations it is typical for the money gained in opportunistic animal supply to go toward aiding the family. This is also true for the adult category of suppliers and exemplified in the man who came from Gao with the uromastyx lizards. By consulting Appendix I, Overview of wildlife species and associated parts and pieces, one can identify those species that are considered small game, and their counterpart, larger game. Those species that are marked as small game tend to be supplied through opportunist children, whereas those marked as larger game are acquired through adults.

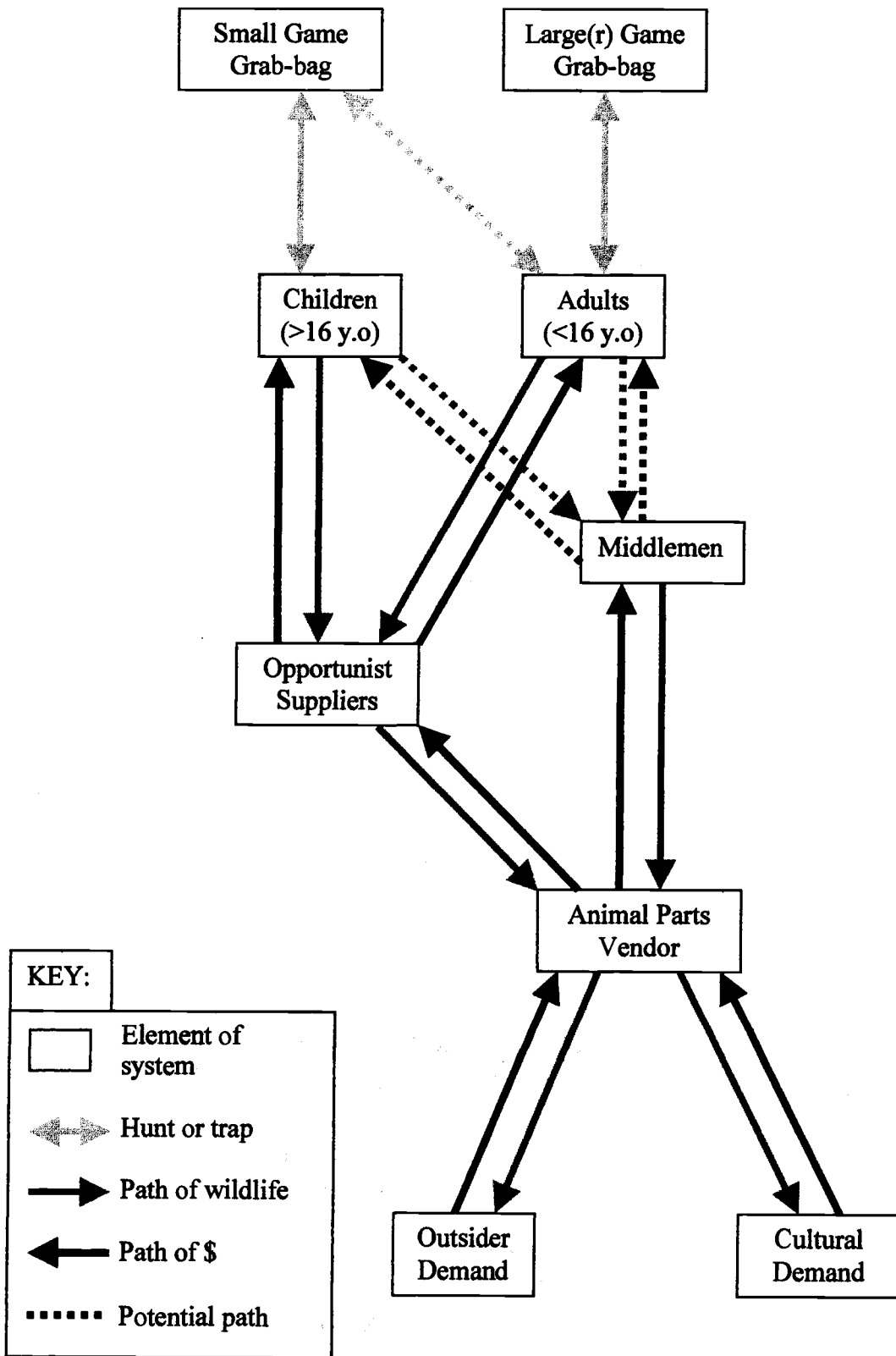


Figure 6: System of Opportunist Supply



A diagram, expanding upon the initial point of view of the animal part vendors, helps to show the division between small vs. larger game and how they tend to be supplied to the fetish market.

### **Professional Suppliers:**

In stark contrast to the actions of opportunist children and adults, professional suppliers are by definition true professionals; men who derive their primary source of income through hunting wildlife and to some degree supplying the fetish market to meet demand. In a word, they are “hunters.” However, there is no comparison between the hunting skills of opportunists when compared with professionals. To be a “hunter” is a statement of profession, and it is reserved only for adult men who have undergone a lifetime of training.

From my observations in the fetish market I was able to discern two types of hunters: those that I call traditional hunters, and those that I call non-traditional, or secular hunters. Though different, both types of hunters are definitely ranked as professional. The real give away is the clothes worn by the hunter. Traditional hunters tend to wear a uniform of sorts, a traditional costume made of the fabric called “bogalan,” which is known in the West as “mud cloth.” To complete the ensemble traditional hunters tend to wear a skull-cap-like hat that sports a pair of nub-horns protruding from the forehead. The entire outfit is peppered with small hanging packets that are grigris tailored to the desires of the wearer. From conversations with several hunters I learned that there is a trend for the grigris adorning the vestments of hunters to be oriented toward

enhancing one's skill at hunting (i.e., tracking, extrasensory perception of surroundings, even drawing the animals to the hunter). Of course not all hunters wear their traditional dress all the time.

On the other side are secular, or non-traditional hunters who tend to wear western clothes or "Islamic" attire. From my conversations with both types of hunters I came to recognize that those who wore "traditional" (i.e., bogalan) garb were strong adherents to local indigenous beliefs, whereas those who tended to wear western or typically Islamic attire (i.e., boubous) professed Allah as God and Mohamed as his prophet. The religious distinction, though insightful, is presented here to help illustrate that hunting for animal parts is not strictly limited to "traditional peoples or practices." Hunting is as much a legitimate profession in Mali as is being a doctor, lawyer, banker, pilot or any other career in the United States. Furthermore, just as any of these American positions would reflect a wide range of ethnicity, race, creed and religious belief, professional hunters in Mali tend to as well.

Due to the fact that the two categories of hunters (i.e., traditional and non-traditional) effectively supply the fetish market in the same fashion, there is no other distinction to be made between them and so they are grouped simply as professional hunters.

The life of a professional hunter is eye opening to say the least. It was through my conversations with animal part vendors, and several self-reported hunters that I came to learn a bit about how and why hunters supply the fetish market.

I was sitting with Kara, reviewing the traditional-use of items he had out to sell, when an older man (maybe 45 years old) greeted us. He wore western clothes and sunglasses but spoke a language that I had not heard since living as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the town of Manantali. The language was Malinke and it turned out the man was from a village called Kenieba (South of Manantali near Guinea). He had left Kenieba five days prior and brought with him a bag full of animal parts.

As Kara and the older man commenced negotiation of price I was able to get a decent count of what was being offered. There was a female lion head and skin (*Panthera leo*), three python skins (1 *Python regius*, 2 *P. sebae sebae*), the head and skin of a Gabon viper (*Bitis gabonica*), the head and skin of a rhinoceros-horned viper (*Bitis nasicornis*) and the skin and dried male sexual organs of a honey badger (*Melivora capensis*).

From Kara's actions I could tell that he desired the lion parts and did not care for the rest. The older man seemed to pick up on this and stopped trying to sell the other items, focusing on the lion. From his pants pocket the older man brought out a few more lion parts that he had secreted away, a dried esophagus and a complete set of extracted claws. Kara was set, he wanted those lion parts, but of course this was as clear to the older man as it was to me. The old man suggested a figure of 20,000CFA (\$28.00) for the lion parts and Kara was taken aback. Kara countered with 8,000CFA (\$11.20) but the older man would not undersell his parts.

Packing everything back up the old man suggested that if Kara wanted what he had to sell he would offer a serious price. Two days later I watched Kara pay 15,000CFA

(\$21.00) for the lion parts. The older man from Kenieba had stuck around and come back after letting Kara stew for a day. Incidentally, Kara had to borrow funds from his brother Sako to help cover the acquisition cost of the parts. Some of the lion's claws were given to Sako to sell while the rest of the lion parts remained in Kara's inventory.

Kara later informed me of the prices that these parts were to sell for. The skin of the lion sells for 500CFA (\$0.70) per "morsel" (a unit of measurement, approximately 6cm x 6cm). Lion claws are sold for 2,000CFA – 3,000CFA (\$2.80 – 4.20) each. The esophagus is sold per cartilaginous ring at 2,500CFA (\$3.50). The head, breaking the general trend for craniums to sell for a base price of 2,500CFA, I was informed, "will sell for no less than 5,000CFA (\$7.00)." It is easy to see that Kara's initial investment (though shared with his brother) will net a healthy profit.

On another morning, after just having greeted Kara in the fetish market, I noticed that he had a new acquisition. "Is that a Leopard skin?" I asked. "Yes, I got it last night from a hunter," Kara explained. "Where did it come from?" I inquired. "The hunter came from Jelekoto (a village on the edge of the Bafing Faunal Reserve in Western Mali)," stated Kara. The leopard skin was not in very good shape as it had several holes and was badly stained with soot. I asked Kara about its condition, "He stuck it up in the roof of his hut, the smoke and rats got to it." Kara went on to suggest that the skin's poor condition had helped him reduce the hunter's asking price, allowing him to purchase it for a mere 7,500CFA (\$10.50).

Doing some basic math it is clear to see how sound Kara's investment was. As mentioned elsewhere, all animal hides are purchased per "morsel" at 500CFA (\$0.70)

each. A “morsel” equates to a square shaped piece of skin approximately 6cm x 6cm. In practice, when a fresh skin is acquired by an animal parts vendor, they paint a “grid” on the underside to act as a guide. Using 90cm x 60cm as the basic dimensions of the useable portions of the leopard skin, there are approximately 150 “morsels” to be sold. The potential capital to be gained from selling the entire leopard hide, per “morsel”, is roughly 75,000CFA (\$107.00). Granted that Kara is able to sell the entire leopard hide he will net a profit of 67,500CFA (\$94.50), not to mention the supplementary sale of the skin from the leopard’s head, tail, and feet.

On another occasion, as I sat and talked with Kara, a man dressed in the typical clothing of a traditional hunter approached pushing a bicycle laden with bags strapped to it haphazardly. The man leaned his bike over and started un-strapping the bags that were tied to it. It was clear from the manner in which Kara greeted the hunter that they were well acquainted with one another.

As the man, approximately 30 years old, unfastened a bag he would hand it to Kara to inspect. Kara would in turn peer into the bag and give a cluck of satisfaction at what he saw within. I managed to catch a glimpse in one bag as Kara set it down next to me. Inside were a mass of baboon, vervet, and patas monkey parts. I was busily trying to figure out what else was being offered by the time I realized that the hunter along with his bicycle had departed.

“Where’d he go,” I asked Kara? “Back to Kita,” said Kara as he went to sorting his new acquisitions. Incidentally, Kati is a about a day’s travel by train. By “road,” and I stress the lack of it, on a bike I would expect it to take at least two, possibly even three

days. From what I gathered from Kara, the man was a professional hunter who regularly supplies animal parts that he harvests. Kara went on to point out all the different animals that the hunter had brought; baboon (*Papio anubis*), patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*), Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*), savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*), freshwater turtles (*Cyclanorbis senegalensis* and *Trionyx triangus*), "caiman" (*Crocodylus niloticus*) a term used locally to describe all manner of crocodiles, warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*), waterbuck (*Kobus ellisiprymnus*) and duiker parts (*Syvicapra grimmia* and *Cephalophus rufilatus*). I was not able to get specific counts of what parts for each species; however, I did manage to learn that Kara paid 15,000CFA (\$21.00) for all of it. Furthermore, the same professional hunter brings a similar amount of items to Kara on a nearly monthly basis.

From two months of observations and interviews in the fetish market it became clear that all professional hunters tended to operate independently, bringing items to market seeking the best price, or in conjunction with an animal parts vendor. Both of these series of interactions are essentially the same, differing only in who (i.e., animal part vendors) the hunter knows. To help illustrate this series of interactions and other examples see figure 7, System of Professional Supply.

It is important to note that for the most part the items brought to Kara, and other animal part vendors, by either traditional or non-traditional hunters are not specifically asked for. Rather, the items (parts) that make it to the fetish market are those collected through the everyday activities of the hunter. Furthermore the hunter has an innate understanding of what parts have value.

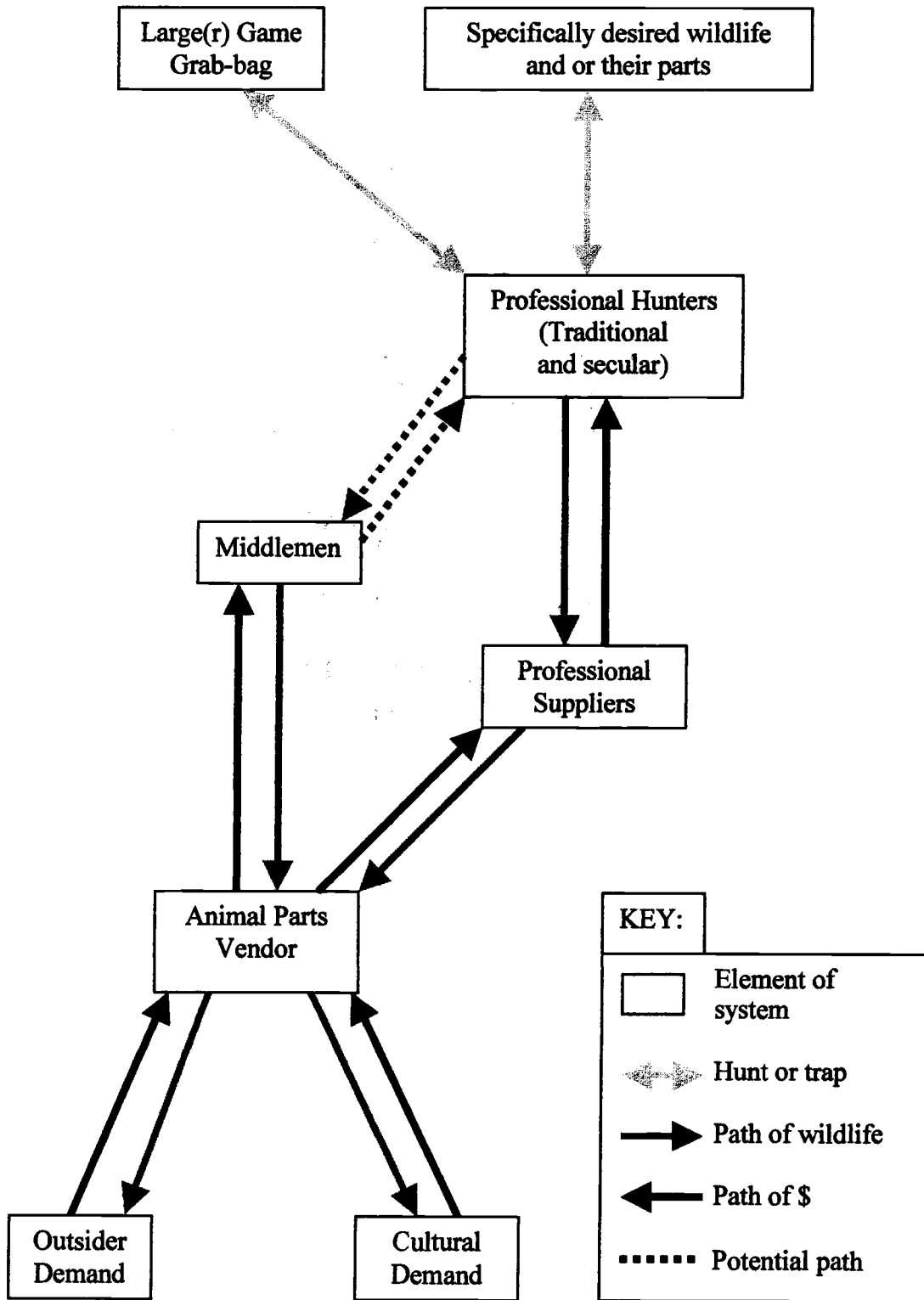


Figure 7: System of Professional Supply.

From other conversations with animal parts vendors and a wide variety of professional hunters I came to understand that it is difficult to ascertain the motivation of the hunter regarding why and how they procure animal parts. Some instances revealed to me that animals had been hunted with the potential income to be made from their parts in the forefront of the hunter's mind. Other cases suggested that the hunter was seeking the protein of the animal to feed his family and cashed in on the secondary profit gained through the sale of inedible parts. After all there is a general trend to get all possible use out of any given object.

This "get the most out of it" philosophy goes beyond recycling used items to include adapting used items to new tasks and or uses. I have seen discarded "C" and "D" size batteries cut apart to extract a pre-fabricated "washer" (the plastic cap over the positive terminal) regularly used to fix a "blown-out" flip-flop (i.e., when the thong gets pulled through). Children use every possible roadside scrap to construct the most amazing "drive by wire" cars and trucks. There is an entire art guild dedicated to producing pieces of art using scrap metal cut from tin, soda, aerosol and paint cans. Women's groups have organized around crocheting purses and other items from used plastic bags. Does it not stand to reason that in a country that has an inherent profit maximizing trend that a professional hunter would do the same?

As described in Chapter three, Outsider Demand, the existence of exotic or specialty animal trade is very real. It was in my second month of working in the fetish market that I came across a similar example that helps to highlight how specifically



desired parts are supplied in much the same manner as a live animal's capture is arranged.

"It's a contracted hunt," I thought to myself as I sat and watched Kara paying a non-traditional hunter. At our feet sat a pile of animal parts that was simply awesome. As Kara and the hunter continued to talk, discussing politics, I was able to get a good count of what the man had brought.

Piled at my feet lay eight aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*) heads, eight aardvark hides, thirty-two aardvark feet, four bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) heads, four bushbuck hides, sixteen bushbuck forelegs and a whole mess of porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*) quills.

I learned his name is Diallo and he lives in the town of Kati as Kara introduced us. The three of us sat and talked for some time giving me the opportunity to learn just how and why these parts had been supplied to Kara. It turns out that about a month prior to this meeting Kara had contracted Diallo for the mass of items I had just picked through. The interesting thing about the contracted service is that Kara named the parts he wanted clearly and specifically.

"I told him to get me all of it. The heads, hides and feet of eight aardvarks, four bushbucks, and the quills of seven porcupines," explained an exasperated Kara as I tried to make sense of the sheer numbers of parts at my feet. I turned to Diallo and asked him, seeking clarification, "you hunted all of this," as I pointed at the pile of parts, "for him?" nodding to Kara.

Diallo's detailed explanation helps to shed some light on how and why he contracted a deal with Kara. From what I gathered, Kara advanced Diallo 15,000CFA

(\$21.00) about a month prior to me talking to him. This money was fronted in good faith to help Diallo cover some of his immediate needs, namely that of his family (one wife and four children). At that time Kara also indicated that he would pay an additional 25,000CFA (\$35.00) once the goods were delivered. Kara named his heart's delight and took his leave to await delivery. My suspicions that this was a well versed and practiced routine were confirmed when Diallo explained that, "this time I came to the fetish market, normally I meet him in Kati. I sent word that I was coming through a friend that said he would tell Kara." All in all it appears as though Kara paid Diallo a total of 40,000CFA (\$56.00) for his services.

Given the opportunity, I could not let slip a chance to ask how Diallo had hunted the animals. "I use snares because it does not hurt the skin," Diallo recounted. "I have a gun, but it is more for protection and hunting birds than these," indicating the bunch of animal parts he had brought in. From later descriptions I would learn that Diallo carries a 20-gauge shotgun but that he rarely uses it because it tears up the meat of the animal.

It turns out that Diallo maximizes his personal profit in his contracted dealings with Kara by eating the edible parts of what he hunts. "I give the meat to my wife to cook. Sometimes I have to sell a little of it to buy wire and shells for my gun," explained Diallo, who seemed to take a real delight at having so many questions asked of him. It seems from what Diallo related to me that he performs his service as a parts specialist only for Kara, though he knows of other hunters who do the same for other animal parts vendors.

## **The Unique Roles of Middlemen:**

As you can see in figure 5, page 105, Point of View of an Animal Parts Vendor, there is a key role, inherent to both opportunist and professional means of supply, known as middlemen. Middlemen are what their name suggests: they are go betweens, transporters, facilitators and individuals seeking to make some easy money. They do not hunt or harvest animal parts, but simply purchase them (or are given a consignment) to resell them later on.

As one might imagine, though middlemen are inherent to each of the previously described sub-systems of supply (opportunist and professional), their roles and functions differ. In general those middlemen who work within the realm of opportunists perform a consolidation and transportation service. Those middlemen who are part of the professional system of supply perform the same services but adhere to higher business ethics than those observed within opportunist middlemen. To help illustrate these roles, functions and services provided by middlemen, as well as the differences between them, I offer an example of each.

The first, an example of opportunist middlemen, was facilitated through my getting to know a man named Timbele. He is a manual laborer by trade, having worked on several large-scale construction projects throughout Mali. After having been on site for eight months, Timbele returned to Bamako to visit his family while he provided a service for others.

To help explain, let me recount how I met Timbele. It was mid afternoon and many of the animal parts vendors were quietly snoozing in their personal patches of

shade. I had spent the morning working with Kara reviewing the uses of certain venomous snakes and then caught up with another of my participants, a vendor known as Omar. Omar is a real character and regularly teased me due to my Malian name.

Historically, Omar's ancestors would have kept me for a slave. We were each claiming ownership rights to the other, all in good jest, when a man decked out in a mid-eighties "White Snake" concert T-shirt, and the aviator sunglasses to match, walked up and greeted us. He was a big guy and had a recycled rice sack hanging over his shoulder.

The acquisition of supply in this case went much the same way it had in other examples that I observed. The big man, about 30 years old, handed the sack to Omar for his examination. Omar dumped the items out on the ground and inspected them. I was able to count a wide variety of wildlife species including, 10+ assorted turtle shells (terrestrial and freshwater varieties, species unknown), a marabout stork (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*), two juvenile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*), a Gabon viper (*Bitis gabonica*), several other snakes (*Python regius*, *P. sebae sebae*, *Bitis nasicornis*, *Naja naja orxiana* and *Echis carinatus*), four baboon (*Papio anubis*) heads, sixteen baboon paws, a Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) and an assortment of warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) pieces (tails, tusks, and forelegs complete with hooves).

The big man asked how much Omar would pay for it all. Omar looked the items over and calculated in his head. "I will give you 7,000CFA (\$9.80)," said Omar. The big man shook his head and uttered "Bi kafa, (literally translated as "make it more," the phrase is used as an expletive to suggest the other is a fool). "How much do you want?" asked Omar. "Wa saba (15,000CFA, \$21.00)," replied the big man. It was clear that the

big man had done some math of his own. "Wa saba?!" exclaimed Omar. "You think I will give you 15,000CFA for this?" Omar said, addressing the pile of odd animal bits at his feet. Turning his attention to the big man and then the other fetish vendors snoozing around us, Omar worked his magic, "You think you can sell this to them for 15,000CFA?" Omar was hinting at the fact that it was late in the day and if the man wanted to be rid of the bag of parts he had brought to sell, Omar was the only one awake to negotiate. The big man seemed to reconsider his asking price and suggested 10,000CFA (\$14.00) for the lot. Omar again played the irritated vendor and offered his final price at 8,000CFA (\$11.20).

Things went a little awry when the big man opted not to go for Omar's counter offer and started picking up the animal parts and returning them to their sack. Omar rethought his low price and suggested that he could give a little more. The big man stopped repacking his sack and asked how much more. "Keme (500CFA, \$0.70)," proffered Omar. "Make it 1,000CFA (\$1.40) and okay," suggested the big man as he held a baboon head poised to drop into the sack. The tables had been turned and Omar agreed to augment his offer of 8,000CFA. The man dropped the baboon head into the bag and then handed it to Omar to deal with. Omar paid the man (9,000CFA, \$12.60) and I finally got a chance to talk to him about the items he had brought to the fetish market.

Once I was able to speak with the big man I learned his name, Timbele, and a bit about his life as a construction worker. He was a little stand-offish as first, but once he learned that we had both lived in the same town (Manantali), albeit at different times, he

became quite engaging asking me about what I was doing in the fetish market and Mali. After this initial “get to know you phase” of the conversation I came to learn that Timbele had just come from Manantali. Furthermore, all the items that he brought to sell in the fetish market were not actually his.

It turns out that due to the fact that Timbele had planned to come to Bamako to visit his family several individuals had approached him to transport and sell by proxy the animals they had harvested or collected. Timbele explained that the two juvenile crocodiles, each about 30 – 40cm long and salt cured, along with the marabout stork (adult and whole though extremely decayed), and Nile monitor lizard (sub-adult, whole and salt cured) were given to him to sell by the man he buys his fish from (i.e., a professional fisherman).

Though I was not able to find out the complete break down of the items that Timbele brought to market for other people, I was able to discern that a total of four different men had used Timbele as a means of bringing the fruits of their opportunistic actions to market. I got the feeling that Timbele might use a little liberty when it came time to return to Manantali and hand over the money he had acquired for the items. The fact that the entire contents of the rice sack (i.e., all of the items collected by different individuals) were sold en masse and not separately, fails to maximize the potential profit of each contributor. In essence Timbele is a “mule” used to transport the goods, negotiate price and return any monies paid to their harvesters. The key to understanding that Timbele is as much an opportunist as the animal collectors is seen in just what story and how much money he returns with.

Just as there are middlemen that are associated with the opportunistic system of supply, there is the equivalent service provided within the professional system of supply. The fundamental difference between the two types of middlemen is seen in the motivation and actions of the professional in comparison to the opportunist.

You will recall from the example of Timbele supplying Omar the animal parts vendor that the motivations and actions of the middlemen begged the question of just how different the middleman is from opportunistic children and adults who collect wildlife for profit. This is not of concern when one observes a professional middleman in action.

As I sat with Diakite the animal parts vendor, a traditional hunter greeted us. He wore bogalan from head to toe and carried a rice sack slung over his shoulder. I never got his name or a good count of what he brought Diakite, seeing only a few baboon (*Papio anubis*), savannah monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*), Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*), and Hyena heads (*Crocuta crocuta* or possibly *Hyaena hyaena*). The reason my attention was not focused on the hunter was due to a small group of police congregating further down the strip. Many of the surrounding animal part vendors also had their eyes locked on the dark blue uniforms that were remaining just far enough away as not to pose a threat, but to keep you on your toes none the less.

Diverting my attention back to the traditional-hunter who sat with Diakite, I came to learn that the man had traveled from Bamafle by train. Much like Timbele in the opportunistic version of a middleman, this hunter had planned to come to Bamako. However, the two types of middlemen begin to differentiate thereafter. This can be seen

in the fact that the hunter who sat with Diakite and me had harvested some of the parts himself. The rest were given to him to transport and sell on the behalf of other hunters from Bamafle.

Given the professional status of the hunter, he most likely had an innate understanding of the relative value of each item he had brought to market. Furthermore, from the extended bartering session that Diakite and the hunter had conducted I suspect that the professional middleman obtained a premium for his own wares as well as for those he sold by proxy.

From conversations with other traditional hunters participating in professional supply I came to understand that this unique function of playing the middleman is a duty taken on freely by the hunter. The only criterion for service is that you are headed to the capital. The extra burden of transporting others goods is not taken into consideration as the service will be reciprocated at a later date. It is worthwhile to note that this is not necessarily true for opportunistic middlemen. This is not surprising given the relatively unorganized social structure of opportunist suppliers. Conversely, it makes all the sense in the world that traditional-hunters would perform this service, due to the fact that most are members of hunting guilds. Furthermore, many of these hunting guilds are secret and perform significant social and religious rituals that are valued by local communities as well as the society at large (i.e., some male rites of passage and spirit medium cults).



### **Specialized Distributors:**

Throughout my research I came across many items that were of unique origin or special in some other regard. This might sound strange at first, due to the apparent alien nature of the items sold in the fetish market, but after two months of observations and interviews it became easier to call one item unique and another typical.

To define the difference between the unique and typical consider a warthog tusk and a vial of manatee oil. Warthog tusk (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) is unrefined and is sold in its natural state. Manatee oil (*Trichechus senegalensis*), on the other hand, is a refined product originating from the fat of a West African manatee. The key difference is that somehow, somewhere, the manatee was hunted, butchered for the raw materials, and then had those materials further reduced to an oil that is then bottled, shipped and eventually sold. In short, where a warthog tusk is a raw material awaiting use as an ingredient, manatee oil is a refined and ready to use product. Furthermore, the means through which warthog tusks and manatee oil are supplied are radically different.

Manatee oil also utilizes a specialized distribution system to supply animal part vendors of the fetish market. This is in contrast to warthog tusks and other typical items (i.e., animal parts in general) that are maintained through either opportunistic or professional systems of supply. With regard to manatee oil, it is produced and bottled by the liter in the region of Gao. Large bottles of the oil are shipped through informal means (much like those used by professional hunters providing a middleman service) to Bamako. Once in Bamako the oil is packaged in small-recycled medicine vials (serum

vials) and sold at 250CFA (\$0.35) each to an animal parts vendor. The vendor in turn will attempt to sell the same vial for 500CFA (\$0.70).

Items like manatee oil, “the red seed”, sacred “red cloth”, rock-salt, black powder, “iron callers”, tools of enslavement, pre-prepared potions, leather medicine containers, and a wide array of human parts are all supplied the to the fetish market through independent yet specialized means. As a result I categorize all of these means as specialized distribution (see figure 5, page 105, Point of View of an Animal Parts Vendor).

One of my very first encounters observing a specially supplied item took place as I sat with Kara. It was within my first couple of weeks of working in the fetish market and I was slowly beginning to make connections as to how it worked when an old man greeted us. He was decked out in a stained boubou and wore koranic prayer beads around one of his wrists. In his other hand he held a stack of metal plates. Not plates that you would eat off of, but flat, thin sheets of metal (see figure 8, Photo of a Marabout with an “Iron Caller.” Please note the individual in the picture is not the old man referred to in this example).

I sat and watched as the old man opened negotiations at 1,000CFA (\$1.40) per metal plate. After several minutes of bartering I took note as Kara paid the old man 2,000CFA (\$2.80) for three of the metal objects. It was after the old man left with his money, walking down the strip trying to sell more metal plates to other vendors, that Kara informed me of the significance of the items he had just purchased.

“These are called Nege Fo (iron callers),” explained Kara as he handed me one of the metal plates to look over. It was smooth on both sides, being just a bit thicker than a piece of paper; one end, instead of being right angled, was rounded giving the object the outline of a stereotypical gravestone marker. I set aside the metal plate and took note of Kara’s insight. From what he explained to me the “iron callers” are a special magic having origins in Islamic scripture.

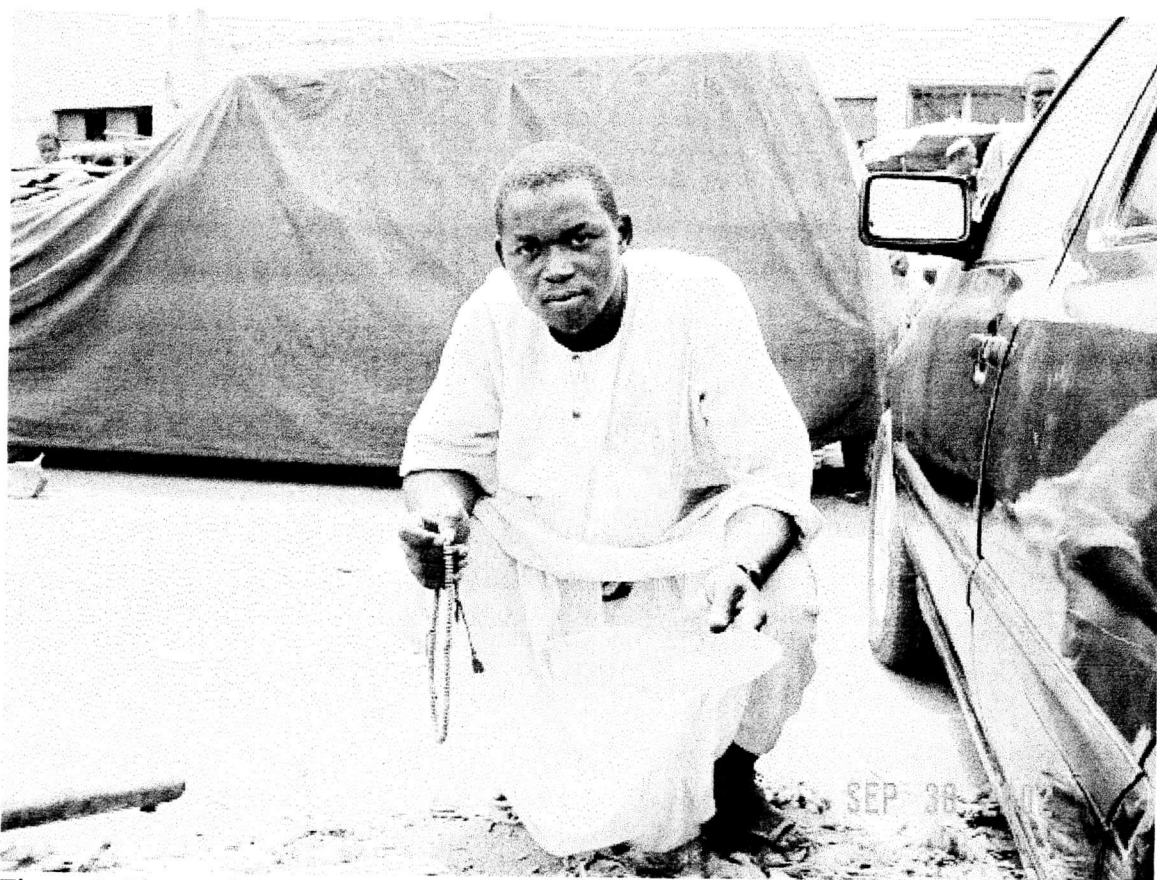


Figure 8: Photo of a Marabout with an “Iron Caller”

Being sold by a vendor for anywhere between 1,000 - 2000CFA (\$1.40 – 2.80), “iron callers” do as their name suggests, they call. After having purchased the item, the user is to inscribe the name of an individual at least a hundred times on each side of the

plate using a sharp pointy piece of metal (i.e., a nail, or scrap of wire, bike spokes are common as well). Once the user has inscribed a person's name they then place the entire object into a fire where it is to sit and burn until all the names have been removed. I am told that this may take as long as five or six days. However, by the time the names have burned away, the person possessing that name will be present. From what Kara and other Malians tell me, "iron callers" are often used by individuals in need of social support. Many examples that were recounted to me cited the impetus for using the object as being related to family disputes, an impending wedding or funeral.

Furthermore, I came to learn that the old man who sold the metal plates to Kara was a "forgeron," or traditional blacksmith. To be a forgeron is to belong to a specialized class that has a long and distinguished history in Mali. It is important to note that not all blacksmiths have the knowledge or training to prepare these specialty items, only select and highly skilled forgerons belonging to a recognized guild, with Islamic roots, may produce and sell "iron callers". Due to the strict rules of production only those who make the plates may sell them, creating a specialized system of distribution.

On a side note, "tools of enslavement" are also provided through the efforts of the similarly ranked forgerons. Though these tools may appear to be nothing more than miniaturized, infant scaled knives, pliers and shackles, they are in fact considered one of the most dangerous items sold by animal part vendors. This is understandable when one keeps in mind that these items are used to place an individual under the supreme control of another.

Another item sold by animal parts vendors that has come to them via an equally specialized distribution system is traditional leather containers. Being a highly functional and traditional object these leather containers are sold by the majority of animal part vendors in the fetish market. There are four graduated sizes of these containers and they are fabricated using sheep, goat, cow or horse hides. See figure 9, Photo of Leather Containers.

Within my first week of working in the fetish market I came to meet a man who specialized in supplying these items. I was making my rounds, greeting vendors, when I noticed a man selling the containers that I had seen everywhere. His name is Solo and he can only be described as a specialist. From my conversation with Solo I came to learn that his father had taught him the trade of fabricating bowls with tight fitting formed lids. It was only natural for Solo to follow in his father's footsteps and continue the tradition of making and supplying the widely used containers.

From what I have come to understand, Solo has a near monopoly on the supply of these leather containers in the Bamako fetish market. About once a week I would observe Solo returning to the fetish market carrying a large sack full of his leather containers to sell. Conversations with animal part vendors confirmed that nearly all of the leather containers that they had out to sell had been supplied by Solo. Furthermore, the fact that Solo tended to dress in costly western attire seemed to underline his profitability.



Figure 9: Photo of Leather Containers.

Possibly the most varied and unique means of distribution can be seen in those examples concerning human parts. As mentioned before, human parts are a vital part of the pharmacopoeia represented in the wares of animal part vendors. Though not all animal parts vendors sell human parts, the fact that several do requires some means of supply.

It was when Kara first revealed to me the use of human foreskins and clitorises (in the fabrication of grigris reflecting desirable traits of the opposite sex) that I gained a little insight into how Kara had procured the items. I came to understand that Kara possessed multiple connections to individuals who sold such items. Kara identified all of

those who sold him human clitorises and foreskins as traditional doctors and professionals who performed the circumcisions or excisions themselves.

With regard to that fist encounter, I learned that Kara had traveled to Kati to meet a man who had sent word through informal means that he had some items Kara might desire. I was able to further decipher that this was a long running arrangement between the two and that Kara had known the traditional doctor since he was a child. They grew up together. This no doubt helped to seal the amicability of the arrangement for both parties. In general Kara paid about 2,000CFA (\$2.80) per foreskin or clitoris, but then he resold them to a parent for 5,000CFA (\$7.00)

On another occasion, I happened across Kara when he was deeply involved in negotiating the price of a small ball of "white man's hair." I took a seat and listened to the man offering the ball of hair to Kara in his open hand. "it is from a wealthy American, he is staying in the suite," cajoled the beanpole of a man with the ball of hair. "What do you want for it?" inquired a piqued Kara. "1,000CFA (\$1.40)," quoted the thin man.

I looked at the ball of hair and for all intents and purposes it looked as if it had come from a Caucasian, male or female I could not tell. Kara picked up the hairball and pulled a single strand from it. He closed both hands around it and closed his eyes as if performing some internalized means of verification. A couple seconds passed and Kara told the man that he would give 750CFA (\$1.05) for the mass of strands. Readily accepting the offer, the thin man took his money and departed with a speed that suggested he had places to go and people to see.

I could not help but think that Kara had just been swindled. The story, the behavior and quick departure of the man suggested something was fishy. Kara on the other hand could not have been happier with his new acquisition and he openly informed me that there was an informal system in place maintaining its supply.

What Kara related was humorous and frightening all at the same time. It turns out that many of those who work as custodians or as cleaning service personnel in tourist hotels also cash in on what Westerners leave behind: nail clippings, shower-drain trappings and the most coveted of all, untainted hair of a white person. These items are associated with transferring the perceived wealth and power of whites to local peoples if used and prepared correctly.

These specialized means of distribution are open to both men and women, reflecting the fact that both women and men work in fairly equal numbers in hotels. Now when I say "work in" hotels, I do not necessarily mean those who are simply employed by the establishment, but imply all who actually work in the building. This includes all hotel staff along with all those who might earn their living in the hotel (i.e., prostitutes).

The case of parts from "dead crazy people" are equally unique and reflect a similar specialized distribution system. From conversations with one animal part vendor I came to understand that it was not uncommon for certain vendors to actively collect valued crazy person parts (hair, eyes, and saliva). Another source confirmed this by suggesting that some animal part vendors and other opportunist minded individuals raided local hospitals, morgues, and fresh graves to acquire the parts they desired. Yet another informant cited specialized hunters who actively sought out and butchered



individuals recognized as insane. This animal parts vendor suggested that all “crazy people” lived in caves. Some hunters/suppliers would visit these well known caves, harvesting anyone within. After all, it is widely known in Mali that only the insane live in caves (as noted before in Other Magical Uses, there is some discrepancy as to whether or not an item originates from an individual who was truly insane).

Having described and outlined the various sub-systems of supply independently (opportunistic and professional means, the unique roles of middlemen and specialized distributors)- the following composite-perspective illustrates what the current research has identified as the Systems of Supply, see figure 10. This systems perspective represents the intricate social and economic relationships inherent in what I have described as the fetish market and animal parts trade of Mali.

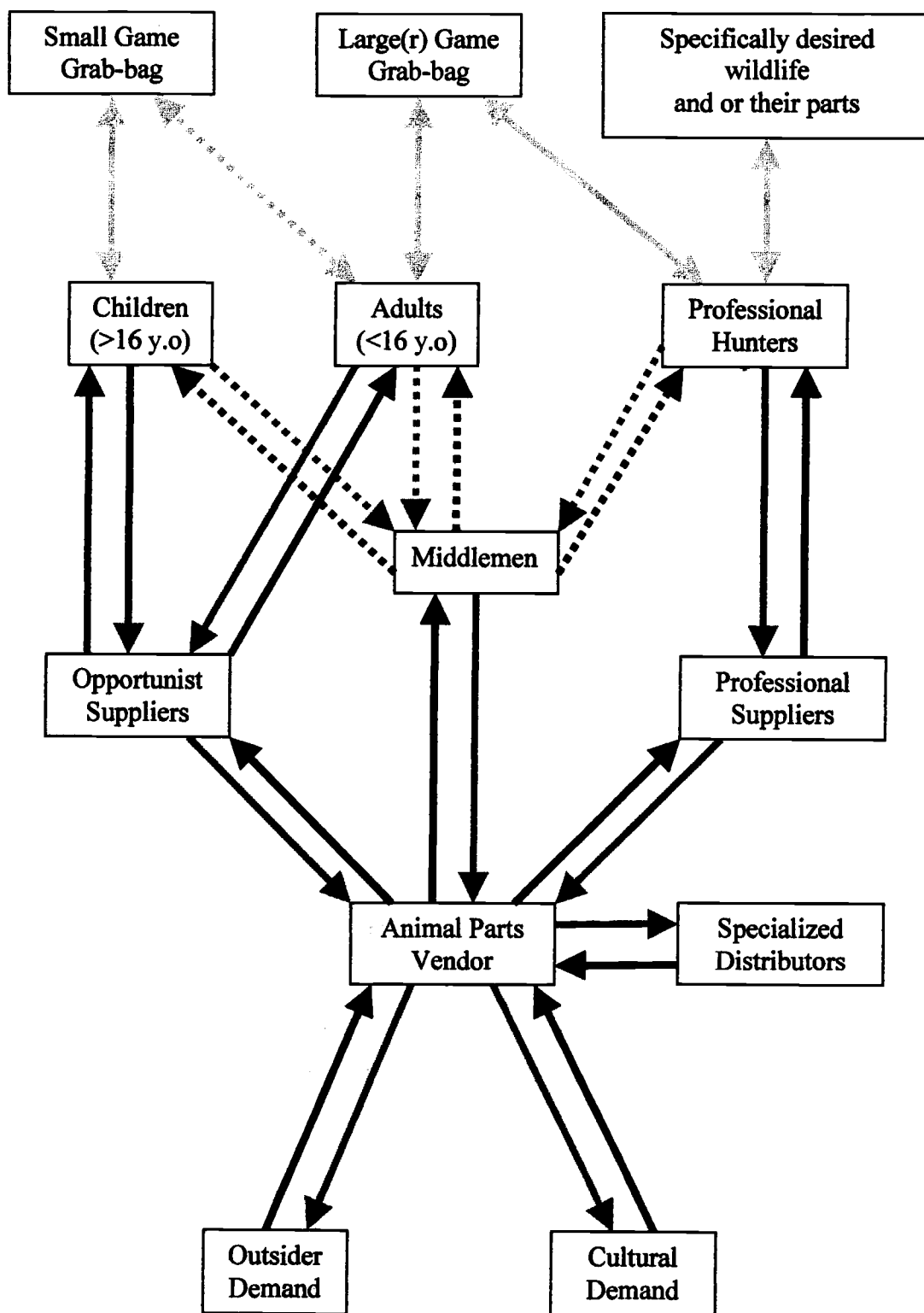
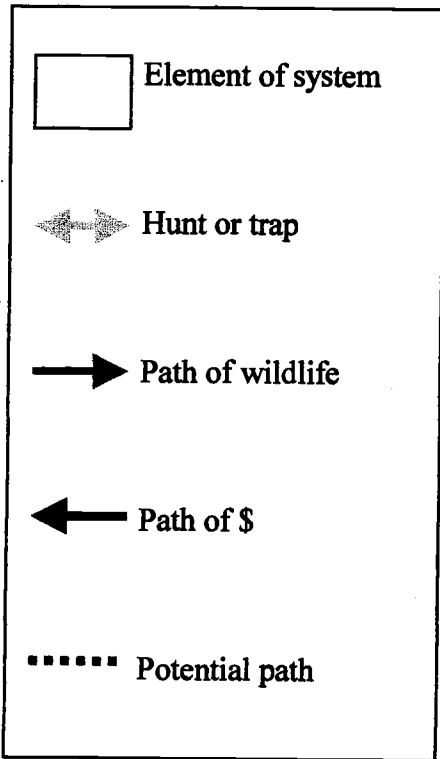


Figure 10: Systems of Supply



Key to Figure 10: Systems of Supply

## Chapter 5

### Entering Dialogues in the Literature

Throughout this research I have used terms that were either directly used by participants and informants, or were created through my experiential-based understanding of an event or situation. To put this in context, participants and informants would use terms like, “traditional medicine”, “traditional magic / sorcery”, whereas I, as a participant observer, have tried to use terms like “traditional,” “cultural” or “local use” to cover the spectrum encountered during research.

If anything, the fact that everyone uses different words to describe the same, or similar circumstance creates a bit of an issue when it comes time to compare what I have to say with what others have to say on the same subject. Where I have reflected locally used terms and my own experienced based understanding, other authors use terms like “natural resource exploitation,” “wildlife products,” “non-timber forest products (or NTFPs),” “wildlife commercialization,” “wildlife trade,” “wildlife utilization,” or even “consumptive use of wildlife.” Others use a different set of terms such as “cultural and ethno-ecology,” “human-environmental relationships,” “traditional hunting,” and “ethno-medicine” to discuss a wide range of culturally based systems of natural resource use.

Besides the pitfalls of terminology, another significant trend identified in relevant literature is oriented around generalizations. There is a tendency for those conducting research in an African nation to generalize findings, or attempt to link site-specific information from the local level, to the national, then regional, and even continental scale.

Even more vexing than the problems of terminology and generalization is the problem in the literature of competing disciplinary emphases. By this I mean that current research on African wildlife tends to fall into two camps along a spectrum. One set of studies emphasizes the biological-environmental approach. Other studies go in the opposite direction by laying emphasis on socio-cultural factors. I will address this split and situate my own work within it by using a two-part literature review. The first part is a further discussion of the disciplinary split and then a review of a large sample of the studies arranged according to the two camps just mentioned. I have chosen to summarize this literature by means of a chart. The chart lays out each article or report within the two camps in terms of its objective, methodology, research location, and then my remarks as to its value and drawbacks. The second part of the literature review is a more in-depth discussion of the three most important studies bearing on my research. The first study I will discuss at length belongs to the camp of socio-culturalists; the second is an important study of the kind used by international development, conservation and environmental agencies to develop policy; the last is an example of a biological-environmental report that has included a cultural component.

### **Competing Disciplinary Emphases:**

To help illustrate the literature on the major camps African wildlife falls into, I have provided the following chart (figure 11, Disciplinary Spectrum).

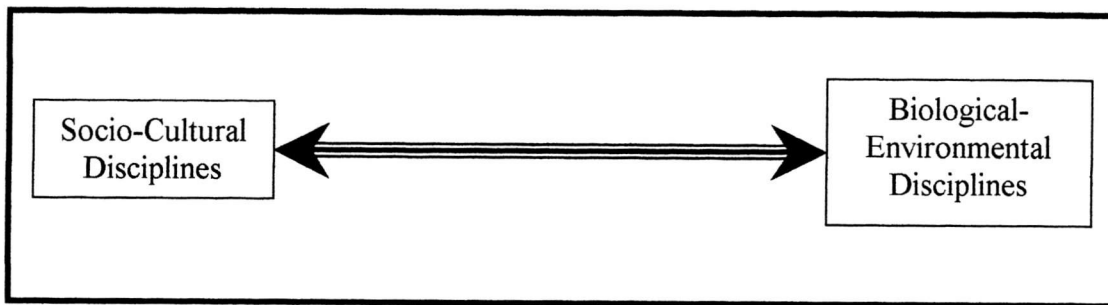


Figure 11: Disciplinary Spectrum

As seen in figure 11, Disciplinary Spectrum, two different ontologies are represented. First, there are those that align themselves with the socio-cultural, the human component of a given situation or circumstance. These are researchers and authors who focus on the human dimension and can include anything from basic ethnographic work to socio-economic analysis. The second perspective identified in the above figure represents those that focus on the biological, environmental or ecological. Conservation strategies, natural resource management plans, biodiversity research, species inventories and distributions all tend to ignore the human component. Furthermore and perhaps due to their unique disciplinary origins, those that focus on the socio-cultural tend to ignore or not fully appreciate the importance of biological and environmental perspectives. The same trend holds true for the biological-environmental extreme: their research interests and approach tend to ignore or not perceive the importance of the human dimension.

For the most part, the two respective disciplinary bodies rarely concern themselves with the work of the other. After all, anthropologists and sociologists study people; biologists and environmentalists describe nature, its species and ecology. Problems start to arise when the two disciplinary bodies find themselves discussing the

same situation or phenomenon, and this is increasingly common as resource use and the environment take center stage in global concerns for the future.

When these two disciplinary bodies converge, it tends to be due to the presence of both a human and biological dimension within a given research area. Human-environmental systems offer a prime example of how this can be interpreted. A human-environmental system is a very basic, though abstract concept that draws connections between people and their surroundings. We as humans interact and use our environment for a variety of different ends. These ends are identified within a human-environmental system by tracing the various interactions, functions, and processes linking people and nature. To put it simply, human-environmental systems help to relate natural resource use. These natural resources may take a variety of forms and can include forest products, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), wildlife and water, or any and all naturally derived resources. Since people and their surroundings make up the basic elements of a human-environmental system, both socio-culturalists and biological-environmentalists are found describing them. This holds special significance to the current research because it describes a human-environmental system pertaining to wildlife use.

Though socio-culturalists and biological-environmentalists may research similar topics, situations and phenomena, each employs their own discipline specific terminology and ontological perspectives. This creates a massive divide within the body of literature pertaining to resource use and human-environmental systems. Socio-culturalists focus on the human actions and significance of use, where biological-

environmentalists orient themselves with the species and resources inherent to human use. It is a paradox of disciplinary perspectives.

What is needed, and the purpose of this thesis, is to strike a balance between the two typically over-lapping and often conflicting disciplinary perspectives. Figure 12, illustrates the point at which this research falls on the disciplinary spectrum.

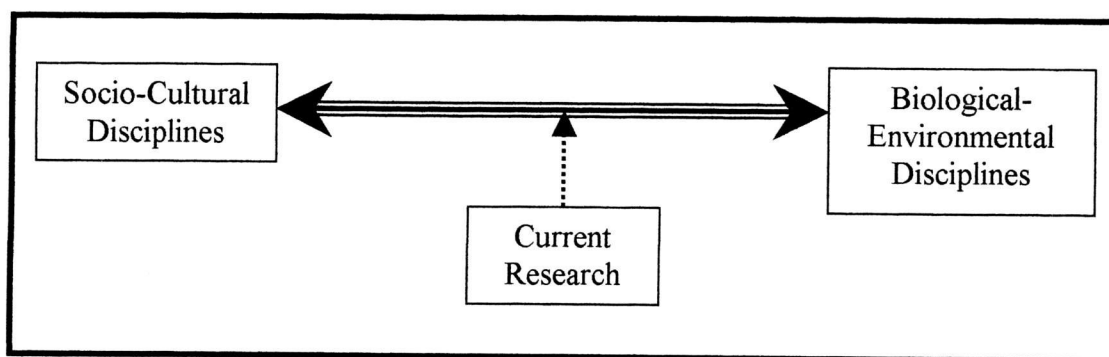


Figure 12: Current research and where it lies on the Disciplinary Spectrum

### **A Review of Relevant Literature:**

It was through my literature review that I came across a simple yet effective means of presenting the wide variety of materials covered: a specialized chart. Initially developed by Hans Ulrich-Caspary in, *Wildlife utilization in Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa- Potentials and Constraints for Development Cooperation*, to relate the amplitude of research methodologies in relation to his own project, his idea has been expanded upon to help relate nineteen pieces of work pertaining to the current research.

Within the chart, Table 1, Reviewed Literature, a division has been made as to those pieces of literature associated with socio-cultural foci and those that focus on the biological-environmental. This distinction helps to keep the reader aligned to the disciplinary spectrum while allowing insight as to the benefits and shortcomings of each



piece of reviewed literature. As mentioned earlier, references, literature types (i.e., articles, professional reports, books, chapters and monographs), study locations, research objectives, methodologies, trends as well as my personal insight and remarks have been included.

Table 1: Reviewed Literature

<b>Socio-Cultural Literature Reviewed</b>						
<b>Reference</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Study Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Trends</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Adeola, Moses Olanre 1992	Article	Nigeria, Central Africa	An examination of the use and importance of wild animals and their by-products. Focus on cultural and religious festivals as well as traditional medicine	Survey of three ecological zones backed with extensive interviews. Surveys were short duration and lasted 1 week; Interviews were conducted over two months in 1986.	Unique and appropriate blending of cultural use and significance along with identified species. Focus on the quantitative aspects has neglected to include emic understanding resulting in an account that is number driven.	Excellent article outlining wildlife species used in Nigerian cultural contexts. Lack of in-depth description of preparation, application, use and significance (i.e., going beyond labels of "traditional medicine", "magic", "appeasing traditional gods", and "invoking witches") does not allow the reader to appreciate the value held by local peoples.

<p>Barsh, Russel 1997</p>	<p>Article</p>	<p>Global</p>	<p>Discussion of ethnobotany with regard to the epistemology of traditional healing systems</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of related articles, papers, books, and reports.</p>	<p>Primary focus is a philosophical discussion of western versus "traditional" epistemology. Reduces wildlife use in traditional healing systems to being insignificant.</p>	<p>Excellent article outlining some key differences in perception and cognition with regard to traditional healing systems and western medicine.</p>
<p>Brener, Louis – From: du Toit, Brian M., and Abdalla, Ismail H. (eds) 1985</p>	<p>Chapter from book</p>	<p>West Africa</p>	<p>Discussion of Islamic medicine and healing practices</p>	<p>No clear methodology- general discussion of previous literature and research</p>	<p>Focus on Islamic healing practices in West Africa. Tends to ignore non-Islamic healing practices. Generalizes and categorizes healing strategies.</p>	<p>Excellent background material in relation to Islam, healing, and West Africa. Slightly dated and reflects skewed image – result of focusing on Islamic healing practices. Modern day Mali presents some interesting changes/adaptations from what is described by Brener.</p>

<p>Fako, Thabo T. From: du Toit, Brian M., and Abdalla, Ismail H. (eds) 1985</p>	<p>Chapter from book</p>	<p>Botswana, Southern Africa</p>	<p>Historical discussion of traditional medicine in Botswana.</p>	<p>Comprehensive review of related literature through history- examining shifts in trends.</p>	<p>Is a concentrated historical particularist (socio-cultural) perspective of traditional medicine in Botswana. Focuses on trends and changes in local values as well as anti-traditional medicine strategies.</p>	<p>Excellent account of traditional medicine in Botswana. Presents a clear, historically accurate, culturally sensitive description. Slightly dated.</p>
<p>Imperato, P. J. 1977</p>	<p>Book</p>	<p>Mali, West Africa</p>	<p>Ethno-medical description of folk medicine. Focus on the practices and beliefs of the Bambara ethnic group.</p>	<p>Based on previous research and professional experience as a western physician throughout Mali.</p>	<p>Strict focus on the socio-cultural aspects of traditional medicine in Mali. Categorizes uses and values. Generalizes ethnic groups.</p>	<p>Text is a product of its time. However, is the best known source of culturally appropriate Mali information. IDs wildlife use but never looks further – tends to view botanicals as only legitimate form of traditional medicine. Treats Magic and sorcery as separate entities.</p>

<p><b>Makinde, M. Akin</b> 1988</p>	<p><b>Mono-graph</b></p>	<p><b>Nigeria, West Africa</b></p>	<p><b>Historical discussion of African philosophy, culture and Nigerian traditional medicine.</b></p>	<p><b>Based on personal and professional experience as the son of a well-known traditional Nigerian healer as well as anthropological investigation.</b></p>	<p><b>Focus on the emic perspectives of traditional medicine in Nigeria. Draws on other site specific case studies (world wide) in an attempt to find commonalities (a type of 'reverse-generalization). Cannot reflect the same understanding of other groups and places.</b></p>	<p><b>Excellent historical discussion of African Philosophy and Nigerian traditional medical practices. IDs wildlife use but not significance.</b></p>
<p><b>Milner-Gulland, E. J., and Leader-Williams, Nigel</b> From: Swanson, Timothy M., and Barbier, Edward B. (eds) 1992</p>	<p><b>Chapter from book</b></p>	<p><b>Luangwa Valley, Zambia, Southern Africa</b></p>	<p><b>Socio-Economic discussion of wildlife exploitation</b></p>	<p><b>No clear methodology- appears to be based on previous research conducted by authors and others.</b></p>	<p><b>Focus on Elephants and Rhinos- possibly a result of aesthetic appeal (i.e., charismatic-mega-fauna). Economic interpretation and perspective only presents #'s and figures- lends little cultural insight. Categorizes hunters and generalizes values from a specific site to Africa.</b></p>	<p><b>Product of its discipline- applied ecology. Cultural relevance is limited to economic potentials and cost benefit analysis. Does not begin to attempt to look beyond what the numbers present. Gives the impression that all African hunters are either subsistence based or are poachers- highly skewed image.</b></p>

<p>Ntiamoa-Baidu, Y. 1997</p>	<p>FAO, United Nations Publicati on</p>	<p>Pan- African</p>	<p>Study and discussion of wildlife and food security in Africa.</p>	<p>No clear methodology – appears to be based on previous research and literature produced by others on a wide range of topics</p>	<p>Focus on wildlife and contributions to food security- examines nutritional, spiritual, cultural, medicinal and economic values – lacking on the cultural Makes large generalizations from site specific case studies to larger regions (i.e. Africa). Categorizes types of use and local values.</p>	<p>Good text for an initial overview of African wildlife and related nutritional and economic associations and values. Attempting to sum up local, national, regional values – presents a skewed image based on numbers restricted to western definitions.</p>
<p>Stock, Robert From: du Toit, Brian M., and Abdalla, Ismail H. (eds) 1985</p>	<p>Chapter from book</p>	<p>Rural Hausaland - Nigeria, West Africa.</p>	<p>Description of Islamic medicine in Hausaland.</p>	<p>Surveys and interviews with self-reported Islamic healers, as well as patients. Oriented towards curative medicines and practices.</p>	<p>Focuses primarily on Islamic healing strategies and practices- tends to ignore other non- Islamic means.</p>	<p>Excellent detailed description of local Islamic healing, meaning and value. Slightly dated. Present day Mali exhibits similar medical systems but also incorporates wildlife in treatment regimes.</p>

### Biological-Environmental Literature Reviewed

Reference	Type	Study Location	Objective	Methodology	Trends	Remarks
Bowen-Jones, Even 1998	Professional Report	West and Central Africa	Discussion of the Bushmeat trade	A review of 52 reports, papers and articles with a focus on primate studies that ID bushmeat trade. Many of the sources are bushmeat market surveys- where animal carcasses are ID'd and counted.	Tends to reduce the bushmeat trade system to only being concerned with primates. Categorizes cultural values and importance. Refers to site-specific data but relates to larger scales and regions- results in distorted perspective with little or no context.	A highly sensational discussion of the bushmeat trade with a focus on primates consumed. Was sponsored by the Ape Alliance- explains focus on aesthetic species (i.e., charismatic-mega-fauna). Some mention of use of primates for magic and system of supply.

<p>Caspary, Hans-Ulrich 1999</p>	<p>Professional report</p>	<p>Ivory Coast and West Africa</p>	<p>Examination and discussion of wildlife utilization with a focus on potentials and constraints for development cooperation</p>	<p>Firsthand fieldwork investigation in Mali and Ivory Coast coupled with a comprehensive literature review.</p>	<p>Focuses on consumptive wildlife use- with an emphasis on the bushmeat trade. Primarily concerned with providing relevant wildlife as well as socio-economic data related to use. Emic understanding is lost through the use of western definitions, categories and focus on wildlife numbers. Generalizations drawn between local areas and larger scales only helps to further remove the reader from reality.</p>	<p>Excellent study and presentation of information. Possibly the most relevant wildlife report to date with regard to wildlife use in West Africa. Fieldwork proximity and interests are similar to current research and present several areas of mutual insight. However, focus on wildlife numbers and western definitions limits the ability of Caspary to ID cultural use and significance. Present day Mali, the Fetish Market and Animal Parts Trade may shed some additional light on areas discussed by Caspary.</p>
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CITES, 2001	Meeting report	Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, and Cameroon (Central Africa)	Discussion of the Bushmeat situation in Central Africa.	Information presented by multiple wildlife professionals from participating countries.	Focus on ways in which to regulate and monitor bushmeat trade in Central Africa. Tends to set up all commercially oriented hunting as Bushmeat.	Good source on the policy and programs related to bushmeat in Central Africa. Does not generalize regional information to larger level. However, focus on bushmeat ignores socio-cultural importance of other wildlife use and fails to present culturally sensitive information.
East, R. (compiler) 1998	Book	Sub-Saharan Africa (West, Central, East & Northeast, Southern & South-central Africa). A total of 43 countries.	Provide the most up-to-date information regarding Antelope species in Sub-Saharan Africa. Focus on conservation status as well as species accounts by country.	Comprehensive review of antelope surveys and other related materials.	Uses terms like, "commercial meat hunting", "uncontrolled hunting", "subsistence hunting" and "poaching" to describe the human impacts to and use of antelope species in Mali. Such categorization and generalization obscures a true image of what is at play.	Mali information based solely on ID'd protected regions in conjunction with ground and aerial surveys. Cultural use and significance were not of concern and as a result were not investigated. It is interesting to note that I was not only present in Mali at this time but was a member of the Bafing Management

						Committee and worked both directly and indirectly with multiple NGOs, government agencies, as well as several individuals involved in providing East with data (Duvall et al, 1997; Mulley, B, 1998). All of these individuals were aware of the Fetish Market and its required supply of wildlife species- many of which had been documented as coming from the Bafing region.
Kone, Bather 2001	UNEP, United Nations publication	Mali, West Africa	Examination and discussion of biodiversity and forests.	No clear methodology- Appears that the author reviewed several documents related to biodiversity, national direction, and other natural resource ministries.	Focuses on figures and numbers of loss and economic gain. No cultural significance. Though a site-specific document it is written in a highly categorized fashion and generalized tone.	ID's poaching, poverty, and commercialization of biological resources as major impacts to biodiversity loss- but does not look further (i.e., cultural significance).

<p><b>Murphree, Michael 2000</b></p>	<p><b>Professional Report</b></p>	<p><b>Western Region, Ghana, West Africa</b></p>	<p><b>Study and discussion of a community based wildlife management program.</b></p>	<p><b>Three-part study based on in depth interviews with local users and government agencies.</b></p>	<p><b>Focused toward the development of a community based wildlife management program that incorporates local users along with other bodies and agencies. Make excellent use of qualitative research-however, some generalization and categorization of users and practices.</b></p>	<p><b>Similar to a rapid assessment procedure (RAP). ID's economic importance of wildlife use, but does not relate much with regard to cultural significance.</b></p>
<p><b>Roe, Dilys, et al. 2002</b></p>	<p><b>Professional report</b></p>	<p><b>Pan-African</b></p>	<p><b>Study of international trade in wildlife, its products, and the associated economic contributions to collectors and traders</b></p>	<p><b>Comprehensive literature review in combination with multiple case studies from Tanzania.</b></p>	<p><b>Focus on economic values in international wildlife trade limits the scope while distorting local perspectives and practices. Use of categorization and generalization with regard to "cultural significance."</b></p>	<p><b>Excellent study of international wildlife trade, however, cultural use and significance is not taken into consideration beyond token statements cited from other sources. Research conducted in Mali suggests that cultural use plays as much a role as subsistence, let alone economic incentives.</b></p>

<p>Roth, Harald H., and Merz, Gunter (eds) 1997</p>	<p>Book</p>	<p>Global</p>	<p>Discussion of wildlife and economic use.</p>	<p>No clear methodology- authors draw on previous research and literature conducted by others.</p>	<p>Focus on the economics of consumptive wildlife use. Categorizes and generalizes culturally based wildlife use systems.</p>	<p>Excellent description of macro-economic wildlife resource use. Fails to present culturally relevant or sensitive information- possibly a result of its global focus and interest in sustainable wildlife use.</p>
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As one can plainly see there is a basic trend for authors and researchers who focus on the socio-cultural aspects of human-environmental systems to over-generalize and over-categorize wildlife and its use. The opposite tends to hold true for those coming from the environmental and biological perspective. That is, they tend to over-generalize socio-cultural factors and significance.

To help place this dichotomy in context, consider the insight provided by Conrad P. Kottak and Alberto C. G. Costa in their discussion of *Ecological Awareness, Environmentalist Action, and International Conservation Strategy* (1993). Though largely based on environmental risk perception in Brazil and Madagascar, the fundamental point of the article is applicable to all people worldwide.

Kottak's experience with conservation efforts in Madagascar, Brazil, and elsewhere has convinced him that a gradual, sensitive, and site-specific conservation strategy (rather than some 'conservation blueprint' designed to be imposed throughout the world) is most likely to succeed (cf. Korten [1980]). The most effective approach to conservation is to listen to the affected people, closely monitor their perceptions, reactions, needs and problems, and try and minimize damage to them. Conservation schemes, like development projects in general (Kottak 1990, 1991), will succeed to the extent that they are site-specific, culturally appropriate, and socially sensitive. Development agencies, NGOs, and other international groups cannot simply impose their conservation goals on communities (or nations) without attention to the practices, laws, rules, customs, beliefs, values, and organizations of the people to be affected. This caveat applies even when intentions are noble and the project is 'good for the globe,' (Kottak, Conrad P., and Costa, Alberto C. G. 1993: 336).

The authors are not suggesting that wildlife, the environment and greater ecological issues are of little or no importance. Rather, before any plan of action,

development program, or conservation strategy is imposed, a comprehensive and fundamental understanding of the impacts to local communities must be properly understood. I personally feel that not only should potential impacts be considered, but also the basic needs, wants and desires of all those involved. Failing to take local perspectives and values into consideration only compounds problems. Kottak and Costa eloquently sum up the failure to take such issues to heart in their description of Malagasy intellectuals and officials:

Many Malagasy intellectuals and officials are bemused and irritated that international groups seem more concerned about lemurs and other endangered species than about Madagascar's people. As one colleague there remarked, '[t]he next time you come to Madagascar, there'll be no more Malagasy. All the people will have starved to death, and a lemur will have to meet you at the airport,' (Kottak, Conrad P., and Costa, Alberto C. G. 1993: 337).

On the other hand I suggest that those socio-cultural researchers involved in studies that concentrate on human-environmental systems (i.e., any and all interactions with the environment), or come across them, look beyond the human component and consider the local value and significance of natural resource use. Those socio-cultural researchers who do examine such systems need to go beyond economic modeling (i.e. cost-benefit analysis).

Bringing these points to bear on the current research and related literature is my task for the second part of this literature review. Three texts have been selected for further discussion based on their direct relation to the current research. Representing research that focuses more on the socio-cultural component is the work of James Pascal Imperato, *African Folk Medicine, Practices and Beliefs of the Bambara and Other*

*Peoples* (1977). *Wildlife and Food Security in Africa* (1997), written by Yaa Ntiamoabaidu, is drawn on to represent texts used extensively by international organizations and institutions in planning and implementing development projects and conservation strategies. And finally, representing research that focuses more on the wildlife and environmental perspective, is the professional report of Hans Ulrich-Caspary, *Wildlife utilization in Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa- Potentials and Constraints for Development Cooperation* (1999).

### **Reading #1: African Folk Medicine, Practices and Beliefs of the Bambara and Other Peoples**

*African Folk Medicine* is possibly the most comprehensive description of traditional healing strategies in Mali, West Africa. Setting aside our differences in perspective and research context (Imperato is interested in medical delivery systems, whereas I am interested in the cultural significance of wildlife use), we both discuss several aspects of traditional healing and related practices. However, in some cases this common ground may be hard to identify, largely as a result of the differences in our approaches, methodology, and terminology used. In fact, in some instances, common ground is identified based solely on first hand knowledge and experience in Mali. In addition, the sheer time difference between our relative works means they have been affected by socio-cultural change through time. It is perhaps beneficial to mention that Imperato was interested in medical delivery systems that he observed through his work as a western physician. This physician's perspective is unique and offers much insight into the differences between western and Malian healing strategies. However, Imperato's use

of western definitions, to which he fits roles and social positions (i.e., witches, sorcerers, diviners, herbalists and others) reflects his biased thought and approach. Where Imperato employs western terms and fits local practices to them, I have tried to reflect the general ambiguity encountered during fieldwork. To distinguish between a witch, sorcerer, or diviner is a western attempt to consolidate something that is not so clean cut; after all, local people do not clearly distinguish between the two. Why should we?

To illustrate this difference in approach and perspective I draw your attention to Imperato's discussion of witchcraft and sorcery-

The Bambara themselves believe in both witches and sorcerers, although the difference is not always clear to all of them. However, I have found that knowledgeable informants know the difference; they ascribe illness to one or the other depending on the circumstances (Imperato, 1977: 34).

Such a statement is loaded with western concepts, as seen through the generalization of what "knowledgeable informants" report taking precedence over what others cited. Who is to say that there is really a difference between a witch and a sorcerer, when both are described in similar terms and functions by local peoples? Apparently Imperato encountered a few individuals who identified such a difference. But does that reflect the population at large? One wonders. Perhaps there has been a marked change in Malian perception of witches and sorcerers since Imperato conducted his research. Just as likely, the difference may be related to our respective study populations (Imperato focused strictly on the Bambara, whereas the current research is cross-cultural, reflecting traditional wildlife use across a wide range of ethnic groups and cultural



traditions: Bambara, Malinke, Mandingue, Sarakole, Bozo, Bobo, Peuhl, Dogon, Touareg, Songhay and Moors).

As one would expect, differences in approach and perspective are not limited to witches and sorcerers; such dissimilarity can be found throughout our texts. From what Imperato describes as "Folk Medicine in the City of Bamako," a lot has changed. As identified in his book, Imperato cites "herbalism," "divination, oracles and spirit mediumship," "witchcraft," "Islamic practices," and "other medical practitioners" as the extent of "traditional medical practices" in the city of Bamako (Imperato, 1977: 70-76). It should be noted that Imperato collected his data in Bamako from 1966 to 1971 and in 1973 and 1974 (ibid, 1977: 71). Furthermore, according to Imperato, "[m]ild and well known symptoms are treated at the household level with herbs obtained from an herbalist (*furatigi*- master of the leaf)" (ibid, 1977: 71). The author goes on to suggest that herbalists are present at the majority of the principle markets in Bamako. To support this, Imperato cites the market of Ouloufobougou as having 11 herbalists, six men and five women who sold "herbal preparations" (ibid, 1977: 71). Though it is not clearly stated, it appears that Imperato conducted similar observations at other markets (and sites) located within the city of Bamako (these other markets include the research site for the current study as well as other sites visited during this researcher's time in Mali).

Although names have changed it appears as though each of the sites mentioned by Imperato in his discussion of traditional medicine in the capital exists to this day. However based on my observations as a Peace Corps volunteer and again from the current research, the difference between what was observed by Imperato and myself is

night and day. Today if one were to inquire as to where one might find a *furatigi*, you would be directed to a small-scale “pill-vendor”, a one-person pharmacy, not to a person who specializes in herbal remedies and treatments. These “pill-vendors” are prolific and can be found in any decent sized market. As seen in figure 1, Map of the Bamako Fetish Market (page 20), they hold a significant and distinct position within the fetish market. On a side note, I found it interesting that the “pill-vendors” of the fetish market are congregated around the busiest point of foot-traffic, no doubt to maximize their sales. Furthermore, “pill-vendors” are highly-mobile due to their use of a large bucket to carry their goods. Such a functional set-up allows a “pill-vendor” to pursue a prospective client to facilitate a sale.

Today the sale of herbal remedies and treatments is dramatically different from what was observed in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. The one Imperato calls an herbalist I categorize as someone who works with botanicals. As discussed elsewhere in this research (*Welcome to the Fetish Market*) the sale of botanicals is relegated to being a woman’s profession due to male dominance within Malian society. In practice these women sell medicinal herbs, roots, nuts, leaves, fruit, tree-limbs, pre-prepared remedies and treatments (note, not all items are “medicinal”, some botanicals sold are “magical”). It should be noted that this is an urban phenomenon and is not reflected in rural traditions where both men and women actively collect and use a wide range of herbs, leaves, roots, nuts, tubers, fruit, and even unique limb structures (i.e., “talking branches”).

Imperato describes the realm of divination, oracles, and spirit mediumship as being facilitated through Marabouts more than by “herbalists or diviner-healers,” (ibid,

1977: 74). He goes on to suggest that there are few diviner-healers in the city of Bamako and as a result “herbalists” and Marabouts provide the majority of such services. To further complicate matters, Imperato differentiates between three types of animist divinations and goes so far as to suggest that they are incompatible with Islam (ibid, 1977: 74). This presents information that is in direct contrast to what I have observed.

Imperato identifies three separate “animist methods of divination;” the *sirikoun* (an oracular fetish), the *soma* (individuals as spirit mediums and diviners), and the *quinmekilila* (also known as *nya-bouin* and *gne-fla*, individuals as spirit mediums and controllers of spirits) (ibid, 1977: 74). With regard to the *quinmekilila*, these individuals are locally known as “witch or sorcerer hunters,” as they provide the supernatural ability to identify witches and sorcerers; an invaluable tool considering some illnesses are directly attributed to magic caste by “evil people” (what Imperato would identify as a witch or sorcerer).

The “three animist methods of divination” (*sirikoun*, *soma*, and *quinmekilila*) are highly relative and are perceived differently depending on with whom you speak. Individual descriptions vary and highlight the difficulty of attributing a specific practice to an individual term. This is illustrated by many in Bamako who view the terms *sirikoun*, *soma*, and *quinmekilila* as synonyms for “magic.” All three of these animistic methods were identified during fieldwork, all within the context of the fetish market. In addition, Imperato’s (1977: 74) suggestion that belief in some animistic practices “is limited to those who are illiterate or semi-literate,” is repugnant and only serves to align traditional practices as being uneducated. Current findings suggest that all manner of

clientele (educated and uneducated alike) visit the fetish market and make use of its services.

Many of these practices are performed by a single individual like my informant and mentor, Kara, who has an extensive professional background spanning wildlife collections, divination, sorcery, medicine, fetishes and historian. It is standard operating procedure for Kara to consult on a daily basis the "sacred sands," identified as animistic "sand reading" by Imperato. Furthermore, Kara and other fetish vendors make use of specific Koranic magic to predict the future in an effort to gain the upper hand in sales and maintain their economic well-being.

Moreover, Koranic scholars and Marabouts alike make active use of practices that are identified as being animistic and, according to Imperato, incompatible with Islam (e.g., religious syncretism [1977: 74]). All one must do is walk through the fetish market to see the clear meshing of the two belief systems. This is clarified particularly well through oral histories that relate the tale of Fakoli and the origin of animistic medicine and magic (fetishes); when he visited Mecca, the Imam stole his secrets and kept them for himself. Today, most-all animal parts vendors straddle the dual systems of belief. Better yet, it is extremely important to qualify that local people have their own perspective and do not necessarily recognize two separate systems of belief (animism and Islam). For many one is the extension of the other, "Allah created animals for people to use, therefore fetishes and Islam are the same. They exist together." Such statements were commonplace when discussing the connection between traditional and Islamic practices with a wide range of participants and informants.

Possibly as a result of having fitted local practices to Western terms, Imperato dismisses the presence of “spirit medium cults” altogether and qualifies “animist practitioners, spirit mediums, and anti-sorcery agents” as being replaced by “Moslem marabouts” (ibid, 1977: 74).

There is no doubt a syncretism between animism, Islam as well as their beliefs and practices, but neither has replaced or done away with the other. Both are alive and well in the capital city of Bamako. Furthermore, my experience with the Komo (a secret society oriented around spirit worship and divination) and others suggests that spirit-mediumship, spirit cults, and a wide mixture of other related practices are a permanent fixture of city life and remain so through local support and belief.

In addition, on several instances during the course of fieldwork, participants mentioned new and foreign practices attributed to Voudoun priests from Benin. One participant claimed that there was a large yet secret society of such practitioners within the city of Bamako. This was verified to some degree when I happened to sit down one morning to my meager breakfast of instant coffee and bread and bumped into a man who was dressed in a manner that clearly labeled him as non-Malian. The man was a Voudoun priest who had been solicited and sequestered by a local government official to aid in diagnosing “marital affairs.” From what the priest related to me there is a large and secret group of similar practitioners within Bamako; however, not all are from Benin, nor do all employ the same techniques (i.e., Voudoun).

Finally, throughout his description of folk medicine in the city of Bamako (this is referring to his discussion of urban practices), nowhere does Imperato make any

reference to the use of wildlife, let alone the fetish market. I find this startling due to the current findings. According to several informants and participants the fetish market has been a fixture of Bamako since they can remember. When such a statement comes from a professional hunter who is clearly advanced in his years (50-60 years old) and claims kinship with previous fetish market vendors and fellow hunters who supplied it, one begins to wonder how Imperato could have overlooked it.

I am not in the position to say that the fetish market was present at the time of Imperato's research, nor am I in the position to say that it did not exist. What is clear from Imperato's writing is that the area currently known as the fetish market (marabaga yoro = animal parts place or fetish market) did not exist then as it does today. Apparently in earlier times the fetish market (the area next to the Grand Mosque) was used by Hausa medicine men as well as Hausa barber-surgeons. No mention was ever given to such individuals during the course of fieldwork, suggesting that it had been a long time since they were last present in the area. However, the fact that Imperato identified medicine men and surgeons in the area currently known as the fetish market also lends some support for its historic presence. It could well be that those identified as Hausa medicine men were in fact the forerunners of the modern day animal part vendors. According to Imperato, such medicine men and surgeons were not permanently installed; rather, they were transhumant, moving with the season between Nigeria and Mali (*ibid*, 1977: 75-76).

Though there is no specific mention of wildlife, its use or value within the context of urban traditional medicine, Imperato does cite the occasional animal in other sections. However, such instances are vague and offer little insight beyond citing animal spirits as

locally perceived causes of illness. Possibly the greatest detail given wildlife with regard to its use in traditional medicine or magic is seen in Imperato's description of arthritic conditions: "Many of the treatments employed are magical and include the use of animal tissues, such as lizard intestines, hyena brains, fish skin, and chicken feces," (ibid, 1977: 161). He cites another recipe in reference to the treatment of a goiter which employs a "[t]alisman consisting of reptile skin or sinew worn around the neck," (ibid, 1977: 160).

Considering his attention to detail when it comes to citing specific botanical species, I am amazed at his general lack of attention to the few instances where wildlife are encountered. To illustrate, consider the level of detail given ethnobotanical medicine for arthritic conditions.

1. The leaves of *Annona senegalensis* are boiled in water and the solution is applied externally to the joint.
2. Shea butter is mixed with pulverized leaves and bark of the *Annona senegalensis*. The paste is then applied to the surface of the joint.
3. The leaves of *Ficus thonningii* (*toro*) are applied together in a bundle and heated in water. The packet is then rubbed over the surface of the joint.
4. The leaves of *Carapa procera* (*kobi*) are boiled in water. The joint is soaked with the solution (ibid, 1977: 161).

Having been presented with such detailed accounting of botanical usage, one is at a loss when it comes to identifying which species of lizard, hyena or fish are used in treating the same condition (arthritic disorders and joint pain). Furthermore, the author points out, "[g]reat attention was paid to how these products are applied, the time of day and the position of the patient" (ibid, 1977: 161). This is not apparent in what the author actually describes in reference to animal tissues, nor is the same attention given to the animal species used.

At least using common names, as seen in the author's description of animal tissues used in treating arthritic conditions, though extremely vague, lets another reader understand what one is talking about. In stark contrast, the descriptor "reptile skin" in reference to treating a goiter is about as helpful as using "red bumps" to describe smallpox to a physician. Given that there are dozens of reptilian species in Mali, it could just as well be cobra, crocodile or monitor lizard skin. We will never know because Imperato, either did not possess the skill, did not take the time or make the effort necessary to record carefully animal parts usage.

### **Reading #2: *Wildlife and Food Security in Africa***

This text presents an extensive, yet general discussion and examination of wildlife and its primary associations in Africa. As one might expect from its title, the report focused on food security and as a result, it has much to offer the current research. Published in 1997 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, this technical and professional report is held in high regard by many governmental agencies and NGOs alike who work in Africa with wildlife, conservation programs and strategies, agriculture as well as a wide range of development projects. In fact this text was on file and was used regularly during my Peace Corps service in Mali.

Of particular importance are the author's description of wildlife use, its related cultural associations and significance. The following excerpts help to align the reader with the author's perspective, as well as help to define the scope of the research:

The contribution of wildlife to food security and nutritional well-being in Africa is also manifest in the spiritual, cultural, and



medicinal values placed on wild animals by rural communities. Many such communities still depend on wild animals and their products, used alone or with herbs, for medication and the treatment of a wide variety of ailments ranging from mental and physical illnesses to ante-natal care, while a wide range of wild animal species have spiritual and cultural associations.

Despite the obvious contribution of wildlife to the socio-economic life in Africa, there are currently no comprehensive and reliable estimates on total supply, trade and consumption of wildlife in any African country. Studies on bushmeat exploitation and consumption are restricted by logistics to specific areas or groups of people in a particular country.....and available data on bushmeat trade are limited to a few market centers. Hunters also often conceal their catch to evade tax and/or wildlife laws. Outputs and services like those related to enhancement of the spiritual well-being, medication, and cultural values are even more difficult to quantify...(ibid, 1997: 4-5).

As one can see, the scale of the author's research is massive and relies on quantifiable data to support and document wildlife use in relation to nutrition, medicine as well as spiritual and cultural values. Given the intended audience of such a document (any and all agencies, organizations, and institutions working with wildlife and/or food security), the pan-African scale makes sense. However, at the same time, such a strict focus on the quantifiable at a pan-African scale severely limits any understanding of what is at play at the local level. Numbers are useful but they cannot relate the reality of what is obviously something that is not only valued differently, but also perceived differently by a wide range of ethnic groups, societies and nations.

Looking beyond the ontological differences between the work of Ntiamoa-Baidu and the current research, several common and salient points are found to be present. First and foremost is what is identified as bushmeat and its organized trade. Bushmeat, a term originating from West Africa, "refers to meat of wild animals," and is categorized as a

form of exploitation and consumption (ibid, 1997: 5-7). As described by the author, bushmeat is related primarily as a food resource with connections to income generation and family well-being (i.e., supplying the family with needed protein [ibid, 1997]). At the same time the author also identifies a wide variety of other indirect contributions of wildlife use, ranging from trophies, hides and skins, live and exotic animal trade, to physical and mental health issues. In effect, each of these topics are discussed and examined independently of each other creating a nicely compartmentalized view of wildlife use in Africa. Unfortunately current research findings suggest that for Mali, these topics and issues are more closely linked to one another than what is presented by Ntiamoa-Baidu.

It must be said, that from having spent a significant amount of time in Mali, as both a natural resource management advisor and researcher, never have I encountered what Ntiamoa-Baidu, and others, refer to as the bushmeat trade, that is, the organized harvesting and commercialized trade of wild animal meat. It simply does not exist. This is confirmed not only through my personal observations and research, but also by a wide range of researchers and scientists who have worked in Mali; out of 10 professional researchers who worked in Mali, none ever encountered a bushmeat restaurant, a key element to an organized bushmeat system (informal conversations with members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as well as other informed researchers). However, this is not to be taken as meaning there is no trade in wild animal meat. Rather, Malians make active use of wildlife resources in order to meet fundamental nutritional requirements as well as to supplement their income.

What I have identified as the fetish market and animal parts trade of Mali helps to realize the innate connections between those who harvest such resources and their motivations in doing so. Motivation is the key. Looking back to earlier sections of this research, specifically at points where hunters are discussed, one can see that there is no universal homogenous motivation driving hunters to harvest wildlife, beyond maintaining well-being. Rather, each case must be looked at individually in order to ascertain the intentions of the persons involved. In general it was found that hunters, both opportunistic and professional alike, seek to maximize their well-being, and that of their relations, through a wide range of practices and services. The same is true for those identified as middlemen. These practices and services include harvesting both large and small-game for a variety of purposes, including nutritional requirements as well as generating income.

From what was described by the wide variety of hunters interviewed in the course of this research, it was not uncommon for portions of large-game to be eaten by the harvester and/or his immediate family. Previous experience as a Peace Corps volunteer suggests that these trends are not limited to those I encountered in association with the fetish market. However, at the same time, there is also a trend for hunters to generate income through the sale of known and valued animal parts. The crux of the matter can be seen in the difference between small and large-game harvested.

Typically those wildlife species identified as large-game hold great value as protein. However, large-game by-products (hides, skins, organs, fluids, parts and pieces) also hold great value with regard to the income they can generate. Conversely, small-

game tends to hold more value in its by-products than it does in its nutritional value. So the problem is, given these generalized trends, who is to say that a hunter who hunts a roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*), consumes a portion of its meat, and sells all valued by-products is a bushmeat hunter? Furthermore, data collected during the course of fieldwork suggests that some hunters are more motivated by the income they can generate through their specialized services as well as sale of valued wildlife parts than they are by the potential protein an animal might provide. It seems more appropriate to call such an individual a subsistence hunter; after all, when one looks at the motivation of the individual, it is to survive and maintain well-being.

It is interesting to point out that within Mali, cultural restrictions and taboos play a key role in deciding what is valued and what is not. However, in studies such as that of Ntiama-Baidu, the label "consumption" does not allow one to see such trends, as all local perspective is lost through generalization. This holds particular importance when it comes to identifying which species are eaten and which are not. To give an example, consider the use of an antelope (bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*) versus the use of a bat (straw-colored fruit bat, *Eidolon helvum*). Antelopes are large-game and hold an innate value as protein, as well as for by-products that can be sold to generate income. A hunter would harvest such a beast and provide his family with nutrition as well as income from the sale of its valued parts. A bat holds only the value of its protein and the fact that they are easy to obtain. All manner of antelope parts (heads, horns, hoofs and hides) may be found within the fetish market, but never was a bat part present or mentioned in

connection with traditional medicine or magic. Yet in the works of Ntiamoa-Baidu and others like her, the bat and antelope would both be categorized as “bushmeat.”

Another example, this time between a monitor lizard (either Nile, Savannah, or desert types, *Varanus niloticus*, *V. exanthematicus*, or *V. griseus*) and a chameleon (*Chamaeleo africanus* or *C. senegalensis*), illustrates the fundamental importance of cultural value and association. A monitor lizard holds a wide variety of value, as does a chameleon. However, where a monitor lizard holds both potential protein to be consumed as well as income to be generated through the sale of its valued parts (head, teeth, skin, tail, claws, fat, internal and sexual organs), a chameleon would never be eaten and is harvested only for the income it could generate for its parts, which have magical properties. Parenthetically, chameleons are viewed as “evil” by many Malians, helping to reinforce their inedible-ness while highlighting their supernatural properties and value.

From just these two basic examples it is clear that wildlife use in Mali holds close ties to maintaining well-being, generating income as well as supplying cultural demand (i.e., traditional medicine and magic) for wildlife parts through the fetish market. Furthermore, from such examples it is clear to see that some wildlife in Mali holds multiple values and is used accordingly (i.e., protein, income, medicinal and/or magical parts), whereas other wildlife has limited use (i.e., is only eaten and has no valued parts to generate income).

In discussing the live animal trade, Ntiamoa-Baidu relies on relating which species are most common and does not attempt to go beyond citing that:

[t]here is some evidence that the live animal trade is lucrative but that most of the profits go to the middlemen and international sales

agents with very little going to the local people who do the capturing (ibid, 1997: 41).

The present research has clearly drawn a connection between the live animal trade and what has been identified as the fetish market. Key players are government officials, well-positioned animal part vendors and their associates (i.e., professional hunters). As described in the actions of contract hunters in *Outsider Demand*, as well as within *Trends in Wildlife Trade: Cultural versus Outsider Demand*, the commercial harvesting of live animals secures relatively large sums of money for those who participate. From informal talks with a wide range of hunters, both opportunistic and professional, there seems to be a trend for those who participate in collecting live animals for commercial trade to only do so on occasion; it is not their primary function.

It should be noted that for the most part opportunistic hunters (both children and adults) do not necessarily know that they are participating. From their perspective, they have collected an animal and taken it to the fetish market to sell. Once the opportunistic hunter sells the animal to an animal parts vendor, little or no concern is given to what will become of it. The opportunistic hunter merely seeks what money he can receive for the animal. The fact that the animal is alive and may be resold to a middleman who exports the animal to another country is typically not known by opportunistic suppliers.

Professional hunters on the other hand are quite aware of the commercial trade in live animals. Yet in order for a professional hunter to participate in collecting live animals for commercial trade they must have a well-positioned contact (i.e. an animal parts vendor). Such contacts are not random, nor are they trivial; they are built on a two-

way reciprocal relationship between hunter and vendor. In the few instances that I came across in the course of fieldwork, it was apparent that the professional hunter involved had an intimate relationship with the vendor they supplied. Furthermore, this relationship was not simply an in-depth business arrangement; rather, both parties typically spent significant portions of their lives in close contact and knew the other as if he were a family member. One would be hard pressed to call them anything other than friends or brothers. Once again, in reports such as that of Ntiamoa-Baidu, the complexities of hunter-middlemen relations are passed over in silence.

With regard to discussing the cultural significance of wildlife use, Ntiamoa-Baidu identifies indirect connections to “spiritual health” as well as “physical and mental health” (ibid, 1997: 43-48). Each of these respective connections are limited due to their reliance on quantitative data and pan-African scale.

According to Ntiamoa-Baidu, “[w]ild animals with spiritual and cultural uses fall into three main categories,” (ibid, 1997: 41). The author then identifies the three categories of spiritual and cultural use as being “totem species”, “tabooed species”, or “sacrificial and/or ceremonial species.” (ibid, 1997: 41-42). Ntiamoa-Baidu describes each as follows:

**Totem species:** animals/ plants regarded as symbols of an existing, intimate, unseen relationship; accorded respect and considered sacred. These may not be killed or eaten.

**Tabooed Species:** a) animals regarded as sacred or holy because of some protection, guidance or help accorded to the ancestors through association with the species; and b) animals regarded as unclean and abhorred because of some misfortune in the past associated with the species. In both cases, eating, killing, or even touching of such animals may be forbidden.

**Sacrificial and/or ceremonial species:** animals used in specific cultural rites and festivals, either in the rituals or in the preparation of the special dishes that go with such ceremonies (ibid, 1997: 42-43).

Such definitions do little to align the reader with the reality of wildlife use, nor do they offer anything but the most cursory explanation of significance. Moreover, from what is presented in the author's text, it seems that these definitions are specific to Ghana (she cites her own previous work in Ghana in relation to the three defined terms).

From the current research, and previous experience in Mali, and West Africa in general, it became quite apparent that even though species may be recognized as a totem, tabooed, or ceremonial it does not preclude them from being used for other purposes. Recall that Mali is not homogenous (nor is any nation for that matter), and represents a wide range of cultural traditions and beliefs. What is viewed as a totem species by one person is lunch or money in the pocket for another. The same is true for what Ntiamoa-Baidu identifies as totem, tabooed and sacrificial or ceremonial species.

Furthermore, historical changes in society and the economy mean that things that were once sacred are now a means of securing income in a relatively insecure and hard world. Take the case of a hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) in Mali: it is the nation's namesake (Bambara for hippo is Mali). For many the hippo is sacred and is not to be hunted, killed or eaten. Many people I talked with said that this had long been the case. Given these cultural taboos, one would expect hippos to be thriving and revered by all in Mali. If that were truly the case, then why are hippos cited as a nuisance species by many



river side farmers and why are their parts highly valued and supplied to the fetish market?

Obviously this once strong taboo is beginning to lose its force.

In rather stark contrast to the categorized and reduced description of “spiritual health”, Ntiamoa-Baidu offers a relatively thicker accounting of wildlife in relation to “physical and mental health,” (ibid, 1997: 43):

The basis for traditional medicines and the primary ingredients used by the traditional healers are wild animal and plant species. The practice is widespread in Africa and market stalls selling plants and animal parts for medicines are common in both rural and urban markets in many African towns and cities. A large number of wild animal species and their products, used alone or with herbs, form the basis of the medicines used by traditional healers. Animal parts used include the meat, hair, skin, tail, bones, teeth, fat, glands, and faecal pellets and the ailments treated range widely from mental and physical illnesses to antenatal care (ibid, 1997: 43).

This description is then followed with statistics and several tables identifying species used, specific parts and application. Many of the species cited as used in traditional medicine are also present in the pharmacopoeia of Mali. It is worthwhile to note that the author draws on her own research in Ghana as well as Adeola’s work in Nigeria (see table 1: Chart of Reviewed Literature, page 153). As a result, what is presented as medicinal use of wildlife is at best a general discussion of a few select case studies from West Africa along with some information pertinent to Zimbabwe (about 2000 miles southwest of the cited case studies). Little if any regional specificity makes it into the study. However, of particular relevance is the author’s recognition of the innateness of wildlife to traditional medicine:

[w]hat is important, however, is that those who use traditional medicines out of preference or out of necessity believe in the

effectiveness and will continue to use them for a long time to come (ibid, 1997: 48).

There is no question that traditional medicine holds a permanent presence in the lives of many Africans and will continue to do so. Evidence from Mali suggests that an inordinate percentage of the population uses traditional medicine or magic to some degree (fetishes and grigris, impotence remedies, fertility treatments, fortune predictions and others locally accepted practices). Furthermore, the formation and continued presence of the fetish market suggests that such traditional medicine and magic hold particular importance to the population and are as much a cultural fixture for them as they are a wildlife use system for research scientists.

### ***Reading #3: Wildlife Utilization in Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa, Potentials and Constraints for Development Cooperation***

Perhaps the best and most relevant professional report dealing with wildlife use in West Africa is the work of the geographer Hans Ulrich-Caspary. Written for GTZ (a German NGO), the World Bank and other international development agencies, *Wildlife Utilization in Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa*, is regionally specific and some of the information presented is also taken from Caspary's research in Mali. Of particular importance to the current research is Caspary's discussion of what he identifies as the bushmeat trade. However, even though the text holds significant amounts of information and insight, its primary mission is an evaluation of where development cooperation might be employed in relation to wildlife management. Thus, those points where common ground between the current research and that of Caspary are found will be discussed.

However, to begin with special mention must be given Caspary's research design and approach.

In short, Caspary's research methodology and implementation are outstanding! In comparison to other regionally specific wildlife use research as well as those sources reviewed for this research Caspary sets the standard. Though I have included him on the biological-environmental side of the spectrum, Caspary has included a cultural component to his research in an effort to understand local perceptions, values and uses of wildlife.

To achieve this dualistic approach (cultural and environmental) Caspary interviewed traditional hunters, transporters, distributors, bushmeat restaurant operators and other local people in an effort to understand not only how wildlife was used, but why. In addition to this Caspary offers in-depth environmental and ecological analysis of local impacts to wildlife. As such, he presents a dualistic approach to wildlife use research with cultural and environmental components.

The first point of common ground is found in Caspary's discussion of, "[t]ypes of wildlife utilization in West Africa," (Caspary, 1999: 18). In this section of his report he cites:

[u]tilization can be aimed at consumptive use of game (meat, oils, hides, feathers, etc.) or non-consumptive use of the resource (research, education, game-viewing tourism), (ibid, 1999: 18).

The author then categorizes what he has identified as six different types of use-

We describe six types of utilization: 1.) traditional hunting; 2.) commercial hunting; 3.) sport hunting; 4.) game-viewing tourism;

5.) extensive systems of game production; 6.) intensive systems of game production (ibid, 1999: 18).

From these excerpts it is possible to identify that Caspary views wildlife use as either consumptive or non-consumptive. Furthermore, what he has termed consumptive use includes what this study labels traditional and secular hunting. Though the other types of wildlife use are insightful, they offer little to the current research and discussion (i.e, sport hunting, game viewing, as well as extensive and intensive systems of game production). As defined by Caspary, traditional hunting is:

Subsistence utilization of game as a resource - formerly considered a sustainable method of utilization practiced by a small number of hunters during the hunting seasons - played an important part in providing the population with animal protein. In recent times, it has developed into an activity which is beyond the extensive and sustainable level (ibid, 1999: 18).

Commercial hunting on the other hand is defined as:

Having undergone the same development, commercial hunting is characterized by the fact that hunters sell what they succeed in hunting. The characteristics of both types of utilization have merged into village-based or communal hunting (ibid, 1999: 19).

Based on these two definitions (three if you include village-based or communal hunting) and personal perspective, Caspary launches into a thorough examination and discussion of various literature, information and data collected by a wide range of researchers and scientists (chapter 3 of his report). It is worth noting that for the most part, all of his review is oriented around literature and research that has either sought to quantify wildlife, its use and value, or qualify it through socio-economic terms.

Though he identifies the connection between generating income through the utilization of wildlife species as well as cultural values (which he reduces to "totem

species”) and traditional medicine, Caspary is predominately concerned with describing the bushmeat trade. Essentially Caspary is dissecting and removing select “pieces” of what is inherent to culture when he separates cultural values as being related to totem species, while traditional medicine stands alone as its own entity. Does this reflect reality? To elaborate, consider what Caspary has to say concerning culture and traditional medicine. He prefaces these statements with the suggestion that besides bushmeat, wildlife also plays a role in:

The different **cultures** of West African countries; the term "totem" signifies that consumption is prohibited. Many wildlife species are "totem species" to particular individuals or families. While a hunter may kill his totem, he cannot make a profit out of his hunt- he is obliged to offer the animal as a gift to another person. To the *Akan* people (living in the south and center of Côte d'Ivoire), the *Bushbuck* has special meaning as a totem. It is able to accommodate the souls of the deceased and even the transformed body of a living human being. As its meat is said to have a human flavor, it is not very popular in bushmeat restaurants.

**Traditional medicine;** several diseases are treated with products derived from wildlife. Markets offer a considerable range of forest and savanna animal body parts such as skulls, feet, skins, tails, and bones. Most of these products are used within the gray area between fetish and traditional medicine. For instance, the *Agnis of Indénié* (ethnic group indigenous to the southeast of Côte d'Ivoire) believe the hand of the Bosman's Potto (*Perodictus potto*), when dried and attached to the wrist, lends power and protection to a child (ibid, 1999: 61-62).

Though these are relevant cultural observations, they seem overly simplistic and fail to express what I view as the complex cultural significance of wildlife use.

In his description of bushmeat (chapter 4 of his report), Caspary gives special mention to “trophy hunting.” It is interesting to note that mention is given only after he has discussed five patterns of wildlife utilization at the subsistence level. Besides its odd

placement, his description of trophy hunting holds particular significance with the current research. Trophy hunting, as typically recognized by both hunters and conservationists alike, refers to wild animals hunted for sport to secure a memento (a pair of elephant tusks, the head and horns of a cape buffalo, the stuffed head of a lion, etc). Moreover, trophy hunting is typically practiced only by those who can afford the high prices associated with travel and game fees (generally people from Western nations- the United States and Europe).

According to Caspary:

[t]rophy hunting is coupled with game consumption and commercialization. Apart from being traded as trophies, the different products (horns, feet, skins and hides, skulls, tails) are also used for the production of indigenous medicaments (ibid, 1999: 72).

Perhaps those identified as trophy hunters by Caspary are not the same as those that I imagine (i.e., westerners). It could very well be that what Caspary identified, as trophy hunters are more like what I describe as professional and contract hunters. Furthermore, I would be surprised if western hunters actively traded their trophies “for the production of indigenous medicaments,” (ibid, 1999: 72)<sup>6</sup>.

Even though Caspary gives two examples that seem to support such a statement, there is no mention of indigenous medicaments; rather, they appear to be tales of hunting large mammals. The items sought seem to lend a little insight as to the motivation of those involved. The first example relates how local farmers sought out the services of a

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<sup>6</sup> However, of the species identified by Caspary as being hunted for trophies, a large percentage are also present in the pharmacopoeia of Mali including, roan antelope (*Hippotragus equines*), waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*), kob (*Kobus kob*), hartebeest (*Alcephalus buselaphus*), hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*), pangolin (*Manis spp*), lion (*Panthera leo*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), as well as primates and large reptiles (ibid, 1999: 72).

trophy hunter to cull elephants destroying local agriculture. The second example explains how a group of Lebanese, Ivorian, and French trophy hunters sought out and killed a Roan antelope, the meat of which was distributed in the capital. Also, within this second example is mention of a group of Malian hunters in search of elephants.

It seems that though Caspary has presented evidence of wildlife harvesting and commercialization (i.e., the meat of the antelope) he has not made a connection between these actions and supplying parts and pieces for traditional medicine.

So, where do the parts and pieces that he identifies as being used for traditional medicine come from? It is at this point that Caspary's research into the bushmeat trade becomes of particular importance.

Caspary describes, in some detail, the system of what he has identified as the bushmeat trade. Just as I have outlined what I have termed the fetish market and the animal parts trade of Mali. Though there are some marked differences between our two perspectives, and foci, there is an uncanny resemblance between what Caspary presents and the current research.

To illustrate, consider figure 13, a systems perspective, provided by Caspary in his report, outlining the bushmeat trade as he encountered it through the course of his research.

For all intents and purposes this schematic design of the bushmeat supply chain is essentially the same as what I have presented for the system of supply (figure 10, page 145) associated with the animal parts trade and fetish market of Bamako. One might wonder if that is just a result of us both using systems designs to relate supply chain

information. After all, all supply chains tend to be fairly similar. However, the first clue that there is a direct connection between what is outlined by Caspary and myself is that Caspary essentially identifies the same types of “hunters” involved in harvesting wildlife. Caspary’s systems design distinguishes between “professional hunters” and “farmer/hunters.” The current research has identified the same, and gone beyond, in documenting the fetish market and animal parts trade of Mali.

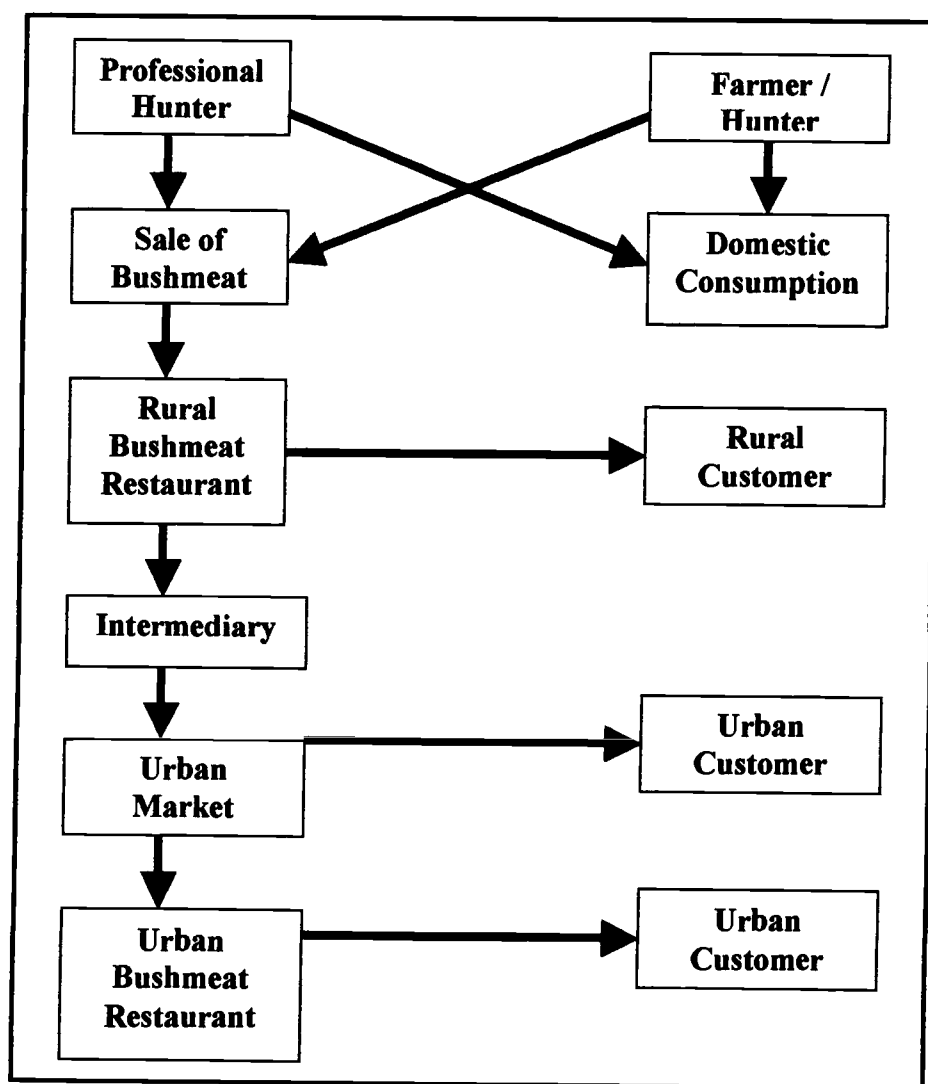


Figure 13: Bushmeat Supply Chain, as related by Caspary (1999: 128).



Going back to the supply section of this research, one can see that professional hunters are but one of three types of individuals that supply animal parts to the fetish market. Caspary reduces and generalizes the other two types as “farmer/hunters,” whereas the current research has identified a distinction between opportunistic children and adults. In his report, Caspary describes that “farmer/hunters” are agriculturally based and participate to generate income. I could not agree more; however, by looking at what is harvested/collected by what the current research identifies as opportunist hunters, there is a marked difference between what a child might bring to market in comparison to an adult. This plays a significant role in supplying the fetish market, as opportunistic children tend to supply the majority of small animals (chameleons, small monitor lizards, cane rats, scorpions) and birds (finches, weaver nests, juvenile raptors, kingfishers) to be sold. An opportunistic adult, though known to supply small game, tends to focus on larger game (large monitor lizards, adult raptors, tortoises, mongoose, porcupine, and the occasional duiker or small antelope); wildlife typically viewed as a nuisance to agricultural production. Please consult appendix I for a break down of which species are considered large or small game. Caspary could not make such a distinction due to his strict generalization between only two types of bushmeat harvesters, “professional” and “farmer/hunter,” (ibid, 1999).

The fact that it appears that Caspary and I have identified the same types of individuals involved in harvesting/collecting wildlife, suggests that there is an intimate relation between the bushmeat and the animal parts trade. The key difference is that bushmeat is oriented toward nutrition, whereas animal parts are associated with non-

culinary cultural activities, such as those practiced by clients and specialists in the fetish market of Bamako, Mali. Furthermore, some species identified as being harvested for bushmeat are also present in the Malian wildlife pharmacopoeia, suggesting that at least some of the species harvested are valued by two distinct, yet intimately related, systems.

To say that all animal parts present in the fetish market are simply by-products of the bushmeat trade is shortsighted. Nothing could be further from the truth as there are several species identified within the fetish market that are considered inedible or have such a negative association as to be feared and/or respected to the point that they are not viewed as a source of protein (i.e., chameleons, geckos, and some species of snakes). Rather, such species have value in terms of what has been described as traditional medicine and magic. However, at the same time several species present in the fetish market are apparently consumed in such a fashion as to be likened to bushmeat. Recall the example of the patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*), sold by a military man to one of my participants; the animal was then butchered and sold as anti-fever medicine. In all appearances this might seem to be bushmeat, after all it is a wild animal that is being sold for consumption, however, those who purchase it do not consider it as such, they view it as medicine. This insight is lost through Caspary's reliance on biological-environmental categorization. Such a culturally immersed perspective could never be seen, or related, through labels of consumptive use, poaching or wildlife commercialization. In fact these terms only further reduce the valuable cultural information that Caspary was able to collect.

One might ask how my research differs, as I have included several generalizations and made use of categorization. The difference lies in the fact that even though I have made use of these I have done so only after presenting local perspectives. As such, the reader is aligned with the reality of wildlife use through thick ethnographic description, while generalizations and categorization help to translate what may seem alien into an interpretable format. Similarly, illustrations and visual aids are often used in conjunction with text to lend greater insight and understanding.

Based on what is described and related by Caspary as well as the current research, a cognitive expansion can be made to both the bushmeat and animal parts trade. Such an expansion, based on the apparent connections, relationships and roles, allows me to construct this complimentary perspective. Figure 14, *A Melding of Two Systems- Bushmeat meets Animal Parts*, is an attempt to relate what seems to be the inherent and intimate relationship between the Bushmeat trade, as identified by Caspary, and the current research.

Though the meshing of our two respective systems and perspectives are not quite commensurable, it is easy to see where points of connection might exist. To highlight this, I have tried to use the same terminology used by Caspary, as well as that outlined in the current research. The result is striking and helps to underline the suggestion that the two systems, one of bushmeat, the other of animal parts, are birds of a feather and should not be so separated and compartmentalized as to show no relation between them, as was the case with studies like those of Ntiamoa-Baidu and Imperato.

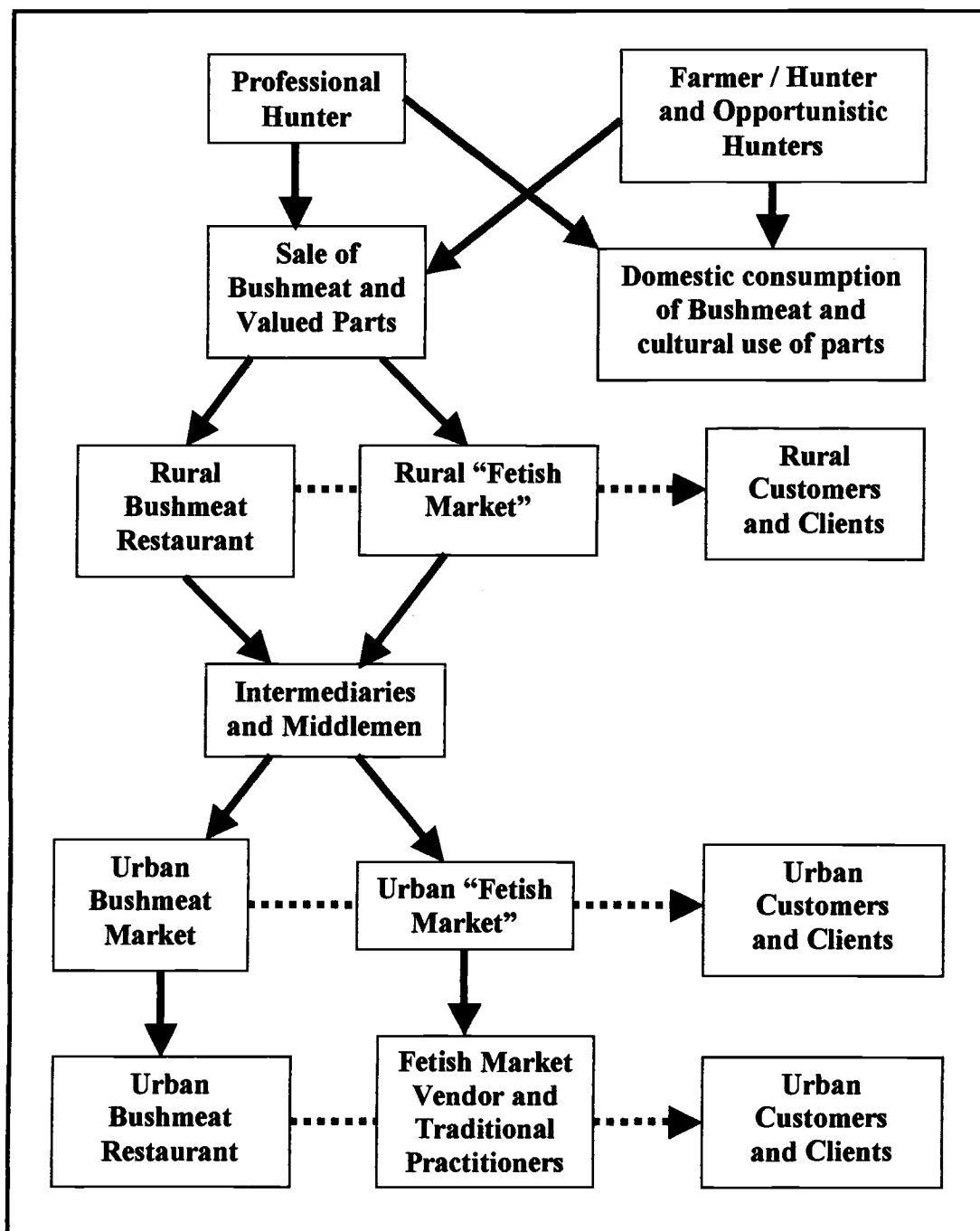


Figure 14: A Melding of Two Systems- Bushmeat meets Animal Parts.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion: A Better Way

The issue of wildlife resources is becoming an ever more important topic as our world slowly but surely becomes smaller and smaller through the process of globalization. People, species and places are disappearing at an alarming rate. In the past thirty years more and more professionals, including biological-environmentalists and socio-culturalists, have attempted to describe various systems of wildlife use in an effort to sustain or conserve their limited nature. However, wildlife resource use is not a solitary entity, rather it is connected to a wide range of related topics including the greater realm of natural resources, biodiversity and habitat loss among others. Placing these issues in context with Mali helps to identify the impact of the fetish market and animal parts trade in comparison to other practices.

Mali is a vast country, roughly twice the size of Texas, with a total of 1.22 million square kilometers of land. Only 2% of this land is considered arable, 25% designated as permanent pastures and 6% described as forests and woodland; the remaining 67% is desert (the southwestern portion of the Sahara desert [CIA, 2002]). With a population of roughly 11 million, 80% of which is engaged in agricultural or fishing activities, Mali is plagued with severe environmental limitations and degradation including desertification, soil erosion, deforestation and limited water resources. Couple with this the fact that the population is growing, with only a limited amount of arable land, requires that new areas be developed for agricultural production. In fact, this became a national agenda of Mali during the 1980's and remains so today.

I consider myself fortunate to have been a Peace Corps volunteer as it allowed me access to these issues. I watched every morning as the women went to collect firewood to cook with. Wood that they constantly had to walk further and further to collect due to consumption rates. Come planting season torrential rains and winds literally erode the land before your very eyes. With less ground cover the land is subject to increased rates of erosion. Furthermore, the national agenda of agricultural development and expansion does more to exacerbate and compound already high rates of deforestation for fuel and resulting soil erosion.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, as a Peace Corps volunteer I worked with hunters of the Bafing Faunal Reserve. At the same time that I was attempting to understand the greater importance of wildlife for these individuals, rural farmers were encroaching upon the reserve the hunters lived within and based their economy on. This entailed the clear cutting of forest and woodland followed by a regime of burning to increase agricultural yields. As one might expect this practice not only has a direct impact on habitat, wildlife and biodiversity, but also adversely affects the lives of those within the reserve.

Entire stands of sub-Saharan woodland are regularly cut, burned, planted with millet, sorghum, maize or other staple food and harvested. This process is repeated until the land is defunct and cannot produce a sufficient yield; then a new area is located and it starts all over again. The impacts to local wildlife can be devastating, far more so than that generated through the fetish market and animal parts trade.

When a new piece of land is altered for agricultural production it impacts not only those species living in the habitat, but also all the other species that are linked to them through ecology and environmental interactions. So, instead of a few select wildlife species being harvested with minimal impacts, an entire biome may be lost through a cascade effect.

Though I have presented these issues in reference to my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Manantali, they exist throughout the nation of Mali. Some areas are less impacted than others due to their geographical location and climate (i.e., areas in southwestern Mali are lush in comparison to other regions). However, given the current environmental trends, which are compounded by local agricultural practices, those areas that have yet to feel the effects do not have long to wait; it is only a matter of time.

Due to current environmental circumstance and the impending future crisis I also have become entrenched in the battle for our future, though many question which side I stand on. "Are you actually condoning the harvesting of threatened and protected species?" a forest resource graduate student asked me. My answer was, and still is "No." However, what I am emphasizing is the need to get away from the current "standard operating procedures" inherent to the majority of research revolving around wildlife use.

As outlined in the literature review portion of this thesis, there are three basic issues at hand that need to be addressed if one is to conduct effective, culturally appropriate and sensitive research pertaining to wildlife use systems. First and foremost are issues of terminology and the trend for different authors, belonging to different disciplinary backgrounds, to use different terms to describe the same or similar

circumstance. To help set a new standard, I have used terms and phrases as they were used by informants and participants in the course of fieldwork, an emic perspective. I have only used western terminology to help translate local perceptions into a format that can be understood by other people interested in such research.

In addition to there being a massive amount of mixed terminology, which only helps to obfuscate the value of such research, there are far too many over-generalizations. Perhaps it is just me, but when I find another author describing "Africa" as a country, rather than the immense continent that it is, I must question the integrity of the work along with its value. However, those who do employ some regional specificity in describing African wildlife use are not free from generalizations. Most tend to relate research results from one area to a much larger one. So, even though results may be specific to a village in southwestern Ghana, they may be used to describe all of West Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, or even Africa as a whole. Given the cultural complexity of any nation, such over-generalization and misrepresentation only helps to further confuse an already convoluted issue.

It is my personal belief that in-depth ethnographic investigations accompanied by thickly described narratives help to lend insight where other approaches have failed or met with limited success. For all intents and purposes those scientists and researchers who make use of quantifiable investigations into wildlife use typically fail to recognize the ever present and all-important human component to such use. Knowing which species, how many, and their population density are important, but lend no insight to how and why such species may be used.



To design and implement any conservation strategy or sustainable development plan, one must have a fundamental understanding of the needs, wants and desires of those involved. For the most part this is not done. Moreover, due to a research emphasis on charismatic-mega-fauna, local people find themselves ignored in comparison to protected and endangered species. If your livelihood or cultural practice were in question, how would you feel? How would you react, if, as a professional hunter, you were called a poacher?

The only ethical means of dealing with these disciplinary and moral issues is to include local people in wildlife use research, not treat them as a nuisance or problem. Within this body of work I have laid out an approach that included local people as well as wildlife. This approach is qualitative by nature and focuses on the needs, wants and desires of locals, those to whom it matters most. To accomplish this, I employed in-depth ethnographic investigation in conjunction with thick narratives to relate the inherent cultural complexity that exists in such wildlife use systems. In addition, I systematically identified the vast majority of all the species encountered in the course of research to properly account for the wildlife I was discussing. The results allow the reader to understand that wildlife holds multiple values while serving both cultural and outsider demand. Furthermore, this research has allowed previously unmade connections to be drawn between other wildlife use systems (e.g., the bushmeat trade).

Though I cannot present evidence that my thick ethnographic approach is the best means of investigating wildlife use, its qualitative and cultural foundations are well tested in other research and management strategies. Hans-Ulrich Caspary incorporated a

cultural component into his research in an effort to gain insight into not only which wildlife species were harvested but also why. He understood that wildlife was not an independent entity; rather it is only one element of a greater system, a system that includes people.

Other evidence supporting the importance of local participation can be seen in what is typically referred to as cooperative management strategies or programs.

Cooperative management has long called for the incorporation of local people in an effort to better meet their needs. Native fisheries management and whaling in Alaska, ranching iguanas in Guatemala, and the Campfire program of South Africa are but a few examples that have not only incorporated local people but empowered them. Many international development agencies and organizations have also taken the steps to involve local people in policy and management such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Bank.

Though there is obviously a concern for the inclusion of local people understanding the culturally-based interactions between people and nature are of paramount importance if proper and effective policy is to be developed with regard to wildlife resources. Those who research wildlife use must make an effort to account for cultural value, use and significance if threatened and protected species are to be saved. Moreover, researchers should include local people in order to address their needs, wants and desires. Without the vested interest of other researchers and scientists to include such a cultural component in their work, wildlife and the people who use it will be treated as separate entities when they are really parts of the same system.

In closing I would like to say that this research has been experimental. It started when I was a fresh faced Peace Corps volunteer with a need to understand something that was not readily apparent and has evolved into a master's thesis. However, my need to understand is still there because it has not been fully answered. Though I designed an approach that lent significant insight into cultural value and use there are still lingering questions that keep me up at night. Many of these questions are a result of my findings such as, what are the differences between regional animal parts markets; do other regions view the Bamako fetish market in the same manner as the "Marabaga men" of Manantali? What species are represented in regional markets, do they parallel the Bamako fetish market?

To be honest I am not sure if I will ever understand wildlife use to the same degree as a Malian however, this research offers the first steppingstone towards drawing connections between local people and the wildlife they use. Without a comprehensive understanding of these connections and interactions management programs or strategies are largely ineffective. Moreover they may create new issues or compound existing problems. Given my position as an anthropologist and natural resource manager, I plan to continue to further my understanding of wildlife resource use in West Africa in an effort to not only satisfy my own personal curiosity, but to influence and change current wildlife use research practices and the policies they uphold.

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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix I**

### **Overview of wildlife species, and other items for sale in the Bamako Fetish Market**



English Common Name	Bambara Common Name	Scientific Name	Associated Parts / Pieces	Small Game	Large(r) Game
Aardvark	Timba, Tinba	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Head, Feet, Skin		X
Addax	Dankalakule	<i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Addra / Dama Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dama</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
African Golden Cat	Jakumawara, Jakumawaranin	<i>Felis aurata</i>	Head, Skin		X
African Mourning Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia dicipiens</i>	Whole	X	
Ants	?	?	Whole	X	
Ball Python	Miniyan Ntomi	<i>Python regius</i>	Live, Skin, Head, Grease		X
Banded Mongoose	Winsin	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X
Birds of Prey (falcons, eagles, hawks, vultures, kestrels...)	Sege, Seke	<i>Falconiformes</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Black Cobra	Ngoronko fi	<i>Naja naja oxiana</i>	Whole, Head, skin		X
Black Spitting Cobra	Ngoronko fi	<i>Naja nigricollis</i>	Whole, Head, skin		X
Black Vulture	Duga	<i>Aegyptius monachus</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Bloody Mongoose	Watajuba	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X
Bonobo (Pygmy Chimpanzee)	Woronin, Demu	<i>Pan paniscus</i>	Head, Hands, Feet		X
Bushbuck	Minan	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Camel	?	<i>Camelus bactrianus</i>	Skin, Feet		X
Cane Rat / Grass Cutter/ False Agouti	Kinin	<i>Thrysozonomis swinderianus</i>	Head, Skin, Feet, Tail	X	X

Caracal	Bak r kuru, Waranikalan	<i>Felis caracal</i>	Head, Skin, Feet, Claws		X
Cattle Egret	Nkunanje	<i>Ardeola ibis</i>	Whole, head	X	X
Chalk	Kribi	-	Small pieces		X
Chimpanzee	Woronin, Demu	<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	Head, Hands, Feet		X
Civet	Bak r kuru, Waranikalan	<i>Civerrictis civetta</i>	Head, Skin, Feet, Claws		X
Common / Gray Duiker	Mankalan	<i>Syvicapra grimmia</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Common Reedbuck	Konkoron	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Crocodylians	Bama	<i>Crocodylus spp</i>	Whole (juveniles), Head, Teeth, Skin, Gall bladders, Bile		X
Defassa / Common Waterbuck	Sen-sen	<i>Kobus defassa</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Derby's Eland	Minanjan	<i>Taurotragus derbianus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Domesticated Cat	Jakuma	<i>Felis catus</i>	Head, Skin, Feet	X	X
Domesticated Dog	Ulu	<i>Canis familiaris</i>	Head, Skin, Teeth,	X	X
Dorcas Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Double- spurred Francolin	Wolo	<i>Francolinus bicalcaratus</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Dugong	Ma	<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>	Refined Grease		X
Egrets	Nkunanje	<i>Egretta ssp</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Egyptian Cobra	Ngoronko	<i>Naja haje</i>	Whole, Head, skin		X
Egyptian Mongoose	Nkoroko winsin	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X
Electric catfish	Ntigin	<i>Malapterurus electricus</i>	Skin		X
Elephant	Sama	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Skin, Tail, Feet, Sperm		X

Finches	?	<i>Fringillidae</i>	Whole, Head	X	
Forest Cobra	Ngoronko	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	Whole, Head, skin		X
Gabon Viper	Dangalan	<i>Bitis gabonica</i>	Whole, Head, skin		X
Galago / Lesser Bushbaby	Gantona	<i>Galago senegalensis</i>	Live, Skin, Feet	X	X
Gambian Sun Squirrel	Ntolo	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>	Whole, Head, Skin, Feet	X	
Genet	Seriba, Ba Koron Kouri	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Skin		X
Golden Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis aureus</i>	Skin		X
Green / Vervet Monkey	Nkoba	<i>Ceropithecus aethiops</i>	Live, Head, Skin, Hands, Feet	X	X
Harlequin Quail	Kuwl	<i>Coturnix delegorguei</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	
Hartebeest	Tankan	<i>Alcephalus buselaphus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Helmeted Guinea fowl	Kami	<i>Numidae meleagris</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	
Hippopotamus	Mali	<i>Hippopotomus amphibious</i>	Teeth, Skin, Fat, Bones		X
Honey Badger / Ratel	Dame	<i>Melivora capensis</i>	Skin, Reproductive Organs		X
Human parts	Mogowfen	Homo sapiens sapiens	Hair, Eyes, Saliva, Foreskins, Clitorises		X
Kingfishers	?	<i>Alcedinidae</i>	Whole, Head	X	
Kob	Sen	<i>Kobus kob</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Land Turtles	Koorokara	<i>Testudo sulcata</i>	Heads, Carapace, Plastron	X	X
Lappet-Faced Vulture	Duga	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Laughing Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	
Leather containers	Fendaga	-	Made of Sheep, Cow		X

Leopard	Waranikalan	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Head, Teeth, Skin, Claws, Grease		X
Lion	Waraba	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Head, Teeth, Skin, Claws, Internal Organs		X
Lung Fish	?	<i>Protopterus annectens</i>	Whole	X	X
Marabout Stork	Temu	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Nile Monitor	Nkana	<i>Varamus niloticus</i>	Whole, Head, Skin, Teeth, Grease, Female Reproductive Organs	X	X
Olive / Anubis Baboon	Ngon	<i>Papio anubis</i>	Head, Skin, Hands, Feet,	X	X
Oribi	Nkolonin	<i>Ourebia ourebi</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Otters	Jiwulu	<i>Lutrinae</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X
Owls	Gingin	<i>Strigiformes</i>	Live, Whole, Head, Feet	X	X
Pangolins	Kooso-Kaasa	<i>Manis Spp</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X
Parrots	Gonjuruba	<i>Psittacus erithacus, Piocephalus senegalus</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Periguine falcon	Sege, Seke	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Porcupine	Balla	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	Head, Quills, Feet		X
Pre-prepared potions	-	-	Unknown Ingredients		X
Red / Patas Monkey	Warabilen	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	Live, Head, Skin, Hands, Feet		X
Red Cloth	Murufle	-	Textile		X
Red seed	Namankuru Bara	-	Unknown		X

Red-Flanked Duiker	Kokunani	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Red-Fronted / Heuglin's Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Rhinoceros-Horned Viper	Jallon sa	<i>Bitis nasicornis</i>	Whole, Head, Skin		X
Roan Antelope	Daj	<i>Hippotragus equines</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Rock Python	Miniyan Ndonso	<i>Python sebae sebae</i>	Live, Head, Skin, Grease		X
Rock Salt	Koko	-	Mineral	-	-
Saddle-Billed Stork	Balasama	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Savannah Monitor	Nkoro	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	Whole, Head, Skin, Teeth, Grease, Female Reproductive Organs	X	X
Saw-Scaled Viper	Fonfonni	<i>Echis carinatus</i>	Whole, Head, Skin		X
Scorpions	?	?	Whole, Tails	X	X
Secretary Bird	Sa-kunu	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Serval	Monokon	<i>Felis serval</i>	Head, Skin, Claws		X
Shoe-Bill	?	<i>Balaeniceps rex</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Side-striped Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis adustus</i>	Skin		X
Silver-backed / Black-backed Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Skin		X
Soft-Shelled Turtles	Tawu, Na	<i>Cyclanorbis senegalensis</i> , <i>Trionyx triangus</i>	Heads, Carapace, Plastron	X	X
Spoon-Bill	?	<i>Platalea alba</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Spotted Hyena	Suruku	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Head, Teeth, Skin, Tail		X
Stone Partridge	Tusnin	<i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	X
Storks	Baninkin	<i>Ciconiidae ssp</i>	Head	X	X

Striped-ground Squirrel	Nkilin	<i>Euxerus erythropus</i>	Whole, Head, Skin, Feet, Tail	X	
Stripped Hyena	Suruku	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	Head, Teeth, Skin, Tail		X
Termites	?	?	Whole	X	
Tools of Enslavement	Jo-bara	-	Miniaturized tools	-	-
Topi, Sassaby, Tsessebe, Korrigum	Togolafin	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
Uromastyx	Gao Basa, Korro Basa	<i>Uromastyx maliensis</i> , <i>U. geyri</i>	Live, Whole, Head		X
Chameleons	Ngoshin	<i>Chamaeleo africanus</i> , <i>C. senegalensis</i>	Live, Whole, Skin, Eggs	X	
Vinaceous Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	
Violet Turaco	Koriko	<i>Musophaga violacea</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Wart Hog	Lai	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	Tusks, Skin, Tail, Feet		X
Water Turtles	Sira-Kokoma, Sira-Kogoma	<i>Kinixys spp</i>	Heads, Carapace, Plastron	X	X
Weavers	?	<i>Ploceidae</i>	Live, Whole, Head	X	
West African Buffalo	Sigi	<i>Syncerus caffer brachyceros</i>	Head, Horns, Skin		X
West African Manatee	Ma	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	Refined Grease		X
West African Sand Boa / Mueller's Sand Boa / Saharan Sand Boa	Sanikunfla	<i>Eryx Mueleri</i>	Whole, Head, Skin		X
Western Gray Plantain-Eater	Koriko	<i>Crinifer piscator</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
White-Backed Vulture	Duga	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Whole, Head	X	X
Wild Cat	Kolokari	<i>Felis lybica</i>	Head, Skin, Feet		X

**Key to symbols used in appendix I: Overview of Wildlife Species, and other items for sale in the Bamako Fetish Market**

- ? = Unknown local or scientific name
- = Not applicable (i.e., tools of enslavement)
- X = Identifies a species as most likely being supplied by either opportunists (i.e., small-game) or professionals (i.e., large-game)

**Appendix II**

**Threatened, Protected and Endangered Wildlife Species**



From this research several themes arose helping to bring the animal parts trade of Mali into greater focus. Though it may seem as if the fetish market is booming, from conversations with animal parts vendors and other associated individuals, trade is actually dwindling. I will never forget when Kara, after a potential client examined a baboon head and did not purchase it, turned and confided in me, "Now people do not have courage." He backed this up by complaining that he has a problem maintaining a diverse inventory.

From talks with young and old vendors alike I came to recognize that there was a clear discrepancy between their views regarding wildlife. From speaking with older, well established, animal parts vendors I learned that there are several species that are recognized as being more and more difficult to obtain. This was in direct contrast to younger vendor who did not possess the age to have witnessed a change in trend. The following table (2) relates those species that are recognized by older animal parts vendors as having decreased.

Table 2: Local trends in Wildlife populations

<b>English Common Name</b>	<b>Bambara Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Identified Trend</b>
Chimpanzee	Woronin, Demu	<i>Pan spp</i>	"Used to be many in the South." "Only found in forests of Kayes Region."
Elephant	Sama	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	"Used to be more" "Used to be in South" "Now only up North"
Giraffe	Kungo Mininjan	?	"Used to be everywhere." "Only three or four couples left near Menaka."

Hartebeest	Tankan	<i>Alcephalus buselaphus</i>	"Used to be many of them."
Lion	Waraba	<i>Panthera leo</i>	"Used to be everywhere." "Now only in Kayes Region."
Oribi	Nkolonin	<i>Ourebia ourebia</i>	"Has the softest skin" "Used to be everywhere, but no more."
Reedbuck	Konkoron	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	"There are no more in Mali."
Wild Camel	Chameaux Sauvage (French)	<i>Camelus dromedaries</i>	"Used to be many in Kayes Region." "Now, only can be found up North in the desert."
Zebra	Kungo Fali	<i>Equidae spp</i>	"Used to be everywhere."

One of the primary reasons cited by those that recognize a decrease in specific wildlife is related to the cognition and motivation of hunters. In the words of one participant, "Hunters are hunters because they hunt large animals. Hunting a guinea fowl does not show you are a hunter." Incidentally, all the species identified (by older informants) as having decreased are considered large animals. Kara added his insight by suggesting that, "there are no longer any big animals because all the hunters hunted them."

Just to get a broader understanding, I took the chance of discussing such issues when I happened to encounter a hunter. Hunters, as you might imagine offer other reasons for the decrease in large wildlife, suggesting that many of them have simply moved to better regions where there is more food (desertification was cited as the impetus). Other hunters suggest that the animals have simply become smarter and therefore more difficult to hunt or trap (i.e., the animals are becoming conscious of the ways in which hunters harvest them and take actions to prevent it). Yet another hunter suggested that the world (Mali) was becoming polluted resulting in wildlife dying off.

The fact that many animal parts vendors, hunters, and other associated individuals of the Fetish Market recognize a decrease in certain species of wildlife helps to highlight trends identified by outside institutions. The International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, also known as the World Conservation Union) is one of the worlds leading non-governmental organizations dedicated to the conservation of flora and fauna. Though the union is global, it works at local, regional, national and international levels to assess conservation issues. Essentially, any country may become a member of IUCN through partnerships, collaboration, and or direct application and admission. Mali is a fully acknowledged member of IUCN and retains a country office (IUCN-Mali) in the capital of Bamako.

One of the most prominent publications produced by IUCN is the Red List of Threatened Species. In essence this volume is a comprehensive listing of all species that are recognized by IUCN as being threatened. Moreover, each listed species is qualified with regard to its threatened status; membership to IUCN requires that those species listed as threatened must be protected accordingly.

It is not surprising that many of the wildlife species identified in the Fetish Market (through varied means) are found within the numerous lines of the Red List of Threatened Species. To conduct this database search one may simply access the Red List online and use a discriminating feature to sort species listed for Mali. However, when done one will find a rather short list that does not reflect the incredible variety of species identified within the fetish market. In short, those species recognized as threatened in Mali only represent a few of the specimens identified in the Fetish Market. A

comprehensive understanding requires that each identified wildlife species be individually searched for within the entire Red List database. The results of this comprehensive threatened species search are presented below.

Table 3: IUCN Red List Species identified in the Fetish Market and their status.

English Common Name	Bambara Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Red List Status
<b><u>MAMMALS</u></b>			
Addax	Dankalakule	<i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>	CR
Addra / Dama Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dama</i>	EN
African Elephant	Sama	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	EN
African Golden Cat	Jakumawara, Jakumawaranin	<i>Felis aurata</i>	VU
Bonobo (Pygmy Chimpanzee)	Woronin	<i>Pan paniscus</i>	EN
Chimpanzee	Woronin	<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	EN
Common Reedbuck	Konkoron	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	LR/cd
Common Waterbuck	Sen-sen	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	LR/cd
Defassa Waterbuck	Sen-sen	<i>Kobus defassa</i>	LR/cd
Derby's Eland	Minanjan	<i>Taurotragus derbianus</i>	EN
Dorcas Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	VU
Gambian Mongoose	Nkoroko winsin	<i>Mungos gambianus</i>	DD
Hartebeest	Tankan	<i>Alcephalus buselaphus</i>	LR/cd
Kob	Sen	<i>Kobus kob</i>	LR/cd
Lion	Waraba	<i>Panthera leo</i>	VU
Oribi	Nkolonin	<i>Ourebia ourebi</i>	LR/cd
Porcupine	Balla	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	LR/nt
Red-Flanked Duiker	Kokunani	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	LR/cd
Red-Fronted Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	VU

Roan Antelope	Daj	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	LR/cd
Speckle-Throated Otter	Jiwulu	<i>Lutra maculicollis</i>	VU
Spotted Hyena	Suruku	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	LR/cd
Stripped Hyena	Suruku	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	LR/nt
Topi, Sassaby, Tsessebe, Korrigum	Togolafin	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	LR/cd
West African Buffalo	Sigi	<i>Syncerus caffer brachyceros</i>	LR/cd
West African Manatee	Ma	<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>	VU
<b>BIRDS</b>			
Lappet-Faced Vulture	Duga	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	VU
<b>REPTILES</b>			
Spurred Tortoise	Sira-Kokoma, Sira-Kogoma	<i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	VU

Key to IUCN Red List abbreviations:

EX = Extinct

EW = Extinct in Wild

CR = Critically Endangered

EN = Endangered

VU = Vulnerable

LR/cd = Lower Risk / conservation dependent

LR/nt = Lower Risk / near threatened

DD = Data Deficient

From table 3, IUCN Red List Species identified in the Fetish Market, it is clear to see that there are many species considered threatened. For a better understanding of each of these species, their use and cultural significance see chapter 3 and 4.

### **CITES and International Trade:**

As one can imagine when demand can no longer be met locally, the system of supply responds accordingly and extends its means of acquisition. From my conversations with animal part vendors and their associations I had already come to understand that some of the wildlife species represented in the Fetish Market did not necessarily originate in Mali. To hear that an animal came from Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, and / or Cote d'Ivoire was not out of line. After all, wildlife has a funny habit of not recognizing state and political boundaries.

However, from my discussions with APVs and other associated individuals I came to recognize that specific countries were valued with regard to supplying specific wildlife species. The following table (4) relates those countries recognized as supplying specific wildlife species to the Fetish Market of Bamako, Mali. Please note that these wildlife species may also be found and procured within Mali.

Table 4: Those countries recognized as supplying specific wildlife species to the Fetish Market.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Recognized Species Supplied</b>
Guinea	"Has lots of deer" "Has caiman" "Has many panthers"
Ghana	"Has some deer" "Has big caiman"
Mauritania	"Has the best Hyenas" "Has some deer"
Cote d'Ivoire	"Has some Elephant" "Has small caiman"
Niger	"Has Hyenas" "Has the best trees"
Burkina Faso	"Has the best vultures"

It is clear that there are animals being supplied to the fetish market from other countries; numbers and specifics are another matter. There is a certain ambiguity with regard to terms given wildlife species. Take as an example the term "deer" which is from the translation of both French and Bambara descriptions (biche = French, bishi = Bambara) and means any large mammal with horns. As such, the term "deer" stretches over a wide variety of known wildlife species of the region, such as bushbuck, waterbuck, duikers, gazelle, eland, oribi, hartebeest, antelope, and topi.

The terms, "hyenas" and "caiman" are a little easier to deal with possibly as a result of the lack of regional variety. There are two species of hyena that are distinguished by animal parts vendors and other informants: those that have spots, and those that have stripes. However, that distinction counts only for those who recognize the term "hyena." It is equally common to have the animal described as "the big desert dog." Those who do not readily use the term "hyena" tend to lump the animal in with other canid species of the desert (i.e., jackals). It just so happens that there are two species of hyena that are found throughout the region and identified by western science, the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) and striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*).

The term "caiman" is equally relative and is used to refer to all crocodylians found in the region. The term is taken from French and readily used in place of the Bambara word for crocodile (bama). Incidentally, "bama" is readily used to refer to any large lizard (i.e., monitors). There are two varieties of crocodile identified by animal parts vendors in the fetish market: white crocs, and black crocs. According to western science, there are also two species of crocodile known to exist in West Africa, the Nile Crocodile

(*Crocodylus niloticus*), and the Sharp-Nosed Crocodile (*C. cataphractus*). The fact that most specimens were lacking distinguishing features (i.e., head, limbs, tail, and any combination there of) does not allow for proper identification. Chances are that both species are represented in the fetish market, however, being that no informant identified such an animal suggests that they are not readily known to exist in the region. As such, the Sharp-nosed croc is probably only represented in token numbers in the fetish market in comparison to the more common Nile crocodile.

The term "panther" is also used by French speaking Malians to describe all large, spotted or marked cats. Bambara speakers were equally ambiguous in their terminology used to describe large cats. Case in point: leopards, civets, genets, servals, and caracals were all loosely referred to as "panthers" by animal parts vendors (if speaking French) and or "Waranikalan" (in Bambara). Hunters, who tended to speak Bambara, helped to distinguish the differences between these animals to me. The local, scientific and common English names of all of these species are presented in Appendix I and Appendix III.



**Appendix III**

**Identified Wildlife Species, CITES and IUCN Red List Status**

Mammalian Species (part or live animal) that may be sold by an animal parts vendor:

English Common Name	Bambara Common Name	Scientific Name	ID	CITES	IUCN Red List
Aardvark	Timba, Tinba	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	I, R	-	-
Addax	Dankalakule	<i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>	I, R	I	CR
Addra / Dama Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dama</i>	I, R	I	EN
African Clawless Otter	Jiwulu	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	I, R	II	-
African Elephant	Sama	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	I, R	I *See note	EN
African Golden Cat	Jakumawara, Jakumawaranin	<i>Felis aurata</i>	I, R	II	VU
Banded Mongoose	Winsin	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	I, R	-	-
Bloody Mongoose	Watajuba	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	R	-	-
Bonobo (Pygmy Chimpanzee)	Woronin	<i>Pan paniscus</i>	R	I	EN
Bushbuck	Minan	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	I, R	-	-
Camel	?	<i>Camelus dromedaries</i>	I, R	-	-
Cane Rat / Grass Cutter/ False Agouti	Kinin	<i>Thrysonomys swinderianus</i>	I, R	-	-
Caracal	Bak r kuru, Waranikalan	<i>Felis caracal</i>	I, R	II (Append. I for Asian Populations)	-
Chimpanzee	Woronin	<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	I, R	I	EN
Civet	Bak r kuru, Waranikalan	<i>Civerrictis civetta</i>	I, R	III (Botswana)	-
Common / Gray Duiker	Mankalan	<i>Syvicapra grimmia</i>	I, R	-	-
Common Reedbuck	Konkoron	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Common Waterbuck	Sen-sen	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymus</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd

Defassa Waterbuck	Sen-sen	<i>Kobus defassa</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Derby's Eland	Minanjan	<i>Taurotragus derbiamus</i>	I, R	-	EN
Domesticated Cat	Jakuma	<i>Felis catus</i>	I, R	-	-
Domesticated Dog	Ulu	<i>Canis Faliaris</i>	I, R	-	-
Domesticated Donkey	Fali	<i>Equus asinus</i>	I, R	-	-
Domesticated Horse	So	<i>Equidae</i>	I, R	-	-
Dorcas Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	I, R	III (Tunisia)	VU
Egyptian Mongoose	Nkoroko winsin	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	R	-	-
Galago / Lesser Bushbaby	Gantona	<i>Galago senegalensis</i>	R	II	-
Gambian Mongoose	Nkoroko winsin	<i>Mungos gambianus</i>	I, R	-	DD
Gambian Sun Squirrel	Ntolo	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>	R	-	-
Genet	Seriba, Ba Koron Kouri	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	I, R	-	-
Golden Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis aureus</i>	I, R	III (India)	-
Green / Vervet Monkey	Nkoba	<i>Chlorocebus aethiops</i>	I, R	II	-
Hartebeest	Tankan	<i>Alcephalus buselaphus</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Hedgehog	N'Duguni	<i>Erinaceus albiventris</i>	I, R	-	-
Hippopotamus	Mali	<i>Hippopotomus amphibious</i>	I, R	II	-
Honey Badger / Ratel	Dame	<i>Melivora capensis</i>	I, R	III (Botswana, Ghana)	-
Kob	Sen	<i>Kobus kob</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Leopard	Waranikalan	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	I, R	I	-
Lion	Waraba	<i>Panthera leo</i>	I, R	II	VU
Olive / Anubis Baboon	Ngon	<i>Papio amubis</i>	I, R	II	-
Oribi	Nkolonin	<i>Ourebia ourebi</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Pangolins	Kooso-Kaasa	<i>Manis Spp</i>	I, R	II	-

Porcupine	Balla	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	I, R	III (Ghana)	LR/nt
Red / Patas Monkey	Warabilen	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	I, R	II	-
Red-Flanked Duiker	Kokunani	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Red-Fronted Gazelle	Sin	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	I, R	-	VU
Roan Antelope	Daj	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Serval	Monokon	<i>Felis serval</i>	R	II	-
Side-striped Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis adustus</i>	I, R	-	-
Silver-backed / Black-backed Jackal	Kungowulu	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	I, R	-	-
Speckle- Throated Otter	Jiwulu	<i>Lutra maculicollis</i>	R	II	VU
Spotted Hyena	Suruku	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
Striped-ground Squirrel	Nkilin	<i>Euxerus erythropus</i>	R	-	-
Stripped Hyena	Suruku	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	I, R	-	LR/nt
Topi, Sassaby, Tsessebe, Korrigum	Togolafin	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	I, R	III (Ghana)	LR/cd
Wart Hog	Lai	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	I, R	-	
West African Buffalo	Sigi	<i>Syncerus caffer brachyceros</i>	I, R	-	LR/cd
West African Manatee	Ma	<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>	I, R	II	VU
Wild Cat	Kolokari	<i>Felis lybica</i>	I, R	II	-

Aviary species (part or live animal) that may be sold by an animal parts vendor:

<b>English Common Name</b>	<b>Bambara Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>CITES</b>	<b>IUCN Red List</b>
African Mourning Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia dicipiens</i>	I, R	III (Ghana)	-
Falcons, eagles, hawks, vultures	Sege, Seke	<i>Falconiformes</i>	I, R	**See Note	N/A
Black Stork	Baninkin fi	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	R	II	-
Cattle Egret	Nkunanje	<i>Ardeola ibis</i>	R	-	-
Double-spurred Francolin	Wolo	<i>Fringillidae</i>	I, R	-	-
Finches	?	<i>Fringillidae</i>	I, R	III (3 species listed by Ghana)	N/A
Gray Parrot	Gonjuruba	<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	I, R	II	-
Harlequin Quail	Kuwl	<i>Coturnix delegorguei</i>	R	-	-
Helmeted Guinea fowl	Kami	<i>Numidae meleagris</i>	I, R	-	-
Kingfishers	?	<i>Alcedinidae</i>	R	-	-
Lappet-Faced Vulture	Duga	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	R	II	VU
Laughing Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	I, R	III (Ghana)	-
Mannikins / Waxbills	Koriko	<i>Estrildidae</i>	I, R	III (29 species listed by Ghana)	-
Marabou Stork	Temu	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	R	III (Ghana)	-
Owls	Gingin	<i>Strigiformes</i>	I, R	II	N/A
Peregrine falcon	Sege, Seke	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	R	I	-
Saddle-Billed Stork	Balasama	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	R	III (Ghana)	-
Secretary Bird	Sa-kunu	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	R	II	-

Senegal Parrot	Gonjuruba	<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>	R	II	-
Shoe-Bill	?	<i>Balaeniceps rex</i>	R	II	-
Spoon-Bill	?	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	R	II	-
Stone Partridge	Tusnin	<i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	R	-	-
Vinaceous Dove	Tubanin	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>	R	III (Ghana)	-
Violet Turaco	Koriko	<i>Musophaga violacea</i>	R	III (Ghana)	-
Weavers	?	<i>Ploceidae</i>	I, R	III (23 species listed by Ghana)	N/A
Western Gray Plantain-Eater	Koriko	<i>Crinifer piscator</i>	R	III (Ghana)	-
White-Backed Vulture	Duga	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	I, R	II	-

Reptilian Species (part or live animal) that may be sold by an animal parts vendor:

English Common Name	Bambara Common Name	Scientific Name	ID	CITES	IUCN Red List
Ball Python	Minian Ntomi	<i>Python regius</i>	I, R	II	-
Black Cobra	Ngoronko fi	<i>Naja naja oxiana</i>	I, R	II	-
Black Spitting Cobra	Ngoronko fi	<i>Naja nigricollis</i>	I, R	-	-
Chameleons	N'Gonshin	<i>Chamaeleo africanus,</i> <i>C. senegalensis</i>	I, R	II	-
Egyptian Cobra	Ngoronko	<i>Naja haje</i>	R	-	-
Forest Cobra	Ngoronko	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	R	-	-
Gabon Viper	Dangalan	<i>Bitis gabonica</i>	I, R	-	-
Grey / Desert Monitor	Nkoro, Nkana	<i>Varanus griseus</i>	I, R	I	-
Nile Crocodile	Bama	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	I, R	I *** See note	-
Nile Monitor	Nkana	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	I, R	II	-

Rhinoceros-Horned Viper	Jallon sa	<i>Bitis nasicornis</i>	I, R	-	-
Rock Python	Miniyan Ndonso	<i>Python sebae sebae</i>	I, R	II	-
Savannah Monitor	Nkoro	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	I, R	II	-
Saw-Scaled Viper	Fonfonni	<i>Echis carinatus</i>	I, R	-	-
Soft-Shelled Turtles	Tawu, Na	<i>Cyclanorbis senegalensis</i> , <i>Trionyx triangus</i>	I, R	<i>T. triangus</i> listed as III (Ghana)	-
Tortoises	Sira-Kokoma, Sira-Kogoma	<i>Kinixys belliana</i> , <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	I, R	<i>G. sulcata</i> II	VU
Uromastyx	Gao Basa, Korro Basa	<i>Uromastyx maliensis</i> , <i>U. geyri</i>	I, R	II	-
West African Sand Boa / Mueller's Sand Boa / Saharan Sand Boa	Sanikunfla	<i>Eryx Mueleri</i>	I, R	II	-

Key to abbreviations:

- CITES and Appendices-I, II, III correspond to appendix listing of species by CITES, the International Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species.
  - Appendix I: full prohibition of international trade in parts, pieces, whole, or live animals. Note that there are special circumstances that can allow for trade in these species.
  - Appendix II: allows for the trade in listed species but requires the continued monitoring and reporting of census data on imports and exports.
  - Appendix III: are species listed by a member of CITES that other member countries are encouraged to treat as Appendix I species.
  
- IUCN and the Red List of Threatened Species-
  - EX = Extinct
  - EW = Extinct in Wild
  - CR = Critically Endangered
  - EN = Endangered
  - VU = Vulnerable
  - LR/cd = Lower Risk / conservation dependent
  - LR/nt = Lower Risk / near threatened
  - DD = Data Deficient
  
- ID – Means of Identification
  - R = identified by researcher
  - I = identified by informant / participant
  - I, R = mutually identified by both researcher and informant / participant

\*Note on Elephants: All elephants are listed as Appendix I except those populations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

\*\*Note on Falconiformes: All Eagles, Falcons, Hawks, and Vultures are raptors and birds of prey. All Falconiformes are recognized as appendix II species unless otherwise cited in appendix I.

\*\*\*Note on Nile Crocodiles: All Nile crocodile as listed as Appendix I, “except populations of Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania [subject to an export quota of no more than 1600 wild specimens including hunting trophies, in addition to ranches specimens], Zambia and Zimbabwe; these populations are included in appendix II” (CITES, 2003).