CONTESTED NATION, GLOBAL SPACE: TOURISM AND THE POLITICS OF TUAREG HERITAGE IN MALI

by

ANGELA MARIE MONTAGUE

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Anthropology
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June 2014

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Angela Marie Montague

Title: Contested Nation, Global Space: Tourism and the Politics of Tuareg Heritage in Mali

This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Anthropology by:

Carol Silverman	Chairperson
Philip Scher	Core Member
Stephen Wooten	Core Member
Judith Raiskin	Institutional Representative

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research and Innovation; Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded June 2014

© 2014 Angela Marie Montague

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Angela Marie Montague

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

June 2014

Title: Contested Nation, Global Space: Tourism and the Politics of Tuareg Heritage in Mali

This dissertation takes an ethnographic perspective on competing global discourses and contested nationalisms in a postcolonial, multicultural nation. Using the Festival au Desert, in Mali, West Africa as a case study, I investigate the complexities of using cultural productions and tourism to achieve political, economic, and social goals. I critically assess several projects of Tuareg Intangible Cultural Heritage preservation to show the contested nature of collective identities. Neoliberal development in the Global South necessitates niche markets such as tourism centered on culture; however these markets are inherently unstable due to historic and contemporary global economic practices.

The Festival au Desert was opened to the world just a few years after an armed rebellion between Tuareg separatists and the state of Mali was suppressed. On the first full moon of 2001, the Festival brought Malian musicians and citizens together in celebration. It became a symbol of peace and reconciliation between formally opposed groups, most notably southern sedentary populations and northern nomadic groups, such as the Tuareg. It also became an important factor in income generation in Mali, and it was a space where international tourists and their Tuareg hosts came into contact and shared

dialogue. Tuareg hoped that through the Festival the world could know who they were outside of the rebellion. But in 2012, a renewed rebellion was staged and subsequently co-opted by supporters of Al-Qaeda who instituted Shari'a law in Timbuktu sending the Festival into exile, and Mali's growing tourist economy came to a devastating halt.

The Festival provides a rich case study of the benefits and perils of tourism in multicultural states and in wider globalizing frames. It highlights the contradictions in using tourism as a development strategy, as prescribed by international institutions such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization, as it is a fragile enterprise subject to the whims of the market, environment, and global and local politics. However, the research also shows the importance of the Festival for Tuareg identity and how it provided a space for nomads to continue a tradition of gathering after seasonal migrations to negotiate marriages, discuss politics, and celebrate together.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Angela Marie Montague

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Cultural Anthropology, 2014, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Anthropology, 2008, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Anthropology, 2005, University of Oregon

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Anthropology of Tourism

Critical Heritage Studies

Economic and Political Anthropology

African Studies, North and West Africa

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Part-Time Instructor, Social Science Division, Lane Community College, 2012-present

Graduate Teaching Fellow, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, 2007-2014

Office Assistant, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, 2002-2006

Ethnographic Art Specialist, Retail Sales, Gold Door, Portland, Oregon, 1999-2003

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, 2014

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, University of Oregon, Winter, Spring 2007, AY 2007-2014

Global Oregon Peace and Migration Research Award, University of Oregon, 2011

Department Travel Award, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, 2010, 2012, 2013

Charles A. Reed Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon 2010-2011

Theodore Stern Distinguished Fellowship Award, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, Spring 2011

Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF), Research on Le Festival au Desert in Mali, Oregon University System, 2010

Joseph K. Starr Award, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon, 2009

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, Institute for International Education, 2004

SIT Study Abroad Scholarship, School for International Training, 2004

PUBLICATION:

Montague, Angela. 2014. "Tourism V. Terrorism: Le Festival Au Desert, Tuareg Culture and the Malian State" Fieldsights - Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online, June 10, 2013. http://culanth.org/fieldsights/323-tourism-v-terrorism-le-festival-au-desert-tuareg-culture-and-the-malian-state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At numerous points along my path to completing this dissertation, I asked myself if it was finally time to throw in the towel. There are numerous people I would like to acknowledge who intercepted, encouraged and supported me in ways that ultimately kept me on track. Without a doubt, I could not be where I am today without the personal and professional support and encouragement from my chair, Carol Silverman. Without her belief in the integrity of my research and my professional capabilities, coupled with her research schedule that kept me moving along in my own, I would not have completed in a timely manner. Likewise, I could not have been able to move along this path as smoothly as I have without the confidence of all of my committee members whose support often surprised and uplifted me. I want to thank Philip W. Scher who has been an indispensible mentor and guiding genius both in the courses that he teaches that gave me theoretical grounding in my research, but also for inspiring meetings that happened serendipitously. Judith Raiskin is also to thank for her course on travel writing and tourism, and her project creating a database of travel advertisements, as they reinvigorated my interest in tourism and representation. I also wish to thank Stephen Wooten for preparing me for research in Mali nearly ten years ago and for encouraging me along the way.

I am indebted to the Ryoichi *Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF)*, without which I would not have been able to travel to Mali and collect data in 2011. Thus, I thank the Anthropology Department for nominating me for, and the Graduate School for awarding me, this prestigious award. I also thank all of the wonderful consultants and friends with whom I have had the pleasure of interacting in my research—for those who opened their doors, their arms, and their lives to me. I cannot

thank Aïcha enough for illuminating my path before me. In any small way, I hope this and any future research will be useful to those in Mali who shared their stories and struggles with me and who ultimately shaped this document.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my many friends and family for believing in me and gently pushing me along, especially my parents for shaping me into a confident person who does not shy away from ambitious dreams. I cannot express enough gratitude to my partner in life, Ellis Montague, for putting his own aspirations on hold in order to care for our three wonderful children as I pursued mine. I am forever indebted to him for his continued patience and support as I struggled, staggered, and strained to stay on this path. To conclude, I cannot decide whether to thank or apologize to my children for the times I had to lock my door against their tears, hand them off to Ellis against protests, or break down and cry at their feet to just let me get through this process. I hope that they know that I did this as much for them as I did it for me, and that is why I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Dedicated to Dante, Elijah, and Avram

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Festivals and Tourism	3
Overview of Chapters	10
II. THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY	15
The Anthropology of Globalization and Tourism Studies	20
Overview of Anthropology of Tourism	25
Performing Identity	32
III. FROM HERE TO TIMBUKTU: METHODOLOGY	35
Finding Timbuktu	38
IV. KALASHNIKOVS AND ELECTRIC GUITARS	45
Competing Nationalisms: Creating Mali's National Heritage	49
Ethnographic Background on Tuareg	53
Music in Tuareg Life	59
Revolution and the Ishumar	62
V. INNOVATION AND TRADITION AT LE FESTIVAL AU DESERT	65
Le Festival au Desert	67
The Festival Site	70
Innovation and Tradition	79
Development in and through the Festival	90
'Backstage'	96
Conclusions	103

Chapter Page

VI. *TOUMAST*: TUAREG IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE 107

Culture Brokers 114

Mohamed Aly (Manny) Ansar 114

Ensemble Tartit 118

Centre Culturel Tumast 121

Conclusions: Performing Identity, Preserving Heritage 127

VII. ARE WE THERE YET? 140

Tourist Imaginaries 148

What Did You Expect? 154

"Africa" 157

"Timbuktu" 159

Conclusions: Performing the Other 168

VIII. TOURISM V. TERRORISM 172

Tourism in Africa 176

Traveling in Mali: There Is No Road to Timbuktu 179

The Importance of Safety 183

Conclusions: It Is Still Africa! 198

IX. IN EXILE: FROM TIMBUKTU TO HERE 201

The Caravan for Peace 207

Conclusions: Where Nationalism Fits In 212

X. CONCLUSIONS: THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS 215

APPENDIX: U.S. TRAVEL ADVISORY 2011 223

Chapter Page

REFERENCES CITED..... 226

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

1. Map of Mali 46
2. Eight Regions of Mali. 46
3. W.A.T. Tents 71
4. Nomad Camp at Festival 71
5. Scène Traditionnelle 84
6. Sword Dance 84
7. Dispute 86
8. Tartit on 'Big Stage' at Festival 87
9. *Al Guitara* Group 88
10. Impromptu Performances 88
11. Camel Race 89
12. Press Conference Tent 93
13. Development Conference 94
14. Manny Ansar at Press Conference 94
15. Festival Program showing partners 105
16. Program showing layout of Festival 105
17. Program showing schedule of events and musicians 106
18. Mohamed in his gallery, Bamako 125
19. One wall of Center's meeting room tent, Bamako 127
20. Dogon Mask Dance 156

Figure Page

21. Entering the City of Timbuktu 161

22. Salt caravan arriving in Timbuktu 2011 165

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Sample Program of Conferences/Forums (2006) 96

2. Sample Itinerary..... 183

3. Number of Arrivals 2001-2010..... 194

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The organization of the Festival, with its focus on combining modernity and tradition, is driven by a strong desire to open its doors to the outside world, while still preserving the cultures and traditions of the desert; for some this signifies being listened to and then recognized, for others it is a way to discover the desert through the inhabitants' values of hospitality and tolerance."

("History: Festival Au Désert" 2013)

Heralded as the most remote music festival in the world[1], *Le Festival au Desert*[2] is a globally recognized gathering held annually outside the city of Timbuktu in Mali, West Africa. Conceived by members of the Tuareg rock band, Tinariwen, it is described as a melding of "modernity and tradition"—essentially a world music festival grafted onto nomadic gatherings of Malian Tuareg[3]. Organizers of the Festival had many hopes and, until recently, it had many positive outcomes for Tuareg, the state of Mali, and tourists. But from the start it was a fragile enterprise fraught with contradictions. The Festival provides a rich case study of the benefits and perils of tourism in postcolonial multicultural states and in wider globalizing frames. It sheds important light on the contradictions and consequences of using tourism for economic development, in a post-

[1] This has become a self-promotional tagline used by Festival media and publicity representatives.

[2] I anglicize this as The Festival in the Desert, or simply the Festival (capitalized)

[3] Tuareg is an outsider term for an internally stratified group of pastoral nomads who refer to themselves as Kel Tamasheq, or "those who speak Tamasheq," a Libeo-Berber language. I use the term Tuareg to be consistent with other American anthropological works on this group. I will discuss this more in chapter III.

911 world, highlighting the way that contested nationalisms and competing global discourses vie for recognition.

The Festival in the Desert was opened to non-Tuareg Malians and foreign tourists on the first full moon of 2001. This was only a few short years after an armed rebellion by Tuareg separatists (including members of Tinariwen) took place against the state of Mali from 1990-1995. The rebellion was suppressed and a symbolic burning of (Tuareg) arms took place known as the *Flame de la Paix* [Flame of Peace] in 1996. The Festival was a way in which members of a specific clan (*tewsit*)[4] of Malian Tuareg, the Kel Ansar (Kel Antessar alternately), attempted to use the globalized space provided by tourism to promote peace and intercultural dialogue, and as I argue, to stake a claim to their place within the Malian nation. The Festival was born out of the 1990's rebellion, yet under the direction of Manny Ansar, positioned itself within the goals of peace, promoting Malian music at an otherwise Tuareg event. The Festival was thus an attempt at democratic peace brokering and diplomacy in a multicultural context, and as such, fits well within the rubric of other "World Music Festivals" that see in music the "weapon of peace," similarly tourism has been described as the "largest peaceful movement of people across cultural boundaries in the history of the world" (Lett, 275).

However, as with most projects of multiculturalism, there are many layers of conflict that cannot be ignored by the supposed panacea of music or tourism. In 2012, a renewed rebellion was staged against the state of Mali, and Tuareg separatists declared an

[4] I had a lengthy discussion with my consultants over what word best described the Kel Ansar. Many used the word *tribu* (tribe). I agree with Lecocq, who uses the term clan, which he translates from the Tamasheq word *tewsit* defined as "quasi kin groups based on a lineage ideology, which varies per clan" (Lecocq 2010). Also, Tinariwen is not part of this clan. The Festival was essentially taken over by their former manager from the Timbuktu region. Some of my consultants cited this as a potential controversy that I will discuss below.

independent nation in Northern Mali. A few months later, the separatist movement was co-opted by Tuareg supporters of Al-Qaeda, and by the end of the year Shari'a law was instituted in Timbuktu and the Festival went into exile.

Festivals and Tourism

Mass tourism has expanded significantly over the last century, bringing with it an increase in festivals where nations or specific cultural groups have hoped to draw tourists to often out-of-the-way places. Festivals are the perfect distillation of local culture, and often make visible the social life of foreign places in ways that a tourist could not see or participate in on any given day. "The foreign vacationer at a local festival achieves perfect synchrony: everyone is on holiday, or so it seems…To festivalize culture is to make every day a holiday" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 62). Since the late 1960's there has been a steady increase in newly created festivals around the world, some with long histories that have been 'rediscovered,' others may be reinvigorated or reinvented, and still others have been created "often as a response to a myriad of social, political, demographic and economic realities" (Picard and Robinson 2006, 2). Overall, this "proliferation" of festivals, although part of a complex process, has been interpreted as a means by which communities seek to "re-assert their identities in the face of a feeling of cultural dislocation brought about by rapid structural change" and other effects of the processes of globalization (ibid; see also De Bres and Davis 2001). Picard and Robinson contend that the growing number of festivals reflects a "feeling of crisis in situations where recognized systems of symbolic continuity are challenged by the realities of new social, economic, and political environments" (ibid). Many Tuareg throughout North and West Africa have seen their traditional nomadic lifestyles upset. Beginning with

European colonization at the end of the nineteenth century, this disruption has been continuing since independence in the 1960's where national borders cut off their traditional routes, drought and desertification have decimated their herds, and global and local politics have caused rapid changes to nomadic lifestyles.

Organizers modeled the Festival in the Desert on traditional gatherings by Tuareg nomads who would come together after seasonal migrations to celebrate the Muslim holidays of Ramadan and Tabaski. These festivals provided a place where nomads would share music and poetry, to dance and celebrate, as well as discuss matters of local importance. These traditional festivals happened throughout Tuareg communities who inhabit the desert regions of Algeria, Libya, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, and represented a place for decision making and exchange of information; they were a venue for political maneuvering, negotiating marriages, and settling disputes, in addition to being light-hearted cultural celebrations that organizers wanted to safeguard (History: Festival Au Désert, 2013). The Festival in the Desert thus became a site for the preservation of Tuareg cultural heritage.[5] It also provided a possible direction of change for nomads who no longer saw a future in pastoralism, but could possibly find a future in tourism.

Through the Festival, organizers had hoped to encourage diplomacy and intercultural dialogue with Mali and the world, as well as to generate income and interest in the cultures and traditions of the desert though tourism. Mali is one of the world's

[5] Heritage, like culture, is not easily defined, and will be more thoroughly theorized in chapter V. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as "practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills…that communities, groups, and in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" and includes such domains as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals and festive events, and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2005).

poorest nations, and citizens in the North are considered the nation's poorest in terms of economic development. Timbuktu, which lies in the north of Mali (and is both a city and a region), was once fabled to have streets paved with gold. Although this was never true, it is farther from such myths now more than ever. For this reason, the Festival had hoped to become a factor in job creation in the region, "thereby promoting local development as well as bringing together the people of the earth" (History: Festival Au Désert, 2013). Thus, there are political, economic, and cultural goals behind the creation of the Festival.

I use the Festival in the Desert as a case study to open up dialogue about several questions. Can cultural productions such as the Festival in the Desert create or maintain peace in formerly volatile regions? How do locals view and use the Festival space? Can tourism provide a sustainable solution to economic development in low-income nations? What are the obstacles Malians face in achieving sustainable development? How do global and local politics affect tourism and by extension development? How do minorities in multiethnic nations negotiate their identity locally and globally? How does cultural identity factor into development strategies? What can we learn about globalization through an investigation into tourism?

My main goal here is to understand the uses of culture, specifically through tourism and other cultural productions, by minorities in multiethnic, postcolonial nations in the context of globalization. This dissertation represents research gathered over the course of ten years. I investigate the linkages between the state of Mali, regional Tuareg, global media, western tourists, travel agents, and tour operators to highlight the ways that each interact with each other in the negotiation of Tuareg identity at the national and international level. I will share the stories of locals in the cities of Timbuktu and Bamako

(Mali's capital), tourists at the Festival (including myself), individuals and groups who are directly involved with the management and organization of the Festival, and others involved in Mali's tourism industry. I will also discuss the work done by individuals who are concerned with the preservation of Tuareg cultural heritage. I add to the growing literature on tourism, development, and globalization in anthropology, centering on the notion of cultural brokering through tourism to claim that neoliberal global capitalism forces cultural groups in the Global South to market their identity for political and social recognition. I thus elucidate an understanding of the political economy of identity building and heritage preservation in a postcolonial nation.

Neoliberal capitalism is understood here to mean an economic and political system that uses different governing bodies (IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization, NAFTA, etc.) to break down barriers to capitalist trade. Neoliberalism promotes the creation of niche markets (especially in the Global South) that produce 'commodities' that will not compete with larger economic players such as the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Cultural Tourism is a perfect example of this as these niche markets are often defined by geographic or cultural locality. The spread of neoliberal ideologies and policies around the globe also creates hybrid forms of governance that move much of the power of the state into the hands of private individuals, organizations, and agencies. It causes certain groups of people to market themselves as cultural products (cf. Comaroff 2009).

My research largely centers on notions of cultural identity and recognition in post-colonial multicultural nations. I specifically show how Kel Ansar Tuareg seek to belong in a nation and a world that they feel has neglected them. I argue that the Festival and

tourism provide a platform for the marketing of Tuareg culture, and have the *potential* for achieving political, economic, and cultural goals. However, as I will show, although tourism is presented as an unproblematic means toward socioeconomic development (see UNWTO "Why Tourism"), it is laced with numerous problems that are not unique to Mali. In the context of Malian tourism we will see that political tensions between the Southern sedentary populations, who make up the majority and control most of the government, and Northern Tuareg populations were not remedied by intercultural dialogue at the Festival in the Desert. In fact, the 2012 Tuareg rebellion, which was co-opted by a faction of Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb, forced the Festival into exile and all but destroyed Mali's growing tourism economy. In the context of neoliberal global capitalism, however, there are few possibilities for low-income nations to participate in the global economy, save for the marketing of cultural difference through tourism. But any shift in safety, whether due to political unrest, environmental or health hazards, makes tourism one of the most unstable markets.

A better anthropological understanding of the motivations locals have for becoming involved in tourism was mostly lacking in tourism studies until relatively recently (Stronza 2001). With this in mind, I set out to discover why Malian Tuareg would want to invite international tourists to an event that was otherwise intimate and culturally specific. I thought that surely no one would consciously choose to become a spectacle to western tourists. What I discovered was a number of surprising things. First, Tuareg in the region had very specifically *chosen* to invite tourists to an otherwise local event, although many changes took place so that it would mimic other international music festivals. The Festival is thus both continuing a tradition as well as starting a new one.

The Festival in the Desert continued to be an important space for nomadic Tuareg to meet after seasonal migrations even after tourists were invited. Thus it was relevant to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage while also having the potential to encourage economic development.

Second, in addition to the motivation for the potential profit to be made, the Festival's economic goals were also sought through inviting international donors to the area to attract investment funds and to fund development projects. From the outset the Festival had explicit economic development goals and planned to use profits made from the sale of tickets for investing in local projects, particularly projects related to increasing education in nomadic regions, where primary enrollment rates are as low as ten percent. The Festival also provided services onsite to local participants through health clinics and workshops falling under the rubric of 'social development.'

Third, perhaps the most central goal of the Festival was to share Tuareg culture with the world. As stated in the above quote from the website for the Festival, it was a way to "be listened to and then recognized," to gain international attention to the realities of Tuareg life in Mali. Tuareg with whom I spoke in Mali felt that if the world knew (i.e. recognized) who the Tuareg were, they would come to their aid in times of crises. In this way, the Festival was a performance of Tuareg identity for a largely foreign audience. As I will discuss in Chapter V, Tuareg identity is encapsulated in the Tamasheq term *toumast* and is mobilized in numerous projects such as global music performances by touring musicians like Tinariwen, and the preservation of Tuareg intangible cultural heritage in museums and festivals.

Fourth, the Festival, even in exile, aims to be a bridge between cultures. Tuareg consultants with whom I spoke said that this needed to begin with their neighbors to the South with whom they have had historically tense relations. Because the Festival grew out of an armed rebellion aimed at gaining recognition and autonomy for Northerners in Mali, this goal is largely about building peaceable relations within the nation. By showing (Southern sedentary) Malians that they seek to be part of the nation, organizers hoped to see an end to the political disenfranchisement of Northern Malians, particularly Tuareg, as well as to overturn prejudices between these groups that are deeply entrenched.

Through my research, I have come to understand the uses of 'culture' in maneuvering within the structures and politics of development, globalization, and tourism. My main argument is that the Festival and tourism are, for the Tuareg, about being legitimized globally, which I posit happens through entering into the global economy as a commodity. Because of the ubiquitousness of global capitalism, cultural identity is negotiated in the market place. Minority groups without political and economic resources often are left with only their 'culture' as a means for gaining recognition in the world. I recognize the power of cultural productions to negotiate disenfranchisement at the regional, national, and international level, but these happen in the context of global capitalism. Cultural production, as Bourdieu states, is created in both "fields of struggle" and "fields of forces" where conflicts over "symbolic capital" are negotiated at both the level of structure and agency. Tuareg produce their cultural heritage within the structures (or fields of forces) of neoliberal capitalist globalization and postcolonial nationalism.

However, the way that they interact with these forces through 'fields of struggle' highlights their agency and savvy (Bourdieu and Johnson 1993).

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter II, "The Politics of Identity," I situate the current research within the anthropology of globalization, development, and tourism. I show how neoliberal practices necessitate the use of culture as a resource in low-income nations and how tourism arose as a niche market and development strategy in many postcolonial nations. I begin to trace how identity and heritage have come to be a quintessential feature in tourism marketing and argue that ethnic minorities and developing nations must market themselves for political and economic recognition. I also highlight how festivals emerged as key players in the creation of tourism in many nations.

In Chapter III, "From Here to Timbuktu," I explain how I came to be interested in the Festival in the Desert by discussing my entrance in to the field in 2004 as an undergraduate. In this dissertation, I utilize several methods and viewpoints including participant-observation, interviews, and textual analyses using secondary sources. I look at policies, publications, and ethnographic data collected in Mali over ten years of researching the Festival. I discuss how I went from a project on education in nomadic areas to learning about how the Festival promotes awareness about education, health and development through conferences aimed at locals. I address my positionality as an American student, tourist, tour guide, researcher, advocate and friend and how I came to be a culture broker, myself.

In Chapter IV, "Kalashnikovs to Electric Guitars," I discuss the political and ethnographic history of Tuareg in Mali. I give an overview of the development of Malian

nationalism and how Tuareg came to feel excluded from national discourse and development focusing on the argument that there have always been two separate nations within the state of Mali (Lecocq 2010). This sets the stage for the 1990 Tuareg rebellion that ended with the Flame of Peace in Timbuktu and the signing of a Peace Agreement, which was supposed to help draw Tuareg and other Northerners into the nation. This chapter gives a brief ethnographic sketch of the Tuareg in Mali centering on the importance of music and the Tuareg group Tinariwen as it relates to the creation of the Festival in the Desert.

In Chapter V "Frontstage/Backstage," I present the history and structure of the Festival in the Desert and discuss how it is positioned within the context of Tuareg culture and society. I ask in what ways it is a Tuareg event and in what ways it is a tourist attraction. I show how it mimics other World Music festivals while it is used by locals in ways similar to traditional Tuareg gatherings. My focus is on the way that 'modernity' and 'tradition' weave together to develop an understanding of the motivations behind opening the Festival to foreign tourists. I explore how innovation and tradition are performed and negotiated in the Festival's organization and structure in order to better understand the uses of cultural productions for communities undergoing rapid social change. What I find is that organizers hope to generate interest in their culture, to gain recognition in the nation and around the world, in order to bring economic and social development to communities in the desert.

In Chapter VI, "Toumast," I focus on several projects related to Tuareg Cultural Heritage and Identity. Consultants used the Tamasheq word *toumast* to refer to Tuareg identity and cultural heritage. I explore what this word means in order to understand the

motivations individuals have for 'preserving and protecting' Tuareg Cultural Heritage and formulate a global identity. I begin with a short biography of Manny and what he presents as the goals of the Festival in the Desert articulating how it fits in with other processes of Tuareg culture brokering. I then discuss a Tuareg cultural center in Bamako called *Centre Culturel de Tumast* that concerns itself with the preservation of Tuareg intangible cultural heritage, and then go on to explore Tuareg Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) practices related to music, UNESCO, and *Tartit*, a traditional Tuareg music ensemble, famous on the global stage. Each of these as sites works to articulate Tuareg cultural identity and interacts with the global stage in some way. Furthermore, my exploration of who is "Tuareg" and who creates Tuareg ICH (smith/artisans or *inaden*) reveals the contested nature of collective identities. Some would argue that inaden are not "Tuareg;" in fact Tuareg itself is an outsider label.

In Chapter VII, "Are we there yet?" I interrogate the ways that North Americans conceptualize and consume the idea of Africa, particularly through a semiotic analysis of tourism discourse focusing on tourism-related promotional media and interviews with four tourists with whom I traveled as their tour guide. I begin with a brief character sketch of the four travelers followed by an analysis of formal interviews that I conducted with them on the theme of "Africa." I then focus on tourism in Mali and media representations of the Festival in order to link these themes to popular understandings of Africa in general. Lastly, I begin to develop my argument that tourism and development are dialectically opposed. What I find is that ethnographic and historical accounts are used to lend credibility to stereotypes about Africa; moreover, they are often used by tourism marketers and tour guides to market destinations. I argue that if any given

destination is going to be attractive to a would-be tourist, they must create intrigue by drawing on preconceived, stereotypical imagery and language in order to appeal to tourists' fantasies. My overarching argument is that tourist imaginaries, which often construct the Other as primitive, run counter to the goals of many development projects, which seek modernization. I argue that true development would devour much of Mali's appeal as a tourist destination.

In Chapter VIII, "Tourism V. Terrorism," I examine how the Festival in the Desert and tourism in Mali were impacted by travel warnings issued by Western governments from 2008-2012 (and later by violence and terrorism). I highlight how governments seek to keep their citizens and guests safe. In 2011, the Malian Minister of Tourism, several tourists, and locals felt that Western travel warnings were part of a disinformation campaign that was negatively affecting Mali's growing tourism industry. I argue that although it is impossible to guarantee safety anywhere, tourists are already concerned about their safety in an African destination due to preconceived notions of Africa as dangerous and primitive. I also further develop the ways in which cycles of perpetual poverty negate many African governments ability to deal with threats to their economies.

In Chapter IX, "The Caravan of Peace," I give a brief overview of previous rebellions in Mali, and how politics among Tuareg communities and the state of Mali led to the renewed rebellion in 2012. I lay out how the Tuareg separatist movement was co-opted by Muslim fundamentalists who instituted Shari'a law in Timbuktu sending the Festival into exile. I then discuss the formation of the "Caravan of Artists for Peace and National Unity in Mali" and how it hopes to tour the world with its message of peace and

reconciliation in the nation of Mali. Lastly, I discuss how contested global discourses overlap with competing nationalisms in Mali.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

Over the past century, global change has created a world where, in many ways, we have more in common and are more connected, while at the same time the rise in economic and social disparities increasingly divides us. Poverty, urbanization, population growth, immigration, ecological disasters, terrorism, war, political instability, not to mention national debt, have plagued many postcolonial nations since they gained 'independence' from colonial rule. European colonization, which focused on bringing economic prosperity to the colonial economy, left many newly independent nations impoverished. Various institutions have since mobilized to (supposedly) bring better living conditions to the world's poor. "For Malians, independence meant the possibility of autonomous development…They consciously chose to alter radically the colonial economy they had inherited by adopting a socialist government" (Koenig, Diarra, and Sow 1998, 73). But pressure from the IMF and certain segments of Mali's population led Mali toward more economic liberalization, decentralization, and democratization (ibid). Mali has continually struggled to secure a decent standard of living for its population

As global economic systems shift more and more toward neoliberal policies and socioeconomic development is pushed further into the private sphere, we see tourism arise as the 'magic bullet' to developing economies. We also find NGOs taking up the practices of the state, becoming, as some researchers have called them, a 'shadow-state' (Karim 2011). Thus, in many areas tourism enterprises and NGOs are intimately connected, both taking on the task of development in emerging economies. The Festival in the Desert is actually run by two NGOs, EFES, which is focused on culture, and

AITMA, which focuses on health and education. Although tourism has been lauded as a 'key driver for socio-economic development' (UNWTO), in anthropology we have uncovered many problems inherent in tourism, especially when it involves selling culture. This chapter will highlight some of the ways that development, globalization and tourism interrelate. I will give an overview of some of the ways that anthropologists have engaged with globalization and outline the development of the anthropology of tourism. I will present my research within the context of globalization centering on the notion of identity as a quintessential feature in marketing tourism.

Mali remains one of the world's twenty-five poorest nations based on gross national income (estimated at $660 per capita in 2011).[6] Drought has been a continual factor in Mali's inability to create a durable economy based on agriculture. Over half of Mali's GDP comes from agriculture. Cotton and livestock are its main exports, in addition to gold. Unfortunately Mali's cotton cannot compete on the world market because of certain protections that safeguard the competitiveness of western markets. One farmer told me that Malians would gladly forgo all foreign aid if the United States would stop subsidizing their agricultural sectors so that Mali could realistically compete. But neoliberal development strategies and structural adjustments in Mali mean that they are specifically deterred from competing with economies in the Global North.

Within certain industries, tourism is presented as an unproblematic method for increasing economic development in many nations with small or impoverished economies, as culture is seen as a renewable resource that does not directly compete with exports in the Global North. However, as I will show here, tourism is an incredibly

[6] GNI calculated by the World Bank in 2011 using the Atlas Method ("World Bank. Mali | Data" 2013).

unstable market on which to base economic projects. For one, although culture is seen as a renewable resource, culture, particularly its aspects that are marketable, is highly open to the whims of the market and the would-be tourist. Tastes change, cultures change. Not to mention that culture itself is highly contested. Second, although tourism makes up nearly 10% of global GDP, the bulk of the profits are not 'trickling down,' as the largest profits continue to go to the same major industries and corporations that are profiting elsewhere (big oil, transportation/airlines, major chain hotels, etc.). Within the tourism industry this is often referred to as 'leakage'—where the profits made through tourism do not actually make it to the economies in which tourists travel. In Kenya, for instance, it is estimated that anywhere from 40-70% of tour packages 'leak' out of the country (Akama 2000). Third, and related to the former two issues, is that while tourists will continue to travel and travel-related industries will continue to grow, there is no guarantee that the tourism economy in any given place will sustainably and predictably grow; too many factors go into whether a destination will be able to draw in foreign visitors and tourists on a regular basis. For example, any disruption to the local economy or environment, any change in political stability, can easily destroy an entire area's tourism sector. As I will show here, within a few short years, Mali's entire tourism industry came to an abrupt and devastating halt.

I hypothesize that tourism can be viewed as a microcosm of the macro processes of global connection. I will be situating cultural tourism as a development strategy within the framework of neoliberal global capitalism, which necessitates the creation of niche markets. This brand of globalization also means that cultures must engage the economy as products seeking recognition. I argue that the Festival in the Desert is an avenue for

Tuareg to market and perform their identity. I view these identity projects as being forged within a matrix of complex and overlapping *scapes* (cf Appadurai 2002), where global flows are not uni-directional (center-periphery), but are part of a shifting world navigated by multiple actors where understanding is articulated within contact zones (Pratt, 1992). These zones however, are not power-neutral. In fact, Pratt defines contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (Pratt 1992, 43). However, I argue that locals in postcolonial nations have agency in how they negotiate interactions in these contact zones. However, these contact zones are often characterized by 'friction,' particularly when multiple players vie for attention (Tsing 2004).

Anna Tsing uses the metaphor of 'friction' to show that globalization is not a "clash of civilizations" but instead reveals "zones of awkward engagement" (Tsing 2004). She defines friction as the "awkward, unequal, unstable and creative aspects of interconnection across difference" (4). I take the Festival in the Desert to be one such awkward zone that although it was initially conceived of as smoothing over frictions, the Festival became a place where we see competing global discourses superimposed on two competing nationalisms. As Tsing states, global connections produce contradictory claims to universals. In the case of the Festival, we have the director Manny and other organizers who claim the Festival and music can bring the world together and facilitate diplomacy and peace. On the other hand, orthodox Muslims, particularly from Al Qaeda, see in the Festival Western debauchery that needs to be stopped. Both ideas are part of global campaigns that make universal claims.

My research adds to anthropological understandings of the polyvalent nature of globalization as it traces the active friction between these two competing universal claims. I see several spaces within the anthropology of globalization that could use further analysis. For one, in anthropology there has been a general lack of a discussion of tourists and tourism, which are iconic of the changes that have occurred over the last century and give particular insight into global connections. Through the Festival in the Desert I find the mobility of tourists to see the immobility of nomads as one of the many ironies and contradictions inherent in the current version of economic globalization. Likewise, the anthropology of globalization has failed to recognize the astonishing importance of investigating contemporary globalization as a process marked by and permanently altered by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Thus, we need to theorize a post-911 globalization, specifically, as something new, or at least fundamentally altering earlier theories of globalization.

Divided on whether to read globalization as an enhancement of complexity or as a form of cultural erosion, anthropologists in the pre-911 world were exploring the effects of large-scale global transformations on local identities and on people's everyday lives. Anthropological engagements with these questions have expanded our definitions of culture, and I will necessarily engage them here as culture and identity form a major component of my findings. But my investigation will also reveal identities and cultures creating friction at the site of the Festival in the Desert, most notably in the fact that an

alternate globalization, that of a radical Salafist[7] Islam, mobilized a transnational social movement that sent the Festival and musicians from Mali's Northern regions into exile.

The Anthropology of Globalization and Tourism Studies

It is surprising that tourism studies have not been systematically utilized to further understand globalization from an anthropological perspective. Inda and Rosaldo's edited volume on the Anthropology of Globalization does not include a single article that specifically addresses tourism as a fundamental aspect of globalization (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). The one exception is Maurer's brief discussion of how the British Virgin Islands 'built' a history in order to create a successful tourist site and offshore financial services center, though tourism is not theorized as part of the central argument (Maurer 2002). Ultimately and perhaps ironically, the bulk of the theorizing in the Anthropology of Globalization highlights mobility as the pinnacle of contemporary global processes, and yet does not include the mobility of people as tourists or travelers. Tourism, in my estimation, is a quintessential component in developing an understanding of globalization.

Globalization has been described as the compression of time and space that occurs due to changes in economics and technology (Harvey 1991). At least since the advent of industrial capitalism, our shared awareness of time and space has been transformed by the emergence of high-speed forms of transportation (for example, rail and air travel) and communication (first with the telegraph and telephone and now cellular technology and

[7] Salafism comes from the Arabic word *salaf* meaning 'originator' or 'ancestor'. It describes a belief that Muslims should return to the pure and rigorous moral habits and religious observances of the original followers of the Prophet.

the Internet) that dramatically heighten the possibilities of human interaction across existing geographical and political divides (ibid). Tourism is absolutely a product of this same history as its own history is tied up in the same history that developed the capitalist world system we all live in now. Whether we take tourism to mean mass travel since the mid-twentieth century, or we move it further back to the Age of Exploration, travel as we know it today has gone hand in hand with capitalist expansion. It is a market itself, as well as a social phenomenon. In the age of the Internet, one can even travel without leaving home, as Europeans once did through reading the tales of Marco Polo.

Globalization has been critiqued for disrupting the notion of place by favoring space, which can expand and contract in a variety of ways, and this is evidenced well in tourism-related activities. Take for instance festivals, which are stationed in a specific *place*, but the *space* created by the festival occurs with the arrival of the attendees, performers, vendors, and the like. But one is not truly favored over the other, as there is interplay between the two. "Space is a practiced place" (Certeau 1984, 117). Similarly, the cultural dynamics of globalization seem to create a deterritorialization of cultures, and thus the disruption of the importance of place, but in the current phase of globalization, culture arises as an important feature of the economy and international politics.

In anthropology we generally understand a culture to be the way in which people, both individually and collectively, make their lives meaningful, and historically we have conceptualized these collectivities as originating in some kind of a fixed territory or place (Tomlinson 1999; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Early anthropologists viewed culture as a bounded entity that occupied a specific physical territory, and globalization has been seen as disrupting this place-based understanding of culture (Inda and Rosaldo 2002:11). In

many ways this is true, but as Arturo Escobar so eloquently put it, culture does still "sit in places" (Escobar 2001). Tourism is evidence of this phenomena as tourists travel to a *place* in order to experience a culture. The importance of place in tourism is in fact a product of global processes, one of which is the importance of marketing a place to potential tourists, through 'branding'.

Place making, such as through nation building, is situated in specific political and historical processes that followed decolonization and to this day hold great import in the marketing of tourist destinations and the preservation of heritage. As nations gained their independence from colonial rule the project of building a nation went hand in hand with developing a national culture. Newly formed national governments spent time forming folkloric displays and troupes that then in turn became marketed to outsiders often as part of a tourist agenda. In Mali, these folklore troupes for many years were focused mostly on cultures in the south, particularly the Bamana (whose language is also the *lingua france*), but Dogon and Tuareg groups have over the last two decades made their way into the national and international spotlight, most notably through commodification and tourism, within the nation of Mali.

I argue that, globalization does not in fact destroy place, although as an economic and political social fact, it does disrupt many things. When we look at the marketing of tourist destinations as a quintessential practice of the current moment of neoliberal capitalist practices (both affecting the social and the economic spheres of people's lives) place is not destroyed, but rather is reconfigured in ways that conform to the needs of the market. People who inhabit certain places are required to present themselves within the

spaces of globalization, which in fact, reinforces place as a brand. Place thus may take on new meaning as it often gets reduced to a list of commodities or symbols.

Globalization has been critiqued as a force of cultural imperialism where cultures will become homogenous because of the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism. But as Richard Wilk explained, the hegemony is actually not at the level of *content* because global capitalism relies on difference, at least manufactured difference, the homogenizing process happens at the level of the *structure*: "the new global cultural system *promotes difference* instead of suppressing it…its hegemony is not of content, but of form" (emphasis in original, 1995:118). Each nation thus creates a national food, dress, dance, song, etc. such that there are 'structures of common difference' with predicable formats (Wilk, 1995). The result is that tourism, and globalization, actually reinforce difference as opposed to destroying it. Difference is what sells. And difference at the level of culture is played out in the politics of idenity.

In *Ethnicity, Inc.* the Comaroffs analyze the implications of the global shift from selling labor to selling culture as it is revealed in the myriad enterprises whose very existences require a thing called 'ethnicity'—defined as culture + identity (Comaroff 2009). They argue against the still common belief that the commodification of culture somehow destroys its essence or authenticity, arguing instead that through the market place identity may actually be enriched. As a matter of fact, because of the current economic realities that many face in the Global South, in emerging economies, in postcolonial states and nations, selling culture is a matter of survival. In sum, they argue that the market provides the legitimization of cultural identity.

As I will discuss here, when tourism is used as a development strategy, the spatial and temporal dynamics become a nexus for investigating the negotiation of space and place and their governance, and in many cases reproduce spatial, temporal, and social inequalities. My research largely examines tourism as a discursive practice between sending and receiving nations whereby the social relations between the tourist and the toured are always-already constituted in a set of hierarchical, historic relations. Through this I am interrogating how neoliberal practices of governance restructure notions of sovereignty, and the way cultural production fits into these geopolitical and economic structures.

Thus, through neoliberalism, festivals and tourism as commodities bring a *privatization of the public, and publicization of the private*! Neoliberalism moves economic and social development out of the hands of the state (public works) and into the hands of private (non-governmental) citizens, agencies, organizations. Tourism simultaneously becomes a strategy for otherwise marginal publics (cities, countries, and communities) who take what is private (cultural productions, arts, performance, rites of passage, festivals) and market them as public events, available for commoditizing, available to the gaze of outsiders, and necessary for articulating identity. Tourism invites the world (those with the means to travel) to gaze at otherwise local intimate events and people.

Although tourism tends to privilege the needs and desires of the tourist (who is usually from a wealthy nation) as the customer, host and guest roles are somewhat muddled at a festival. This is definitely true of the Festival in the Desert: Tuareg and non-Tuareg Malians from all over the nation come to hear the music, interact with *each other*

and celebrate. Likewise many nomadic Tuareg come to partake in the Festival's traditional activities, as well as interact with others in attendance who hail from African nations, Europe, Japan, Australia, North and South America. As I will discuss in the following chapters, all participants are performing identities that are always-already framed within representations and expectations participants have of each other. In a recent article on the Festival, Marta Amico similarly shows how the Festival experience becomes a 'game of reciprocal gazes,' building on ideas about 'cultural difference' which are constituted through the categories of 'tourists' and 'nomads' (2013). But beyond interpersonal interactions, identities are negotiated in the global arena as well.

Overview of the Anthropology of Tourism

As one of the largest industries worldwide, tourism has left an indelible mark on today's world. Until fairly recently, however, there was near silence in anthropology regarding tourism. Although tourists had no doubt made their way into many of the communities that anthropologists were studying, this deafening silence was not broken until well into the 1990's. As Erve Chambers points out in his book *Native Tours,* this is surprising given the fact that "tourism is so amiable to cultural interpretation" (Chambers 2009). There have been a few theories put forth as to why there was reluctance on the part of anthropologists to study tourism. One of the most common reasons that anthropologists have perhaps avoided the study of tourism was that it was a subject seen as frivolous, an object not worthy of serious scholarly inquiry. As Van den Berghe states, "…most of my colleagues imply that a professed interest in tourism constitutes little more than a clever ploy to pass off one's vacations as work" (Van den Berghe 1994).

A second reason that anthropologists have likely avoided the study of tourism stems from the somewhat uncomfortable similarities between anthropologists and tourists (Gmelch 2009). As Georgette L. Burns experienced in Fiji, members of the community where she has lived and researched did not in fact distinguish 'operationally' between tourists and anthropologists or other outsiders. But for many academics, such equation is heresy. As I will discuss below, MacCannel's own theory posits that tourists, like social scientists, are actually on a quest for authenticity, however, I concur that anthropologists (along with others who travel) prefer not to be equated with tourists. In fact, Crick's 1985 article "'Tracing' the Anthropological Self" revealed some uncomfortable similarities, stating that anthropologists and tourists both seem to lack an ability to reach an objective understanding of each other. He even suggested that anthropologists embrace ethnographic fieldwork as play, positioning his analysis in the post-modern self-reflexivity that hit the academy in the mid-1980's (Crick 1985) (for a response to this article see Friedman 1987). But as Errington and Gewertz point out, although there are similarities between tourists and anthropologists in that we are all products of the same sociocultural system, anthropologists have largely sought to (indeed are obliged to) incorporate a political framework in their analyses, whereas tourists tend to remain self-referential.

A final reason that tourism may have been avoided in anthropology is anthropologists' ignorance of its importance (Burns 2004). As Burns and Chambers have both pointed out, by avoiding the subject of tourism for so long, anthropologists had only done the field a disservice (Burns 2004; Chambers 2009). It took several decades before anthropologists engaged in research on tourism as a subject in and of itself, worthy of

serious academic focus. In our defense, however, I believe that tourism, as an important research subject, did not truly merit attention until at least the advent of mass tourism, which actually does coincide with the first studies in anthropology. Furthermore, anthropologists were still operating in a paradigm that treated their subjects of study as distinct, bounded, unchanging entities that could be objectively described. It was not until postmodern and post-structuralist theories came into popularity that a sustained interest in cultural change or global impacts and intercultural interactions became commonplace in anthropology. Thus, the anthropology of tourism, though slow to emerge, is not completely out of step with trends in anthropology.

As Amanda Stronza states in her review of the anthropology of tourism in 2001, "many of the major questions that concern cultural anthropologists appear in the study of tourism" (Stronza 2001). Indeed, from the first study published specifically on tourism by an anthropologist (Nunez 1963), we can see that it has been used to provide answers to many general questions that anthropologists have asked at a particular time. Nuñez's article on 'weekendismo' in a Mexican village is generally considered to be the first publication in anthropology focusing on tourism and highlighted a new concern for anthropologists during the age of decolonization—i.e. acculturation (Nunez 1963). Although further research on tourism did not immediately follow, by the 1970's anthropologists were publishing in the *Annals of Tourism Research* from its beginning in 1973, and by 1977 we had the first edited volume on the anthropology of tourism: Valene Smith's *Hosts and Guests* (V. L. Smith 1989). These early discussions were largely focused on the impacts that outsiders had on 'local' cultures, again keeping in time with current trends in the social sciences. Greenwood warned of the detrimental effects of the

the commodification of culture (Greenwood 2004), whereas Dennison Nash described the way that tourism was replicating colonial power dynamics (Nash 1989). At this time, and for the decades following, the majority of anthropological works on tourism focused on the (mostly negative) impacts inherent in host and guest interactions. Again, many of these anthropologists were still operating in an academic paradigm where cultures were perceived to be bounded, changeless entities threatened by outside influences; these outside influences perceived to be the enemies of authenticity.

Dean MacCannel's book *The Tourist*, although not focused specifically on impacts, reinforces the notion that authenticity is something that lies 'over there' in those 'traditional' cultures that first anthropologists, and now tourists seek to encounter (MacCannell 1999). MacCannel's theory was that the reasons tourists travel in increasing numbers to 'traditional' (third world, postcolonial) societies was related to a perceived lack of authenticity felt by those in industrial capitalist nations who are alienated by the mechanisms of modernity. Thus they travel in a quest for authenticity, where the "past is a foreign country." But as tourists travel to these authentic places, anthropologists lose their own authority to represent the "Other" and at some point risk losing the "Other" to modernity itself.

Within tourism studies, academically problematizing "impact" has been a fundamental issue leading to what could be considered a moral alarmism within the industry itself—creating such 'correctives' as ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and various exposés on responsible tourism (Castañeda and Wallace, 2012). But this problematization further reinforces a West versus the Rest paradigm that glosses over numerous problems; most obviously in the way it reifies both tourism and culture. Within

this paradigm culture is seen as an actual object that can then be impacted by the outside force of tourism. The relationship between 'host' and 'guest' is subsequently seen as asymmetrical and unbalanced in favor of the tourist/guest. Amanda Stronza's review of the anthropology of tourism in 2001 quite thoroughly addressed the anthropological obsession with tourism's impacts on local communities. As she states: "In general, anthropologists have conceptualized tourism as determining the fate of hosts in many ways, such as whether they develop economically or not, whether they feel pride or shame about themselves and their traditions, or whether they will have incentives to protect or destroy their environment" (Stronza 2001).

Not all social scientists have been so pessimistic about tourism. Indeed economists continue to promote tourism development as an unproblematic use of local renewable resources (i.e. culture) to promote economic growth. In fact economists and anthropologists often seem to be talking past one another. Various governmental sectors, NGOs, and businesses follow the United Nations Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which has promoted tourism as a "key driver for socio-economic development" since its inception in the mid-1970's (UNWTO 1995). In a report prepared for USAID on tourism and food security in Mali, Robert Richardson of Michigan State University puts forth the specific reasons why tourism is an important tool for "promoting economic growth, alleviating poverty, and advancing food security" in emerging economies and impoverished areas of the world, such as Mali (Richardson 2010). This report is not unique to Mali, and exemplifies an optimistic stance on tourism as development. As he states, "tourism enables communities that are poor in material wealth but rich in history and cultural heritage to leverage their unique assets for economic development" (ibid).

Because tourists are attracted to remote areas with rich cultural or natural resources, emerging economies are encouraged to promote these for 'export.' As I will address below, although these sentiments are widespread, tourism has not proven to be a sustainable form of economic development in many regions because it tends to be subject to fluctuations in political, economic, as well as cultural changes. In addition, foreign investments keep money in the hands of foreign investors, and although tourism does bring jobs, it produces more low-skill and low-wage jobs, and women and other vulnerable populations often end up in the informal sectors, including drug trafficking and prostitution.

Recent developments in the anthropology of tourism are still concerned with tourism's negative impacts, though we have largely moved away from decrying tourism as the harbinger of cultural destruction. Amanda Stronza divided classic anthropology of tourism literature into origins and impacts critiquing the literature for only focusing on the origins of tourism and motivations of tourists to travel, and only looking at the impacts on the so-called guest culture (or the tourees in her words). She suggested that we add to the literature by seeking to understand what motivates locals to become involved in tourism, and on the flip side, seek to understand if tourism has any impact on the tourist. I think that these are both worthy pursuits, especially when we look at how forcefully tourism is promoted as a development strategy for host communities. In effect, I have worked to understand why Tuareg in Mali opened the Festival in the Desert to international tourists and what motivations locals in Timbuktu have had for encouraging tourism broadly.

As the ministry of tourism for Mali states, "All of Mali is Touristic," but Mali is actually not a top destination for the standard traveler if one looks specifically at the numbers of arrivals at the most popular global destinations[8]. Much of the literature on tourism has focused on these so-called standard (or popular) tourist destinations. Ultimately there is ample literature on tourism to the sun, sea, and sand locations such as the Caribbean, but the literature on tourism in Africa is particularly scant. All in all, the tourism literature in the social sciences has grown steadily over the last fifty years, but there is an important hole to be filled in understanding tourism in an African nation, as it will give insight on the means and methods for developing a sustainable economic development strategy based on tourism.

In this way, the research that I have conducted in Timbuktu will also serve as the inverse of research on tourism's impacts on locals, to shed light on the ways that international and national politics and economics *impact* tourism. Or, in other words, how they affect the ability of Mali to attract tourists (and thus develop a sustainable economic 'export' based on tourism) as well as encourage branding of nations and ethnic groups as objects in the market. What I propose here is to develop a theory of tourism that sheds light on both issues important in anthropology now, specifically developing an understanding of the social, political, and economic aspects of globalization as evidenced through tourism, as well as give nuance to the field of tourism studies. Although the anthropological study of tourism has grown substantially over the last several decades, and gained sophistication and acceptance, it has still not been well integrated into, or

---

[8] I use the terms traveler and tourist interchangeably although within the tourism industry individuals often distinguish themselves as one or the other, more on this below.

perhaps not made use of, current theoretical paradigms in the discipline at large. To some degree it has remained a niche field of study.

Performing Identity

Festivals have been recognized as important sites for anthropological inquiry beginning with Durkheim, who saw them as "instances of 'collective effervescence,' and therefore as channels for expressing and consolidating a sense of community" (Giorgi, Sassatelli, and Delanty 2011, 2). This 'sense of community' is part of what is at stake in the current globalizing world as people and places become detached from one another. This is why we see the rise in so many festivals as sites of Intangible Cultural Heritage preservation. Heritage is thought to belong to certain 'communities' who are then charged with its preservation, though as Dorothy Noyes points out, this assumes a sort of genetic link between members of a community and their heritage, which I will more fully explore in Chapter V (Noyes 2006). Heritage then becomes property that is in danger of appropriation, exploitation, or destruction, watched over by a community. It follows then, that there is an authentic attribute to a community's heritage that can be captured and thus safeguarded.

However, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett stated: "Heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed…heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past" (1998, 149). Briggs pointed out in 1996, following the debates around Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition,* stating "that forms that derive their importance from a perceived connection with the past are 'invented,' 'imagined,' 'constructed,' or 'made.'" But as I will capture in chapter five, regardless of whether western scholars see these processes as

a type of 'false consciousness,' heritage preservation is incredibly important to many Malian Tuareg in asserting their identity and sense of belonging in the nation of Mali. However, I will not overlook the contested nature of Tuareg heritage as it relates to internal stratification systems whereby elite Tuareg seek to assert an identity that rests on the processes and practices of preserving and protecting non-elite cultural forms. In the third chapter, I will also address the issue of negotiating Tuareg identity within the nation of Mali, with particular attention paid to internal divisions around post-independence nationalism.

Although early theories defined nationalism on the basis of internal cohesion, as well as universal similarities (Gellner 1983, Anderson 1989), more recent theorists have pointed to the cultural variations of nationalism (Herzfeld 1991, for instance), and as is true for Mali, many ethnographies on nationalism have shown that the nation is often highly contested from within—for instance, in India, (Appadurai 1988; Chatterjee 1993), Quebec (Handler 1988), and many African nations such as Tanzania (Askew 2002). Interestingly, performance, heritage, and culture become places where nationalism is both promoted and contested. For example, through her investigation of *taraab* performances in Tanzania, Askew shows how dance is a site for negotiating and demonstrating political affiliations. My research builds on insights such as hers, as well as working toward an understanding of the dialectical nature of tourism, development, and nationalism centering on the nexus of culture and identity.

Projects of nationalism often promote a seemingly cohesive nation, often through touristic practices of nation-branding. However, much of what postcolonial nations use to attract tourists can be seen as opposed to development and nationalism, particularly

regarding representations that promote many places, such as Mali, as exotic and primitive, as I discuss in chapter six. Nationalism and development aim to promote solidarity, modernity and advancement; tourism relies on exoticism, difference and traditionality (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995; Steiner 1994). However, as Bruner has discussed for the Maasai of Kenya, tourism is one way that ethnic minorities can revitalize or preserve a culture that is otherwise at odds with the mainstream national culture (Bruner 2001). Tourism can thus have the potential to revitalize lost aspects of a culture through its commoditization, as Medina found for the Maya of Belize who even used archaeological publications to learn about their Mayan heritage, often for the purposes of guiding foreign tourists to archaeological sites (Medina, 2001). Other scholars claim that tourism overall exploits and ultimately destroys culture, as already mentioned above (Nash 1977, Greenwood 2004 [1977], Trask 1999). The present research seeks to add to this debate by developing an understanding of the polyvalent nature of tourism, nationalism, and development as evidenced in Mali. One central point is that all of these forces center on questions of belonging in the nation and the world. Thus Tuareg seek recognition and legitimacy at multiple levels of engagement.

CHAPTER III

FROM HERE TO TIMBUKTU: METHODOLOGY

My investigation of tourism development and heritage preservation uses insights gained from looking at the Festival in the Desert from multiple perspectives. I engage the way Tuareg identity articulates with the state of Mali, historically, economically, culturally, and politically. I highlight my own experiences as a student, researcher, tour guide, tourist, anthropologist, travel agent, and friend. I look at policies, publications, and ethnographic data collected in Mali over ten years of researching the Festival. My main data comes from three field seasons in Mali which covered over twelve months making connections, conducting interviews, and collecting stories beginning in 2004.

In terms of data collection, I used several general approaches in my dissertation research: participant observation, structured interviews, and secondary research. Participant observation is the quintessential feature of anthropological fieldwork, and it formed the foundation of my research. Participant observation involves, "observation, natural conversations, various kinds of interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), checklists, questionnaires, and unobtrusive methods" (Bernard 2011, 136). I took copious notes after participating in daily activities, using 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1977), particularly at the Festival in the Desert, and analyzed them as text. I am however not analyzing 'culture-as-text' as Geertz suggested; rather I am analyzing my interpretations of culture as revealed in my descriptions. I have also included excerpts from my fieldnotes/travel journal verbatim in several chapters of this dissertation to elucidate my thinking as a tour guide and tourist in 2005. The purpose of participant

observation is said to allow for the observation of unanticipated patterns of thought and behavior in a natural setting, and it also allows the researcher to contextualize information collected elsewhere (DeWalt and DeWalt 2010). This helped in my analysis of secondary sources, which made up another large part of my research.

As Bernard states, there is a "continuum of interview situations" with informal interviewing at one end, and structured interviews at the other (Bernard 2011, 209). Unstructured, informal, and semi-structured interviews were utilized throughout my research. My method of what I call 'directed conversations' would be classified as 'informal' interviews by Bernard. Informal interviews, like my directed conversations, are "characterized by a total lack of structure or control" where the "researcher tries to remember conversations heard during the course of the day" (ibid). But I did direct these conversations occasionally, or noted how they became directed to certain topics when I explained to people what I was doing in Mali. These 'interviews' were great for collecting information in an unobtrusive way that also helped me to build greater rapport with research participants. Often these conversations led to more formal interviews.

Of the formal interviews I conducted, they were largely semi- and unstructured. Unstructured interviews are considered formal in the sense that participants know they are being interviewed, and the interviewer has a clear plan in mind, but there is minimal control over a participant's response (Bernard 2011). Semi-structured interviews are great because they are laid back like unstructured interviews, but they follow an interview guide with written lists of questions and topics to be covered. Some interviews actually moved between these two if new topics emerged outside of the context of my interview guide. In all, I conducted seventeen semi-structured and twenty-two unstructured

interviews with Malian participants. I also collected three short life histories that I do not make much use of here, though a few quotes are used as epilogues to chapters or sections. I conducted fourteen informal and three unstructured interviews with tourists at the Festival, and four semi-structured interviews in the U.S. after the Festival.

My third method of data collection involved secondary sources. I have collected over 150 articles, blogs, and travel ads related to the Festival and analyzed nearly as many images to understand the ways that the Festival is promoted abroad. Archival and secondary data collection including demographics, newspaper and magazine articles, as well as online media further contextualize observations (Konopinski 2013, 41). Secondary sources, such as these, enabled me to analyze representations of my field site and how they are utilized or contradicted by my observations. I also relied heavily on ethnographic research by other anthropologists, particularly due to the truncated nature of my dissertation fieldwork as a result of the changing political climate in Mali in 2012.

Because I am doing research in a former French colony, with a minority group within one of the poorest countries in the world, I have felt it of utmost importance to continually assess my position as a college student from one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Within the United States I have several avenues of power related to being white and raised in a middle-class suburban community with access to clean water, reliable nutrition, political stability, and an excellent education, although I grew up in a lower income family often lacking in basic resources. I have paid for my college education with scholarships, grants, and student loans, and although I do not have the kind of financial resources that many of my colleagues have, my access to a PhD has been eased by several factors not available to those with whom I work in Mali. I was

awarded a Gilman International Scholarship in 2004 for my undergraduate study abroad research in Mali, and a Ryoichi *Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund* (*Sylff*) in 2011. At times, I felt that my research consultants in Mali and I were on equal footing economically because most of those that I interviewed and interacted with daily, particularly those who work on the organization of the Festival, come from fairly wealthy backgrounds by Malian standards and all were educated and fluent in French. However, I cannot deny that my ability to gain a visa to do research in Mali was never much of a hurdle whereas few Malians would have the same opportunity in the United States.

In Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methods,* she states, "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (L. T. Smith 2012). I am greatly aware of the political, historical, and social conditions that favor my research. I am gravely aware of the potential harm academic research can have, as well as the potential offense with which it can be received by those who have been colonized, studied objects rather than subjects. As aware as I may be of the epistemic and political power with which I collect data in Mali, I will never fully understand what it is to be a colonized person. A major problem I see is that this work is raising more questions than it answers and yet the data I have collected was done so with the knowledge that those in my field site want answers. I thus aim to be sensitive in the application and dissemination of my findings.

Finding Timbuktu

The first time I traveled to Mali was as an undergraduate as part of a study abroad focused on Gender and Development. For five months in 2004 I learned about the development issues that Malians face and spent time researching and interacting with

different development agencies in the capital city of Bamako. I lived with a Bamana family and communicated mostly in French while I learned the language (Bamana). I had arrived in Mali with a desire to understand the changes being faced by nomadic Tuareg in the wake of a shifting economy. I was specifically interested in how Tuareg women were faring in the shift from pastoralism to wage-labor. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to conduct independent research in Timbuktu (ironically due to travel warnings), and felt actively discouraged by the director of the program from focusing on Tuareg issues at all. He said he knew of a Tuareg woman who worked in development, but it took several weeks of prodding to get him to make contact with her.

I bring up this the attempt to deter my focus as it relates to continued and real tensions between Southern Malians and Tuareg both in the capital of Mali and in the North. At the time of my attempted research with a Tuareg community, I felt (vaguely) then, and (strongly) now, that tensions were still pronounced between Southern sedentary Malians (like my Bamana host family and program director) and Northern nomadic groups (many of whom are Tuareg and nomadic). But I did finally make contact with Aïcha, a Tuareg woman who works with the Minister of Education and is deeply committed to extending education to women and girls in Mali's nomadic regions. I worked with Aïcha for five weeks collecting data on nomadic schooling and researching strategies for improving the educational opportunities for women and girls in nomadic communities in Mali's Northern regions (such as Timbuktu). It was through this last avenue that I learned about the Festival in the Desert and became aware of how it functioned as both a tourist attraction and as a local venue for educating families about the importance of sending their daughters to school. I conducted several interviews with

Festival organizers, specifically the Festival director, Manny Ansar (who is Aïcha's cousin), and several representatives of development organizations that worked closely with the Festival in 2003 and 2004. Many of my consultants are from Essakane where the Festival was held from 2003-2009, and Goundam, where Aïcha is from. Most of my interviews were fairly structured but I also interacted with several of my interviewees informally as I spent most of my leisure time with Aïcha and an extended Tamasheq-speaking community in Bamako.

I returned to Mali in 2005 as a tour guide for four Americans associated with an import store in the Pacific Northwest. I largely used participant-observation with these tourists and others attending the Festival in the Desert in 2005. At this time I focused on the economic goals of the Festival and issues of representation at the international level. I conducted structured interviews with each of these participants in 2008 as part of my master's research on tourist expectations when traveling to an African nation. I have included some of that research here. In 2005, I started collecting promotional materials for the Festival and began an ongoing textual analysis of representational media for tourism in Mali and for the Festival. I have incorporated my analysis of these media representations to understand the discord between attracting foreign tourists and meeting the development goals of locals.

In 2005, I did participant-observation in the tourist camps at the Festival and interviewed three tour operators at the Festival. The owner of one of these, "West Africa Tours[9]" (W.A.T.) and I have been in continued contact, and in 2011 he hired me as a consultant/intern to help expand his clientele into the United States. W.A.T. is based in

[9] A pseudonym

Bamako and runs tours in Algeria, Mali, and Niger, and other surrounding countries and maintains their own operations (including their own guides, cars, equipment, etc.). They also put me in touch with another agency that I call "Africa Travel," which was run by a British couple and was in the process of opening an office in New York City. Africa Travel contracts numerous smaller companies and individuals (including W.A.T.) and operates tours throughout the African continent; it is now expanding into Asia. From this internship I learned a great deal about what tourists desire when traveling to Africa as well as how African tourism is arranged, negotiated, and advertised. My general duties were to answer customers' questions about travel to Mali. My duties later expanded to include questions regarding other destinations on the continent. I often helped tourists make decisions regarding activities in their destination, as well was what destination to choose and why. I contacted and arranged the details of their tours with local agents in the destination, as well. I was also charged with some editing of promotional materials for print and the web, and worked with one company's artistic director.

In 2011, I returned to Mali for what was going to be a reconnaissance mission to the Festival, but after changes in Mali's political stability, I have not returned. I spent several weeks reconnecting with friends and consultants in Bamako and Timbuktu with the intention to continue my dissertation research. I spent several weeks in Timbuktu with Aicha's sister and other family members and I traveled to the Festival in the Desert January 10, 11, and 12th. My positioning at the Festival in 2011 took on several dimensions. I was a guest of West Africa Tours' campsite, though I did not begin my internship with them until I returned to the States in March of that year. I had also paid for a Festival pass with full board, only to learn that the camp to which I was assigned

was run by a family member of Aïcha's, and I was thus reprimanded for paying. I was also five months pregnant at the time, which made me somewhat of an anomaly as a tourist, and meant that I was often escorted by a consultant (as per Aicha's request) to make sure I was safe. I stayed in Timbuktu with Aïcha's sister and family before and after the Festival, and arrived at the Festival site with several of her family members, many of who are festival employees. I spent the majority of my time during the day in the two camps doing participant-oberservation among tourists, and I also interviewed West Africa Tours' field staff and others who had traveled to the festival with the company.

In W.A.T.'s camp there were eleven official travelers and one extra who paid for food from their kitchen. All of them were Dutch and spoke to me in English. I had directed conversations with them and conducted one semi-structured interview. I spent more time at the camp run by Festival staff, particularly during the day when I wasn't conducting interviews elsewhere or attending conferences. I was befriended by a group that included a British doctor on holiday, a couple in their twenties from Chile, a young woman (in her mid-twenties traveling alone) from the Midwest United States, and a man in his late twenties from Boston who was a 'world music fanatic' (also traveling alone). That camp had over twenty-five people, some of whom I only had very cursory interactions with. Again, I mostly spoke English here, though the couple from Chile preferred to speak in French when other English speakers were not around.

I spent a good amount of time at the Festival reconnecting with a friend whom I call Almou (again, someone related to the festival organizer and Aïcha) whom I had met in 2005 and who agreed to act as a consultant on my dissertation project. We spent time looking into more of the behind-the-scenes aspects of the festival organization, as this

particular consultant worked in security at the Festival. In 2005, he had also given me a locals' eye view when we toured several Tuareg tents and listened to groups of men and women performing music and poetry for family and friends. I use these experiences to develop a description and understanding of how the Festival differs for local Tuareg and international guests, and give depth to the multiple layers of the Festival site, which I will discuss below. In both 2005 and 2011, I also attended several conferences (press and development conferences) at the Festival where I was an observer-participant aided by Almou who translated from Tamasheq to French for me when necessary.

I have kept in contact with several in my field site and have continued to follow the Festival as it has moved into 'exile' following the coup d'état in 2012. I have since kept abreast of the political situation and debates that emerged after the 2012 Festival. Because I could not return as hoped, I have utilized many novel forms of ethnographic research including the use of social media for interacting with different groups of people and conducting interviews in chat sessions and over the phone. Throughout the time between 2005 and the present I have continued my research on the Festival and tourism in Mali.

Throughout my research I have examined the ironies of trying to represent others' experiences as empirical data as well as questioned the ideology of anthropological approaches to understanding the diversity of human experience. I realize and have contemplated the political and ethical implications and limitations for this type of research by being reflexive in my methods, moving back and forth between my own position in the world (my age, nationality, class, gender, etc.) and how these inform the relations I have with others. My research methods flow from the idea that my own

cultural, social, discursive position will always inform my research and affect the ways that others interact with me as a North American female anthropologist. One of the most influential voices in my understanding of my position vis-à-vis my consultants and my research in general is Edward Said. I do not wish to create another academic work that objectifies or others those whom I have come to consider friends. I feel intense loyalty to those who shared so much with me, not just in terms of interviews and information, but who shared meals, their families, and their homes with me. In the end, I became attached to my consultants' concerns about recognition and identity. I wished to see all of their goals achieved. However, this dissertation is a cautionary tale, in all it highlights the many problems faced by those who hope that tourism will solve more problems than it creates. In this way, I fear that the present work leans more toward pessimism and yet I wished for hope.

The methods that I have used for this research demonstrate the constraints as well as the opportunities inherent in ethnographic research. I have a strong commitment to decolonizing anthropology and utilizing methods that are aware of and sensitive to the personal and social histories of those who have helped with this research. Some as interlocutors on the topics of my research, some as consultants and interviewees, many others have become friends. I faced several constraints in producing an ethnographic description of different cultural practices, and similar to many anthropologists, I have been left with more questions than answers, and thus view the present work as a beginning, not an end in itself.

CHAPTER IV

KALASHNIKOVS AND ELECTRIC GUITARS

The Republic of Mali is a landlocked nation that lies in the heart of West Africa covering a vast territory nearly twice the size of Texas (see figure 1). The Sahara Desert covers close to half of Northern Mali with the River Niger running north to Timbuktu before dropping into the country of Niger. Mali is divided into eight regions: Tombouctou (Timbuktu), Kidal, Gao, Mopti, Ségou (Segu), Sikasso, Koulikoro (home to the capital city, Bamako), and Kayes (see figure 2). Once part of three West African empires—Ghana Empire, Mali Empire, and the Songhai Empire—what is now present day Mali controlled the trans-Saharan trade for much of its history and flourished in mathematics, astronomy, literature, and art, during its heyday—evidenced in manuscripts still held in the libraries of Timbuktu.[10] As a multiethnic nation, and (until recently) an example of African democracy, Mali had sought to achieve a national identity whereby its citizens accepted the nationalist slogan of 'one people, one goal, one faith.'[11] My research with Tuareg in Northern Mali, however, shows there is strong contention that minority populations in the north were never truly admitted into the nationalist discourse.

---

[10] These have become known as the Timbuktu Manuscripts. During the 2012 take over of Timbuktu by Ansar Dine (alleged affiliates of Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb) libraries and several thousand manuscripts were torched. Thousands more were smuggled out by dedicated people and are currently being preserved and repatriated under direction by Abdel Kader Haidara and Stephanie Diakité (See Diakité 2013 and T160K.org).

[11] "Une Peuple, un But, une Fois »

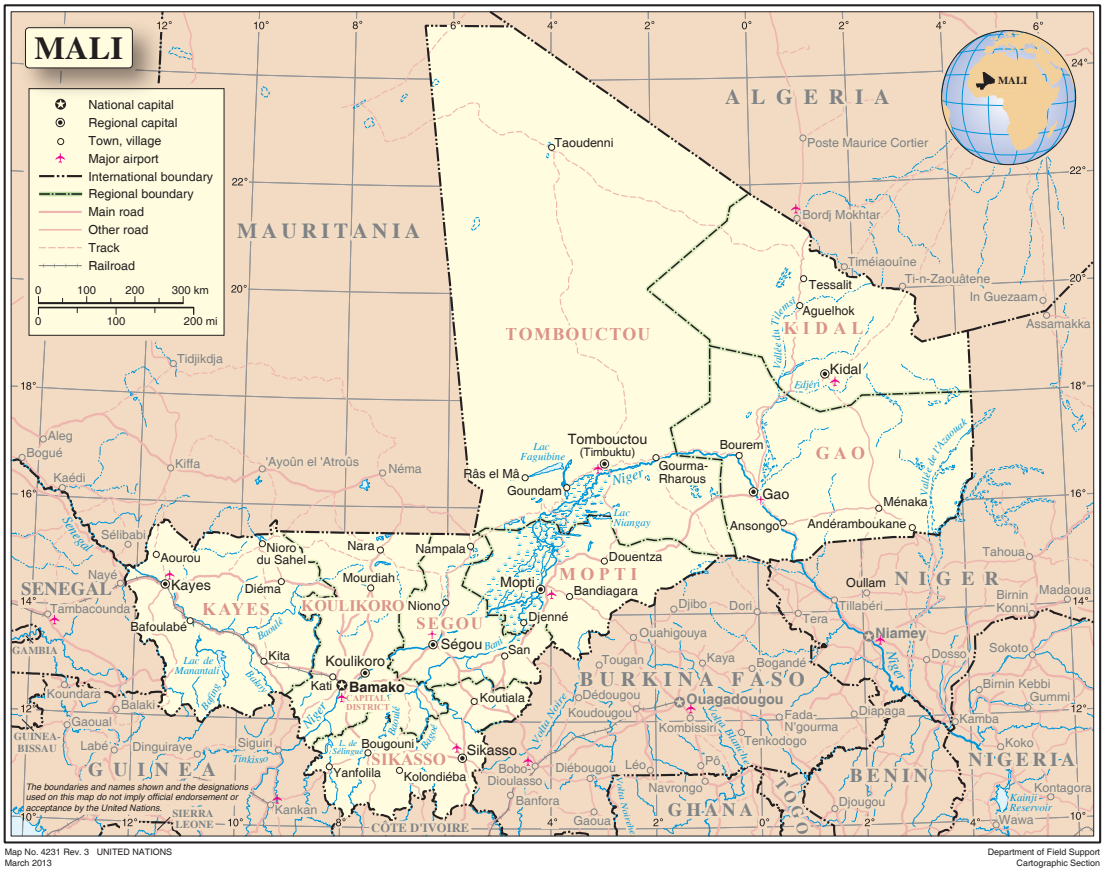


Figure 1: Map of Mali (Source: United Nations 2013)

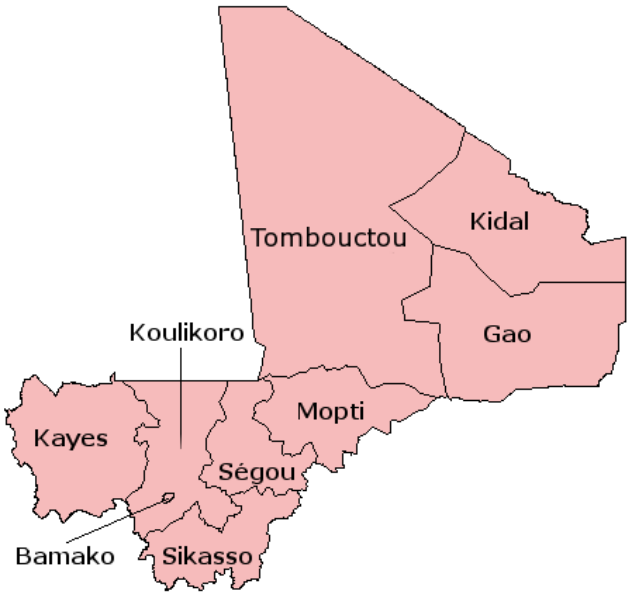


Figure 2: Eight Regions of Mali (Source: Wikipedia 2005)

During the 19th century colonial 'Scramble for Africa,' France seized control of Mali making it part of Soudan Français (French Sudan). The borders of Mali were drawn in 1890 and reflect a fiction on the part of both the French and the multiple parties that negotiated them during decolonization until they were solidified in 1968. The demarcation of the borders is cited as one of several problems for Tuareg in Mali's post-independence era. Nomadic routes were cut-off and violently blocked in many cases, which stunted economic productivity for pastoralists such as the Tuareg and served to sever family and cultural ties that once spanned the Saharan regions of Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya and Morocco.

France colonized Mali for over sixty-eight years negotiating power at every turn. When attempting to create a trans-Saharan railroad they had made an effort to negotiate with Tuareg leaders, which ultimately led to embarrassment on the part of the French as they were forced to abandon their plans (Porch 2005). Later they signed a peace treaty with Tuareg leaders, at which time Tuareg were led to believe that France would grant them control of their own independent nation. They eventually turned control over to the predominantly Mandé, specifically Bamana, political leaders in the south on September 22, 1960, the year Mali officially gained independence. Originally containing Senegal, who seceded in 1960, Mali chose a socialist government electing Modibo Keita as head of state. Keita ruled for only eight years before a military coup turned power over to Moussa Traoré, a dictator who ruled in the Second Republic from 1968-1990.

Mali's diverse population is estimated at seventeen million people, most of who live in rural villages in the south, though around ten percent is nomadic and lives in the north. There are numerous ethnic groups in Mali, about half are of a Mandé ethnicity

(which includes the Bamana, Soninké, Senufo, Malinké, and Khassonké) with Bamana language being the principal *lingua franca*, and understood by most in the South. Other groups include the Fulani (alternately Peul, Fula, or Fulfulbe) who are semi-nomadic and represent about fifteen to twenty per cent of the population. The Dogon are a smaller ethnic group who live in the central plateau region of the country, where the Bandiagara Escarpment[12]—a sandstone cliff—provided a refuge for many Dogon who built huts in the cliffs to avoid conversion to Islam in the fifteenth century. The Bozo are also a representative group, though by no means a large one, who are predominantly fishers in and around the Niger River, and who founded the famous cities of Djenné (home to the world's largest mud-brick structure, a World Heritage Site[13]), and Mopti (the 'Venice of Mali'). Tuareg and other nomadic populations, such as the Moors, make up only about 10% of the population, collectively, the Tuareg population estimated at about 500,000[14]. Tuareg are thought to have settled Timbuktu[15] in the 12th century (Imperato 2008).

Approximately 90% of Malians follow Islam in some form or other; the majority is Sunni Muslim. Islam came into Mali in the 9th century by Muslim Berbers and Tuareg merchants, the latter of which had been converted by the founders of Sufi brotherhoods. I noted while living in Mali that although most Malians consider themselves to be devout

---

[12] Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1989. http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516

[13] Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1988 at the 'Old Town of Djenné.' http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/116

[14] "Exact figures for Tuareg populations are not available. The national census takers in countries where Tuaregs live do not classify population by ethnicity. Therefore, all figures for Tuareg populations are based on estimates. Estimates range from a few hundred thousand to seven million – depending on what countries and social classes of Tuaregs are included. Many Tuaregs [sic] feel that the population estimates are usually much too low, and anthropologists generally agree that the estimates are too low" (Tanat 2013).

[15] Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1988. http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119/

followers of Islam, there is ample evidence of the importance of pre-Islamic (including animist) beliefs for most as well. During the reign of Mansa Musa (1312-1327), Timbuktu was incorporated into the Mali Empire and became one of the world's most important cultural centers, especially for Islamic learning.

Competing Nationalisms: Creating Mali's National Heritage

The transformation from the French Sudan to the Republic of Mali was a slow and gradual process that cannot be understood simply in terms of changes that took place between 1946 to 1968 when the territory, the administration, and the name were solidified (Lecocq 2010, 28–30). As a nation that had been under direct colonial rule for nearly seven decades, nationalism in Mali emerged as a political and an intellectual movement that was embraced by a broad spectrum of social elites, but that experienced multiple power balances that shifted continuously (Forrest 2006; Lecocq 2010). Shifting from colonial to independent rule meant that emerging leaders sought to create a unified national identity free from ethnic sub-groupings, or at least where "ethnic boundaries would not cut across political ones" (Gellner 2008, 1).

"The land and peoples occupying the present day Republic of Mali have a rich and largely documented history either through oral traditions or through Arabic documents written by local Muslim scholars" (Lecocq 2010, 70). Mali has some of the most famous and ancient cities in West Africa—Timbuktu, Gao, Djenné—within its borders, and as mentioned briefly above, has housed many great empires and powerful kingdoms. "This is the stuff par excellence on which to build a national historical myth: antecedent states, which can be connected, without too much interruption, to a dignified present and glorious future" (ibid.). The Mali Empire, historically situated within Mali's

present-day borders, is perhaps the most famous medieval West African empire. Sunjata Keita, a celebrated hero of Mandé people, founded the Empire and is immortalized in the *Epic of Sunjata* which forms the basis of social relations between Mandé family groups (*jamuw*) which function in the daily lives of Malians to this day (ibid.). The most prominent of these are the joking relations (*cousinage* in French, and *sanankuyu* in Mandé) that occur between jamuw. While I was living in Mali these relations were often described as the underlying reason why Mali was a strong democracy; people had learned to deal with their differences centuries ago through mild insults and jokes that forbid offense.[16] Joking cousins were at one time warring clans that were brought together under Sunjata. Malian nationalism plays on this history, as well as the fact that other ethnic groups, such as the Songhay and Fulani (Fulbe) had had important empires (and are also incorporated into these joking relations). The Epic of Sunjata and the many great Mandé and Bamana kingdoms that followed, are woven together into a history that "is a solid anvil on which to forge a sense of national unity" (Lecocq 2012, 71). Malian nationalism was supposed to draw in all ethnic groups without the problems that other African nations were experiencing as the following quote by Mamadou Gologo, former Malian Minister of Information and ideologist, highlights:

> Nationalism is the awareness of belonging to a nation and the conservation of this identity, which is shaped in a rich history. All Malian ethnic groups have had the experience of state rule, to have been ruled and to have ruled. This experience excludes tribalism in national sentiments (quoted in Lecocq 2010, 72).

---

[16] Joking is formulaic between certain jamuw; for instance the family with whom I lived in 2004, the Dembeles' joking cousins include Coulibalys, Konés and Diarras. There relations involve several formulae but they are effectively centuries' old jokes over who eats beans more.

However much this was an *ideology*, in reality most of Mali's national discourse and identity-building derived from Mandé culture and history, so much so that they are often considered synonymous, with Bamana culture being particularly prominent (ibid.). This can be evidenced by symbolism, for instance the *ciwara,*[17] a Bamana headdress representing an antelope, which is so prolific it is essentially the symbol of the nation; it's on the money, official websites, and a massive ciwara sculpture was installed at the president's mansion. The Bamana language is also the lingua franca throughout much of Mali and in the major urban centers education begins in Bamana before gradually moving into French, the national language. As with many African nations following the waves of independence, Mali stimulated the creation of several folklore troupes in order to promote national cultural heritage through song, dance, and music yet were also largely spreading Mandé folklore. In fact, the *troupe artistique* of Kidal was forbidden from singing in Tamasheq and had to learn Bamana songs instead (Lecocq 2010, 73).

Of course, the nation and nationalism are 'imagined' everywhere (Anderson 1991). Nations do not arise organically, and as many have pointed out, the histories and heritage that nationalist sentiments often draw on are, by their very nature, also imagined. In terms of national heritage many authors have pointed out the power relations that are involved in the appraisal and ultimate selection of national representations. In an article regarding heritage in Trinidad, Philip W. Scher points out how "…the celebration of some forms and not others erases certain aspects of cultural history" and can further marginalize already underrepresented groups in the nation (Scher 2002, 468). These

[17] See Stephen R. Wooten's book *Art of Livelihood: Creating Expressive Agri-Culture in Rural Mali* for a discussion of the importance of the ciwara in Bamana society (2009) (Also Wooten 2004).

erasures often get overlooked when outsiders seek to understand contested or competing nationalisms, pointing instead to cultural or ethnic differences.

According to Baz Lecocq, there have always been two separate nations in Mali: the Malian nation and the Tamasheq nation (2010, 29). The first was legitimated by the French at independence whereas the latter become viewed as "an unforeseen by-product" that threatened the newly formed political order (ibid). In the first years of independence, Northerners, predominantly Moors and Tuareg, sought to form an *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* a governing body that would control regions lying in Mali's Sahara. This highlights the way that Northerners felt marginal to the political process of independence as they began organizing for political representation (Poulton and ag Youssouf 1998:12). The wish to be excluded from the nation of Mali led a small group of Tuareg from Kidal, of the *Kel Adagh* tribe, to organize against the Southern government in 1963. Keita's regime suppressed this armed uprising with such severity it created the first waves of Tuareg refugees to Algeria and Libya (Lecocq 2002, 2).

Traoré's military dictatorship ruled for the next twenty-seven years. However, the military proved unable to manage politically or economically; many citizens were marginalized, and Northerners suffered disproportionately more. To compound political neglect, the North suffered from abuse by military governors; at the same time they suffered from major drought. During these droughts, Tuareg saw entire herds annihilated, and many never saw relief aid intended for them because corrupt governments diverted and sold most of it elsewhere. Many young men were forced to search out work in urban centers or live as refugees. The environmental disruption and political corruption would soon lead to more Tuareg uprisings in Niger and Mali (Poulton and Youssouf 1998, 13).

To a large extent, the continued dissatisfaction with the government in the south by Northerners relates to the fact that the Malian state has been in a virtual poverty trap since independence. For many African nations, poverty is the most prominent obstacle to good governance (McCord, Sachs, and Woo 2005).

Ethnographic Background on the Tuareg

The Tuareg (alternately Touareg) are not easily defined. The name itself is a misnomer with confusing and contested origins. Generally believed to derive from an Arabic word meaning "The abandoned of God," most refer to themselves as *Kel Tamasheq*,[18] or "those who speak Tamasheq," highlighting the importance of language to their identity (Keenan 2003, 7–9). They are described as an ethnicity of pastoral nomads who live in the Saharan regions of the contemporary nation-states of Niger, Mali, Algeria, Libya and Burkina Faso and speak a Libeo-Berber language—Tamasheq (also Tamahaq or Tamachek). I am deeply indebted to the work of many, but my research would have suffered without two anthropologists. Susan Rasmussen, an American anthropologist, who has been conducting fieldwork in Niger and Mali for over thirty-five years and whose style of ethnographic inquiry and her topical interests continually intrigue and inspire my own. Baz Lecocq, a Dutch historian and anthropologist, is likewise a major contributor to my understanding of Tuareg society. Without his fastidiously researched social histories I could not have made sense of much of the complexities of Tamasheq political history.

---

[18] Many Tamasheq-speakers accept this name, but more are moving toward calling themselves Tamasheq publically. I have chosen to use the term Tuareg for consistency with anthropological works, though I think that Tamasheq is a better label. I asked those in my field site which they preferred and they agreed that Tuareg was 'fine.'

Tuareg society is highly complex and deeply stratified. Prior to colonization, the Tuareg were organized into 'confederations' (political categories with traditional leaders called *Amenakoul*) internally organized by occupation (Rasmussen 1997; Lecocq 2002, 2010). At the top are nobles, *imajeren* or the "proud and free" who traditionally controlled the caravans and still belong to the warrior class. Below them are free but subordinate men and women (possibly nobles of other confederacies captured in battle) who hold a tributary relationship with nobles and are called *imrad*. Next are religious scholars popularly called *marabouts*, or in Tamasheq *ineslemen*. Below these two are the smith/artisans, *inaden,* who are frequently clients of noble patrons. Smiths remain highly specialized in their profession manufacturing jewelry, household tools, and weapons; singing praise songs at noble weddings and naming ceremonies; reciting genealogies as oral historians; and acting as ritual specialists and political go-betweens for noble patron families (Rasmussen 1997). The origin of the *inaden* are unclear, but some show evidence that they are possibly descendants of Jews who were forced out of southern Morocco in the fourteenth and fifteenth century (Seligman et al. 2006, 23).

At the bottom of the Tuareg social hierarchy are the "Bella," the Songhay word for slaves, a name popularized by the French. They may also be referred to as *iklan,* and are thought to be an ethnic group from Niger and Burkina Faso, possibly captured in war centuries ago. Although slavery has been officially abolished, many Bella still live under the tutelage of noble families[19] (Rasmussen 1997; Keenan 2003; Lecocq 2004, 2011).

---

[19] While living in Timbuktu with a Tamasheq family of the *marabout* class I witnessed this continued relationship between higher status Tuareg and Bella. Young Bella girls, for instance, were live-in maids and nannies. According my hosts, they send money home to their families. The girls were taken care of to some extent, but treated as a lowly servant caste.

Many upper status Tuareg trace their lineage to the Arabian Peninsula, and are perceived to be racially divided both by themselves and outsiders; nobles are commonly referred to as white, smiths and Bella are referred to as black (ag Ewangaye 2006, 59; Lecocq 2002, 4). This is a distinction sometimes used by Tuareg themselves, but in the south of Mali when a *Bamakois* refers to Tuaregs as 'white' he or she generally means this as pejorative. I also heard light-skinned Tuareg simply referred to as 'Arabs' as many Southerners do not differentiate between the two and have as much disdain for Arabs as they do for Tuareg.

Islam entered Tuareg culture from the west with the migration of Sufi mystics in the seventh century. Today, Tuareg generally identify as Sunni Muslim, though traditional[20] pre-Islamic beliefs still carry importance in every day life. According to Susan Rasmussen, the local belief system "interweaves and overlaps with official Islam rather than standing in opposition to it" (1997, 4). Tuareg women hold rather high prestige and economic independence, especially in comparison with other Muslim women (however this varies depending on one's family's status and level of adherence to Islam) and several origin stories feature a powerful female figure named Tin Hanan. Tuareg were historically matrilineal, tracing occupation and status through the mother's family, though patrilineality has supplanted or been combined with matrilineality, perhaps as a result of Islam, or pressures from national governments (Seligman 2006, 25). The family with whom I lived were of the marabout class, are of the Kel Ansar clan, and thus resembled more closely other (non-Tuareg) Muslim Malians with whom I visited,

[20] I do not care for the term 'traditional' but find it a challenging term to replace. In most cases I use it to mean socio-cultural aspects of Tuareg life that are without a specific origin, roughly meaning old and indigenous.

with patrilineal descent more prominent, and women more subservient (though still to a lesser degree than other Muslims).

Although nomadism is often described as one of the most salient characteristics of Tuareg life, semi-nomadism is more the reality. In fact, given the above occupational divisions, not everyone ever was nomadic, even historically; this is especially true when we take into account the gendered division of labor, where (noble) women often remained in semi-permanent camps, and did not partake in caravans at all (Rasmussen 1997, 158-159). However, for many, nomadism is an ideal to which they long to return, and throughout my research was described as the quintessential definition of being Tuareg. Historically, the Tuareg obtained their livelihood from raising goats and camels, in addition to hunting (ibid; Seligman 2006, 27). Current occupations range from herding sheep, goats, camels and donkeys to raising dates, vegetables, and wheat at garden oases. In the past, raiding and trading, as well as providing protection for people traveling across the Sahara, were noble economic pursuits. The latter has been transformed by some Tuareg acting as guides for tourists, the former converted to acts of banditry (ibid.). As a result of several factors, many Tuareg migrated to urban centers, where some act as guards for wealthy Africans and Europeans (Rasmussen 1997, 4, Seligman 2006, 27). The majority of individuals in the extended family with whom I lived in Bamako and Timbuktu worked in development related fields, and many were involved with the Festival in various aspects[21].

[21] Aicha's direct cousin is Manny Ansar who is the Festival's executive director, for instance, and several other family members worked in development agencies that also funded the Festival including AITMA and EFES. Other examples include: a camp director, public relations executive, a security guard, and several others.

Due to socioeconomic upheaval and significant alteration to their lifestyle, there is considerable tension among the Tuareg themselves, as well as between the Tuareg and their national governments. They have also been highly marginalized by the majority populations in all of the countries they inhabit (Seligman 2006, 27; Lecocq 2002, 2004, 2010). This is undoubtedly a result of many factors, though one that was often relayed to me while in Mali by non-Tuareg is that Southern Malians remember the role that Tuareg played in enslaving sub-Saharan Africans for themselves, Arabs, North Africans, and Europeans. This marginalization plays out quite significantly in a series of armed rebellions, to be discussed below, that culminated in a peace accord in 1996.

Since independence from colonial rule Tuareg society has undergone the most significant changes. The French adamantly pursued a mission of pacifying and colonizing the Tuareg with the hopes of building a trans-Saharan railroad in the first years of colonial penetration into West Africa. When this pursuit proved impossible, not least of which due to the fact that Tuareg put up such fierce resistance, the Tuareg were largely left alone during the later years of French colonization in Algeria, Mali and Niger (Lecocq 2004, 89). Thus, perhaps ironically, major disruptions to Tuareg life began after independence when they came under direct rule of African leaders in distant cities. First the creation of national borders restricted seasonal migrations as many national governments took brutal measures to police their borders. These governments also took it upon themselves to 'modernize' the Tuareg as they deemed their lifestyle "backward and undesirable" (Lecocq 2004, 89). Tuareg with whom I spoke described the disruption national borders created to their nomadic routes, coupled with the harshness with which military officials treat them at these borders to this day.

Another related disruption to Tuareg life came with a wave of droughts that struck the Sahel in the 1970's and 1980's. International aid that was intended for those hit the hardest by the droughts was often stolen; "The victims of these droughts were confronted with insufficiency of relief aid and state corruption in its distribution, as it was diverted and sold" (Lecocq 2004, 89; see also Poulton and ag Yousouff 1989). After climactic conditions improved in the eighties, many Tuareg refugees returned. However they were not warmly received and clashes began to break out with local populations and military forces in Mali and Niger. "Seeing themselves as victimized and threatened by their own governments, the Tuareg began to mobilise [sic] in both countries" (Seely 2001, 506).

Changes from the influx of a cash economy into the local economy, and forced sedentarization—either by state policies or economic necessity—have also had a major impact on local conceptualizations of gender, and women's status and autonomy. As stated above, many have perceived Tuareg women as having relatively high status in Tuareg society and enjoy considerable rights and privileges (Rasmussen 2005, 159). This has taken different forms; one important aspect of power has been that women have relative freedom in terms of their choice of sexual and romantic involvement. Tuareg women also enjoy a high degree of economic independence, as they can own livestock and other assets, most notably their main dwelling, the tent. Ownership of the tent is of particular importance as a woman can effectively remove a man from it (and initiate divorce) as she sees fit. Unfortunately, with the onset of wage labor and economic opportunities specifically for men, as well as a more sedentary lifestyle, men have been building brick houses and overriding the importance of the tent, and by extension women's autonomy (ibid).

The Tuareg with whom I mostly came into contact beginning in 2004 were of the Kel Ansar (alternately Antessar) clan or tewsit[22] from the town of Goundam and the village of Essakane in the region of Timbuktu. More specifically, my main consultants both at the Festival site, those with whom I lived in Timbuktu and Bamako, many who were directly related[23] and of the *marabout* class. When I was discussing Tuareg women as being reported to have high status, Aïcha disagreed. She said that they were not allowed to divorce, were forced into marriages at very young ages, and were often in polygynous marriages unlike other Tuareg women. She has been actively campaigning against many of these as she understands them to be oppressive to women and girls.

Music in Tuareg Life

Music plays an important part in the social, political and ceremonial life of the Tuareg (Card Wendt 1982). An investigation of Tuareg music is also indicative of a history of mobility and nomadism as it incorporates Sub-Saharan, particularly West African styles, and Middle Eastern or Arab styles. For instance, Tuareg musicians frequently use pentatonic scales common in West African styles, yet incorporate musical and vocal ornamentation and trilling or ululation common in Middle Eastern styles. This multiculturalism is also evident in the types of instruments used. Caroline Card Wendt divides (traditional) Tuareg music into three categories, identified by the use of voice and/or instruments. Each genre uses both voice and one of three specific instruments: the

---

[22] Consultants generally used the French term *tribu* (tribe). Nicolaisen (1963) translated the term tewsit as "drum group" as they are generally under the influence of an *ettebel*—literally 'war drum'— which is a grouping of clans organized hierarchically (cited in Lecocq 2010, 13).

[23] Using the French term 'cousin direct' to denote that they were related by blood not just from the same village where everyone calls those of similar age a 'cousin.'

imzad, tahardent, or tendé. Each of these is associated with a specific poetic genre and musical style, which are central to specific social events as well.

The *imzad* (alternately anzad) is a one-string fiddle that is played by women of the noble class. It is said to be a force for good and was used to inspire men to be courageous and protect them when away from home. Card Wendt elaborates on the imzad's significance stating that "Warriors in combat strove to always act courageously, lest their women deprive them of music: the prospect of silent fiddles on their return renewed their courage in the face of defeat" (577). This tradition has been on the decline since the early twentieth century largely due to the disruption of their traditional economy as only noble women had the leisure time to pursue their skill. Also warfare became less common due to colonization and defeat by the French. The imzad is also associated with courtship, political rallies, and religious holidays; many evening courtship gatherings centered on the imzad as well, according to Rasmussen (Rasmussen 2000, 133-134). In Tuareg society it is considered the classical music of the Tuareg, and the "practices and knowledge" with which it is associated were inscribed on UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" in December 2013.[24]

The *tendé*, on the other hand, is considered Tuareg 'folk music' according to Card Wendt. The tendé describes not only the instrument, a mortar drum, but it also is a genre of music and a social event. The tendé events, characterized by poetry contests, camel races, and festive gatherings, are what the Festival in the Desert was modeled after. The tendé is much less specialized than the imzad and most performers are young, and until recently it was associated with the lower classes. It is the most popular music at national

[24] http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00891

holiday celebrations, evening rites of passage, and spirit possession ceremonies (Rasmussen 2000, 137). It is played by women and is accompanied by men and women of all social classes who may clap, sing, drum, shout, dance, ride camels or otherwise become involved (Card Wendt 1982).

The *tahardent* is a three-stringed plucked lute that is found throughout West Africa by many other names, most notably the n'goni in Mali. It also follows a similar tradition. It has been part of Tuareg music for a long time traditionally played by inaden men, who composed praise songs for nobles on it, similar to the griot tradition in other West African cultures, but has been described to me as closer to the bard traditions of Europe. Tahardent music is composed of specific formulas regarded as rhythms, each of which has a specific name and context. In the 1970's it became the most common instrument used in popular Tuareg music performed in cities throughout the Sahara and was considered controversial because of its association with urban life and contemporary values. However, in the form of bardic ballads that praise patrons and heroes, it may be part of a tradition several centuries old. Currently, it is most popular for its newer rhythms used for dance and entertainment and because of its tradition linked to social protest it most likely paved the way for the rise of al-guitara music, initiated by Tinariwen (Belalimat 2010).

Ibrahim ag Alhabib, one of the founding members of Tinariwen, was one of the first to develop the style of music that would later become known as *al-guitara*, a blend of traditional Tuareg sounds played on electric guitars. Having seen his father killed in 1963 by Malian military, and his family's herd ruthlessly slaughtered, Ibrahim's story is illustrative of what many Tuareg born in the 1950's and 60's experienced. At a young age

he stowed away on a cement truck headed to Algeria. Ibrahim dealt with the hardship of being exiled by playing music, mostly the flute,[25] in the solitude of the desert. He had always been fascinated by the guitar, which he had seen in a western movie in his youth, but it wasn't until he was a teenager in Tamanrassat that he encountered an actual guitar. While living in Algeria he would watch a man play guitar who later invited him to learn. Ibrahim eventually bought a guitar and began to play with his friend Inteyeden.

According to Nadia Belalimat, they began experimenting with the instrument's acoustics by adapting melodies from a traditional Tuareg vocal repertoire and inventing a set of guitar rhythms inspired by some of the syncopated rhythms of the tendé drum (Belalimat 2010, 162). The basic form of Tinariwen's music is a call and response song between the singer-guitarist soloist and the male or female chorus, interrupted with interludes of variable length, improvised on the melodic line (ibid). Tinariwen's music is deeply tied to the politics of Tuareg culture in Mali and it helped launch the 1990 Tuareg rebellion against the Malian state.

Revolution and the Ishumar

By the late 1980's young Tuareg intellectuals known as i*shumar* derived from the French word for "unemployed," *chômeur*,[26] met in refugee camps in Libya and began reformulating ideas of starting an independent Tuareg nation. Many *ishumar* had been conscripted into Gaddafi's army where they gained military training and revolutionary ideals. Seeing themselves as a "revolutionary military vanguard, which would lead their

---

[25] Probably a "shepherd's flute" made from sorghum or *gidga* woods

[26] Others have said that the term derives from the Tamasheq word '*shimmir'* which means to resist (ag Ewangaye 2006, 63)

people to independence," many returned in 1990 and led attacks on military posts throughout Northern Mali and Niger (Lecocq 2004, 92-96). In late May of 1990, the "Tuareg Revolt" began with attacks on military posts in Northern Niger and Mali by the *Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad* (MPA), purportedly supported by all ethnic populations of the North (Poulton and ag Youssouf 1998,13).

In addition to the military movement, *ishumar* were also responsible for an intellectual and artistic movement. Putting their ideas of migration, modernity and politics into poems and songs, they initiated a musical renaissance that accompanied the armed rebellions (Lecocq 2004, 94-96). Tinariwen claims that its members met in Gaddafi's army in Libya where they learned to use *Kalashnikovs* and electric guitars (Tinariwen 2000, 4-5). In fact, at the time of the rebellion, owning Tinariwen cassettes with messages of political import could lead to imprisonment (Lecocq 2004, 97).

During the years before the official rebellion began, Moussa Traoré and his colonels reacted with violence both in the North and in the cities. The dictatorship was under pressure from democratic associations, criticized in Mali's new free press, denounced by labor unions, students, human rights associations, lawyers and mothers. In response, Lieutenant Amadou Toumani Touré (affectionately called ATT[27]) launched a coup and arrested Traoré in March of 1991 (Poulton and ag Youssouf 1998,13). ATT then led Mali out of a dictatorship, through a transitional phase, and into the country's first open multi-party elections. On April 26, 1992 Alpha Oumar Konaré became the first democratically elected president of Mali. Ten days after Alpha was inaugurated, there were more rebel attacks in the North (66).

---

[27] Pronounced in French (in English phonetically would be, "ah, tay, tay").

The "Tuareg Revolt," did not officially end until 1996. After numerous negotiations between the government and the so-called rebels[28], the end of the rebellion was marked by the burning of hundreds of (Tuareg) arms in Timbuktu. This symbolic act became known as the *Flame de la Paix (*"Flame of Peace"), and the major fighting gradually diminished. In 1998, members of Tinariwen traveled to the southern capital of Bamako after thirty years of exile to perform. It was here that they met the French band Lo'Jo, a meeting that would later produce the "Festival au Désert" (Tinariwen 2001, 6).

Though the Festival is based on traditional gatherings, specifically the tendé festivals of Northern Mali, its current form is formatted like many music festivals around the globe. In the next chapter, I will provide a more in-depth history of the formation, format, and layout of the Festival in the Desert. I will highlight how the Festival is utilized by different participants and analyze several dimensions of the Festival in light of being both a gathering of nomads and a gathering tourists to show how innovation and tradition interweave with the motivations of the Festival organizers.

[28] There is some disagreement as to whether these fighters should be considered 'rebels' fighting *against* a regime, or 'revolutionaries' fighting *for* an independent nation as both were goals then and are now (See for instance, Lecocq 2010).

CHAPTER V

INNOVATION AND TRADITION AT LE FESTIVAL AU DESERT

How does the Festival in the Desert position itself in the context of Tuareg culture and society? Is it a Tuareg event or a tourist attraction, or both? Why was it opened to foreign tourists? The Festival stems from a longstanding tradition of coming together after seasonal migrations. These annual meetings allowed nomadic Tuareg to reconnect, resolve conflicts between individuals and groups, to exchange ideas about the challenges that they face, and to celebrate. Today, its focus on "combining modernity and tradition, is driven by a strong desire to open its doors to the outside world, while still preserving the cultures and traditions of the desert" ("History: Festival Au Désert" 2013). In general, it has some common features with the tendé festivals that it is modeled on, but there is much that is of recent origin. In this chapter I will discuss the way that 'modernity' and 'tradition' weave together to understand what motivations lie behind opening the Festival to foreign tourists. I will explore the way that innovation and tradition are performed and negotiated in the Festival's organization and structure in order to better understand the uses of cultural productions for communities undergoing rapid social change. Moreover, I seek to understand how the Festival positions itself within the Tuareg communities that it seeks to serve.

One main goal that was relayed to me by several consultants was that the Festival was primarily about 'promoting and preserving' Tuareg cultural heritage. However, as Stephen Wooten, an anthropologist who works in an agricultural community in southern

Mali asked, “Is the Festival a Tuareg event?” (personal communication). As I will acknowledge here, aside from its location in a remote area of Mali, the Festival has a great deal in common with other world music festivals. However, the Festival site is still used in ways that traditional nomadic gatherings and tendé festivals were. In exploring what the motivations are behind the Festival’s creation, I will not be asking whether the Festival is an ‘authentic’ Tuareg event. Explorations into questions of authenticity have no doubt a place in research on tourism and festival, but I specifically avoid them here. However, I note that folklorists and anthropologists have shown that authenticity is a socially constructed concept (Bendix 2009; Briggs 1996; Cohen 1988; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Silver 1996). I am developing an understanding of the Festival as serving a particular set of purposes, rather than asking whether it is authentic or not. As such, I will describe which elements of the Festival in the Desert relate to traditional festivals and may still serve similar purposes for locals.

Symbolically, the Festival creates a space for nomads to enter into a global sphere that otherwise threatens to destroy their livelihood. Through interactions with tourists, musicians, development workers and volunteers they navigate this new space in terms that can be interpreted as familiar and relevant. The globalized space created by tourism at the Festival is a microcosm for how nomads enter global processes. The ideal is for the Festival to provide economic benefit both for local participants and for the organizers, some of whom are now working year round on the Festival’s organization and structure. Tourism now shapes the form and function of festivals around the world; it often creates situations where “commercial models of exchange have gained primacy over ritual symbolic and aesthetic aspects as common community practices of festivity have attained

alternate value in the face of new audiences" (Picard and Robinson 2006, 13). The Festival continues to serve local nomadic communities in ways similar to the past, but because of the expense of catering to foreign tourists, it has not been able to realize another primary goal: generating economic opportunities for these communities.

Le Festival au Desert

On the first full moon of 2001, in the village of Tin Essako, thousands of kilometers from the capital of Bamako, the Festival in the Desert was born in Mali. In the late 1990's, after Tinariwen and the French band Lo'Jo played together in Bamako, Tinariwen was invited to play at Les Nuits Toucouleurs Festival in France. Manny was their manager at the time and told me that when they performed in this European festival they were reminded of gatherings that used to happen in their own villages. It is then that they began formulating the idea for a music festival in Mali. Lo'Jo's manager Philippe Brix was keen on bringing Tinariwen into the global music market and he discussed these ideas with Issa Dicko, a Tuareg historian and activist. The two developed the idea for a 'festival in the desert' and went to work finding partners to fund and organize the event. That first year, organizers estimated that there were close to 3000 nomads who attended along with a few hundred tourists (including Malians from the south) ("Interview with Philippe Brix" 2004; Ansar interview February, 2011).

The Festival was first and foremost a way to bring attention to the Tuareg in Mali. It was also a way to celebrate the 'Flame of Peace' in hopes of it being an ongoing example of how to manage internal conflicts. The Malian government sent the prime minister and several others that first year to show their support. Although the Festival is based on Tuareg gatherings, and is about bringing investment and awareness to the lives

of Tuareg in Mali, it largely promotes Malian—not just Tuareg—musicians. Thus it is only four years after *ishumar* (revolutionaries), including members of Tinariwen, led an armed rebellion against the state of Mali, that they went on to create a tourist attraction that highlights *Malian* musicians and culture, and presents Tuareg communities as part of the nation.

This is an incredible turn of events, but what spurred this change? One possible reason is that the peace negotiations promised to create more regional autonomy, along with the integration of rebel fighters into the Malian army, and Tuareg representatives into national politics. Many changes were put into effect when Mali became a democratic republic. Another possible reason is that Festival organizers were hoping to capitalize on the popularity of Malian musicians for promoting their event. Many musicians from the south of Mali have been popular on the global music market for years. Likewise, the Festival brought tourists to Mali and thus this could be seen as reciprocal promotion. Whatever the reasons, the Festival served as a powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation. Issa Dicko said that the rebellion of the 1990's was one way to bring international attention to the "drastic situation of the Tuaregs of Mali." His feelings were that if the world knew who the Tuareg were they would come to their aid during times of crisis; "Thanks to the festival," he says, "Tuareg culture is being promoted across the world…It's a very strong message of peace addressed to the people of Africa and the world" (interview in Brouet 2004).

In an interview in 2011, Manny Ansar recounted the first year. He said: "the tension between Malians from the south and the north was incredibly thick…Everyone sat uncomfortably with their arms folded, shooting uneasy glances at the other

groups…but when the music commenced, they all began to dance and the tensions melted away" (Interview, Bamako, February 2011). Until the festival was created, he said, famous performers from the south of Mali such as Omou Sangare never would have travelled to the North. As stated in festival literature and relayed to me by numerous festival-goers and organizers, the Festival is about creating cultural exchanges between the north and south, as well as with the world. Manny felt that music was the ultimate equalizer; in spite of the recent 'hiccup' in security, and the forced exile of the Festival, he feels it still has the power to manifest its goals of creating cultural bridges, which begins with "their neighbors to the south."

The Festival also has economic goals, and hoped to bring investment into nomadic communities in the north. In the beginning, the Festival was nomadic itself, planning to move to different sites in order to engage different communities and potentially bring development to each one. However, beginning in 2003 the Festival was held in Essakane a village forty miles from the city of Timbuktu, and in 2010 moved just outside the city. Both of these moves were to cater to tourists' needs. The move to Essakane happened so that Festival management could rely on some basic infrastructure, a few permanent stalls and flush toilets. Everything is trucked in and it takes several weeks to bring everything, including all drinking water, up from Bamako to Timbuktu; logistically it made more sense to organizers to keep the location static. Essakane is also a traditional gathering point for nomads according to Manny. The move to Timbuktu in 2010 was a result of heightened security concerns following threats by Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and several kidnappings of Westerners, which occurred sporadically between 2008-2010 in remote locations in the Sahara Desert. These

incidences caused several governments to issue warnings against travel in the north of Mali, even singling out the Festival as potentially dangerous. Manny felt these warnings were erroneous, but when Hilary Clinton advised against travel to Northern Mali which included "the world-renowned Festival in the Desert," Manny felt it was ironically great publicity (Morgan 2013a, 28–29).

The Festival Site

Traditionally, Tuareg festivals, called *Takoubelt* in Timbuktu, fell after the Muslim holidays of Ramadan or Tabaski (known as Eid al-Adha elsewhere). In its current form it is held annually during the second week in January, to accommodate tourist planning. This shows how the Festival was something significantly different from traditional gatherings that followed a religious calendar. The general format for international tourists is four days and three nights camping and includes concerts by Tuareg, Malian, and international musicians. The Festival site has numerous camps where tourists stayed for the duration of the Festival as concerts ran late into the night and early morning. Even when it was closer to Timbuktu, it was often not practical for most to stay in town at a hotel. Many camps were run by locals and only operated for the purposes of the festival. Other camps are set up as part of a larger tour, including West Africa Tours who runs tours throughout the region, and has a special Festival tour package that follows one of their preset tours with the Festival as the highlight. W.A.T.'s standard Festival tour package is fifteen days, three of which are camping at the Festival site in "traditional Tuareg tents."

Festival management request that camps follow basic guidelines in order to retain the 'traditional' feel of the site. For instance, one of the criteria for tour operators who

wished to gain access to a Festival site was that their tents be either traditional camel leather or light tan canvas. Festival management highly recommends camping at the Festival with an official tour operator. However, one can camp at the Festival independently, but the management still requests that tents fit the above requirements. The shape and style of Festival-run campsites' tents were fairly uniform in style; most were made of canvas, a few of the traditional camel leather (Figures 3-4).



Figure 3: W.A.T. Tents (photo by author 2011)



Figure 4: Nomad Camp at Festival (photo by author 2011)

Tuareg tents used by nomads tend to be domed or conical, made of camel leather or canvas with open sides and grass reed mats used as walls to keep out wind and sand (to a certain degree) (Figure 5). They can be adjusted depending on which way the wind is

blowing, and one side can be completely closed for privacy. In 2011, West Africa Tours had two large "Tuareg" tents where travelers could hang out together and eat. They had small manufactured tents that held two to four people each and formed a semi circle that faced the communal tents. This was similar to other camps; W.A.T. was, however, the only company that I observed that used prefab tents, a result of their tour including overnight camping in the Bandiagara Escarpment as well. Some individual campers also had these, but the majority of camps used canvas tents. International travelers and groups camped in a small radius around the Festival stage. Beyond the tourist camps there were several hundred nomadic Tuareg camps within view, but presumably more as organizers estimated upwards of ten thousand nomads involved in related festivities.

Mapping the Festival was very challenging as it is made up of more than a square mile of a series of dunes. In both 2005, when it was at Essakane, and in 2011, when it was in Timbuktu, I observed a similar layout that is roughly represented in Figure 17 (end of chapter). Camps, food stalls, restaurants, and bathrooms were either on top of the dunes or in shallow valleys. Most sites, including the stage, were nestled in the valleys, and could be completely hidden from view. Because of this, walking through the Festival site was often disorienting, as one could not see his or her destination. Moving through the site was further complicated by the fact that 4x4's had to keep their speed in order to not get stuck in the sand and one had to be constantly vigilant listening for approaching vehicles. Lastly, most visitors did not have access to a map of the site or even a program of events. A British woman with whom I spoke in 2005 said, "This is absolute rubbish, no one knows what is going on. We came for the music, for Ali Farka Touré, and we do not even know if he is playing." Rumors circled Festival grounds about who was playing

and at what time or which day, as well as who had canceled or not been heard from. Although the Festival website lists a 'tentative' program a few weeks before the Festival, the logistics of travel in Mali and the fact that most musicians were not paid for traveling to the Festival meant that things remained tentative for the duration of the event. I interviewed Manny in February, nearly a month after the Festival in 2011, after which he handed me a program, "a much coveted gift," as he described it (Figures 16-18).

There are subtle differences between the two Festivals that I attended in 2005 and 2011. The biggest difference was arriving at the Festival. In years prior to 2010, one made the trek from the city of Timbuktu over forty miles of sand in a 4x4 truck to the village of Essakane. This could take anywhere from two to four (or more) hours depending on the deftness of the driver and the strength of the vehicle. A flat tire was fairly common, as were other mishaps. Regarding her research at the Festival in 2009, ethnomusicologist Marta Amico states: "The experience of 'authenticity' offered by the festival starts with the journey to the festival location near Timbuktu, which is typically divided into two steps: The first one takes place by car, bus, or boat…" (Amico 2013, 90). Basically, one can drive the 700 or so kilometers along the long stretch of paved road from Bamako to the ferry that will take you across the Niger River to the city of Timbuktu. Alternately, you can take a boat up the Niger from Mopti, which takes several days. In addition to these modes of travel, you may also arrive by airplane, as there is a charter flight from Bamako and Mopti to Timbuktu, which is how I arrived in 2011. The second leg of the trip required four-wheel drive vehicles. "This long journey is often defined by tourists as an adventure or 'expedition,'" says Amico, "that allows them to gradually leave what they perceive as the 'civilized' world to encounter a world of

nomads, sand, and emptiness" (ibid. 90-91). I agree with Amico, that this separation from home, then from the cities of Mali, echoes Van Gennep's (1960) description of a rite of passage, as well as Graburn's treatment of tourism as a secular ritual.

The group with whom I traveled in 2005 experienced an extended version of this separation as it took us several hours to arrive at the Festival in Essakane, which is only 65 kilometers from the city of Timbuktu. In the journal passage below, I utilize my own narrative (and even naïve) voice as a tourist to highlight the themes of separation and liminality. This excerpt also shows how haphazard arriving at the festival can be and should set the stage for some of the aesthetics of the site of the festival 'in the middle of nowhere.'

> **7 January 2005**. We awoke Thursday morning around 8:00 a.m. and saw that the town (Timbuktu) was already bustling with people—tourists and locals looking for rides, young men hoping to sell their wares, women carrying food on large platters to sell—and trucks getting ready to head to the Festival. We were supposed to meet a friend of Aïcha's in front of the Hotel La Colombe at 9:00 to caravan to the Festival together. Max, our driver, needs to get gas he says. We haven't had breakfast or coffee and the five of us tell Max to go get gas and come back. For some reason we end up in the truck with him as he speeds through the narrow streets of Timbuktu looking for a 'gas station.' I see Egmar, who we were supposed to meet but he's dealing with a truck that broke down and says to find another caravan to follow to the Festival.
>
> Max sees another group heading out with Festival stickers on their trucks and takes off after them. Only two kilometers outside of town and we get stuck in the sand. We push the 'Cat-Cat' (as we have come to call the 4x4 mimicking French quatre-quatre) up the small hill and get going again. Ten yards later we're stuck again. "Camels would be so much more convenient," says one of the tourists in our truck. "What's the point of rushing after a stupid caravan of trucks if you can't keep up with them," says another.

Jake and I walk out onto the dunes and we are all in good spirits. “It’s pretty fun actually,” says Jake. We watch a dung beetle do its thing as Gary pours Nescafé coffee crystals into his mouth to kill the caffeine fit. The dunes are silky white and only a sporadic bush or tree can be seen for miles. The sky is a dusty blue and the sun is low and there isn’t a sound save for the wind. Jake and I decide we could stay here all day and enjoy the peace and quiet.

From out of nowhere a herd of goats come over the dune bleating as they pass. There are so many 4x4’s flying by at random that I’m nervous they won’t make it across the valley, but there seems to be a lull in the desert ‘traffic.’ There are no roads, not even a path really. One truck follows another’s tracks. Following the goats is a young boy, maybe eleven in a tattered blue robe. He keeps his eye on the herd and crosses the path. Moments later another boy walks out from behind a dune and sits down next to Jake and me. He doesn’t say a word, nor does he really acknowledge us at all.

I offer him a cookie and he smiles and takes it, quietly. The other boy comes back and sits next to us. He greets the other, the only words uttered between us. Jake and I carry on watching the beetle and Max tells us that a mechanic is on his way because the problem is mechanical. Now another convoy of vehicles comes wailing by as we sit and sit and sit. Finally someone stops to help because Egmar heard we had gotten stuck. He’s kind but mutters under his breath to me that ‘people from the south only know goudrone (paved roads), they don’t know sand.’ I get the impression he is insulting Max, but he is kind for stopping. He leaves as he can do nothing.

Over the horizon two men on camels appear. What a sight! They move slowly over the crest of the dune and then trot off toward the north. The silence is once again cut by the net wave of trucks heading to the Festival. This time it’s jeeps and open back trucks packed to the hilt with people, mostly Malians from what I can tell, laughing and squealing as the cars blaze over the dunes. We’re still waiting.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere this little jeep stops and these four little men jump out, run over to our truck with little boxes and start tinkering with the

hubs. They are speaking to Max in Bamana and apparently are explaining to him how to drive in the sand. Okay, so maybe the first guy was right, Max apparently is getting his first lesson in dune driving.

We set off again for the bumpiest, giggliest, ride ever. We are now passing others stuck in the sand, but refuse to stop; the tides have turned. Between an hour and a half to two hours we pass close to fifteen other cars in our previous predicament. At one point we hit rock and we all laugh that it feels like we are driving on the moon. We have left planet Earth!!

In the middle of what looks like vast emptiness, is a giant arch reading "Festival au Desert." We're here!! There are armed guards at the entrance that ask which camp we are with, and they motion us past. Though no one tells us which way to go to reach our camp. We enter the gates and see some bathrooms on the right and a small tent with people around it. It's hard to see how big the Festival grounds might be because the dunes skew the horizon. We park at the bottom of one and get out to walk around, and ask for direction.

(Author's Fieldnotes, 2005).

The adventure to the Festival over the dunes was one of the most memorable parts of our trip in 2005. According to Manny, tourists conveyed to him that they found the trek to the Festival 'fun' and part of the adventure. He lamented the move to Timbuktu because he felt it "denied tourists a major part of the Festival experience." In 2011, I took a taxi with four others with whom I was staying in Timbuktu; it took ten minutes to arrive at the entrance to the Festival. However, as Graburn's analysis shows, separation begins when one leaves home. Thus, tourism holds several different stages or sites of liminality. But the longer the separation, the more one leaves behind life at home (Graburn 2004).

Once one arrived at the Festival site, there was an entry point with a large gate and registration area where attendees showed that they had paid.[29] In 2005, we received recycled bracelets, which were marked with the name of another festival, and they were given to us by our camp leader in the evening. Once inside, the festival ground looked as though organizers were still in the process of setting up, though most of the campsites were ready for arriving tourists. In 2011, things were more organized. When I arrived at the Festival site, for instance, there was a covered area outside of the Festival arch; one could not get in the gate, which was guarded by security, without a bracelet. They had volunteers that had official registration books and they found my name and told me which camp I was to go to. They had a telephone that attendees could use to contact their camp coordinator and they had directions to the camps and one posted map of the site.

Although from my perspective the 2011 edition was much more organized, one volunteer from the U.S. said, "'Organization' is the last word that comes to mind with this experience." She said that when the bus of volunteers showed up a week prior to the Festival nothing had been prepared and they sat around waiting for direction at a hotel in Timbuktu for several days. Starting in 2005, the Festival started to recruit around forty volunteers to help out with different aspects of the organization. Tasks might include receiving festivalgoers, artists, media representatives, dealing with sound and light management, or any other task that came up. Most of these volunteers came from outside of Mali. In 2011 there were volunteers from Thailand, Canada, Brazil, the United States,

[29] All Africans get in for free, only non-African tourists have to pay, though a few non-Malian Africans with whom I spoke did not know this prior to arriving at the site, and thus had paid the 150 Euros for the three days.

and Europe, according to one consultant. Generally volunteers work for about a week and receive full board at the Festival.

There was not a fence that enclosed the entire festival area, but in 2011, the perimeter was patrolled by security (military) as part of increased security measures, which included the move from Essakane to Timbuktu. Administration, security, and emergency medical tents were located near the main gate, and there were other nearby tents with information for locals, and a traditional healing tent which created a sort of fence at the entrance. A market area to the right of the entrance created a thoroughfare toward the rest of the festival site (though one could easily walk around it). The market was lined with tents on either side and each tent had a vendor or two sitting on a mat with their wares spread out in front of them. Vendors were mostly Tuareg from Mali or Niger; fewer vendors were from Bamako, Segue, and Dogon Country. Vendors sold jewelry, textiles, or figurines; the most popular item was the Cheche or Tagelmoust, a traditional Tuareg headscarf/veil worn by Tuareg men, but found on nearly every other tourist, men and women alike, across the Festival grounds. Roving vendors also approached tourists at their camps or when walking around the Festival site.

Beyond the entrance and the market, food and alcohol were sold at either small stands or 'restaurants,' a few of the latter had large enclosed areas that created a patio. In 2005, those in the group with whom I traveled were astounded, if not overjoyed, when they came across a small café that sold beer and cocktails! One tourist I spoke with in 2011 said, "I cannot believe how tolerant they are as Muslims that they allow the sell of alcohol on the grounds." Jake and Gary spent a considerable amount of time sipping gin and tonics (without ice) in the shade of one café's tent.

Most tourist camps had their own food accommodations. At W.A.T.'s camp, all food was cooked by a Malian chef (in this case a Dogon woman, with help from her brother and a cousin) and was included in the cost of the ten day itinerary, which was about 3500 Euros in 2011. Tourists had to buy their own Festival passes from the official website, however. A Festival package with full board, which could be bought separately from an organized tour, included three days camping, three meals, and three liters of bottled water a day for about 250 Euros, on top of the Festival entrance fee which was 150 Euro in 2011; single and two day passes were also available. Festival camps were run by local Tuareg, many of them Kel Ansar and close relatives of Festival organizers from Essakane.

Throughout the day there are multiple events that take place including camel races, traditional music and dance concerts, press conferences, and development workshops. In the evening, after the sun goes down, the main stage is lit up and the concerts begin. Behind the scenes, however, there are still elements of the traditional gatherings taking place that are not as easily recognizable by tourists. In the following discussion I seek to highlight the layers of participation at the Festival as well as to understand the uses of the Festival for locals in attendance.

Innovation and Tradition

In this section, I will situate the Festival in the Desert among other types of Tuareg festivities in the area. As the quotes below illustrate, these gatherings held cherished memories. The fact that the Festival in the Desert had brought them back was profoundly important to many with whom I spoke.

"I must have been six years old when one day we had pitched our tents in the desert near the village of Gargando, west of the city of Timbuktu, heading towards Mauritania. As I stood outside our nomadic encampment on a high spot, I was puzzled as I watched something move through the camp. The image I saw was of a group of men arriving on the backs of proud-faced camels, walking in caravans or galloping. The men of our camp welcomed the guests and led them to the reception tents a few meters away from the houses. The women got busy—some organizing things inside the tents, others striking their tambourines to announce the event being prepared and to send a call to the neighboring camps."

(El Ansari, *Le Festival au Desert,* 2010).

"We had traveled to a spot a few kilometers from my village, near the city (Timbuktu). I was fairly young maybe five or six, and I noticed everyone was in his finest attire. My mother and the other women were preparing food when dozens of men began arriving on camels exquisitely decorated. I didn't know what was happening or why so many people were gathering at this spot. By nightfall the tents were pitched and I could hear the women's singing begin. The festivities lasted for days with more and more nomads arriving every day. Many years passed before I remember another gathering."

(Almou, recalling a gathering ca. 1980, interview Timbuktu, January 2011)

"We had gatherings like this all the time when I was a child. After Ramadan all of the nomads would come back to these sites and we would celebrate for days. There weren't foreigners then…sometimes tourists would come. The first time I saw a white person I was afraid because I had never seen them before…Now the Festival brings people from all over the world and the nomads can discuss and exchange ideas with people from Europe and America. It's a good thing. It's good for the nomads and it's good for the tourists to know about them."

(Mohktar, interview Timbuktu, January 2011)

For nomads, the Festival in the Desert is one iteration of traditional nomadic festivals, which were a time to reconnect, settle disputes, arrange marriages, and celebrate after being apart for most of the year. It is also one of a number of festivals in the region,[30] and mimics the general structure of Tuareg *tendé* festivals—traditional festivals based on the music of the *tendé* drum. These festivals, known as *Takoubelt* in the region of Kidal, and *Tamakannit* in Timbuktu have long been a time for nomadic Tuareg to reconnect in order to make decisions, exchange information, and bring together communities separated during the nomadic seasons. They have always had a festive atmosphere where Tuareg celebrated with song, dance, poetry, and camel races.

The Festival in the Desert is also similar to other secular festivals that are associated with youth and courtship, though many elders attended to discuss matters of political and social import, as they do now. Traditionally, elders become more devoted to Islam as part of the Tuareg lifecycle and they move away from secular activities. In Tuareg society, age is categorized by one's social and ritual position, rather than by chronological or biological markers. For example, one is not considered a full adult until they have become a parent, and become an elder when their first grandchild is born. As Susan Rasmussen has noted, "Secular evening festivals featuring non-liturgical music, courtship, and dancing, are classified as 'anti-Islamic,' and still tend to be identified with youthful, single persons" (Rasmussen 2000, 133).

The international focus and popularity of the Festival in the Desert makes it even more important to some Tuareg than other local festivals as it draws together multiple

---

[30] Each community has their own festivals, and the Festival au Desert is not the only one open to foreigners, though it is the most widely known and publicized.

communities and tens of thousands of Tuareg from Northern Mali. As such, locals often gather at the site for more than ten days before and after the tourist event takes place. When I asked a Tuareg consultant if it was strange to have foreign guests at such an intimate event, he replied: "You must realize that the part of the festival that tourists see is only three days. Most nomads have been here for a few days before and will probably stay for a week or so after tourists have gone on their way. Also, they retire to their tents and discuss things, but everyone makes the party at night together." This is a place where families can meet and discuss marriages as well. Marriages are one of the most important events that take place on the Festival grounds according to several of my consultants. Because the music and festivities are already there, they said, it has become a popular site for families that want to save money and have a major celebration. In 2011, one of the Festival organizers was married on Saturday of the Festival and according to Manny, at least ten other families were having their wedding celebrations during the three day event, albeit in the 'backstage' space for 'locals.'

The concepts of *backstage* and *frontstage* were first articulated by Goffman (1959) as a way of distinguishing between the 'front regions' where performances are made for the consumers/customers of a social establishment and the 'back regions' where performers relax and recuperate before performing again. Dean MacCannell (1976) later applied these concepts to distinguish between the spaces that accommodate tourists (the frontstage) and those where the private, everyday lives of locals are respected (the backstage). MacCannell also demarcated a series of stages that showed that there are not always clear distinctions in tourism because tourists often move in and out of venues that are also utilized by locals (such as transportation, cafes, boutiques, etc.). There are also

hybrid events where the lines between the two are blurred, or events that are frontstage, but meant to look backstage (such as the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii, see Stanton 1989, for instance). The Festival in the Desert is a hybrid front/backstage venue, as it has events simultaneously meant for both locals and tourists to enjoy (whether or not the latter understand all of it).

The Festival in the Desert literally has two separate stages: the *Scène Traditionnelle* (also called the small stage, figure 5) dedicated to performances considered part of Tuareg traditional music styles, and the *Grande Scène* which is a large concert stage for the evening performances by national and international musicians. The small stage is not as much a stage as it is an area at the foot of a dune, which is why it is also referred to as the 'dune stage,' where performances by Tuareg locals of poetry, dance, and music take place using a simple amplification system. The stage demarcations were not very clear; the 'stage' was simply a flat area below a dune with rugs laid out and speakers pointing toward the dunes. Perhaps the direction of the speakers was the indicator of who was meant to be an observer. Crowds of men on camels would gather behind groups of seated (Tuareg) families, who sat behind groups of women, some of whom were singing, clapping, ululating, and/or playing instruments. On the rugs in front of the musicians, men danced with swords in a style some described as a type of martial arts using swords in mock duals (figure 6) (Standifer 1988). Others said the dances told stories and were traditionally performed at weddings. Now they are often competitive, as is the music.



Figure 5: Scène Traditionnelle (Photo by author 2005)



Figure 6: Sword Dance (photo by author 2005)

These performances took place in the heat of the day and were not listed specifically in any of the rare programs one could find, or in the online program. These

events were simply called ‘traditional music’ with no names of the ‘bands’ or individuals listed anywhere. In 2011, I actually did not attend any of them as I was in conferences most of the day. Some Tuareg traditional music groups performed on the main stage, however, earlier in the day and had their names in the program (Tamnana, Horguere, and Bintou Garba). That year, these performances and competitions were happening more in tents on the outskirts of the festival, according to Manny, rather than on the stage. However, there were also fewer groups altogether because the move to Timbuktu made it too far for many nomads to travel.

In 2005, the small stage was very central and any passerby might stop and watch for a bit and move on. Unfortunately, without regulation or a program, most foreigners did not have a reference for understanding what these performances were, except ‘traditional.’ The competitive nature was particularly unclear, and at one event in 2005, a dispute broke out that confused many of the tourists in the audience. In fact, many simply left the scene as several minutes went by as they attempted to work something out. I asked Manny about this and he said that they were deciding whether to let one of the men perform because he was from the ‘wrong’ village (Figure 7). These competitions that take place at traditional tendé events follow a prescribed format according to one’s ‘drum group’ (tewsit). At the Festival in the Desert, hundreds of tewsiten may come to compete that may not have performed together in the past. Without traditional regulations, or in the process of new regulations and formats coming into being, confusion can occur, as this incident illustrates. They did eventually let the man perform, and the show continued.



Figure 7: Dispute (photo by author 2011)

Performances on the main 'large' stage are dominated by bands and musicians from Mali that have reached some sort of international acclaim such as Tinariwen, Tartit, Viex Farka Touré, Bombino (who are from the Saharan regions of Mali and Niger), Salif Keita, Oumou Sangaré, Bassekou Kouyaté (from the south of Mali), and many more (Figure 8). This stage is set up in a standard concert format with a massive amplification system, soundboard, lights, etc. and an MC announces each performance in French. In between sets this stage is also used for promoting social development projects to locals in attendance. For instance, between two sets in 2011, there was a comedic dramatization of an obstinate grandfather being convinced to allow his granddaughter to go to school for the good it would do the family. Because the play was in Tamasheq, outsiders did not necessarily understand it, but I spoke with several tourists in 2011 who said they enjoyed the little skits between the music as 'cultural displays,' without not understanding them.



Figure 8: Tartit on 'Big Stage' at Festival (photo by author 2011)

Throughout the festival grounds, one might also stumble upon impromptu performances by other musicians. There are two types that I came across: young men playing *al-guitara*[31] music over a small amp for whoever stops to listen (Figure 9). The other I came across: circles of men and women clapping and chanting in more 'traditional' styles with young children in tow, perhaps some dancing as well, similar to what one might find on the small dune stage. In 2005, I noticed that a small group of women had sat down in the sand and begun clapping and singing. Within moments, I found myself enclosed by a circle of camels who also came to watch and listen (Figure 10).

[31] The genre popularized by Tinariwen, called either ishumar, or simply guitar music.



Figure 9: *Al Guitara* Group (photo by author 2005)



Figure 10: Impromptu Performances (photo by author 2005)

During the day, there are also camel races that take place, which has long been a feature of Tuareg festivals; in fact, many refer to traditional gatherings as simply 'camel festivals.' In 2005, the camel race was not well advertised or cordoned off. In fact, during a performance of traditional music, I watched as a tourist was nearly trampled by a camel in one of the races that seemed to be happening on the fly by groups of men that organized them on their own (Figure 11). In 2011 the camel race was better advertised and coincided with the president's visit. It was a grand show where a crowd of possibly 1000 or more spectators watched the final leg of the race that began several kilometers away and the winner was awarded 1000 Euros by the president himself.



Figure 11: Camel Race (photo by author 2005)

Performances on the 'big stage' begin at sunset with a welcoming message. In 2005 the Minister of Culture and Tourism[32] was supposed to give the opening address but had not made it to the festival at the time the evening concerts began, which because of several logistical problems did not begin until after 10:00 p.m. The concerts go on until well into the night, ending around two or three in the morning. In 2011, there was also 'Desert Discotheque' that played music until the sun rose. The crowd is mixed of foreigners, Tuareg, and other Malians, many who are wearing the cheche, thus the audience is a medley of bright colors. People stand in the sand on the floor in front of the stage, which is set in the valley of dunes, so the dunes create a stadium affect without bleachers. The stage is brightly lit with lights and while watching these performances, one might forget that they are on the edge of the Sahara Desert, as the feel is similar to many outdoor concerts and music festivals that one might attend anywhere in the world.

Development in and through the Festival

> My father was a great scholar of Islam in my village and we were raised very traditionally, except for one thing: I went to school. There were not very many girls whose parents sent them to school, but my father was adamant that his daughters would be educated. See in the past, the French came and tried to force us to send our children to school, so many Tuareg are very suspicious of schools. After independence, we were still suspicious that the new government was trying to take away our children, turn them away from their culture that they saw as backward. So many Tuareg did not send their children to school.
>
> So, I went to school and I have many opportunities. This is why I am putting my education toward bringing schools to Tuareg villages and to show elders that I did not lose my culture. In 2003, I came to the Festival in the Desert to talk to the

[32] *OMATHO* is the abbreviated name of the Office Malien du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie

> elders about education. There were 30,000 people that year from all over Mali and the world, so I spoke to all of them. This is why the Festival is so important not just for celebrating. We can encourage elders to be sensitive to the needs of educating children, especially girls, but we can also make contact with international donors and NGO's for these campaigns as well.
>
> (Aïcha. Bamako, Mali. Interview 27 April 2004).

Historically Tuareg gatherings and festivals were an important venue for settling disputes or being informed of local politics; this is still a facet of the Festival in the Desert. According to one consultant, because of the festive atmosphere, coming to the Festival and celebrating with others usually diminished tensions and erased old hostilities without formal negotiation. However, the Festival also arranged several conferences and forums dedicated to negotiation as well as educating nomadic attendees on national and regional politics. For instance, several conferences attended by locals and foreign visitors cover topics like education in nomadic areas, meeting the United Nations Millennium Goals[33], sustainable tourism, increasing access to water and wells, among others.

These conferences generally took place in a large tent that could fit more than fifty people. Attendees sat on rugs that were laid out over the sand and faced away from the opening or 'door.' On the opposite side there were rugs that created a 'stage.' Two of the conferences that I attended in 2011 had a PA system, though most went without. In 2011, I attended a press conference with Manny and one other organizer, two with

---

[33] End extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; and Develop a global partnership for development ("Millennium Development Goals" 2014).

musicians (Tartit, Vieux Farka Touré), and several development conferences, including one with Amnesty International (Figures 12-14).

In 2005, Almou took me to a conference that was mostly attended by elders from Goundam and Essakane. The conference theme was 'decentralization.' They began discussing the problem of several wells drying up in the area and how it related to the issue of desertification in the region. They began in Tamasheq, and then someone else translated into French and Bamana. It was taking a long time to get through the information and at one point a Tuareg man said sternly, "These topics concern us, not these others, and we should proceed in Tamasheq!" They continued in Tamasheq and one by one the other tourists left. Almou encouraged me to stay saying he would translate for me. The conversation got heated when several began complaining about being taxed so heavily by the central government as the money was never returned to the North. They complained at length that there were no roads being improved in the area, and most importantly, there was still no road to Timbuktu. Highlighting the tensions that set in motion the rebellion in 1990, and perhaps hinting at the possibility that the issues that were meant to be dealt with during the peace negotiations were still unrealized, one man angrily stated: "As the south grows and is developing, the North is choked, completely cut-off from development."

These conferences are also an important site for distributing information about social programs, as the quote from Aïcha highlights. The Festival is also important for delivering of health related services. For example, there are medical tents that offer services for attendees, with minor health services for tourists, as well as vaccinations and related immunizations for local children. For some families, this may be the only time

they have access to health care; the Festival and its funding makes these things possible. There was also a booth funded by USAID where Mahmoud, one of my consultants, administered free and confidential HIV/AIDS tests for Malians in attendance. Mahmoud said that in the three days of the Festival he did at least sixty HIV tests, where as in previous years less than twenty were done. One reason for this increase, Mahmoud said, was probably a result of the site being closer to the city of Timbuktu, but he also felt that word-of-mouth advertising had raised people's awareness of the service. There were also free condoms available and his booth helped educate locals on health issues such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, syphilis, dysentery, and family planning.



Figure 12: Press Conference Tent (photo by author)



Figure 13: Development Conference (photo by author 2011)



Figure 14: Manny Ansar at Press Conference (photo by author 2011)

In an interview with Manny, he told me that the Festival was good for development for a number of reasons. One, the Festival is a place in which locals can host NGO's and show them hospitality as well as the importance of bringing development funds to the area. He said that the Festival is a time to communicate problems while simultaneously sharing their rich tradition of hospitality. Second, NGOs and others working in development give presentations at the Festival during conferences held throughout the day. In an interview with Iyor of AITMA—an NGO that also helps fund the Festival—he discussed the importance of the Festival for its goals to use culture as a vector for development, particularly in the areas of health and education, and as he said, "to open local cultures to globalization."

Throughout much of the day, Tuareg leaders meet to discuss topics of political import and attend conferences that are put on by local and international NGOs. Aïcha has presented at several of the Festival conferences, highlighting her research with the Minister of Education on the benefits of educating women and girls, as well as sharing some of the obstacles that the government has faced in extending education to nomadic areas. She said that the conference is a space where local officials and lay people could brainstorm solutions to development problems such as how to extend education to nomadic children, while also raising awareness via presentations during the concerts and conferences as mentioned above. (See the sample Program of Conferences in Table 1).

Table 1: Sample Program of Conferences/Forums (2006)

Date	Hour	Theme	Speaker	Duration
Jan 14	9:00	Multiparty and social conflicts	Sikaye Anicet (Gao)	1:15
	10:30	Nomad Schools: analysis and perspectives	Aicha Walet (Minister of Education)	1:15
	11:00 1:05	Strategy to fight against AIDS	Commission nationale de lutte contre le sida	1:15
Jan 15	9:00	Strategy to fight against the proliferation and circulation of small arms	Commission nationale	1:15
	10:30	Filling of Lake Fagibine	Engineer	1:20
	11:55 1:05	Culture and Decentralization	Ould Aly, Mission Culturelle (Timbuktu)	

'Backstage'

The fact that all of this is going on 'backstage' shows the multilayered dimensions of what seems on the surface to be nothing more than a world music festival in one of the 'most remote places in the world.' I spoke with a group of tourists at the 2011 Festival and one of them, a British doctor in his late thirties asked if the 'culture' of the Festival was real or if the locals were just dressed up in costumes for the tourists. He was surprised to learn that the Tuareg are not necessarily dressed up for tourists. Tuareg come to the Festival in their finest attire—men and women in their most elegant *boubous*.[34] The camels are even dressed up in their finest. Many locals dress this way regularly, while others who may wear jeans and tee-shirts in town, were dressed up for the special

[34] The boubou is a type of formal robe or gown worn by men (and women) in West Africa. They have flowing wide sleeves and are often worn over other clothes.

occasion. Regardless, what this particular tourist seemed to be questioning was the authenticity of the festival, which I will discuss further below. As already stated, the Festival does have the goal of maintaining and continuing a longstanding tradition of gathering together seasonally. What may be unclear to foreign tourists, and even to Malian tourists, is the significance the festival has for Tuareg beyond preserving a tradition, or performing it for tourists.

In addition to promoting development through conferences, or providing services on site, the Festival has had the goal of generating income for locals and bringing economic development to the region. This has happened most notably through the increase in tourist related services. The economic impacts of the festival are thought to have been far-reaching. The *artisanat* (craft market) provided income to artists and merchants selling their handicrafts such as jewelry, statuary, handbags, and boxes. As mentioned above, there are also roving vendors who wander the Festival grounds, approaching tourists individually in hopes of selling them jewelry or souvenirs most likely made by family members.

The Festival has also helped numerous small tour operators, car rental companies, hotels, restaurants and all of the associated businesses that supply the latter two with goods and services. In this way, the popularity of the Festival has helped to increase revenue from Bamako to Timbuktu and back again. The economic impacts of the Festival have had far reaching (and positive) effects according to many. However, as we will see in the following chapters, because the Festival is currently in exile due to renewed conflicts with Tuareg separatists, the economic conditions are at an all time low. In addition to the impact on tourist-related businesses, the Festival organizers have always

worked hand-in-hand with international and national development agencies with the hope of being a source of development aid to local communities, particularly in terms of services to nomadic attendees.

The Festival itself is funded from outside sources. Several government agencies have sponsored the event such as the Minister of Culture, and the Minister of Tourism and Art. International and national NGO's that work in music, culture, or social and economic development have helped fund it as well. Manny's NGO 'EFES' is the main funding source, as is AITMA, discussed above. Air Mali and L'Amitie (a hotel) in Bamako have provided funding. Even W.A.T. donated several thousand dollars one year, according to the owner. Beginning in 2004, the government in Mali began to see that the Festival was quickly becoming a premier tourist attraction and made an effort to fund it. Organizers also secure donations from local businesses. Because many international development-related funding agencies are tied to their own governments, many pulled their funding beginning in 2008 after several tourists were kidnapped in the Sahara. Manny said that every year after 2008 it became harder to finance. At this time, according to Manny, the government of Mali really stepped up saying it was "too important for the nation, for peace, and it would happen no matter what!"

The Festival is very expensive to put together. Manny pointed out that they have to import everything from Bamako: the generators, the bathrooms, the stage, the lighting, the sleeping mats, the water, the food, everything. Because of this, most musicians are not paid to perform, though they should be treated to quality hospitality and be provided with food and board. Even international musicians, such as Bono, Robert Plant, and Jimmy Buffet, have essentially performed as a donation. Bands that travel to the Festival

to perform are responsible for their own transportation costs to and from the site. There were many complaints circulating regarding the management of the Festival because of their 'inability' to pay performers, particularly local performers.

The expense of putting the Festival together is why organizer's initial goal to elect a different Tuareg village each year to receive funds from the Festival has largely gone unrealized. According to organizers, several different formulas have been tested over the years to try to raise money for the development of nomadic communities such as taxing travel agencies or tacking on a tax to festival tickets. In 2011, there was an optional donation of $40 that one could add to their ticket price for these projects. Because the Festival organizers and partners have not been able to actualize their myriad goals, they have had to decide where to concentrate their resources. Education has been the main focus.

Direct aid from the Festival has financed the renovation of three classrooms and supplying of workbooks, textbooks, and other school materials such as writing tablets and pencils in the municipality of Essakane. The Festival has provided full board for nomadic students in Bamako and coverage of expenditures for students studying in Algeria and Tunisia, according to Manny. Festival NGO's have also paid the salary of a teacher during the school year in Tissikorev, a school in the municipality of Essakane. The goal in 2011 was to be able to enroll 1000 nomadic children from the region of Timbuktu in a time-span of five years. Because nomadic communities in northern Mali have some of the lowest levels of primary education enrollment in the world, the Festival in 2011 and 2012 focused on education specifically. In fact, as will become more evident in the following chapter, nearly everyone involved in Tuareg cultural heritage, be it in Bamako, at the

Festival in the Desert, or internationally, has a goal of extending and expanding educational provision in nomadic communities; this was a concern of all with whom I spoke. Mali has some of the lowest numbers of educational enrollment worldwide and in the North the numbers are abysmal.

Because the Festival caters primarily to foreign visitors, with amenities imported from 1000 kilometers away, it has never made a profit, which has stifled its larger development goals. Only foreign tourists pay for entrance into the Festival and they constitute approximately ten percent of those in attendance. I have not been able to secure the exact numbers, but organizers and others have said that the Festival barely secures enough funding to set up the grounds and provide for basics. But nomadic gatherings do not need expensive amenities that cost so much. These are "first world problems" that come from the fact that tourists need toilets and restaurants and running water. It also comes from the fact that the Festival is mimicking other world music festivals that utilize sound systems and lighting that require several generators to create electricity in the middle of the desert.

This is a good of example of why Nash defined tourism as a form of imperialism (Nash 1989). As Nash states, tourists desire certain comforts from home while they are abroad and often expect to have their own needs catered to by locals rather than adapting to local conditions (p. 46). I saw this in the ways that tourists in Mali used water and electricity, taking long hot showers for instance, in areas where both were a precious resource. At the Festival there is the added expense (especially when it was in Essakane) of having to bring everything out into the middle of the desert. In 2005 the amenities were less than favorable after only 24 hours of a few thousand people using the public

portable toilets. In 2011, tour groups that had their own toilets required a special pass to use them as they became so coveted.

Cultural performances also have to adhere to time constraints and scheduling demands in ways that are not necessarily traditional, as attested to the scheduling of the Festival in January. Festivals have become a mainstay on tourist itineraries because they can be made to conform to these prerequisites while also sharing culture in a condensed form (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Locals in Mali confided that the catering to foreigners was less than ideal in many ways, though they loved having tourists to share conversations about the world. As I will discuss below, hospitality is a local value and it is not taken lightly. In fact, some of the complaints that I heard specifically regarded the lack of hospitality some local participants and performers felt they received.

Overall, the expense is what Manny said kept the Festival from realizing its development goals. But as several Tuareg consultants hinted at, there are some potential controversies over the way the Festival was managed. About a half dozen separate local Tuareg consultants said that people higher up in the organizational structure were definitely profiting from the Festival at the communities' expense. Some pointed directly at Manny who they assumed was making a living off of profits from the Festival. Locals also complained about the lack of professionalism and organization. Several tourists with whom I spoke were outraged at the lack of organization, particularly in 2005. Performers were also purportedly angry that they had not been paid to perform and had not been properly hosted by management in previous years and refused to perform again.

Speaking with one of the drivers for a tour operator who grew up with members of Tinariwen[35] said that they were unhappy with the lack of hospitality at previous festivals. He added that "Timbuktu stole the Festival" from Tinariwen and from Kidal. When the Festival was permanently moved to Essakane (a Kel Ansar village where Manny is from) in 2003, some people saw that as a political move that benefited the Kel Ansar and no one else. This may be inadvertently true, as the little bit of development that has been realized has largely gone to schools in the area of Essakane. It also highlights the complexity of whether this is a "Tuareg" event or not. The Festival had intended to help Tuareg communities throughout Mali, but ended up barely being able to help one.

In 2010, the move from Essakane to the city of Timbuktu, once again catered to the needs (read: fears) of foreigners whose governments had published travel advisories not to travel to the north of Mali because of possible terrorist activity (see chapter VIII). Many locals, including Manny, lamented this move, although they were happy that tourists felt safer. As mentioned above, the move to Timbuktu made it too far for many nomads to travel. Organizers had settled on the site of Essakane because it was historically a destination for nomads after their seasonal migration. According to Manny, it was a traditional site that was already being used by several nomadic communities for the tendé festivals, so it seemed like a natural choice for the international Festival. Others contend that it was a political choice that forced many communities out of the

[35] I asked Manny if he felt that any of these complaints were founded and he disagreed wholeheartedly (this is not surprising as he is the highest up in the organizational structure). In 2005 Manny said that he lived off his income from his job in Bamako and had never made a profit or income from the festival as it never made a profit. In regards to Tinariwen (whom he used to manage) he said they have very friendly relations and the times they did not attend the festival were due to personal circumstances (illness and death in the family for instance).

organization and consolidated the Festival in the hands of particular Kel Ansar who purportedly profit off the books. Because there has still not been an audit and bookkeeping is still a major problem, there was no way for me or anyone else to validate these claims.

Other issues arose that also seemed to be a result of the move to Timbuktu. According to several of my consultants there were too many beggars, prostitutes, and street people that came to the Festival causing problems for the tourists and Tuareg participants. Almou said that petty theft had never been a problem at the Festival when it was in Essakane, but was a daily occurrence that he had to deal with at the Timbuktu site. Granted, the Festival was a mere kilometer from the city center of Timbuktu. Several Tuareg consultants said that they felt it 'cheapened' the Festival and took away the authenticity. I can add that at the Essakane site nomadic families made up the majority of Festival participants, whereas the Timbuktu site had Malians from considerably more social and cultural backgrounds.

Conclusions

In all, the festival is not huge, a few thousand foreigners and non-Tuareg participants, combined with potentially upwards of ten or twenty-thousand Tuareg participants according to organizers. In 2011, there was estimated to be about 10,000 Tuareg and only a few hundred tourists, according to Festival management. Thus is it a Tuareg event? In what ways does it continue a (Tuareg) tradition? Although the Festival is modeled and promoted in ways that are ultimately familiar to European and American concert-goers and music festival participants, behind and between the scenes Tuareg modes of participation take place simultaneously.

There were several motivations for opening up the Festival in the Desert to outsiders. One was the hope that the Festival could bring awareness to the realities of life in the desert and to the culture of the Tuareg. This had several concommitant side effects. One motivation was the potential profit to be made as tourism was seen as a way to increase investment and development in the area. The Festival was also about opening up dialogue with outsiders, particularly bringing Malians together as one nation. One consultant said that the Festival's theme of 'peace' is a way of saying that its organizers are seeking belonging in the nation. Mali's government has responded by helping to fund the Festival which it saw as increasing tourism in the country, but that they also saw in it a mode of diplomacy. Lastly, the Festival is seen by many to continue a tradition that had been lost or was in danger of being lost. Although it is of recent origin, and mimics other world music festivals, some of its backstage elements continue to serve nomadic communities in ways that traditional gatherings and festivals had. Thus, the globalized space created by tourism at the Festival serves as a path for how nomads can enter into global processes. But as will unfold in subsequent chapters, the primary means by which they make their entrance is through certain identity performances that seek legitimization from outsiders (the nation-state, the market, international tourists) based primarily on "culture." In the next chapter, I will discuss how the Festival fits in with other projects related to Tuareg identity and cultural heritage.



Figure 15: Festival Program showing partners



Figure 16: Program showing layout of Festival



Figure 17: Program showing schedule of events and musicians

CHAPTER VI

TOUMAST: TUAREG IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

> "To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize "how it really was." It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger. For historical materialism it is a question of holding fast to a picture of the past, just as if it had unexpectedly thrust itself, in a moment of danger, on the historical subject."
>
> -Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History,* (Benjamin 2009)

When I asked Tuareg participants at the Festival what they felt was the most important facet of the Festival, nearly all of them said, "to promote and preserve Tuareg Cultural Heritage and create intercultural dialogue."[36] *Toumast* (alternatively *tumast)* is a Tamasheq word that roughly translates to Tuareg 'identity' and by extension 'heritage.'[37] Throughout my fieldwork I engaged with different individuals and collectivities who stated that their main goal was to 'preserve and protect' Tuareg culture, specifically 'intangible cultural heritage,' as one consultant clarified. Before I left for Mali in 2010 I wondered what types of individuals concerned themselves with preserving their culture. My thesis was that it would be those that were most at risk of 'losing' their culture, i.e. cosmopolitan urban Tuareg, who would act as "cultural brokers"[38] (Kurin 1997). As I

---

[36] The latter was also a major theme at the 2011 edition of the Festival, so much so that tourists in the Festival camp began joking about it and several said they had tired of hearing the phrases "intercultural dialogue" or "bridges between cultures."

[37] I heard this word used frequently in 2011, both at the Festival and by others I encountered in Bamako who also were in the 'business' of preserving Tuareg heritage.

[38] Kurin describes a cultural broker as someone who is charged with representing and interpreting someone, someplace, or something through cultural programs such as museums and festivals for those outside of that culture.

will discuss in this chapter, the act of preserving Tuareg culture is done through simultaneously articulating what *was,* what *is,* and what *will be*. To a certain degree, to know one's culture, one has to also know what one's culture is not. It is in the moment of danger that one begins to 'hold fast to a picture of the past' and define what will ultimately be known of something, someone, or somewhere.[39] This is a project of both identity and heritage, a dialogic process which, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has pointed out, is often about producing the local for the global (1998). Identity and heritage both interact in spaces of power and negotiation, and heritage especially is about 'global' values. However, in the case of World Heritage Sites, and increasingly with Intangible Cultural Heritage, 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' is often based in Western national and elite class experiences that reinforce received ideas about innate cultural value tied to time depth, monumentality, expert knowledge and aesthetics (L. Smith 2006).

In this chapter I will focus on the Festival in the Desert as part of a process of preserving and protecting *Toumast*, articulating the way it fits in with other processes of Tuareg cultural brokering, and how it relates to "intercultural dialogue." I will discuss a Tuareg cultural center in Bamako called 'Centre Culturel de Tumast' that concerns itself with the preservation of Tuareg intangible cultural heritage, as well as some of the Intangible Cultural Heritage practices related to music, UNESCO, and Tartit, a traditional Tuareg music ensemble, famous on the global stage. In discussing each of these as sites of the articulation of Tuareg cultural identity, I will necessarily highlight the politics of

---

[39] Cf: Dundes (1969) who argues that folklore devolves causing preservationists to make it their mission to rescue these archaic forms before they disappear, simultaneously utilizing them in order to revitalize some aspect of the identity of the particular culture.

cultural presentation and preservation, as well as the contested nature of collective identities, particularly as it relates to the place that Tuareg inhabit in the nation of Mali.

Many people are familiar with Tuareg art forms. Beautiful silver jewelry, particularly the famous cross of Agadez, has made Tuareg art a mainstay in many import and jewelry stores, as well as in collectors' homes across the globe. In fact, Hermès, the legendary French house of couture, commissioned Tuareg artisans to make exclusive silver pieces for their stores, and even produced Tuareg designs on silk scarves and handbags (Seligman 2006b). But as I will interrogate here, the intangible aspects of identity and heritage are tied to and have important ramifications that are tangible, often in the form of remuneration. For instance, in 2002, Volkswagen introduced the SUV crossover vehicle, the *Touareg* (European spelling). A few years later, Georg Klute, an anthropologist at the University of Bayreuth, negotiated with Volkswagen for a copyright fee of $500,000 for the use of the name Touareg, which was donated to a village of Tuareg in the region of Kidal where Klute has done fieldwork since 1973 (Gardi 2006, 2; Klute personal communication). Interestingly, on Volkswagen's site they do not report it as a 'copyright fee' but one of several efforts that the company is making for "sustainability and responsibility" ("Volkswagen Group Water for the Desert Riders" 2014). For instance, most of the money was used to build schools in the area. "In 2002, Volkswagen, as an expression of thanks for the inspirational name, built two schools in the Tuareg tribal area between Sahel and Sahara: in Tinnesako and Anouzagréne" (ibid). Working with a Volkswagen official, Klute went on to form an NGO called 'Tamat' in 2004 that works on development in the area through projects focused on water, health, and education. Volkswagen dedicated ten years of sponsorship to the project, "providing

funding not only for new classrooms and teachers but also to buy a flock of goats and a herd of camels for the school" (ibid).

These activities are happening in tangible places, specific villages in Kidal in this instance, and affecting the lives of individuals and communities. But as with most development and heritage preservation projects the process is neither universal nor equal; it is a selective process that will in the end leave some or many things and people out (L. Smith 2006). In the case of Malian Tuareg it becomes even further complicated by several facts related to internal stratification and other tensions, as I will discuss below.

My initial assumptions researching tourism was similar to early anthropological works fearing that the commodification of culture would inevitably lead to its destruction (Greenwood 2004). What this destruction looks like, however, is hard to assess. Locals in all four of the main tourist cities in Mali with whom I spoke welcomed the money that tourists brought in, as well as genuinely enjoyed the cultural exchanges. Some did say that they worried that too many tourists might encourage their children to want to adopt western styles, habits, and attitudes, a concern they also had about the influx of foreign media. Visitors to Mali whom I encountered or interviewed or who have written about their trips to Mali have nearly all commented on how friendly and welcoming Malians are to outsiders. Many Tuareg in Timbuktu with whom I spoke said that hospitality toward outsiders is a local cultural ideal and part of their heritage, thus tourism is considered part of their heritage (more below). And in terms of cultural continuity, there is no reason to believe that tourism has affected Malian culture more than other influences such as socioeconomic changes from war, drought, colonization, urbanization, or education.

Tourism is part of the rapid increase in cultural contact and sharing that makes up the present moment of globalization. Although cultural productions, such as festivals, are frequently formatted under the auspices of western hegemony, recall Richard Wilk's term 'structures of common difference' (1995). However, locals have recourse to certain aspects of agency, but for the most part they work within global hegemonic structures, according to Wilk. I would add however, that locals work through these structures on account of their own motivations. I will investigate this here by paying particular attention to what those in my field site named as motivations for sharing their culture through performance and tourism. Time and again, consultants told me that reaching out to the world, whether through tourism, performances at the Festival or abroad, was a way to articulate their place in the world, to fight for their place in the nation of Mali, and to gain recognition for the North specifically.

Although much of what tourists and other foreigners expect of Africans is fairly predictable, and heritage is often safeguarded through elite practices, the identities that individuals and groups forge, or 'invent,' are not done simply for westerners; they are important projects of articulating a place in a rapidly globalizing world. These identity projects are often articulated in what Appadurai calls *scapes* to show how global flows are not uni-directional from the West (center) to the Rest (periphery) (Appadurai 1990). Ethnoscapes, for instance, create disjunctured meanings that shift in context and across space, and as I argue, according to one's motivations and goals. Appadurai argued that ethnoscapes arise out of multi-directional movements between local settings, where mobile groups are rarely able to form fixed imaginary identities because of constant movement (297). I argue that identity is always in constant movement, worked out in

contact zones "where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power " (Pratt 2007, 43). These contact zones are where identities are articulated.

The Festival in the Desert represents a multidimensional site of articulation—a place where the local and the global come into contact, where identities are formed and negotiated (Gupta and Ferguson 2002, 67). As Stuart Hall states, identity is a process of articulation that requires a "binding and marking of symbolic boundaries" and these boundaries are created and maintained by discourse through representation (1996, 3). What an outsider expects of the Tuareg, for instance, is an already existent representation that is then articulated in the process of interaction. But these processes happen in dialogue, in a back and forth 'conversation' where negotiation is paramount, and Western discourse is only one in several.

I use the term 'identity' here as a result of both my own interpretations of what I observed—a self-conscious sense of self (cf: Giddens 1991)—as well as what Tuareg consultants shared with me, particularly when using the term 'toumast'. However, I cannot help but ask, as Richard Handler does: "Is 'identity' a useful cross-cultural concept?" (1994). Just as anthropologists and folklorists are becoming wary of terms such as culture, tradition, and heritage, we must likewise scrutinize the term 'identity' (see for e.g.: Gupta and Ferguson 2002 [1997]; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995). Identity is used in a very western framework of individuality (and liberalism) where it is conceived of in terms of a certain oneness, sameness, and essence (as per the Oxford dictionary definition quoted in Handler 1994, 28). Handler shows how "It testifies more to the rapid spread of hegemonic ideas about

modernity and ethnicity than it does to the universality of collective concerns about identity" (1994, 38). What I learned from talking with Tuareg about the Tamasheq term toumast, however, is that ideas about a collective identity are largely housed in issues of heritage preservation, and many with whom I spoke felt anxious that certain facets of Tuareg heritage were being lost, and with it their identity as a people, as a culture. Thus the project of identity building and heritage preservation, are part of a larger project concerned with the 'politics of recognition'. Thus, identity can be a useful term for social justice issues that Tuareg face in a multiethnic nation.

As an ethnic minority seeking a place in a rapidly globalizing technocratic society, the Tuareg can gain a great deal politically and socially from entertaining the notion of a collective identity, thus they often use romanticized stereotypical images of themselves, particularly playing up nomadism.[40] What is deemed important in the forging of a Tuareg identity? Who is doing this work? And how are they working to maintain and promote the idea? The project of forging a unified Tuareg identity is a particularly challenging task, however, as who counts as 'Tuareg' is contestable. In fact, the name 'Tuareg' itself is not a neatly definable or uncontested nomenclature as it is an outsider's term that many Kel Tamasheq do not use to define themselves. Also, the "Tuareg do not form a cohesive whole, and they have a long history of intergroup conflict" (Seligman 2006, 23). As with other identity-based projects, debates rage over what constitutes Tuareg heritage and identity. As Susan Rasmussen found in analyzing an international performance by Tartit, there are debates over Tuareg cultural memory and different

[40] However, I will discuss the problems as well in the following chapter.

voices of identity emerge in different contexts (Rasmussen 2005). This situation is compounded evermore by the current political crisis that has divided not only the north from the south but communities and families from each other as well. Regardless, Tuareg with whom I spoke have stated the importance of sharing, preserving, and promoting (at least their version of) Tuareg culture with the world.

Culture Brokers

Mohamed Aly (Manny) Ansar

"[Before the Festival], the world didn't know the Tuareg, and the Tuareg didn't know the world" (Manny, interview, Bamako, January 2011)

I first met Manny Ansar in Bamako on 2004 when I was working with Aïcha on education in nomadic areas. The first time we met Manny was wearing jeans and a T-shirt and greeted me in English. He invited me to attend a gathering of folks who had worked on the Festival that year. He picked me up the next evening wearing a fine boubou and Tuareg veil or Tagelmust, but he did not cover his mouth when we spoke, as less cosmopolitan Tuareg men did in my presence. We arrived at the home of a man known as 'Egmar' who shared with me a documentary that the BBC had aired the previous year about the Festival. The home was a three-story cement-brick house that resembled many in the middle classes in Bamako with indoor lighting and plumbing, tiled floors, and upholstered furniture. During this gathering, Manny and Egmar both explained to me the vision of the Festival, excited that it was gaining so much attention.

In 2003, the first documentary film[41] was made about the Festival, when Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin fame performed.

Manny was born amidst the sand dunes of Essakane, in the Tuareg village of the Kel Ansar, in the region of Timbuktu. Through EFES Foundation and Essakane Productions, both of which he founded, he acts as the Executive Producer of the Festival. At the time of its creation Tinariwen was managed by Manny. Their music was just gaining attention outside of the Sahara in the late 1990's, which as already discussed led to the creation of the Festival in 2001. Manny has a master's degree in International Public Policy and for years worked in the humanitarian aid field while his true passion had always been music, he said. Manny served as a resident consultant for the *Strømme Foundation*[42] from 1985-2002, a not-for-profit organization, prior to running the Festival. In September 2003, he became the Chief Officer of Logistics and Human Resources for AMADER, a Malian agency funded by the World Bank, which focuses on providing electrical services to rural areas. It was a couple of years ago that he and a small handful of others, were able to leave their 'day jobs' to focus fully on the Festival.

Manny works tirelessly to preserve the rich musical heritage of Mali and West Africa, and to promote international peace and cultural plurality through cultural engagement, and has recently won several awards and speaking engagements at

---

[41] *Festival au Désert*, DVD was the first, filmed in 2003 (Brouet 2004). In 2011 *Woodstock in Timbuktu* was filmed directed by Dutch filmmaker Désirée von Trotha. *Last Song Before the War* was also filmed in 2011 produced by Andrea Papitto**,** Kiley Kraskouskas and Leola Calzolai-Stewart. Both were released in 2013.

[42] The Strømme Foundation is a Norwegian international development organization "helping poor people climb out of poverty through microfinance and education. It is involved in microfinance projects in South America, East and West Africa, and Southeast Asia. It works through partners on the ground, some of these partners are major MFIs, while others are grassroots groups based locally in the villages" [http://www.microfinancegateway.org/p/site/m/template.rc/1.11.192995/] accessed 1/23/2014) .

universities and institutions around the world. Most recently, he won the prestigious Freemuse Award for artistic freedom from the United Nations in Geneva. According to Manny: "Music is important as a daily event. It's not just a business, for it's through our music that we know history and our own identity. Our elders gave us lessons through music. It's through music that we declare love and get married — and we criticize and make comments on the people around us."[43] It is in this way that Manny sees music as essential to the future of Tuareg culture and peace in Mali. Through the Festival he and Philip Brix (manager of Lo'Jo who initiated the idea of the Festival in the Desert) sought to invite the world to Mali's desert to help in the promotion of the music and bring investment into the area through economic and social development projects.

Manny told me in a recent interview that the main goal of the Festival is for the world to know the Tuareg and for the Tuareg to know the world. He said that before the rebellion the world did not know who the Tuareg were, they did not know the culture, only the rebellion. He said that the most important point was to first focus on their neighbors to the south because relations with sedentary Malians were so bad. He said that Southern Malians had a very bad image of the Tuareg, so it was essential that they first begin dialogue with them. As I mentioned above, Manny said that the tension at the first Festival was palatable; people had their arms folded and shot nervous glances at each other. Once the music began, the tension melted away. It was then that Manny said he saw the power of music to open dialogue and to resolve conflicts. Something that he feels even more strongly about after the take-over of Timbuktu in 2012 by radical Islamists

---

[43] This quote is reproduced in several places online, and can be found here: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-01-25-00-the-battle-for-malis-soul-is-a-battle-for-its-music [accessed 2/28/2014] ("The Battle for Mali's Soul Is a Battle for Its Music" 2014) .

who instituted Shari'a law and outlawed all forms of secular music or dance. This is why he said that his work in promoting music has become a full-time job, particularly after the recent rebellion and coup d'état, and aligns with his previous work in humanitarian aid.

Manny further explained that the Festival is significant for developing and promoting Malian music. This is a place where local and emerging musicians meet musicians from around the world and can replicate the trajectory that won Tinariwen a Grammy in 2012. I spoke recently with Chris Nolan, a music promoter in the United States, who now manages Khaira Arby, "The Nightingale of the North," from Abaradjou in Timbuktu, and Imarhan, a Tuareg "desert blues" band from Timbuktu, through his company Clermont Music. He met these musicians while helping organize the Festival in the Desert. These types of exchanges have proven invaluable for not just the musicians, but for the subsequent development and recognition that they bring to region as well.

Nearly every Malian musician with whom I spoke at the Festival was working on a project related to development. As they gained notoriety and were paid for playing internationally, they put their profits into developing certain areas of Northern Mali. Tinariwen, for instance, opened a school in Kidal through their NGO, 'Taghreft Tinariwen." And as I will discuss below, Tartit, a well-known Tuareg music ensemble has done the same. Vieux Farka Touré (son of the world-famous desert blues guitarist Ali Farka Touré), who I briefly interviewed in 2011, said that he pays for mosquito nets, and provides other things needed in the North, particularly in the smaller villages. When I asked if he too had an NGO that he founded, he said that he does these things directly; he buys the necessary items (5000 mosquito nets in 2011) with the money he makes as a traveling musician and distributes them to those in need. Vieux also said that when he

traveled around the world that he promotes the Festival at all of his concerts because it brings a lot of people work. His father did the same, he said, as Ali was one of the central performers at the Festival every year until his death in 2006. Vieux wants to continue to promote the Festival, as "Tourism is everything for development in Timbuktu." In response to the problems brewing at the time, he feared: "if tourism stops it would be very troubling for the entire country" (a reality that came to pass).

Manny also explained that the Festival has been an important way for Tuareg, especially the youth, to 'rediscover' their culture. After living in refugee camps and having life disturbed by civil unrest, it has helped to reinvigorate lost traditions, especially the music, but also the mere act of celebrating had returned. This was also reflected in an interview with members of the Tuareg band *Tartit* who have become world famous in their performances of traditional Tuareg music. They said that they play traditional music specifically so that the youth will know their own culture and the world will know about life in the desert.

Ensemble Tartit

Tartit is the Tamasheq word for unity, a significant symbol for the music ensemble of the same name, as its members are forged from two separate music groups: one who met in a refugee camp in Mauritania, the other in a refugee camp in Burkina Faso, where they were displaced during the drought and civil war of the 1990's (Rasmussen 2005). Members of Tartit originally numbered approximately twenty people, but now have around ten and include men and women singers and players of traditional

Tuareg instruments such as: the tendé, imzad, and taherdent (ibid).[44] Known as 'Disco,' Fadimata Walett Oumar is considered the head of Tartit. She said that the Festival has been a way to valorize Tuareg culture for young people. In an interview, she talked about how young people all want 'modern things' and to be like Europeans, but when they see that Europeans have come all the way to Essakane or Timbuktu just to see their culture, it gives them pride in what they have to share. She and others in the group believe that with Tuareg music being valorized internationally it has the potential to improve the situation for nomads by building pride in the culture from within as well through sharing their stories abroad. Disco's goals in touring are similar, she said: "when people hear of the nomads they will know they are here and can learn of their struggles." Vieux Farka Touré also echoed this in his interview, feeling strongly that people from wealthy nations should come and see what life was like in the desert, "both the good and the bad," he said, meaning that he wanted people to see the poverty as well as share in the beauty of the culture.[45] Many from the North have felt utterly neglected by the state of Mali, and are reaching out to an international community to build their presence in the world.

Disco also said that she specifically wants to help make the imzad popular again because so many young people are learning electric guitar and want to be like Tinariwen. Also, until recently only women of noble origins played the imzad (Rasmussen 2005). In traditional Tuareg music, certain forms have been associated with particular people based

---

[44] Members of Tartit are: Fadimata Walett Oumar, Walett Oumar Zeinabou, Mama Walet Amoumine, and Fadimata W. Mohamedun all on tendé and vocals, Tafa Al Hosseini on vocals and imzad, Mohamed Issa Ag Oumar on lead electric guitar and vocals, Ag Mohamed Idwal on four-string teherdent lute and guitar, Amanou on three-string tehardent lute, guitar and vocals, and lead vocalist Mossa Ag Mohamed.

[45] Vieux Farka Touré is not Tuareg, his father was from the region of Timbuktu, part Songhai and Fula/Fulani, but his comment highlights the belief in a 'desert culture' of which many in Timbuktu spoke, particularly regarding hospitality.

on their gender or social status, and the instruments that Tartit plays, which includes the guitar, would not traditionally be played all together (ibid). I asked Disco if she was concerned about the traditional restrictions placed on instruments, whether the 'authenticity' was lost if a man played the imzad, for instance. She said that for her, it doesn't matter who's playing the instruments, she mostly fears that traditional music is suffering and that is why Tartit is working to bring it back into fashion. Tartit spoke of a music school that they recently started specifically dedicated to teaching traditional Tuareg music forms to local children, and in this school they place no restrictions on who plays what instrument. They have also funded programs that work to bring educational and economic opportunities to women and children.[46] Disco said that she is pleased that the tendé drum has continued to be taught, but other instruments are in danger of being lost.

During a press conference at the Festival I observed that members of Tartit, particularly Disco, as the spokesperson for the band, also became a spokesperson for Tuareg culture. Many of the questions that interviewers asked were about Tuareg culture broadly, not simply about music or the band. As Susan Rasmussen found in the US, "Tartit are mouthpieces who speak for other Tuareg, somewhat like ambassadors speak for selected cultural authorities" (Rasmussen 2005, 812). But there is a level of negotiation that I, and Rasmussen, noted. For instance, one interviewer asked about marriage customs and if it is true that Tuareg women can divorce. There seemed to be some negotiation between Disco and another woman from Tartit, her answer was that

[46] The women of Tartit had formed an association recognized by the United Nations that is now unable to run do to the turmoil in the region. I was not able to find any information online about the association.

yes, in many cases they could, but added, that marriages are often arranged for girls at a young age, but that this was changing with education. Rasmussen noted that in the process of translating Tuareg culture to Americans that there is intricate 'impression management' and I believe that in this answer Disco, in discourse with the other woman, thought carefully about presenting a picture of Tuareg culture that felt 'true' but at the same time highlighted the importance of education for improving the position of women who are losing traditional power as a result of outside forces. From Tartit's perspective, their role is important for negotiating change, safeguarding tradition, and sharing Tuareg culture with the world. As Rasmussen states, "From Tartit's perspective…the performance represents the most powerfully meaningful cultural experience…[as] it reveals that, while forces of globalization and transcultural flows are indeed a powerful influence on local cultural expressions of identity and memory…Tartit was not passive in these processes" (Rasmussen 2005, 818).

Centre Culturel Tumast

One afternoon, a friend in Bamako offered to take me to what he called a "Tuareg Cultural Center." I was initially concerned that it was going to be a shop where I would be expected to buy tourist items; I was happily surprised. At the gate, I was greeted by a man who introduced himself as Iba and we walked into the courtyard. On one side was a small brick building with offices and a gallery and to the north was a large tent 'a la Marocaine'—or Moroccan style.[47] I walked with Iba into the tent area and we chatted, apparently waiting for the director of the center, Mohamed, to arrive. Iba studied

[47] The Tuareg tent is similar, but in this case the tent was huge with a cement foundation and cushions all around the perimeter.

sociology in Paris and worked in the area of education in nomadic areas as well as in the preservation of Tuareg culture. His work included recording and translating songs and poetry into French from Tamasheq and explaining their significance to outsiders as he felt that song and poetry were the best ways for outsiders to understand Tuareg life and culture. He said that he worked for the center in this capacity as well as photographing life in 'the bush' (meaning nomadic life in rural areas) to show "the every day mode of life of the nomad." He was also still concerned with education for nomadic children because he said it as their only chance for survival. They needed to know the outside world he said, even if it is threatening theirs. Iba believed that although education is seen as a foreign influence by some, it is the only way to support the life of nomads, as well as preserve their culture. "It is a delicate balance; especially for those who want to remain nomadic," he said. Every year, according to Iba, more and more nomads "leave their animals," effectively abandoning their way of life.

Throughout my fieldwork in Mali, I regularly asked Tuareg what it 'meant to be Tuareg' or what toumast meant to them. The first on everyone's list: nomadism. This seemed ironic to me, as all of the people I spoke with were <u>not</u> living a nomadic life, per se. In fact, when I asked Egmar this question, as we sat in his living room watching the BBC documentary mentioned above, I said, "but you live in the city." He said (with only a hint of irony), "if I can't get up to Timbuktu to see my animals, then I rearrange my furniture! See, I am still a nomad." Nomadism is a quintessential feature to Tuareg identity, and as I came to understand, it was not only lived in the economy of pastoralism, but in the act of being Tuareg, in the heritage perhaps. Another consultant said that this is why he chose to become a schoolteacher because he could travel back to his village in the

region of Timbuktu each year during breaks. So although nomadism is also one of the most romanticized aspects by outsiders, as I will discuss below, I found that it was still a quintessential marker of Tuareg identity, even if it is changing form.

Unfortunately, Iba did not have this outlook. Although Iba says that he wants to see his heritage safeguarded, nomadism really does not have a future. According to him, even the salt caravan was going to disappear soon. His grim prediction was that in twenty to thirty years, there would be no more nomads. This is why education is so important, he said. I asked Iba to also comment on the Festival and how it aligns with the work he does and the goals of the Center. He said that he appreciates that the Festival is showcasing Tuareg talent and helping musicians make money off of their art. He also appreciated that it was bringing outsiders to the area to meet nomads. He said, "Through dialogue, through interaction, through recognition, Tuareg identity is bolstered." However, it was not the best mode of cultural preservation, he added, as it is only three days a year and caters more to outsiders than locals.

After chatting awhile with Iba, Mohamed, the president of Tumast, arrived. Mohamed was an energetic man who was bubbling with excitement about the center. He was in Western dress when we met, wearing a loose-fitting linen suit coat over a V-neck sweater. He was well presumably in his fifties, and as I learned had spent most of his adult life in Bamako. Mohamed said that it was toumast—Tuareg identity—that created the Center, not the other way around, underscoring a belief that Tuareg heritage existed in a time before and a place outside of the Center's goals. These are: to popularize and promote Tuareg culture, and to safeguard Tuareg tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The Center was initiating activities that Mohamed hoped would promote the

writing and preservation of Tifinigh, the Tamasheq alphabet and writing system. He added, however, that its objectives are not *only* about the cultural heritage of the Tuareg; the Center also aims for the "consolidation and solidarity of all communities in Mali. Together for the fulfillment of the goals of socioeconomic development in a plural Mali."[48] He said he wants the Center to create lasting "intercommunity and intercultural ties, creating links between communities in Mali as well as with the outside world."

Mohamed hopes that through bringing in world-renowned musicians like Tartit and Tinariwen, as well as spotlighting budding musicians, that the center will gain popularity and open up dialogue with those who live in Bamako. Being in Bamako is very important, according to Mohamed, "because so many Malians do not know or understand the Tuareg." "Many in the south still associate all Tuareg with rebels," he went on to say. Mohamed spoke at length about how much he also wanted to support "true" artists who produce quality art. He lamented that the economic conditions for many nomadic Tuareg had lessened the quality of Tuareg art forms, specifically the inability of many artisans to use sterling silver, instead using what is called 'tourist silver' (a mix of nickel and less than 40 percent silver). He wanted the Center to only sell quality art, mostly jewelry (made my men) and leatherwork (made by women), in their shop on site, and he planned to expand its small gallery as well (Figure 18).

The Center is also a restaurant and banquet hall, where they regularly host dinners of traditional Tuareg cuisine, and serve fresh juices made through a women's microfinance NGO called NAPRO. Which he also sells bottled in the Center's cantine. During these banquets musicians are often playing and people have a chance to browse

[48] The statements come directly from the Center's official objectives. http://tumast.com/objectif/

the shop and donate to the various projects the Center highlights. Mohamed hoped to make enough money at the Center to fund schooling in nomadic areas, as well, but at the time of my fieldwork this was still a far off dream. Overall, he said that he is pleased if people come just to see great music, eat food, and partake in traditional Tuareg culture.



Figure 18: Mohamed in his gallery, Bamako (photo by author 2011)

Mohamed said that he became interested in preserving Tuareg culture because at one point in his life he was ashamed to be Tuareg. He left home at eighteen and came to Bamako to study international business and has been an entrepreneur ever since. When he got to Bamako all he wanted was to be 'modern' and forget his life 'in the bush.' He ended up marrying a Bamana woman and together they have two children. He recounted this story that he said led him back to his culture:

> My brother came to visit from the north at one point. He was excited to meet my children, his nephews. Unfortunately they really only speak French and a little Bamana, so they could not communicate with their uncle, who only spoke Tamasheq. When I saw that my own family could not communicate I was deeply saddened. I had worked so hard to be modern, and I had forgotten everything about my childhood. I didn't want to have anything to do with it at one point, and

> I abandoned it, effectively. Until one day someone asked about this scar on my arm and I remembered that I got it when I fell off a camel. This scar was all that was left of my childhood.
>
> (Interview, Bamako, February 2011)

From this experience he decided to use his entrepreneurial skills to start a business selling Tuareg art. He wrote to a funding agency in Europe and secured enough money to buy thousands of pieces of quality Tuareg jewelry and leather art to sell in a shop that he owned. He then had the idea of opening a gallery, and this is how the idea of the Cultural Center was born. The Center has a small gallery and shop and he hoped to expand both of them. Numerous different groups and individuals support the Center, though Mohamed and his family were largely funded it at the time that I was there. It in turn supports several hundred artists, he said. The tent that we were sitting in created a large gathering room that groups could rent out for parties and meetings, where the Center also regularly hosts well-known Tuareg musicians, including Amanar, Groupe Agna, Imajaran, (all of whom are gaining international audiences), in addition to larger band like Tinariwen and Tartit (Figure 19).

In an informal focus group one afternoon, with several men at the Center, I asked about the word *toumast*. In discussion with them they came up with a list that they felt encompassed much of what fell under the rubric of toumast, but it was more than just these 'things.' They said it was their heritage and was found in: the dress—particularly the veil of both men and women, including the rituals that went with the veiling, Tuareg cuisine, dances, songs and poetry, the tents, the art (jewelry, leather working, etc.), the language of Tamasheq and Tifinigh writing, and in a (history) of nomadism. The Center hopes to share and to safeguard all of these things for future generations. But what many

overlook is the paradoxical nature of preserving cultural heritage in any setting, and how particularly complex it is in the Tuareg context.



Figure 19: One wall of Center's meeting room tent, Bamako (photo by author 2011)

Conclusions: Performing Identity, Preserving Heritage

As many of the above groups and individuals underscore, safeguarding traditions is simultaneously a project of learning and sharing. It is about youth and elders, locals and foreigners, about "keeping the culture going (for others)" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Note that the point at which one becomes concerned with saving something is at the very moment one is set to lose it (i.e. urban folks preserving life 'in the bush' that they do not themselves intend to return to). Tuareg who are in the process of living a nomadic life are essentially 'safeguarding' their traditions by virtue of living them; what does it mean to them that urban cosmopolitan Tuareg are working so 'tirelessly' to save

it? Heritage preservation is essentially about this. About preserving cultural diversity the world over, and saving it for future generations, because it is assumed to be something that is in danger of being lost. In the moment of near-loss though, advocates rise up and declare it worthy of preservation, often with the help of massive governing bodies like UNESCO. Nation-states also take up the charge, and work to decide, often in concert with UNESCO, what is representative of their national heritage. Tourism is thought to be an area where heritage can be promoted and preserved; museums are similarly thought to preserve the past. In Mali, the sale of art, the touring of culture, as well as the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, are done in relationships with the outside world.

The Festival is just one example, but an excellent one, of a venue that brings people together from all walks of life to share, celebrate, and by extension consume, Tuareg culture. In his memoirs from the Festival, Intagrist el Ansari, a Tuareg journalist, says of the Festival: "One can cross both ministers, ambassadors, Princess Caroline of Monaco, a billionaire owner of the famous MTV, and a shepherd who supports his eight children with five goats, or a craftsman who offers his crafts; all so different and so similar, taking place on the same large white dune, of fine and pristine sand" (El Ansari 2010). In these contact zones, diverse people grapple with each other, figure out who they are, figure out who the other is, and leave changed, presumably. This is partially how I came to see cultural tourism as a dialogue between different groups who are seeking common ground. I am reminded here of Victor Turner's description of *communitas*—that point when all distinctions of difference are stripped down and a sort

of unity is achieved. Those with whom I spoke in Mali felt that intercultural dialogue, particularly tourism, was essential to breaking down these barriers of difference.

But are the differences really stripped down when so much of cultural tourism is about exotification? The process is 'dialogic' as I have already mentioned, thus, I do not imply that the exotification is unidirectional. The Festival in the Desert exemplifies this far better than many other forms of cultural tourism, because as I have already discussed, foreigners (African and non-African) are both engaging in "game of *reciprocal* gazes" as mutual participants in the Festival (Amico, 2014, 98, emphasis added). Tuareg, nomads and urbanites both, and other Malian visitors come to gaze at the (mostly white) foreigners as much as tourists come to see the locals. Exotification in the form of romanticization also takes on a literal tone. For instance, in my research at the Festival in 2005 and 2011, I observed the ways that Malian male participants 'cruised' the site for foreign women and by the second night noted how many foreign women were paired up with a local man. I spoke with several of these women; in fact, both women in my group in 2005 became 'attached' to a local man.[49] Though not all of these pairings were romantic, per se, of the seven women I spoke with, four of them did admit to romantic activity. Local women on the other hand kept their distance. I observed that Tuareg women for the most part gazed from afar (generally from atop a sand dune) and I noted that many left the Festival site at nightfall. More urban women (recognizable by their dress) stayed for the evening concerts. However, I did not notice local women pairing

[49] In 2005, I myself was 'pursued' by two separate Tuareg men who explicitly made romantic advances, regardless of my married status, and only left me alone when I was with Almou, my primary consultant at the Festival.

with foreign men in the vast and easily observable numbers of Malian men with foreign women.

Stronza's (2001) review of tourism in anthropology lamented that there was not more work highlighting the impact that tourism has on tourists. Graburn's classic treatment of tourism as secular ritual was unique, but in the end, he concluded that although tourists go through the stages of a ritual as outlined by Van Gennep (1960), "tourists generally remain unchanged," perhaps just "better versions of their same old selves" (Graburn 2004, 3). Through intercultural exchanges that happen at the Festival, Tuareg perform their identities in hopes of making a lasting impression on the visitor's lives. For some, this might mean making romantic attachments in hopes of securing travel to the US or Europe, as several of my consultants suggested. But how much do tourists' experiences change them? As Edward Bruner relays in his article on the "Transformation of Self in Tourism," although much of travel advertisements and other forms of discourse promise nothing short of a total transformation through travel, the tourist changes very little actually, whereas the toured (particularly in 'Third World' destinations) often experience profound changes according to Bruner (1991).

Tuareg who promote tourism in Mali mentioned that some of the changes they hoped for were economical, but they also hoped that through 'intercultural dialogue' visitors would appreciate Tuareg culture, promoting an awareness of life in the desert. The idea was to promote and preserve Tuareg culture through gaining attention of those in wealthy nations, and by extension, this would hopefully bring economic development to the area as well, particularly for schools. In fact, several of the tours that I participated in ended with a plea for donations to local schools, in Timbuktu as well as in other sites

visited in Mali. Tours that I helped to set up with W.A.T. included an optional donation to partner projects dedicated to schooling for Fulani and Tuareg nomads in Northern Mali, as well.

But how much benefit is there? And who benefits? Manny stated that Festival organizers have always made sure to balance the numbers of attendees; to simultaneously "grow the festival, without losing its intimacy," he said. They did this by only having around 1000 tickets available for foreign visitors as well as by showcasing a majority of Tuareg and Malian musicians over international acts at the Festival. Some Tuareg with whom I spoke lamented that there were too many outsiders, while others complained that there were not enough (particularly paying attendees). According to others, they did not like how many non-Tuareg Malians came when it was closer to Timbuktu, coupled with the fact that it was too far for many nomads as well, as mentioned in the previous chapter. They felt that it was losing its traditional aspects, which they saw as most important for preserving the culture, and also felt that this was what Europeans wanted. "They came for the nomads not the city-dwellers," said one consultant.

Many Tuareg also hoped that education and the opportunity to globalize would be balanced with safeguarding tradition. I cannot help but notice, again that those concerned with preserving Tuareg cultural heritage, were themselves agents of change by virtue of being urban or cosmopolitan, and part of the "metacultural" world of heritage preservation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). This is one of several of the critiques regarding the safeguarding cultural heritage, particularly through UNESCO. These critiques align with anthropologists and folklorists who challenge the conceptualization of cultures as bounded, stable, isomorphic entities, reified in the practices of safeguarding

cultural heritage. Many preservationist activities deny the fluid and performative nature of cultural traditions and the ways in which culture changes over time. "Change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and addressing the inherently processual nature of culture" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 16). Translating this conceptualization of culture into policy risks undermining its integrity by ignoring the fact that cultural traditions are not objects detached from other aspects of culture as they are lived. But it is through policy that entities such as UNESCO hope to maintain cultural diversity.

In 2003, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* due to concerns regarding the loss of the diversity of living cultural expressions as well as the perceived imbalance of protections for tangible heritage such as monuments over living traditions of marginalized communities and ethnic minorities (Kurin 2004, Ruggles and Silverman 2009; L. Smith 2006, UNESCO 2005). By 2006 multiple projects around the globe were being inscribed onto a new list, *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. According to the Convention, intangible cultural heritage is:

> The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO 2003, Definitions, article 2.1).

> Intangible cultural heritage is manifested in oral traditions, including language; performing arts (traditional dance, music, and theatre); social practices, rituals, and festive events; knowledge and practices; and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003, Definitions, article 2.2).

As already mentioned, the "Practices and knowledge linked to the Imzad of the Tuareg communities of Algeria, Mali and Niger", was included on the list in 2013 (UNESCO (8.COM) 2013). Thus it is not just the object, such as the instrument imzad, but the practices and knowledge, including the transmission of it that is also safeguarded, or at least that is the hope. A major purpose of the Convention is to raise awareness and appreciation of ICH as well as maintain the conditions necessary for it to be perpetuated for what is considered the common good. This is why tourism is thought to be a complimentary enterprise as it leaves ICH '*in situ*' where it can be experienced under the proposed conditions and at the site in which it is perpetuated or lived (cf: Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). But as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out, "the process of safeguarding, which includes defining, identifying, documenting and presenting cultural traditions and their practitioners, produces something metacultural. What is produced includes not only an altered relationship of practitioners to their art but also distinctive artifacts such as the list…" (2006, 171). Thus the intangible becomes tangible, reified and 'thingified,' as Michael Brown argued for the inventorying and listing practices of the Convention (Brown [2003][50] 2012).

---

[50] Originally published in 2003 on the website *Cultural Commons: The Meeting Place for Culture and Policy* which suspended operations in 2005. It was republished by Museum Anthropology Review in 2012.

Much of the concern of Manny or Mohamed, mirror that of UNESCO, whereby the processes of globalization threaten the integrity and identity of cultural diversity. For the Tuareg, it is about preserving particular intangible aspects of Tuareg cultural heritage and by extension their cultural identity. Ironically, some of the most important aspects of Tuareg cultural identity were perhaps never 'Tuareg' in the first place. As Gardi points out in his review of Seligman's "The Art of Being Tuareg," the book is actually not about the nomadic Tuareg, it is about sedentary silversmiths, who to some are not considered Tuareg at all (Gardi 2006). In fact, the *inaden* are not considered 'Tuareg' by some upper caste Tuareg, and yet are the people associated with the most famous Tuareg art forms, including the making and playing of the imzad. This fact deeply complicates the goals of preserving 'Tuareg' cultural heritage. It is telling that the chapter in this book by a Tuareg artisan, Mohamed ag Ewangaye, is titled: "The *Inadan*, Makers of Amazigh[51] Identity." In this the author, an *enad*[52] from Niger, points out the reciprocal relationship between imajeren, nobles, and inaden, and argues that assertions that debase inaden are part of an "egocentric process on the part of other Tuareg, whereby each person attributes the noblest role to him or herself" (ag Ewangaye 2006, 62). It also highlights the ways in which ICH assumes that communities are homogeneous and tends to overshadow social inequalities (cf: Bendix 2000, Bendix, et. al. 2012). This is apparent at the state level, but it is also apparent as evidenced here, at the community level (cf: Noyes 2006).

---

[51] Amazigh is a Tamasheq word that means 'the free people' and is often used in place of Kel Tamasheq and Tuareg

[52] Singular of inaden

As I have discussed throughout, branding is a quintessential facet of tourism marketing, and self-stereotyping is an essential feature of branding. Different groups engaged in cultural tourism often have to use terms and descriptions produced and popularized from outside of that culture to attract tourists. Even my decision to use the term 'Tuaerg' over 'Kel Tamasheq' was largely based on recognizability and to position myself within Tuareg ethnographic studies that have come before. Tuareg invokes the romance of the 'blue people' of the desert, the desert nobles, highly romanticized in Europe. Similarly, Tuareg heritage also makes claims to the term. But who is Tuareg?

As one consultant told me, "A true Tuareg is not black, they are just trying to sell you their wares when they say they are nomads."[53] To my untrained eye, I often could not see the subtle differences in skin tone, and was frequently flustered when I was asked if a Tuareg with whom I was consulting was black, white, or red. Nonetheless, these distinctions were openly discussed by Tuareg throughout my fieldwork. As such, I became aware of some of these racial and ethnic divisions within Tuareg communities. For example, as already mentioned, Bella were the descendants of slaves who speak Tamasheq, but are not considered Tuareg. They are the servants of wealthy, aristocratic and *maraboutic*, families; they are the ones who move the herds that belong to urban Tuareg while they are in the city, and the people who take care of working Tuareg mothers' children. The continued servitude of the Bella is cited as one reason why Southern Malians still hold disdain for Tuareg.[54] It was a challenge for me during my

---

[53] To some degree the word Tuareg seems to have become synonymous with nomad. Although, as I have already discussed, Tuareg is an outsider term, it has taken on new meanings as this statement shows.

[54] Though wealthy Bamakois, many of Bamana or Fulani ethnicity, treat the Dogon similarly.

fieldwork on multiple levels. As Susan Rasmussen has noted, it is challenging to balance the obligations of a researcher to represent multiple voices while remaining an advocate for cultural survival (Rasmussen 1999). In the case of the Tuareg, how do we balance internal pre-colonial stratification, with external marginality in relation to the postcolonial nation-state on the other?

Furthermore, other conflicts raged all around me during fieldwork. There was definitely contention not just within the general structures of Tuareg society, but between groups that I saw as working toward similar goals. For instance, there were some consultants who said that Tinariwen, for example, was not working for Tuareg communities because they were "a force of change" that threatened Tuareg tradition. Others said that the Festival was only benefiting Kel Ansar at the detriment of the larger Tuareg community. One consultant said that fighting for 'peace' was effectively capitulating to the state and not addressing the real matter, which is that Tuareg identity was about freedom and independence, and this meant not working *with* the state of Mali. Another consultant said that because the Festival only happened once a year, it effectively prostituted Tuareg culture for three days, then did nothing for the other 362 days. This consultant said, "Timbuktu and Tuareg communities needed economic sustainability year round." Likewise, even Manny agreed that the Festival has so far been so expensive to put together that it regularly bankrupts itself. Thus many feel that it is not really bringing development to the communities.

There is also the issue that some Tuareg, particularly those who are highly religious, do not appreciate the Festival for what they see as Western debauchery. In 2013 the Festival in the Desert was awarded the WOMEX Award for Professional Excellence.

Andy Morgan gave the acceptance speech where he highlighted a few of the themes presented here. It was entitled "What the Festival in the Desert did for one dumbfounded tourist" and begins by quoting from a document put out by Ansar Dine (one of the Salafist[55] groups that took over Timbuktu and instituted Shari'a law in 2012). The document covered numerous themes from the criticizing Northern leaders for capitulating to the state, bemoaning the "Machiavellian" games played by the government in Bamako with the North.

> "Poor herders are executed without trial for no other reason than their ethnic origin. Children die like flies from easily preventable diseases. Mothers die in childbirth. Entire families survive thanks only to foraging, soliciting, begging and foreign aid. Infected water in ponds and wells causes irreparable damage."
> "And also, during this time," the text continues, "DUMBFOUNDED TOURISTS arrive daily to revel sadistically in the agony of a people who are on the road to oblivion." (Morgan 2013b, n.p.).

Morgan counters this charge and goes on to discuss the many ways that the Festival and his introduction to the culture of the Tuareg in the desert changed his life.

> I consider myself blessed to have been present at the very first Festival in the Desert in 2001. I arrived as a tourist, and – yes – I was dumbfounded. Put simply and bluntly, the desert blew my tiny mind. First, there was that backdrop of vast skies, endless level horizons and that bountiful sense of space and time. But very quickly after that, it was the people that seduced me: their hospitality, their resilience, their skill, their love of laughter and companionship.

---

[55] Salafism comes from the Arabic word *salaf* meaning 'originator' or 'ancestor'. It describes a belief that Muslims should return to the pure and rigorous moral habits and religious observances of the original followers of the Prophet.

> And of course, I did see poverty. You couldn't avoid it…But, hand on heart, I can't remember ever revelling sadistically in any kind of agony. Quite the opposite. The desert taught me more that I ever could have expected about the nobility of which the heart is capable. It forced humility on me and challenged all my notions about fate and man's relation to it…
> …Quite a few Touareg friends have confirmed to me that many of the traditional desert skills were fading fast in the late 1990s – tent making, leather working, old instruments like the imzad fiddle or the stunningly elegant silver jewellery made by hereditary silversmiths. Desert culture needed the wonder of new eyes and the desire of new hearts in order to grow stronger and survive. The Festival in the Desert has done so much to provide those new eyes and new hearts (ibid).

Overall, I heard nothing but positive reactions to tourists, presumably as Tuareg pride themselves on a cultural ideal of hospitality. In fact, my consultants frequently reminded me that Timbuktu was built on a foundation of intercultural dialogue, evidenced by its famed libraries and universities. One consultant in Timbuktu, Hamadou, said that "there are no borders here, there are no doors. Everyone is welcome here. If someone shows up at your door with their knapsack," he continued, "you give them water, you give them food, you help them. It's always been like that, since the first Europeans came here." Another consultant, 'Baba' who worked at one of the hotels in Timbuktu, said that the culture of Timbuktu could be summed up in the word 'hospitality' and this is why people from all over the world originally wanted to come here. Even though it is a religious town, he said, and founded on the principles of Islam, true Islam is about tolerance. I heard this at the Festival as well, especially in countering the problems of foreign ministries encouraging their citizens to not visit Northern Mali due to terrorist activities and threats by Muslim extremists (see below). Spokespeople at

the Festival, including the (then) president's remarks, said that Islam is by nature a tolerant religion based on sharing between cultures. Regardless, images of Islam as extremist and intolerant flood the lives of most potential tourists, before they ever even consider traveling to Timbuktu. In the next chapter I will discuss how representations of Africa interact with the experiences of foreign tourists to the Festival and Mali, and the ways in which goals for bringing development to the area may contradict some of these 'imaginaries.'

CHAPTER VII

ARE WE THERE YET?

In 2005, I was hired as a tour guide for four Americans traveling to Mali for the Festival in the Desert. This experience expanded my insight into the expectations that tourists have when traveling to a particular destination for the first time. The preparations for the trip began over six months in advance and involved a multitude of concerns on behalf of the four. Interestingly, conversations that I had with them were never about travel to Mali as a specific country in West Africa, but instead were centered on the notion of a trip to Africa (the entire continent). Once we arrived in Mali, there began a series of joking questions about when we would get to 'Africa'. As we drove through the crowded streets of Bamako, the capital of Mali, Gary,[56] the most widely traveled of the four, asked, "Is this Africa?" As we drove up the highway toward The Festival in the Desert (our main destination), one of the four would ask periodically "Are we in Africa yet?" Much like a child sitting in the backseat of the car asking ever too often, "Are we there yet?" each took turns asking if we had made it to 'Africa'. It was not until after visiting the festival, and a number of the main tourist attractions along the way, that I began to wonder if and when they ever made it to 'Africa.'

In this chapter I interrogate the ways that North Americans conceptualize and consume the idea of Africa, particularly through a semiotic analysis of tourism discourse focusing on tourism-related promotional media. The idea of Africa in the imagination of

[56] A pseudonym

non-Africans has from time to time been an object of study in and of itself.[57] What I add to these studies is an ethnographic sketch of the imaginaries as revealed first through tourists themselves, and then through media promoting the Festival. I begin with a brief character sketch of the four travelers with whom I worked followed by an analysis of formal interviews that I conducted with each of them on the theme of 'Africa' before and after their trip to Mali. I then specifically focus on tourism in Mali and media representations of the Festival in order to link these themes to popular understandings of Africa in general. Lastly, I begin to develop my argument that tourism and development are dialectically opposed.

Throughout this chapter I examine tourism as a discursive dialogic practice between sending and receiving nations whereby the social relations between the tourist and the toured are constituted in a set of hierarchical, historic relations through colonial and Orientalist imaginaries. I take tourism marketing to be a prime example of Western discourse about the "Other." I argue that the 'West' historically (and ethnographically) created an understanding of Africa that is adopted by Africans and then played back to contemporary tourists by various African peoples through the process of branding themselves. Thus, ontologically speaking, tourists go in search of an Africa already constructed in and through their own social histories in what has been called the 'tourism imaginary,' a sort of social practice that creates a tourist destination as 'credible' by appealing to preconceived notions of a destination and its people (Salazar 2012). What I

---

[57] Examples include: The Comaroff's *Of Revelation and Revolution, vol. 1 (1991),* Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* (1988) and *The Idea of Africa* (1994), a recent overview of Africa in American popular culture, *Africa in the American Imagination* by Carol Magee (2012), and Lutz and Collins' (1993) *Reading National Geographic*.

found apparent is that tourists seem to be in search of confirmation of what they expect a destination *should* be. Furthermore, Africans themselves use these stereotypes to perform back tourists' expectations.

Cultural tourism has become a niche market in many African nations, particularly since the 1970's. At this time, developing nations were pressured by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to liberalize their economies under Structural Adjustment Policies. This was intended to help nations 'modernize' and increase foreign investment, by following a certain set of prescriptions, namely trade liberalization, selling off state-owned property, pushing privatization of state enterprises, cutting spending on social welfare, and devaluing national currency to encourage investment. The result was disastrous for many nations and continues to wreak havoc on the ability of governments to take care of their citizens and run the state effectively. More often than not, neoliberalism has served to benefit economic elites and continues to increase the poverty of the already poor (Harvey 2005). Neoliberal development policies encourage niche markets because they do not compete with larger economies, and this is why cultural tourism is promoted so widely by agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (cf: UNWTO 1995).

Branding is an essential practice in tourism marketing today. It necessitates making distinct and recognizable a destination's culture for sale. Branding is the context by which any given destination—a nation, for example—makes itself standout against contenders, which means presenting your destination as unique. One way to do this is by 'marketing authenticity' and difference that relies on an understanding of non-Western peoples as primitive (cf: Silver 1995). In Ira Silver's article on marketing 'Third World'

destinations, he states, "that tourists often make fundamental distinctions between their lives in the modern world, and what they tend to view as the timeless and unchanging—thus primitive lives of many native peoples" (ibid, 306). Already existent information, in the form of ethnographic or historical accounts, for instance, lends these ideas credibility. Thus, if any given destination wants to attract a would-be tourist, marketers must create intrigue by drawing on preconceived, stereotypical imagery and language in order to appeal to tourists' fantasies. John Urry argued that the 'touristic gaze' focuses on particular signs when traveling (such as the 'typical' German beer garden, or the 'typical' French café), and these signs create the template for a tourist's agenda. The people, places, and things that make it onto the itinerary show "how tourists are in a way semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism" (Urry 1990). Thus branding, one could argue, is a process whereby the destination must create sign-value that appeals to these pre-established notions. And anthropology is complicit in this history.

Anthropological accounts dating back to before the twentieth century could thus be responsible for what some tourists are after. In fact, it has been argued that "[t]ourists are essentially unilinear evolutionists who find the world filled with chiefs and witch doctors, and their self-referential tales are based on…often completely erroneous information" (Errington and Gewertz 1989). Unfortunately much of this erroneous information may actually stem from anthropology. Although most of us in the discipline have moved on from treating non-European cultures as primitive and unchanging, tourists have not. "Tourism gives tribalism and colonialism second life…" as popular media continues to rely on these same tropes (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994, 435). I

argue that because tourism continues to rely on these outdated models and understandings of Africans, tourism for development becomes a dialectical impossibility as the goals of the former cancel out the goals of the latter. In other words, if the purposes of development projects are to 'modernize' and tourists want 'primitive' cultures then a successful development project will devour tourism's ability to be a sustainable development model.

For example, in Mali many people come for the culture as it is most romanticized. The current tag-line for Mali's tourism sector is "Le Mali: Une Afrique Authentique!" What is authentic Africa? According to the images on the website for the Tourist Office of Mali it is mostly dancing in costume: masked, in feather headdresses, in grass skirts and masks. It is camels and the Blue Men of the Desert (i.e. Tuareg nomads). There are also images of mosques and of Islamic learning: mud-brick mosques and shrines, children reading the Quran on a slate. The images are not of children inside school buildings or mothers in hospitals. There are no images of paved roads or indoor plumbing, sanitation and the like. The images appeal to the tourist who wants to see an authentic, i.e. pre-modern, Africa.

Tourists often are not choosing to travel to Africa as it really is, or how many Africans want it to be, it is how the tourist expects it to be. I am not implying that what Africans or Malians want is a unified vision. More importantly, I also do not intend to imply that these photographs are not real and that Malians do not want to continue traditional dances, that Tuareg do not wear indigo cloth that tints their skin blue, that they do not ride camels. I underline the fact that these images are used specifically because they appeal to tourists. According to Fürsich and Robins, "The interplay among tourists,

tourism workers, and the image-creating travel industry can be understood as a performance with significant consequences for representing the 'Other,' and the search for authenticity and identity" (Fürsich and Robins 2004, 133). Orientalized images, such as those used by Mali's Ministry of Tourism, flatten the lives of Africans, and they run counter to what many Malians want, in terms of development and modernization.

Renato Rosaldo's term "imperialist nostalgia," which refers to the way that Westerners ache for the cultures that were destroyed by their own imperial governments, is useful for understanding tourist desires. In a discussion of the Mayers' Ranch, a tourist destination in Kenya, Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discuss how imperialist nostalgia is used as a "scenario for tourist productions…and the marketing of them" (435). The quest for the 'pre-contact tribal peoples' living in harmony with nature is a fantasy that draws tourists to places like Kenya. It is telling that the directors of the Mayers' Ranch in Kenya request that the Maasai lock up any evidence of western goods while tourists are visiting the Maasai village adjacent to the ranch. The performers are not allowed to wear wristwatches or western style clothing for the duration of the tourists' visit. When Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asked performers about hiding objects from tourists, they replied, " it was what the tourists expect, and anyway, tourists come to Kenya to see Maasai things, not European things" (466). As I will show here, tourists go searching for what they imagine these places to be like. "In tourism, the Third World becomes a playground of the Western imaginary, in which the affluent are given the discursive space to enact their fantasies" (440).

In his study of how travel agents market Third World countries, Ira Silver follows Edward Said in showing how "…marketed images of indigenous people tend to

portray predominantly what Westerners have historically imagined the Other to be like" (1993, 303). Through an analysis of travel advertisements he shows how the majority use phrases like "the last unspoiled island" or "stone-age society" or "previously untouched worlds" to describe tourist destinations in developing nations (308). Bruner has also shown how advertisements and brochures portray locals ('natives') as having static traditions largely unchanged by the processes of colonialism, nationalism, development or even tourism itself (1991, 239). In his analysis of 'tourism imaginaries,' Noel B. Salazar analyzes the often overlapping and conflicting ways that fantasies drive tourists and tourism service providers alike (cf: Salazar 2010, 2011, 2012).

Anthropologists have long been considered *the* experts on traditional cultures around the world. No matter how much we have contested representation or aimed to correct essentialist notions of non-European cultures, classical anthropological description lives on in Discovery Channel and National Geographic representations, travel and tourism media. Through his research in Tanzania and Indonesia, Salazar's interviews with tour guides revealed this to be true (Salazar 2013). He demonstrated how tour guides often carried classical works in anthropology and referenced them in order to lend authority to their descriptions of local sites. In Mali, I found this to be true as well; guides in Timbuktu, for instance, would mention by name certain anthropologists or historians while guiding tourists through heritage sites or describing performances. In two of the small local museums and one of the cultural centers that I visited while in Mali, there were also ethnographies available for sale.[58]

---

[58] For example: Claudot-Hawad *Les Touaregs* and Marcel Griaule *Conversations with Ogotemmeli* (about conversations he had with a Dogon elder during the 1930's).

I emphasize that traveling to many tourist destinations to see the 'culture' rests on the same presumptions that were rampant in early anthropological accounts that described 'primitive' cultures as if they were unchanged, timeless, and indeed 'pure.' This is true of both print and Internet advertising and descriptions of the Festival in the Desert, as well as in my interviews with tourists. Just as early ethnographers went into the field in order to document, describe and catalogue a specific culture's systems or traits, tourists today travel on the assumption that the so-called primitive cultures of the world are uninfluenced by history and unaffected by modernity. Just as Franz Boas did in the 1940's, many tourists hope to go and consume these cultures first hand, before they vanish. I was shocked, for instance, when Gary asked me what he could bring along as gifts to Mali; I said that t-shirts from the U.S. are highly sought after, and his response was "What will they do with them? Will they make ceremonial objects out of them or use them in a ritual?" My appalled response: "No, they will wear them." The presumption that Africans' daily lives are spent in ritual or ceremonial activities is not unique to this particular North American. Just as early travelers, colonial officials, and anthropologists came to represent the Other, whose life was characterized by blind faith in ritual and magic, reinforced the notion that the West was bound by scientific rationality (cf. Said's *Orientalism*). For centuries, Africans have been described broadly by terms such as "dark," "savage," and "uncivilized."

Tourist Imaginaries

The four tourists with whom I traveled in 2005, Gary, Anna Lee, Becky and Jake,[59] were all associated with an import store in the Pacific Northwest whose website proclaims: "Our staff travels to exotic lands seeking beautiful and unusual jewelry, fine, folk and ethnographic art to share with all who venture in. Step through the door and discover for yourself where a world of mystery and beauty abound."[60] Gary is the owner of the store and has traveled extensively buying goods for the shop. At the time of our travels he was living in Brazil nearly a third of the year and had extensive business connections throughout the Caribbean. In addition to business travel, he often travels to places where there are practitioners of the Afro-Caribbean religions that interest him. For instance he has studied Vodoun, Santeria and Condomble and thus has traveled to Haiti, Cuba and Brazil. Traveling to West Africa seemed like the "logical next step," he said. Gary often pays for large portions of his employees' trips and they are often expected to do some shopping while abroad.

Anna Lee is an outgoing, talkative, and somewhat brash white woman in her mid-to-late forties. She has been traveling with Gary for fifteen years and the two have visited numerous locations together including Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Turkey and Vietnam. She enjoys traveling for leisure, but loves "exotic" locations, she said; she considers herself open to anything, but mostly wants to relax and have a good time when she travels. She is a regular customer of the store, and enjoys many of its imported objects, but when she

---

[59] Pseudonymns

[60] To preserve anonymity I have not provided their web address

travels with Gary she asks him to refrain from buying for the store as she feels it takes her away from her own purposes of leisure; "But, he is always on business to some extent," she admits. She too shops extensively when traveling, which I witnessed throughout our tour of Mali, but compared to Gary her shopping is in the realm of "souvenir buying" as opposed to Gary's "stockpiling." Throughout tour of Mali, Anna and Gary both spent ample time in the markets and we often had a trail of vendors chasing after us or following us to our hotels (or camps) hoping to finish or elicit a sale. As revealed in the following excerpt from my field notes in 2005:

> **4 January 2005**. We got up pretty early in order to hit the markets. The merchants are just beginning to put out their wares. Gary is doing pretty well with negotiations in a mix of English and Portuguese, combined with my French or Bambara when needed. He's made quite an impression. Men are going to get their brothers and cousins and cousins' cousins to try to sell stuff to him. He's buying bulk and at random. No one can keep track of him. The men are hunting me down to help them translate, "Il faut lui dire…" You must tell him such and such about this piece, why he must buy it.
>
> Max, our driver, comes and literally drags us out of the market, pulling Gary away from his buying frenzy as men are tagging along behind us in long lines with more and more stuff to sell. We took a pirogue across the Niger River to have lunch at a little Bozo restaurant where it appears that every other tourist is also having lunch, as there is a long wait. Max and Anna Lee are seemingly becoming quite close, and as opposed to waiting outside as he did the first few days as our driver, he is sitting with us now, part of the 'family' as Gary puts it. Some of the Mopti merchants have found us at the restaurant and continue trying to get our attention from the door of the restaurant. Boubacar, whom I had bought a small Tuareg cross from is at the door, motioning for me to come over. I wish I had never gone down this road with the others. I wave at him and tell him I'm not

> interested right now. Gary on the other hand, invites him in to show us his jewelry, and ends up buying a number of things right at the table. Boubacar is so pleased with his sale that he gives each of us a small gift before he leaves. Word has spread that we are on our way to the Festival in the Desert, so now merchants are coming at us with brightly colored cheche (head scarves worn by Tuareg men) in the classic indigo blue as well as every other color imaginable. They are following us saying "Il faut avoir une cheche for Tombouctou" (you must have a cheche for Timbuktu). It's almost dangerous to leave with all the vendors having heard of our conspicuous purchasing. We decide to take the pirogue across the river and hit another market. I patiently make friends with some locals while I wait for Anna and Gary as they are at it again—SHOPPING! Gary bought a Tuareg man's jewelry making tool that he was using to make something right there! I am appalled but Gary said the price he paid could probably afford the man ten more. Some Fulani women have shown up to watch the hoopla as these crazy *toubabous*[61] buy up some man's entire stock.
>
> (Author's Fieldnotes, 2005)

At the time, I was uncomfortable with Gary's conspicuous and compulsive shopping. In retrospect, I see that the amount of money that he was leaving in these communities was probably a dream come true. I think that because of my own beliefs, particularly then, that the commodification of everyday life lends to artificial social interactions that his shopping deterred from our group's goals for traveling to Mali. Ironically, it was probably more in line with the goals of those who welcome tourists, i.e. to make a living. Becky and Jake, the others in our group, had said that they wanted to interact with locals and get to them genuinely, and Anna Lee definitely felt that Gary's

---

[61] Malian (Bamana) word that roughly means 'foreigner.'

shopping kept her from being able to relax while on vacation. But everyone in the group partook in shopping.

Becky and Jake were both Gary's employees at the time of our travel to Mali. Becky worked for Gary for eight years and now sells jewelry that she either makes or has purchased at trade shows or while traveling abroad independently. She is also an independent tattoo artist. She says she considers herself a 'traveler,' not a tourist;[62] "I want to get to know the locals and their culture at a deeper level," she says. This is why she said she likes to travel to a particular location for a month or more. Before Mali she had traveled to Haiti and Brazil and shortly afterward traveled to Nigeria, Bali, and Thailand where she bought either for the shop (when she was employed there) as well as for her own independent business and collection. Overall, however, she says that she likes to "try to live like the locals, interact with them, get to know them beyond business or tourism" (pronouncing 'tourism' with some disdain).

Jake had worked for Gary for fifteen years and for the most part runs Gary's shop while he is traveling or living in Brazil. Jake has also traveled to a number of places with Gary, but is more likely to be found managing the shop or in his garden than planning travel to foreign countries. He is pleasant and easy-going and says he travels for a number of reasons, but mostly enjoys the time to relax and see life in other places. I also worked for Gary for two and a half years before returning to school in 2002. In fact, my interest in ethnographic art and jewelry laid the foundation for my academic pursuit of an advanced degree in anthropology. Although it was never part of our formal training,

---

[62] In the literature on tourism there is some discussion on this distinction, see for example Cohen 1989; Smith 1989; and Errington and Gewertz 2004 [1989].

many of us who worked in the shop conducted informal research on the items for sale in the store and spent a great deal of time with potential customers telling them about the items for sale. We had ample books on the art collections, and while most were not explicitly anthropological, they did in many cases have articles or descriptions written by anthropologists.[63] In this way, the shop came to be described by the employees as "a museum where you could buy the artifacts."

Perhaps to some degree, none of these four, or myself, would necessarily be described as 'typical' tourists. But what is a typical tourist? In Erik Cohen's article on the 'phenomonolgy of tourist experience,' he proposed a diversity of tourist types defined by an individual's relative alienation, in the Marxist sense (Cohen 1979). For instance, the 'existential' tourist feels the most alienated from his or her nature and is the most likely to "go native." The others, in diminishing order of alienation, are: experimental, experiential, diversionary, and recreational. Cohen describes the polarity of theories regarding tourists comparing Boorstin's (1962) which states that tourists are content with superficial experiences and the 'pseudo event," and MacCannell's (1973), which states the opposite, that tourists demand authenticity but are denied it by staged tourist settings and 'false backs' (Boorstin 1992; MacCannell 1999). "In my view," says Cohen, "neither of the opposing conceptions is universally valid, though each has contributed valuable insight into the motives, behavior and experiences of *some* tourists…[and] both enjoy some empirical support…" (ibid. 180, emphasis in the original). What I found in my

---

[63] Some examples of books we consulted are: Angela Fisher's *Africa Adorned* (1984) and her book with Carol Beck *African Ceremonies* (2000)*; The History of Beads* (Dubin 1987); *The Tribal Arts of Africa* (Bacquart 2002); *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou* (Cosentino 1995).

interviews was that each of these four had different ideas and desires regarding authenticity.

I asked the tourists in my group what their opinion was on seeking authenticity in their travels. Becky said that she absolutely wants authenticity and actively searches out the most "authentic experiences." She said that she does not like performances that she knows are for tourists and prefers stumbling upon local performances serendipitously. Anna Lee on the other hand said that she doesn't care much one way or the other for authenticity. "I'm not concerned about authenticity too much. I don't mind staged performances, as long as they are good." Jake was similar to Anna, but said that he loves to be able to see things in their "natural setting," which is why he was so excited about the Festival in the Desert. Gary said that he wants authenticity in some experiences, particularly ritual performances like he witnessed in Haiti with Vodoun ceremonies. In fact, before we left Mali he specifically asked that we find a ritual site where he could experience a ritual, and when we did he complained at length that it was phony, staged, and not at all 'real.' Alternately, he doesn't mind purchasing goods for the shop that are not necessarily 'authentic' i.e. made in mass quantities as long as they will sell. The customer will appreciate the authenticity of him traveling so far to buy the object presumably. "But for my own collection," he said, "I want stuff caked in blood and mud, something that has been used in a ritual or ceremony." Using Cohen's typology, I think that our group covered almost all of his categories. Anna Lee was more 'recreational,' Becky and Gary were perhaps the most likely to 'go native,' and Jake was somewhere in the middle.

What Did You Expect?

In my interviews with these four tourists I first wanted to know what 'Africa' was to each before arriving in Mali. I also asked each to describe some of the expectations they had about the trip and whether they were met or not. Gary had the most direct answer to what Africa was in his mind, stating that what he "expected and wanted at the time was more of a tropical Africa…" the Africa from his childhood, "the Tarzan Africa." He admitted that he had been very anxious about the trip because Africa is so big and he felt that he had not properly researched the trip departing (as he does with other destinations). This is interesting because the store sold items from Mali; in fact, my first exposure to many of the ethnic groups and images of the country came from *Africa Adorned* that Gary kept as reference behind the counter. This book is a collection of over four hundred color photographs taken by photographer Angela Fisher, beginning in 1970. It is divided by region and highlights the jewelry and clothing of various ethnic groups. She provides religious, cultural, and historical background for each region as well as explains the significance of adornment for the items and ethnic groups that she covers (Fisher 1984).

Becky said that she had always been intrigued by Africa, and that Fisher's book, as well as National Geographic, was quite influential in her intrigue. She said that she was "curious to see the poverty, beauty and riches" of the country and that she wanted "stories not stores." She did not want people hawking items made for tourists, rather she wanted to buy things from artists directly which she believed came with "history, story…connection." Becky said that she was most surprised (and disappointed) by how much 'American' influence there was in Mali. When I asked her to expand, she said that

it annoyed her that many of the Malians that we met listened to American hip-hop and wanted to talk about her being American. She wanted to see drumming, African dance, and people in traditional dress not tee shirts and jeans.

Jake said that he really did not have any expectations, per se, but that Africa in his mind was maybe grassy plains and exotic animals. In fact, what surprised him about Mali was that the landscape was so diverse and that we saw hardly any fauna at all. When I asked him if he ever made it to 'Africa,' referring to our joke, he said that there were numerous times when he thought to himself, "Holy shit, I'm in Africa," mostly because so much was unbelievable as well as unexpected. Becky mirrored some of his narrative in that she said that Africa to her was by-and-large the animals—zebras, elephants, giraffes. Anna Lee added that for her it was "Lions, tigers and rhinos."

The reference to animals is striking because although no one was under the impression we were taking a safari, the most powerful mental images these four had of Africa centered on animals. This no doubt stems from media representations of Africa as well as a broader tendency to associate Africa with nature, the primeval, and the primitive. However, there was a darker Africa they all recognized, one associated with famine, tribal warfare, poverty and disease, an idea of Africa that has been fed by movies and news stories. In fact, Anna Lee even said that one thing that did not surprise her upon arriving in Mali was that it was dirty, that the people were poor and that on numerous occasions we did not have clean hotel rooms.

The destination all most eagerly anticipated was the Festival in the Desert, specifically traveling to the fabled city of Timbuktu. The thought of going to Timbuktu most assuredly carries with it a wide array of predetermined mental imagery—Gary even

stated that it was the most intriguing part of the trip. Timbuktu is the quintessential out-of-the-way place, colloquially equivalent to "the middle of nowhere." It represents a challenge and holds an aura of escape. An interesting observation, however, is that when I asked each of my fellow travelers when they felt that they actually arrived in 'Africa' none of them mentioned the Festival, or Timbuktu. In fact, all agreed that the Bandiagara Escarpment, or Dogon Country (as it is referred to), was the closest to their prior expectations of 'Africa.' When I asked why, they mentioned vague things like the 'energy' or 'vibe' of the place. My interpretation is that it has something to do with what we did while we were there. For example, the day we arrived we were escorted through a paint-covered cave where a circumcision ritual takes place once every four years. Next, we visited several tiny villages of mud huts with thatched roofs where people approached us with painted masks and millet beer in gourds for sell. After these tours we watched a Dogon mask dance performed (figure 20). At night there were drums beating in the distance, and there were few electric lights to illuminate the night; these things being quintessentially "African" by many popular standards.



Figure 20: Dogon Mask Dance (photos by author 2005)

Overall, my informants seemed to be in search of an Africa that could not be corroborated fully in Mali, as much of it only existed in fantasy. Applying Baudrillard's work on the simulacra, Boorstin claimed that America was living in an "age of contrivance" where illusions and fabrications, i.e. simulations, had become the dominant force in society ([1962] 1992). He said that staged and scripted events, called 'pseudo-events,' had come to permeate life. Even the tourism industry, which once offered adventure seekers a passport to reality, or what MacCannell would call authenticity, Boorstin argues that tourists are now insulated from the reality of these places instead offered "artificial products" where "picturesque natives fashion papier-mâché images of themselves," for tourists who expect to see scenes out of the movies (ibid, 17). It is my belief that tourists, even well traveled and educated ones, seem to want confirmation of preconceived ideas they hold of a place that they visit. Below I will discuss the repercussions and possible dangers of these preconceived notions when tourism is used for economic development. Essentializing and othering Africa and Africans in consistent and predictable ways serve to deny Africans agency and a place in the contemporary world.

"Africa"

What is Africa? Where is Africa? Although Africa is a vastly diverse continent replete with over fifty nation-states, it is regularly described as simply: "Africa." This popular understanding of the continent and people of Africa as one unified entity most likely stems from the way that Africa has been (re-)presented in various media. I argue that it is a product of the way that Africa has been 'othered' that allows it to be

semiotically understood in this simplified way. As James Ferguson put it, "Historically, Western societies have found in 'Africa' a radical other for their own constructions of civilization, enlightenment, progress, development, modernity, and, indeed, history" (Ferguson 2006). Ferguson states that although anthropologists dismiss the idea of a unified Africa as culturally absurd, the idea lives on, and as Ferguson points out, it continues to be used, even by Africans, to justify political and economic decisions from which anthropologists have largely been absent (Ferguson 2006).

When I begin teaching a unit on Africa I often ask students to shout out what words, images, or ideas come to mind when they hear the word 'Africa'? Quite consistently, the lists include: drumming, dancing, music, bright colors, culture, exotic, safaris, rituals, jungles, tribes, dark skinned people, dangerous, undeveloped, disease, warfare, poverty, AIDS, starving children.[64] The first half roughly could be categorized as positive, while the remaining are more negative but all come from media and international news coverage. We see some of these same themes apparent in the descriptions by tourists that I interviewed, summarized above. In general, one can assume that tourists seek an experience in Africa that will highlight the positive, but even with those in my research, the negative was not too far from their minds. While working for the tour agencies I held conversations with tourists that seemed to teeter on the line between both. For instance, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the issue of safety was paramount for everyone that I encountered booking travel to an African destination, exposing an understanding of Africa as dirty, unsanitary, and rife with diseases. The rise

[64] I have also been a student and a teaching assistant for a university course on Africa taught by Professor Stephen Wooten, and I noted the same regular list of terms when he did this exercise.

in volunteer tourism[65] (or voluntourism) also complicates the general assumption that tourists only seek out the beautiful or more pleasant aspects of third world destinations; this does continue the trend of narrow understandings of the lives of Africans, however.

"Timbuktu"

As my fellow travelers discussed above, Timbuktu held major intrigue on their trip. Of course, it has long been a place that holds great allure for travelers. In the eighteenth century, colonial powers raced against each other to try to enter this fabled city. Tales of Timbuktu's wealth no doubt prompted much of this fascination, and indeed is said to have encouraged European exploration of West Africa. It was the most popular city in Mali for centuries, but was so difficult for Europeans to reach that in 1824, the Paris-based Société de Géographie offered a 10,000 Franc prize to the first non-Muslim to reach the town and return with information about it.[66] Scottish explorer Gordon Laing arrived in September 1826 but was killed shortly after by locals who were fearful of European discovery and intervention. The Frenchman René Caillié arrived in 1828. He traveled alone disguised as a Muslim and was able to safely return and claim the prize. Today, his home is a popular stop for visitors touring the city. Robert Adams, an African-American sailor, claimed to have visited the city in 1811 as a slave after his ship wrecked off the African coast. He later gave an account to the British counsel in Morocco in 1813 and later published this account in a book, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, a Barbary Captive* (still in print as of 2006) (Adams and Adams 2005). Doubts remain about his

---

[65] Defined as tourism based around humanitarian work. See Mary Mostafanezhad's recent (2012) book *Volunteer Tourism: Popular Humanitarianism in Neoliberal Times* for an excellent analysis of this genre.

[66] Information in this paragraph is mostly common knowledge for anyone that has spent time in Timbuktu. I did corroborate the information online for example Rosenberg 2014.

account. Only three other Europeans reached the city before 1890: Heinrich Barth in 1853 and the German Oskar Lenz with the Spanish Cristobal Benítez in 1880. Barth's home is also a stop on the tourist's itinerary. After my first trip to Timbuktu in 2004, I remember finding it odd that the bulk of our tour was to see remnants of the houses of Europeans. Is this what tour guides in Timbuktu assumed tourists desired? Are they proud of this history of attempts to penetrate the city; proud of their place in white European history? Unfortunately I did not ask.

UNESCO designated Timbuktu a World Heritage Site in 1988 based on the following three criteria:

Criterion (ii): The mosques and holy places of Timbuktu have played an essential role in the spread of Islam in Africa at an early period.
Criterion (iv): The three great mosques of Timbuktu, restored by the Qadi Al Aqib in the 16th century, bear witness to the golden age of the intellectual and spiritual capital at the end of the Askia dynasty.
Criterion (v): The three mosques and mausoleums are outstanding witnesses to the urban establishment of Timbuktu, its important role of commercial, spiritual and cultural centre on the southern trans-Saharan trading route, and its traditional characteristic construction techniques.

("Timbuktu - UNESCO World Heritage Centre" 2014)

Today, Timbuktu is more often than not conceived of as a non-place, for by definition it could be "any distant or outlandish place"[67] When I say that I work in Timbuktu I am regularly met with surprise that it is an actual city, and relatively few adults even know that it is in Mali. In fact, Stuart Redler a British photographer surveyed

[67] CollinsDictionary.com. "Collins English Dictionary" – Complete & Unabridged 11th Edition. Retrieved 6 December 2012

150 young Britons when he was holding an exhibit of photographs he took in Mali and found that 34% of them did not believe it existed, and over half of them thought it was a mythical place . In fact, to this day, tourists line up at the tourism office in Timbuktu, where the local tourism minister stamps passports with the evidence of having been there.

Many tourists with whom I spoke stated that the opportunity to say they had been to Timbuktu was paramount. A few stated that saying they had been there was almost more exciting than actually being there, as Timbuktu in reality is a far cry from the fabled city of gold, with dusty streets and dilapidated buildings. Timbuktu is instead a place that for many represents the furthest place from 'here' and thus is a gem in a world traveler's portfolio. In fact, the tour operator "From Here 2 Timbuktu" states: "Like the prophet Mohammed, Timbuktu - the great seat of knowledge, learning, gold, salt and travel - should not be described. It is enough to attain the city that marks the end of the known world, and the beginning of the unknown world" ("More on Mali" 2014). Getting proof that you have been there, is paramount, and my group made sure to establish proof (figure 21).

Tourism officials in Mali are quite aware of the draw of Timbuktu and actively work to promote it on tourist agendas. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there is an inherent understanding of its interest and importance, on account of its "Outstanding Universal Value" (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119/). But besides its material heritage of historic libraries, universities and ancient manuscripts, it mostly holds intangible appeal as a "place to escape from the world." "Our asset is our name," states Timbuktu's mayor. "The word Timbuktu says something to everybody, even people who don't know where Mali is," adds Aminata Traoré, the minister for Culture and Tourism. "These days,

people in the West have a great urge to get away from it all. Timbuktu hasn't got much to sell, but it can sell dreams" she says.



Figure 21: Entering the City of Timbuktu (photo by author 2005)

The Festival, held outside of Timbuktu, is often referred to as the 'most remote music festival in the world.' As one blogger said, "This particular event … had been called 'Burning Man' meets 'One Thousand and One Nights,' an otherworldly experience that captured the Tamashek tradition of nomadic clans meeting to celebrate in the middle of the desert" (Conley 2013). Excerpts from press releases on the official Festival website include such statements as: "The Festival of the Desert in Mali might not have the name recognition of Newport, New Orleans, or Montreux, but on the ' Exotic' and 'Remote' scales, it has all music festivals beat" (Carberry 2004). "Timbuktu seemed absolutely remote—dusty, drab and extremely exotic" (Sattin 2004). 'Remote' is perhaps a function

of being 'Timbuktu' and 'exotic' by virtue of being African. In essence, exotic is the quintessential marker for all that is 'Other.'

Regardless of its contemporary origins, media outlets focus on the "traditional" and "ancient" aspects of the gathering, thrusting the festival into time immemorial. One review begins, "For centuries, the Tuareg nomads have gathered at oases to make music and race camels" (Newberry 2004). Another reads almost identically, "For centuries, the Tuareg had held desert gatherings…" (Denselow 2004). References to ancient tradition proliferate in describing the people of the desert as well. Issa Dicko, a conference organizer at the festival, says "Perhaps the Europeans romanticize the Tuaregs too much and their clichés could actually be harmful to us as a community" (Brouet 2004). In his oft-cited book, MacCannell theorizes that leisure tourism originated from the alienation felt in modern industrial society and that what tourists are after is the authenticity they lack in their own lives, a situation likened to the traditional quest for the sacred. He argues that tourists are motivated by some perceived lack, which can only be found in more 'traditional' societies. Thus, perhaps if a destination can highlight its traditional aspects, it can further its brand appeal. But as Dicko fears, images of sand dunes, men on camels in turbans with swords, and references to "the middle of the desert" perhaps overshadow the economic and political goals of the festival.

Many places around the globe are demarcated by their history, and travel literature uses the words *traditional* and *ancient* without discrimination when it can. When it comes to Africa and other postcolonial travel destinations, we find these descriptors used in conjunction with other words such as *tribal* and *primitive*. In advertising, juxtaposition is often used. In the Global South, this mode seems to be used

to elicit the unbelievable: these exotic places actually exist in the present and you can visit them! For instance, one tour operator describes Mali thus: "Modern-day Mali has its roots richly planted in the past… Ancient relics, centuries-old buildings and timeworn, tribal traditions intermingle with the contemporary in Mali's cities, towns and villages" (http://www.intrepidtravel.com/us/mali).

A recent New York Times' multimedia piece on the festival has very little text besides stating that the festival is a "time-shifting experience" that takes place in a remote Malian city (Maloney 2008: 15). The Times' author ends his piece with the statement that his eyes, in seeing turbaned men leaving on camels, and his ears, in hearing rock bands performing on a brightly lit stage, were "separated by hundreds of years" (ibid). This juxtaposition of the modern against the traditional is how the article creates its appeal, making the experience seem utterly unbelievable. A letter to the editor about this article sums up my own critique of such treatments of the festival: "Unfortunately, the article flattened the richness and complexity of the festival… Mali is more than 'colorful turbans' of men gathered around 'simple fires'…" (Snyder and Walker 2008). In fact, the Festival in the Desert is a cultural festival as well as a community clinic and conference setting, as discussed above. During the 2011 Festival, a salt caravan arrived bringing large slabs of salt to the markets in Timbuktu. This was not a staged event, I do not know if they came back to celebrate or not, but the caravan is still part of the Tuareg economy (figure 22).

It would be wrong to say that these descriptions do not hold some truth. The Festival *is* fashioned on historic gatherings that Tuareg held in the region, and it still is a time for families to come together to discuss current issues, settle disputes, tell stories,

and buy and sell goods. It is, however, a contemporary event that has a lot in common with other 'world music' festivals. One could definitely argue that the festival is 'traditional' and linked to Tuareg cultural identity, but in essence it is a recent phenomenon with a new purpose. It has an explicit goal of bringing awareness and development to the area, in addition to reviving traditions. Reviving traditions is itself not a 'traditional' practice. One cannot revive something if it has not been on the verge of being lost. In the case of the Festival, it is reviving a tradition of festivity that was under threat by not only modernity, but by numerous contemporary forces and changes.



Figure 22: Salt caravan arriving in Timbuktu 2011 (photo by author)

In addition to highlighting the traditional, and the ancient aspects of the festival, media have also pointed out its connection to Tuareg rebellions in the region. "The Festival's significance grows in light of the history of this region where civil war

prevailed only a decade ago," writes Andy Morgan in the liner notes for the CD featuring music from the 2003 edition (Morgan 2003). Of course, the Festival grew out of these rebellions, and organizers specifically hope it can serve as an act of diplomacy and peace keeping in the region, but the way that the rebellion is included in tourist literature is quite interesting. The inclusion of statements such as 'traditionally volatile area' or 'recent armed conflict' in a description or promotion of the Festival in the Desert appears on the surface to be somewhat uncouth and counter-productive. In general, tourist destinations are presented as being safe havens from an unforgiving world, and travelers generally do not want to visit places rife with conflict (hence the reason tourism is at a standstill in Mali currently). However, I argue that the inclusion of discussions of Tuareg "rebellion" and "revolution" still molds to the paradigm of romance, and unfortunately, because of the current state of the area, may create a more lasting impression of Tuareg as Islamic terrorists, than as romantic traditionalist (Montague 2013).

Comparing media from 2003-2008 and 2010-13, I notice that these descriptions of volatility taper off, probably because of real threats becoming apparent again after 2008 when several Westerners in and around Mali were kidnapped by AQIM[68] affiliated groups. Thus, I found the Festival being promoted as peaceful, even over the traditional aspects. However, these descriptions are not entirely gone as reviews of the Festival often contrast the past conflict with the current diplomacy that the Festival has served. This is similar to the balancing act that many Tuareg performers engage in when promoting their concerts abroad. Susan Rasmussen has noted how touring Tuareg musicians must balance their persona in international settings, downplaying conflict and highlighting conciliation

[68] Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb

(Rasmussen 2005). This is as much true for ishumar musicians, such as Tinariwen, as it is for traditional ensembles such as Tartit (particularly now). However, the former are more likely to draw on their rebel persona (often likened to punk rockers) to create appeal, yet still distancing themselves from their history.

Returning to my short list discussed above of what "Africa" is in popular Western imaginations, I argue that referencing the rebellion further serves to stereotype Africa as full of savagery, tribal warfare, and ethnic conflict, thus, reinforcing African exoticism. Additionally, it serves the adventurous side of tourism, because until recently, the rebellion was a thing of the past, and tourists only had "the titillation of a vicarious brush with danger" (Bruner 1989, 438). The appeal of danger still creates the fascination and ignites the imagination that many tourists desire. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994) found this to be true in Kenya in the way that Maasai made a living performing the 'noble savage' for tourists. According to the authors, the Maasai "embody the potential for violence, at least in fantasy, and the potential for unleashing powerful primitive forces…" (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994, 454). In this way, cultural tourism becomes an adventure, so long as the danger is in the past.

When society is "filtered through the touristic lens of spectacle," it glosses over the conflicting layers of society itself (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Removed from political and historic realities these festivals often whitewash conflict or at best make it seem eternally a thing of the past. Although there are some media on the Festival in the Desert that discuss the past conflict, it is described as a thing of the past, something that makes the Festival and the Tuareg exciting. The impression management that went on at

the 2011 edition of the Festival was overt and forceful at times, and involved a careful portrayal of Tuareg and Islam as peaceful.

Frequently tourism relies on marketing that casts certain places in a time locked far away from the present, without a history, just as early anthropologists used the 'ethnographic' present to describe native cultures, a practice not far removed from colonial practices either. According to Jeremy Keenan (1973), the French identified with Tuareg values of freedom and chivalry, regarding them as the last of the noble savages, leading them to decide on a deal which would preserve their traditional way of life, but keep them out of modernization projects (137). The *Mission Civilisatrice* (French civilizing mission) had initially sought to co-opt Tuareg leaders into local positions of authority but nobles consistently evaded French colonial authority. Ironically, colonial educational campaigns that specifically sought to enroll children of Tuareg nobles failed because nobles often sent the children of inaden or even Bella to the colonial schools instead. By the 1940's the French had abandoned colonial educational campaigns in nomadic areas, because, according to Baz Lecocq, they "did not want to see the Tuareg educated as they might then become 'modern' and lose their own, thoroughly orientalised culture," realizing perhaps that Tuareg culture would be the only riches they could gain from the Sahara (2003, 34, 41).

Conclusions: Performing the Other

In spite of stereotypes, I believe that Tuareg are savvy to these clichés and actively seek to capitalize on them, at least economically, through a process of 'self-

othering.'[69] For instance, while attending the festival, I was frequently approached by men in traditional Tuareg veils who introduced themselves by saying, "Je suis Tuareg, je suis nomad."[7071] These men often turned out to be eliciting a sale by then proceeding to say, "Juste pour plaisir a voir…" Meaning they wanted to show me their wares, not to make a sale, per se, but "just for the pleasure of looking." Nomadism is perhaps the most prominent stereotype of Tuareg, eclipsing even the romantic moniker "Blue Men of the Desert." Much of Tuareg identity rests on being a nomad, yet ironically the majority of these roving vendors were smith/artisans who are traditionally sedentary. The point is they are drawing on the West's romanticism of the nomadic lifestyle in order to engage a potential customer. As Amico points out in her article on the Festival: "While nomads 'play' the nomad role by dressing and acting as [they would] in their home camps, for three days tourists can experience Otherness in the form of 'desert life'" (Amico 2013, 92).

Aside from material culture for sale, men high on their camels would motion to tourists as they passed to initiate a paid ride. Selling camel rides was widespread; one young boy offered to take us to his village ten kilometers away to spend the day for the equivalent of twenty dollars. Many travel companies, included a camel trek AND a Tuareg turban (called a *cheche*) in their tour fee. Most of the websites that I visited for companies offering tours to the festival had very little relaying the significance or goals of the festival or even much about the 'culture' of the Tuareg. Images on all of the travel

---

[69] Cf: 'self-stereotyping' Silverman (2007, 2012) or "self-orientalizing," Ong (1999).

[70] "I am Tuareg; I am a nomad"

[71] See also Amico, Marta (2014)

websites that I analyzed were dominated by pictures of camels, Tuareg men with veils, and vast expanses of white sand dunes (see websites for operators such as Saga Tours, Touareg Tours, From Here 2 Timbuktu, Fulani Travel, and Guerba). Image is everything in advertising, and tourism is a product for sale.

When it comes to the non-Western world, most Western media regurgitate the same stereotypes that have been circulating for millennia. In looking at imagery and descriptions of tours highlighting the Festival, I found that in most cases they obscured or ignored most of the development goals of the Festival, except perhaps the preservation of Tuareg culture. Indeed, the Festival is a way that local Tuareg hope to continue a tradition of meeting and celebrating together, and inviting tourists is part of a long tradition of Timbuktu being a crossroads of cultures; Many Timbuktu inhabitants with whom I spoke emphasized the importance of hospitality to outsiders. But an equally important goal of the Festival is to bring economic opportunities and social development to the area. In a film recorded in 2003, Issa Dicko, who runs the development agency EFES and who helped to initiate the festival points out: "Tuareg can't be expected to live in a dream world—a mirage. A Tuareg is a human being who desires development and modernity." Thus the reason he fears that romanticism may harm Tuareg more than help them by trapping them in the past, much the way colonial policies sought to do.

A similar concern has been raised regarding the Ju/'hoansi in Namibia as evidenced by John Marshall's film "Death by Myth" (Marshall 2001). In the film, Marshall presents three separate 'Bushman' myths that culminate in the belief that Ju/'hoansi as hunter-gatherers are 'natural resource' managers and should remain in their natural habitat to be preserved like fauna. Subsequently, international donors from

agencies like World Wildlife Fund and USAID pour money into the region for projects based around establishing a nature conservancy never to pay attention to the fact that many local Ju/'hoansi were turning toward farming and needed development funds put toward water pumps, gardens, cattle, and farming technologies. Instead water pumps and gardens ended up being destroyed by imported elephants. In the end Ju/'hoansi make the equivalent of ten US dollars for two years of allowing trophy hunting, tourism, and documentary filmmakers in the area. Stereotypes have lived consequences, and this is the danger in romanticism.

As I have shown here, the romanticism inherent in commodifying culture through tourism has several downsides, and in fact, has real life repercussions for those who seek to compete in the so-called 'modern world.' Africans are not a unified group of people, but the ways that they are portrayed are unified. Stereotypes in media outlets, whether about tourism or not, continually rehash old ideas that generally originated in colonial policies. The Festival in the Desert has specific economic and political goals in inviting tourists to the event, but these are not attained. In the next chapter I will further discuss the problems associated with using tourism for development purposes through an analysis of the decline in tourist receipts to the Festival that came about in the years leading up to the 2012 rebellion. Because an issue of paramount concern for most tourists is safety, I ask, what happens when tourism and terrorism collide?

CHAPTER VIII

TOURISM V. TERRORISM

The linkages between tourism and terrorism[72] are particularly strong when we look at the ways that tourist destinations and industries are impacted by terrorist threats and the fact that terrorists often specifically target tourists. In addition, one of the main areas of heightened concern regarding terrorism revolves around the most fundamental aspect of travel: airlines. The normalization of heightened security measures has made air travel a major feature in the linkages between tourism and terrorism. Governmental concern and intervention in their citizens' safety while traveling abroad further draws these two together. The ripple effects of the attacks on New York's World Trade Center in 2001 were felt globally as tourist receipts declined rapidly after September 11th. Likewise, in the post-911 world, terrorist activities and threats have taken on new dimension and understandably garner major media and tourist attention.

The connections between tourism, terrorism and the media cannot be overemphasized. Media can significantly influence the way that tourists perceive a particular destination, and in the event of a terrorist attack, it can most assuredly curtail a tourist's desire to visit any given location. Through constant negative media focus, tourist arrivals drop significantly in certain travel destinations. The ability of a nation to repair these negative images is also directly related to that nation's resources for countering

---

[72] There is no internationally agreed upon definition of 'terrorism'. For the purposes of this discussion, I will use the United Nations General Assembly definition of terrorism to mean "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes…" (UN General Assembly 1994). The problems with any definition of terrorism are beyond the scope of this paper to discuss, though are hereby acknowledged.

such coverage. Comparing, for example, the bombings in Mombasa or Bali (2002) to those in London (2005) or Madrid (2004), Stafford and Gallagher show how the latter two were able to create counter-media campaigns, and thus tourism in these two European destinations quickly recovered (Stafford and Gallagher 2011). The former two still struggle, though Bali's 'Back to Bali' campaign in 2003 helped it recover by 2004. The difference is not just in the media coverage; the terrorist actions also had different meaning and intent. The bombings in Southeast Asia, for instance, were targeting tourists directly as representatives of their governments, whereas the European bombings were targeting major transportation hubs in an attempt to impact their economies. Regardless of the intent of the bombings, the difference in impact on the local economy is part of the overall problem. Nations that are able to bounce back after terrorist activities and negative media coverage often have the economic means by which to create counter-media campaigns because of a solid economy most likely anchored in more sustainable sectors. When considering the purported benefits and sustainability of tourism globally, then, we will find that the already well-to-do probably fair better in the beginning and in the long run.

Before 2012, media coverage of "potential" terrorist actions against tourists in Mali had a major effect on Mali's ability to sustain its tourism sector. Interestingly, many of my consultants felt that Mali and the Festival in the Desert were unduly targeted by media, as they argued that terrorists can and do target anywhere. Furthermore, this highlights the power of representation, wherein certain places are already imagined to be dangerous. In the case of Mali, the fact that it is predominantly Muslim arguably predisposes many potential tourists (from the West) to fear terrorist activity. Many

Western tourists equate terrorism with Muslims (and Islam with extremism) and accept the travel warnings without much thought. Likewise, as argued in the previous chapter, Africa is always-already framed as dangerous, thus tourists are often already on the fence about travel there. Of course, terrorism is not the only threat to tourism's safety and sustainability. Natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, economic recessions, changes in travel costs and safety, civil wars and political instability are all obvious hampers to tourism. Nations on the continent of Africa have seen all of these issues arise, and again media attention of them makes the sustainability of tourism particularly frustrating.

In this chapter, I continue to address several of the reasons that tourism remains untenable and unsustainable for economic development, particularly looking at the way the Festival in the Desert was impacted by travel warnings issued by Western governments from 2008-2012. I will highlight some of the issues that come up regarding tourists' safety while traveling, as it is paramount to both hosts and guests. Several of the tourists whom I cite below grappled with how seriously to take governmental travel advisories. Several tourists and locals seemed to feel that it was in certain government's interests to curtail tourism to Mali. One traveler said that she thought the warnings were promoted for political and economic reasons. Others called the advisories 'propaganda.' It is unclear who benefits from this propaganda but my interpretation is that it stems from criticisms regarding the War on Terror and what many interpret as anti-Muslim propaganda.

It is within a government's purview to attempt to safeguard their citizens' wellbeing both within their borders and while they travel abroad. Thus, the issue of safety has political implications that can be usefully understood using Foucault's treatment of

what he termed 'governmentality' (Foucault 1991). As an art of governing, governmentality involves a state's desire to promote the welfare of populations within a state in order to preserve the stability and power of the state. One of the ways that governments are able to do this is by monitoring other states and then issuing advisories that may deter their citizens from traveling to places deemed unsafe. However, the state often cannot outright prevent individuals from taking risks related to international travel so they may seek ways to minimize risk. The U.S. advisory, for instance, suggests that travelers sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP allows U.S. citizens and nationals to register their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate in order to receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in the destination country and make "informed decisions" about their travel plans. It also allows the Embassy to contact travelers in the event of an emergency including "natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency" (https://step.state.gov/step/).

In terms of whether the state can guarantee safety, we know that they absolutely cannot. Too much is uncontrollable. Promoting tourism as the end-all be-all of development strategies for many low-income nations does not take this into account. I argue that much of the problem is in the way that tourism is reported because it perpetuates false dreams for many without recourse to other more sustainable options. In discussing the importance of safety and security to tourists broadly, I argue that it is not only impossible for any given destination to promise it outright, but it is particularly challenging for a postcolonial nation such as Mali to guarantee.

In this chapter, I will be turning the age-old question of how tourism impacts locals on its head by showing how tourism is impacted by international and national

politics. I argue that tourism in Mali is yet another victim of current trends in the geopolitical showdown called the "War on Terror." It is also a victim of post-Independence politics regarding Tuareg and Malian nationalisms that continue to form the backdrop to internal conflicts. I will illustrate how travel advisories affected Mali's tourist economy, even before a real threat became apparent showing how the postcolonial condition makes up both the draw and the drawbacks to traveling in Mali and other African nations. Lastly, I discuss the problems and possibilities for Mali as 'just another African nation' and what this means for its ability to attract tourists.

Tourism in Africa

Over the last thirty years, tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa grew from a base of just 6.7 million in 1990, to 33.8 million in 2012 (World Bank 2013). As such, when looking solely at the numbers, the possibilities of tourism seem like the magic bullet to African nations' economic hurdles. However, this is not without contradictions, as some nations more easily attract tourists and sustain tourist infrastructures than others. Politically, Mali seemed poised for growth beginning in the late 1990's after successfully transitioning from a dictatorship to a democracy and following the Peace Accords, when it was held up as an emblem of the possibilities of African democracy in a multiethnic nation coming out of a civil war. In step with this perceived stability was a concurrent rise in tourism receipts, as the state began investing in tourist infrastructure, especially in the South. But in the North, problems had persisted regardless of any promises made in the Accords, and travelers had always been warned against travel to cities in the North, including Timbuktu. The U.S. travel advisory specifically stated: "U.S. citizens are specifically reminded that these

areas include the Timbuktu site of the popular Festival au Desert music festival." Regardless, the Festival over the last decade became what Mali's minister of tourism called "The premier tourist attraction in the country." In fact, the government had gone from ignoring it somewhat in the beginning to funding large portions of it between 2007 and 2012, understanding its importance to the peace process. The 2011 edition, even welcomed a visit by then-president Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT), who came as a statement of the importance and the safety of the Festival.

In the last decade or so, tourism has been promoted as an unproblematic economic venture with nothing but positive possibilities for development. Several agencies perpetuate these assumptions including international, local and regional development agencies, NGOs, and businesses. As mentioned in chapter one, USAID's Office of Economic Growth prepared a document on the potential of tourism development to improve food security in Mali (Richardson 2010). Several projects in the country were thought to aid in increasing tourism activities and spur economic growth. These included activities under UNWTO's "Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty" (ST-EP) initiative, including: The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and The Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (GSTA), who have worked to develop or increase tourism in different regions in Mali. According to Richardson, "Several strategies for tourism development have been found to be effective in creating employment and income opportunities for vulnerable groups and communities" (ibid. 1). He states that expansion of business opportunities, increases in wages and employment, as well as development of community income are all *perceived* economic benefits of tourism. However, as many possibilities as he states, USAID and other development groups only had initiatives.

There is no data that concludes that any of these potential benefits came to fruition or that the projects took place. Granted he was writing in 2010 and had no way to predict the catastrophes of 2012 when tourism came to a halt in Mali. Thus, the projects that were initiated were most likely not fully implemented.

I argue that the way that data is compiled and analyzed by global entities such as UNWTO, particularly the way that Africa is conceived of regionally, overlooks case studies that contradict the numbers supporting the positive impacts of tourism. The negative impacts that do get addressed are generally described as social ills (prostitution, sex tourism, drugs, etc.). They are brushed aside as easy to alleviate with alternate programs. Thus, with little critique, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council, and several other aid and development agencies, not to mention business consultants, continue to promote tourism as the "magic bullet" to development, using statistics that look fool proof, at least from afar. Meaning that most of their data come from specific countries, many of which have already established tourism industries, but are used to make regional predictions.

As Richardson highlights in the USAID document, several factors make Mali unique and thus potentially attractive for tourism—specifically Mali's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. They include the Old Towns of Djenné, Timbuktu, the Cliff of Bandiagara, and the Tomb of Askia.[73] There are also nine other cultural properties submitted for consideration on the List[74] and several natural properties as well. "Mali has

---

[73] Tomb of the Songhai Emporer, Askia, in Gao. http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1139/

[74] Kamablon (1999), La Boucle du Baoulé (1999), Es-Souk (1999), La Cité Historique de Hamdallahi (2009), Le Fort de Médine (2009), La grande mosquée de vendredi de Niono (2008), Le site de Kurukan

promoted tourism by structuring the nation's heritage as the engine of economic and social development" says Richardson (2010, 2). Unfortunately, emphasizing my argument that tourism is unsustainable, several cultural heritage sites were destroyed during the insurgency in the North including several saints' tombs outside of Timbuktu.[75] Also, several thousand of the ancient Timbuktu Manuscripts were burned when Salafists torched a library in the city. Furthermore, the economic and political instability of the last couple of years has made the project of safeguarding cultural heritage even more challenging than it already was, not to mention convincing tourists it's safe to return.

Traveling in Mali: There Is No Road to Timbuktu

A large percentage of Timbuktu's revenue comes from tourism, but in most cases it is an out of the way place that is reserved for the intrepid traveler. In fact, a number of travelers to Mali for whom I helped book travel did not go to Timbuktu, either because it seemed too far or they had security concerns. The large number of activities and destinations that one hopes to experience in a typical eight-day itinerary in the country can also make the extra four hours to Timbuktu on a hot, dusty road less appealing and in some cases impossible. As highlighted in the narrative below, there are a number of problems that one can encounter traveling in an undeveloped country such as Mali, which means that frequently those who plan to visit Timbuktu do not make it. There is an airport in the city and regular weekly flights from both Bamako and Mopti, but most itineraries in Mali follow a fairly predictable path as we followed in 2005. The variation

---

Fuga (2009), La Mosquée de Komoguel (2009), Le Tata de Sikasso (2009). http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ml

[75] Reconstruction of these mausoleums began on March 14, 2014 with funding from UNESCO. http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1112/

is mostly in how long one spends in each place, and in what order. It can also be affected by how many mishaps one encounters along the way. As the following excerpt from my field notes shows, travel in Mali can be remarkably unpredictable.

> **4 January 2005**: We woke up early, planning to leave Bamako at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Max showed up with the Toyota Landcruiser that would take us all the way to Timbuktu. There was an issue with his permit, however, and we didn't get out of town until close to 10:00. We were headed to Segu where we were going to have lunch. We arrive around two in the afternoon and have some cheese and salads, and Fanta cocktails while we relax. We were just going to get a snack, but of course Gary is already getting lost shopping. As it is we're going to get to Djenné pretty late. We finally head out and get a flat tire within two hours. I cannot believe it's starting like this. We end up hanging out in some village on the side of the busy one lane 'highway' drinking sodas and standing around choking on dust.
>
> The courtyard of the house next to where we are waiting is full of women and young girls cooking and hanging laundry. Anna Lee is trying to talk to them but they just laugh and run away. I am chatting with Jake on the side of the road while a group of men wearing jeans and dirty t-shirts are trying to beat the heat. Everyone in our crew is flexible and in a good mood, happy to be seeing even the roadside village culture. We decide to skip Djenné for now and head straight to our hotel in Sevarré, just outside of Mopti. We arrive at what is supposed to be our hotel (as I made reservations in November), but they told us they didn't have a room for us but found us a room at a hostel in Mopti. The hostel is not at all like the hotel I planned on. I know there are few luxuries in Mali, but Gary and Anna Lee prefer the best available. They are complaining before we even see our rooms, and once in the rooms I am sent down to the front desk because there were no towels or blankets in the rooms. They sent me down over and over again to demand more and more, or to just complain. I'm starting to understand how unprepared Mali is for the demand created by the Festival. Everyone has to be flexible.

6 January 2005: After that whirlwind shopping spree ("5 January," chapter 6), Gary is out of cash. I told him that it would be near impossible to exchange money once we were out of Bamako. He doesn't believe me that not even hotels can take credit cards. Now Max is trying to find somewhere that we can get some money before heading to Timbuktu. At least we get out of town early! The paved road ends at Doentza, and Max is flying over the dirt path at fifty km/h. It's bumpy and windy and we're laughing hysterically, though our asses will hurt tomorrow. We arrive at the ferry at noon and we're the first in line! I didn't realize that we had to cross the Niger River. It's quite an experience. 4x4 after 4x4 is arriving, many with Festival stickers on the side, and there appears to be no sense of order as we all vie for a spot in line. Just to the right of us, I see the biggest truck I have ever seen, loaded to the hilt with sleeping mats (for the Festival). It appears to have tipped over slightly and is stuck, blocking the entrance to the ferry. After waiting for what felt like a millennia, we finally are able to board the ferry.

Crossing the Niger is quite an experience! I cannot believe how many cars and people they are loading on these ferries. The ferry is old and rusty, but the scenery is beautiful. The sun is creating a strange halo in the sky as it tries to break through dust that eternally tints it a greenish gray hue. Women along the river's edge are doing their wash and the bright colors of their pagnes[76] contrast brilliantly with the brown of everything else. We once again arrive at our hotel only to find out our 'reservation' was not honored. The hotel manager is trying diligently to find a solution. We once again, end up in a hostel.

(Author's Fieldnotes, 2005)

As this description shows, tourism in Mali is generally not well-organized and predictable. We frequently could not rely on 'reservations' in hotels, even though I had made them months in advance. The truck that we were traveling in was less than reliable

[76] Untailored brightly colored cotton fabrics [bought in increments of 2x6 meters] that are simply wrapped around the waist into a skirt, or are tailored into outfits.

and broke down several times costing us an estimated two days of our itinerary. As described in the sample eight-day itinerary offered by West Africa Travel in Table 2 below, it is possible to see the four main tourist sites, Djenne, Mopti, Dogon, and Timbuktu, in one week. However, a similar eight-day itinerary by another tour company cuts out Timbuktu offering it as an add-on for a ten-day tour. But unforeseen events as described above can alter any itinerary. We were able to see Djenné on the way back to Bamako from Timbuktu, for instance, but many tourists do not have that luxury as they only have a week off from work. While working for W.A.T., I frequently had to deal with disappointed customers who had planned on seeing specific sites but had to miss them as their tour had to be altered for various reasons. For small businesses like W.A.T. it is hard to guarantee all aspects of a tour and the owner frequently went into debt refunding particularly angry clients. Safety is also an issue that is hard to predict or promise. As described in the sample eight-day itinerary offered by West Africa Travel in Table 2 below, it is possible to see the four main tourist sites, Djenne, Mopti, Dogon, and Timbuktu, in one week. However, a similar eight-day itinerary by another tour company cuts out Timbuktu offering it as an add-on for a ten-day tour. There are plenty of natural sites in Mali, but the bulk of tours center around cultural heritage.

Table 2: Sample Itinerary

Day 1: Bamako arrival
Day 2: Drive to the city of Djenne, site of the Great Mosque, built in 1907 in the distinct mud-brick (adobe) style on the site of an earlier mosque built in the thirteenth century and which was designated a World Heritage Site in 1988. Spend the evening taking photos of the mosque and have dinner at a local restaurant.
Day 3 and 4: Drive to Dogon Country, a strip of land around the Bandiagara Escarpment where one can take a half day trek around the villages as well as view the ancient cliff dwellings from the seventh and eighth century when the Tellem people built them some 200-300 meters up, and are now used as tombs by the Dogon.
Day 5 and 6: Take the "long, dusty drive" to Timbuktu. It takes nearly around eight hours to drive from Dogon to Timbuktu. Most tours of the city also include a camel trek into the Sahara Desert to 'mingle' with the local nomads and often watch a performance of traditional Tuareg music and dance.
Day 7: drive to Mopti, "the Venice of Mali." Mopti is a port town on the Bani river just a few hundred meters upstream from the confluence of the Bani and Niger Rivers. During seasonal flooding of the Inland Niger Delta, it is dotted with several small island villages of Bozo and Fulani people, the two main ethnic groups in this area.
Day 8: return to Bamako with a stop in the city of Segou, the original capital of Mali.

The Importance of Safety

Safety and security are absolutely vital to tourists, regardless of destination, and those working in the travel and tourism sector are acutely aware of how much of their existence relies on these factors. There are entire books on the topic for those in the hospitality world and the topics came up regularly when I was working for a tour operator and travel agency. In 2009, before my internship, a driver for Africa Travel was killed in a terrible accident when he was driving tourists through Algeria. The tourists were okay, but again, safety is hard to ensure on many levels. Since at least 2001, the issue of security has not only figured more prominently than previous decades, it has also become more difficult to ensure.

While working for W.A.T., I helped retired couples and individuals, professionals, young adults, college students, and families arrange their travel to many

countries on the African continent including Egypt, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Niger. There are few generalizations that I can make based on my experiences in this capacity, except that a main concern for all of the travelers was safety. There are both real and perceived safety concerns for any Western traveler to an African country. Because basic concerns were health related, travelers needed to know what kind of vaccinations or prophylaxes were needed in different areas. Malaria is a major concern throughout Africa and in a number of countries you need specific vaccinations (Yellow Fever in Mali). There are then concerns with infrastructure such as drinking water, road and vehicle safety, in-country air travel, etc. Lastly, there is the issue of interpersonal safety. Potential travelers want to know if people in the location are nice or friendly, whether they like Americans or Europeans, and whether there are any security issues.

Some of the travelers with whom I worked in 2011 and 2012 were compelled to cancel their plans last minute because of a change in security in certain locations, and a few were in the process of trying to reschedule after political events had thwarted previous plans for travel. For instance, a retired couple that had bought a tour to Algeria with West Africa Tours that was to begin in December of 2010 had to cancel their trip at the last minute because of turmoil related to protests and general civil unrest (considered part of the 'Arab Spring'). I was to rearrange their travel for the end of 2011. Over one half of the twenty emails sent back and forth between myself and this group regarded their safety. They specifically asked if we could *guarantee* that they would be safe. A common concern they had was whether as Americans they would be safe from Islamic extremists known to operate in Algeria. They did eventually travel to Algeria and had a

wonderful (and safe) time, but I was surprised at how often the issue came up, and in consultation with our Algerian tour guide, we had to find innumerable ways to assure them they would be as safe there as anywhere, but we could not technically *guarantee* safety.

Overall, the concerns that tourists had regarding travel to Mali were related to the specific warnings against travel to the north published by the U.S. and other embassies which warned of potential terrorist attacks on foreigners. Beginning in 2008, the embassy in Bamako stated that it 'continues' to recommend against travel to the North "due to kidnapping threats against Westerners," and that "U.S. citizens are specifically reminded that the restricted areas include Essakane, site of the popular 'Festival au Desert'" (U.S. Embassy 2009). Travelers regularly asked about these warnings. During the 2011 year, I set up several tours to Mali, some of which were specifically to the Festival in the Desert for 2012. Because of travel warnings against visiting the north of Mali by most major governments (United Kingdom, United States, Sweden, Germany, France, Australia, for example), travelers from these countries wanted to understand what safety measures would be taken by the operators. Of the twenty-one individuals that I assisted with travel to Mali, eight decided not to go to Timbuktu because of concerns they had related to a governmental advisory.

What is revealed in the following discussion is that the issue of making 'informed decisions' based on travel advisories led different potential or returning travelers to Mali to assess danger in a variety of ways. When I traveled to the Festival in 2011 I spoke with numerous travelers and Festival officials regarding the travel warnings, and have since followed up on a number of blog posts and travel forums on the subject. All in all, it

seems that without a clear picture of what exactly was going on behind the travel warnings, the decision to visit Timbuktu, the Festival, or even Mali, prior to the rebellion and subsequent coup in 2012, was a matter of a tourist's personal opinion. One of my participants, a fifty-something year old man said, "As for the safety warnings…they are simply absurd… given that no American has ever been harmed in Mali. In fact, I have been to over 25 countries and have never seen such a remarkable love for Americans." Another traveler to the 2011 festival stated: "Before I went I was a bit worried about the security alerts but I have to say I couldn't see what all the fuss was about. I don't remember one police stop." Conversely, in a forum on TripAdvisor regarding safety in Mali, someone by the name of Tom posted the following in 2010:

> "I just returned from a trip to Mali. I had planned to fly to Timbuktu and Mopti and hike in the Dogon Country. The situation is far worse than anywhere mentioned in the Western press. The Tuareg are holding hostages in the eastern part of Mali. The city of Timbuktu is not safe either. The embassy advisories have to be taken very seriously. Westerners are taken hostage and a ransom is demanded… The land borders between Mali and Burkina Faso are not safe and Al-Queida [sic] is very active in those areas, trying to take Westerners as hostages" ("TripAdvisor, Safety in Mali" 2010).

He was met with mixed responses, most commentators denounced him for reproducing government "propaganda." One respondent, Richard Trillo, who is also author of the "Rough Guide to Travel in West Africa," rebuked Tom's post, stating: "There's certainly a propaganda campaign under way to dissuade people from visiting parts of Mali that in every sense are completely safe and secure. I'm personally not convinced by the level of

threat implied in recent travel advisories from the UK and US." A post by an Australian woman named Jane, who traveled to the 2011 Festival, similarly responded saying: "…the so called risks in Mali are distorted (I think for political and economic reasons). We had a very good trip and felt totally safe at all times" (ibid.). Another traveler said:

> I went to Mali in Jan 2011 for the festival, and I felt perfectly safe at all times. I don't entirely understand all the politics involved, but obviously there are people trying to (and indeed already have) commit[ed] acts of terror in NY, London and Madrid, among others, and yet there are no travel warnings for those cities. Mali as a whole is much safer than most inner cities in the U.S. Bad things can happen anywhere, but generally speaking Mali seems very safe. The festival was an amazing experience, the people and music of Mali are wonderful, and I would not let the travel warnings deter you" ("TripAdvisor, Safety in Mali" 2010).

An Australian man in his late fifties, whom I will call Daniel, who also traveled to the Festival in 2011, had similar sentiments. Daniel and I had a lengthy conversation shortly after the Festival while at a hotel in Timbuktu. Our conversation almost immediately centered on the travel warnings. Daniel said that he and his wife were celebrating their thirty-year wedding anniversary with a tour of Africa including Mali. They had both wanted to go to Timbuktu specifically but ran across the Australian travel warning when making plans. They contacted the tour company for assurance and he said they felt that the company helped them to feel secure with their travel plans. In fact, he said that of the many places he had traveled around the world (some thirty countries), Mali was "one of the absolute safest" in his opinion.

In fact, Daniel and I talked about putting together a petition to send to several governments to lift the ban, as we (as well as many others) felt that Mali was in fact exceptionally safe and as we saw it, the warnings were negatively affecting the livelihoods of so many people in and around Timbuktu. Daniel said that his tour guides were very vigilant about their safety in terms of reminding them to keep their wallets and passports in discreet locations and encouraging them to stay with the group. Beginning in 2009, West Africa Tours had all of the travelers in their camps register and check-in at regular times (10 a.m. and 6 p.m.) and warned them not to take camel rides offered by locals into the desert as they could become easy targets for criminal activity. But overall, these were considered precautions, and guides and tourists with whom I spoke all felt that the travel warnings were highly exaggerated as they did not encounter or see hint of any suspicious activity. Early travel warnings (prior to 2008) had mostly focused on the potential for what they called 'banditry' and 'petty theft.' The State Travel Advisories between 2008-2012 were more specifically warning against kidnappings and terrorist threats made by Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). "The Department is aware of several separate sources of information indicating AQIM's ongoing interest in kidnapping Westerners throughout the Sahel region" (Embassy 2012, see Appendix A). Obviously, in retrospect the embassies knew some things that an average tourist would not, but advisories allow travelers to come to their own conclusions. Even Manny knew that fundamentalists were encroaching, he said that every year he had to increase security. He said that he'd call people in the Tuareg separatist movement who knew about the political currents in the Sahara to ask if they thought it was safe for the Festival to go on, and they always answered affirmative (Morgan 2013a, 3).

After the events of 2012 many of the above quoted travelers may indeed have had a change of heart. Most tourists spoke not of terrorists or kidnappings, but about how friendly Malians were. How were they supposed to perceive of safety while traveling? They were aware of the advisories. But they came anyway. One thing that many of these respondents have in common is an understanding of the risks of being anywhere. Thus, what it is it about travel to Mali in particular that made for such extreme warnings? Locals felt they had been specifically and unfairly singled out.

One afternoon as I crossed a dune at the Festival I was greeted by Salim, a young Tuareg vendor at the festival. I told him that I was not interested in buying anything at that time, but sat down in the sand to look at what he had to offer and we struck up a conversation. He said, "France does not care about Mali and that is why they exaggerated the threat of Al Qaeda…Al Qaeda is everywhere, it is in New York and Paris, but no one is giving warnings against travel there." Salim felt that even if Al Qaeda did threaten to kidnap Westerners in Mali (which they had done), Tuareg would never let that happen because they pride themselves on being hospitable to outsiders. Of course, there were a few specific events that did make Mali look increasingly unsafe. In December of 2008 two Canadian nationals who worked for the United Nations were kidnapped in Niger. In June of 2009 four European tourists were kidnapped along the Mali-Niger border, and one British hostage was killed. A U.S. citizen was killed in Mauritania in June as well. In November of 2009 a French citizen living in the Malian city of Menaka (about 500 miles from Timbuktu) was kidnapped. Al Qaeda took responsibility for all of these. But locals in Timbuktu and at the Festival felt that the travel warnings were an overreaction to the problem. At the time of my fieldwork in Mali, I felt that those reporting on kidnappings

that had happened on the borders of Niger or Mauritania or in southern Algeria lacked an understanding of the geography of Mali as many of the incidences mentioned above happened hundreds of miles from Timbuktu and Essakane. As one consultant put it: "They are confusing these remote regions with tourist spots, and these are not places most tourists would go to. They are on the edges of civilization, out in the bush, not even nomads go there; they know it is dangerous."

The issue is complex and it relates to the fact that the Sahara Desert is vast and remote making it an attractive for people wishing to organize and operate under the radar. But I also think that anti-terror actions often create what they wish to deter. The U.S. had been training Mali's military since shortly after 9/11 and in 2008 created United States Africa Command (AFRICOM).[77] Shortly after the 2012 coup, Gregory Mann, an historian of francophone West Africa wrote: "[A] decade of investment in Special Forces training, cooperation between Sahelien armies and the United States, and counterterrorism programs of all sorts run by both the State Department and the Pentagon has, at best, failed to prevent a new disaster in the desert and, at worst, sowed its seeds" (Mann 2012; quoted in Whitehouse 2014). Still, before the events of 2012, Manny felt secure in continuing the Festival and in 2011 worked hard to dispel tourist fears of traveling to Timbuktu.

Malians are deeply aware of their powerlessness politically and economically. Mali's global political economic position also suppresses the state's ability to deal with

[77] "United States Africa Command, (U.S. AFRICOM) is one of six of the U.S. Defense Department's geographic combatant commands and is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for military relations with African nations, the African Union, and African regional security organizations. A full-spectrum combatant command, U.S. AFRICOM is responsible for all U.S. Department of Defense operations, exercises, and security cooperation on the African continent, its island nations, and surrounding waters. AFRICOM began initial operations on Oct. 1, 2007, and officially became an independent command on Oct. 1, 2008" (http://www.africom.mil/about-the-command).

both terrorism and state travel advisories that are set on destroying the tourist economy. In an interview with a reporter for Christian Science Monitor, Manny said, "You know the Bronx is more dangerous than Timbuktu. My problem is that I can't say that there is no Al Qaeda in Northern Mali, because Al Qaeda is everywhere" (Baldauf 2010). He did agree that areas around the borders of Mali were substantially less secure at the time (2010-2011) than in the area of Timbuktu. Manny had told me in an interview in Bamako in 2011 that he felt the Festival itself was being unduly targeted and that travel warnings against visiting Timbuktu because of kidnappings on the border of Mauritania would be like a travel warning against visiting Los Angeles because of kidnappings in New York. To a certain degree this is true, but the fact of the matter is, the U.S. can better deal with terrorist activities both because it has a stronger military and a more stable economy.

Regardless, organizers did move the Festival from its location in Essakane to the city of Timbuktu beginning in 2010 to ease some of the fears that tourists and governments had. The government also provided military security at the festival. Throughout the day armed military in jeeps patrolled the perimeter of the main festival site and several were speckled throughout the crowds as well. In 2011, to show that the area was indeed safe, the (then) president of Mali, Amadou Toumani Touré, even attended. In his address at the Festival he thanked tourists for having the "courage" to come despite the travel warnings. He took time to explain that Islam is a peaceful religion, a tolerant religion that it is not about violence or aggression. It is a religion of brotherly love and peace. "Here in Mali," he said, "it is a symbol of faith and trust in God and the good of all people." Mali welcomed all people, he said.

The impression management that went on at the 2011 edition of the Festival was overt and forceful at times. Every press conference that I attended made mention of the travel warnings and how they were erroneous or harmful. The Festival was continually described as a 'bridge between cultures' or an example of 'intercultural dialogue.' These comments seemed to be in response to representations of Muslims as a whole. "Occidental cultures," Manny said, "misunderstand Islam and think that we are all terrorists." Tamnana, a traditional Tuareg band who spoke at a press conference, said: "Please share the message that the Tuareg region is not a place of terrorism or violence but a place of peace and solidarity with the world." They thanked everyone for coming to Timbuktu despite the travel warnings. "The Festival helps the lives of so many people here and is very important to so many people to have tourists putting their money into the economy. Many people make a living this way."

With the close proximity to the city, the festival was substantially different in 2011 than it was in 2005, as I've already mentioned. Having the Festival in Essakane, which is a long forty miles from Timbuktu gave the festival its famous remoteness. Not to say that Timbuktu itself is not remote, but in Essakane one gets the sense of really being 'in the middle of the desert'. Another result of moving closer to the city was that more Timbuktu locals visited. As mentioned above, several Tuareg lamented this because it brought in "beggars and street folk," which they felt degraded the atmosphere.

On a potential positive note, with the festival near the city, some felt that it would keep tourists in the city for the weekend surrounding the festival. Overall, however, travelers were slowing down their visits to the North due to travel warnings, regardless of how far away the kidnappings were. One hotelier in Timbuktu had a dozen rooms empty,

which meant he only three or four were filled after the festival in 2011. In fact, I was moved from the famous Hotel Colombe to its annex because it was empty and they needed to consolidate their services. Normally Timbuktu would be teeming with tourists before and after. In fact, Timbuktu generally has a steady tourist wave from November through April.

The Office of Tourism and Hospitality in Timbuktu estimated that over half of the city's adults worked in tourism in some fashion and that in many ways all industries were linked to tourism. For instance, those working in agriculture were supplying produce to restaurants and hotels, as well as to locals, and thus were negatively affected by the drop in demand. Most of the inhabitants with whom I spoke had some part of their income deriving from tourism as well. For instance, the postal worker who delivered mail in the central square which included several of the hotels also sold postcards and small souvenirs to tourists he encountered on his routes. Aïcha's brother-in-law, Mahmoud, who hosted me in Timbuktu worked for USAID but also had a side business providing tourists in Timbuktu with overnight stays in his village a few kilometers away.

Tourism was Mali's third largest revenue generator until the coup d'etat in 2012. From 2002 until 2008, tourism in Mali had seen steady growth. In 2008 Mali it had its greatest number of arrivals (around 190,000), up from barely 110,000 in 2002, and dropping to less then 170,000 by 2010 (WTTC 2012). According to government officials, because of the instability in the north, the country has lost nearly $110 million in lost

tourism receipts and over 8,000 jobs between 2010 and 2012 ("In Pictures: Tourism in Mali" 2014). See the number of arrivals in Timbuktu from 2001-2010[78] below (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of Arrivals 2001-2010

2001	4836	
2002	5135	
2003	6276	First Festival in area
2004	5702	
2005	8656	
2006	45,000[79]	Mawlid Festival in April
2007	6114	
2008	6418	
2009	6000	
2010	1845	

In 2011, I spoke with several young men in Timbuktu who worked as tour guides. One young man, "Michael" as he calls himself, had specifically learned English from Peace Corps volunteers so that he would be able to work with American tourists. This gave him an edge compared with other guides who only spoke French. According to Michael, without tourism everyone was just sitting around with nothing to do. Some tour guides had gone south to find work in Djenné, another big tourist attraction in Mali. Moustafa, another guide said that he couldn't even afford to make the trip to Djenné. "The decline in tourists this season," he said, "was completely unexpected and I was not prepared." Before the travel warnings, some could make more than $100 a day working with tourists. This was not money that they pocketed for themselves, generally. Many

[78] These numbers were given to me by the tourism officials in Timbuktu. When I was there in 2011, arrivals were a meager 492 in the first quarter of 2011, which is generally the height of the tourist season in the city.

[79] In April of 2006 there was a larger-than-usual Mawlid Festival marking the birth of the Prophet Mohammed. This year's festival was partially financed by then-Libyan president Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Amadou Toumani Touré and the Muslim presidents of surrounding nations (Senegal, Niger, Mauritania and Sierra Leone) joined an estimated 30,000 Malians who all camped out in the desert (Daniel 2006)

were supporting their extended families (mothers, fathers, multiple siblings and grandparents). When I met Michael he was only fourteen, but often brought in more money than his father who was an artisan who sold jewelry to tourists. Michael paid for his younger siblings to go to school and helped fund his family's metalworking business at times as well. His family also often hosted tourists that had hired Michael.

Reflecting on the difference between my visit to Timbuktu in 2005 and 2011, I can say without a doubt that the city had changed considerably. In 2005, the city of Timbuktu was teeming with tourists, but in 2011, it was nearly devoid of tourists. Before and after the Festival in 2005, the markets were full of white faces and, in the little shops along the road, groups waited to get a peek at the wares for sale. In fact, everywhere we went was bustling with tourists, many on their way to the Festival. This is evidenced in the fact that twice our hotel reservations were not honored and we were directed to a hostel. In 2005, the steps of the Hotel Colombe were swarmed with at least a dozen young men vying to be guides for tourists. Young children also crowded the hotels wanting to get a look at the "toubabous" and many had small trinkets and souvenirs to sell.

In 2011, Timbuktu felt like a ghost town. I didn't see more than two or three other foreigners and there were no taxis circling the center of town. In fact I couldn't even find a guide. This was the day after the Festival ended. I spoke with a young man named Salikou who worked as a bartender in one of the hotels and he said that most of the guides had gone south to try and make money at the "Festival sur le Niger" in Segu,

Mali.[80] The Festival in the Desert was the only thing that brought in any tourists this year. "In the past the town would be full of tourists from December to February, but this year there were hardly any," he said. Even people with reservations were cancelling last minute, he added. For example, a group of twenty French nationals had booked several rooms at the hotel and cancelled a week before they were supposed to arrive. They were told that Al Qaeda was threatening to kidnap Westerners at the festival, and decided not to come. Salikou said he knew scores of people who were now unemployed because of the decline in tourism. He worried about his own job because the hotel had so little work.

I spoke with several artisans in the market and they echoed the same concerns. Some artisans were able to make their way to Segu, but those who couldn't, did not know what they were going to do. Some hoped that they could sell to NGO workers who were scheduled to visit, but even that wasn't guaranteed because many NGOs were also not sending people to Timbuktu because of the threat of attacks by Al Qaeda. Other young men with whom I spoke said that the travel warnings could become a self-fulfilling prophecy because when you take tourism away from a city like Timbuktu you create a situation in which terror groups like Al Qaeda have more sway. As one man put it, if you don't even have enough to buy bread and someone comes along and offers you bread and a radio, you will probably do whatever they ask you to do. I am not implying this is indeed what happened in Mali, but it was voiced as a concern by a group of men with whom I spoke.

Between the years 2008 (when France first announced a travel warning) and 2011, Mali's growing tourism industry rapidly deteriorated almost as fast as it had grown.

---

[80] A music festival that was started in 2004 in the Mali's colonial capital.

Mali was never a top travel destination, and I am frequently mistaken for saying "Bali" as opposed to "Mali" when stating where I do my research. However, before 2008, tourist arrivals steadily grew, much of which is attributed to the increasing popularity of the Festival in the Desert. From 2003-2007 international arrivals at the Bamako airport grew from 110,000 to 164,000, to 193,000 by 2008 only to drop back to 160,000 by 2012 (World Bank, 2013).

Ahmed, a worker at the Office of Tourism and Hospitality in Timbuktu, said that the numbers in 2010 were down more than 4000 from the year prior. He estimated that over 70% of the families in Timbuktu have income deriving from tourism so the entire city was suffering because of travel warnings. A primary source for tourism in Timbuktu was the Festival in the Desert. According to Ahmed, it helped tourism tremendously even when it was in Essakane, Timbuktu benefitted from hosting visitors before and after. In his opinion, the embassy in France was responsible for propagating the warnings beginning with the kidnappings in 2008. Ahmed felt that France did not have an awareness of how important the Festival and tourism were to the livelihoods of those in Timbuktu.

As I have already mentioned, the Festival moved from Essakane to Timbuktu in 2010 and 2011 to help foreigners feel more secure. Manny told me that the move was largely symbolic, to make foreigners feel more secure next to a city, and also to appease international donors by showing that they were taking seriously the warnings and threats. But according to Manny, one is no safer in Timbuktu than in Essakane. And as already mentioned, many nomadic groups did not come because it was further away. Essakane is a traditional meeting place for nomadic groups, which according to Manny is why it was

chosen in the first place for the festival. Thus, the impact was much farther reaching than even the question of whether tourists would attend. In an attempt to cater to the needs of attracting tourists and by extension profits, the Festival was not able to cater to the needs of some locals.

By 2012, only one lone traveler with West Africa Tours decided to fulfill his travel plans to the Festival. In fact, West Africa Tours estimates that even before the rebellion and the coup d'état in 2012, they lost over 80% of their clientele because of the heightened media coverage and warnings against travel to Northern Mali. However, many travelers simply switched their plans to surrounding countries such as Ghana, which were deemed safer; others cancelled altogether. Thus, the events of 2012 had economic repercussions far beyond the borders of Mali. For large travel agencies this is probably unimportant, but for small companies like the two for whom I worked, it was devastating. And for the nation of Mali, it disrupted the entire economy.

Conclusions: It Is Still Africa!

Although tourism in Mali dropped significantly, tourists still traveled but changed their destination. Thus, tourism as an overall economy did not show the effects of heightened security concerns in Mali, however Mali's economy was negatively impacted, first by travel warnings, and then by civil unrest and finally by actual terrorist activity. Tourism is not an isolated phenomenon; it incorporates people, industries, and economies around the globe. Global and local politics also impact the ability of any given destination to remain attractive to tourists. Mali's tourist economy was steadily on the rise (a trend seen throughout the continent) for nearly a decade only to fall dramatically in the few years leading up to the coup d'état in 2012, largely due to media coverage and

travel warnings by various governments. Safety is a major concern for tourists everywhere, but in a vastly impoverished nation like Mali it is incredibly hard to guarantee because infrastructure and control are missing at several levels. Granted, safety can be difficult to guarantee anywhere. In terms of a nation such as Mali, a further complication is related to the ways that Western media amplify danger in Africa, in addition to the ability of the Malian government to focus investment on tourism infrastructures. The interchangeability of Mali for another African destination highlights another issue: the way that many Western tourists conceptualize Africa.

Some tourists specifically wish to visit Mali for a variety of reasons. Many I spoke with came to the Festival for the music; others came for Timbuktu, and timed it with the Festival. Amico (2013) found that many tourists came to experience 'desert culture' through the Festival. Other tourists with whom I spoke came to Mali because it is renowned for several art forms including *bogolan* (mud-dyed fabrics). All in all, however, my research revealed that for Western tourists Africa is Africa and to visit Mali, or Ghana, or Senegal, or Kenya even, is still a trip to Africa. Capitalizing on tourist imaginaries is essential in marketing; if Mali is going to take part in tourist enterprises, it positions itself not as uniquely Malian, but instead quintessentially African as the current campaign tag line demonstrates: "Le Mali: Une Afrique Authentique." West Africa Tours has also just changed its tag line recently to "Authentic Africa."

In the next chapter, I will discuss how Festival organizers have dealt with the recent political turmoil, bringing the situation as up-to-date as possible. In further developing an understanding of Mali's history of contested nationalisms, we will see how historic tensions became manifested in the 2012 rebellion. As I continue to discuss how

tourism is situated within national and international politics I will give an overview of how the Festival as the "Caravan for Peace," still aims to continue the Festival's goals.

CHAPTER IX

IN EXILE: FROM TIMBUKTU TO HERE

"No need for a Flame of Peace. People understand art."

(Egmar, personal communication, 2004)

Barely twenty-four hours after the 2012 edition of the Festival in the Desert ended, on January 17, the *Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad* (MNLA),[81] staged an insurrection against the state of Mali and on April 6, 2012 they claimed independence and declared the regions of Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao an independent Tuareg nation called Azawad. This separatist movement is in many ways a continuation of the rebellion of the 1990's but it took on a decidedly different form by the end of 2013 when it was co-opted by, or incorporated into, a movement to bring Salafist[82] Islam into West Africa. As I will show in this chapter, several features of the renewed rebellion of 2012 relate to issues addressed in this dissertation. First, the declaration of an independent Tuareg nation shows the continued dissatisfaction many Tuareg felt with the state of Mali. Thus we see the ongoing issue of contested nationalisms. Second, Tuareg are not a united community. Manny has now started a campaign of peace and is seeking to use the festival format to bring Mali back together as one nation, while a Tuareg

[81] Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad; National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad in English, generally referred to as Tuareg rebels from the North of Mali and thought to have been trained and fought in the Libyan army under Gaddafi.

[82] According to Andy Morgan: "The Salafist philosophy that rules the north can be traced back through Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the founders of Al Qaida, to Hassan Al Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and his fellow Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, the theorist-in-chief of late 20th century Islamic radicalism; through Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, the father of the Islamic revival in northern India, to an austere ultra- conservative 18th century preacher from Najd in Saudi Arabia called Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab" (2013: 7).

separatist movement seeks the opposite. Third, we see further evidence of competing discourses of globalization. Certain jihadist movements by some Muslims seeking to institute radical interpretations of the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed are gaining global traction and are coming up against the discourses of universal human rights and neoliberal capitalism all of which are being challenged in global spaces. In this chapter I will give a brief overview of previous rebellions in Mali, the renewed rebellion in 2012, and specifically address some of the internal politics involved. I will then discuss the formation of the Caravan for Peace and what its goals are. I will end with a discussion of contested nationalisms in global spaces.

The internal politics of the Tuareg rebellions are so complicated that reading through the best scholarly works on the issues relevant to Tuareg populations literally made me dizzy, but I will lay out some of the major features as they relate to the Festival and Timbuktu here. As mentioned above, Tuareg are not, and arguably never have been, a unified collective. Even in the North, Tuareg do not unanimously agree with the notion of a separate Tuareg nation. As anthropologist Bruce Whitehouse put it, "The people we call 'the Tuareg' are not united on anything, least of all separatism."[83] All Tuareg would agree, however, that increased development aid to the North is essential.

As I found in conferences that I attended at the Festival in the Desert in both 2005 and 2011, Northerners in Mali feel slighted by the state's efforts to modernize (i.e. develop). "There isn't even a road to Timbuktu!" declared one man angrily. Of course, there are not roads in many places in Mali, but whether there is a road or not makes all the difference regarding a community's ability to partake in the national economy.

---

[83] From Whitehouse's blog "Bridges from Bamako" accessed February 28, 2013. (http://bridgesfrombamako.com/2013/02/25/understanding-malis-tuareg-problem/

Whether it means being able to get products out or bring them in, it is essential to be able to travel with ease. In terms of tourism, ease of access can make all the difference. For Timbuktu, the remoteness is part of the appeal, but it also can be an obstacle. Frequently tourists choose to skip the city on their itinerary because of lack of time. Most of Mali's economy is concentrated around the capital city of Bamako; many areas on the periphery have been stifled in terms of social and economic development.

Continuing droughts in Mali have preceded all of the rebellions by Northerners, so it is easy to assert that economic considerations are key to Tuareg contempt. But there is also the age-old issue of competing nationalisms in Mali. The first Tuareg rebellion against the state of Mali was staged in 1963. Just two years after Mali's independence. This was the initial call for an independent Tuareg nation. As already discussed in chapter four, this rebellion was suppressed with intense brutality and the North was essentially forced under a military occupation for the following two decades. This is also when the initial waves of refugees and exiles fled Mali, many ended up in Libya.

The second Tuareg rebellion supposedly ended a little better as Mali was then democratic, and the new president, Alpha Konare, granted greater autonomy to the nation's Northern regions. This helped to pacify many, but it wasn't enough to fully deal with the problems that would lead to continued dissatisfaction and feelings of neglect in the North. After two terms, Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) succeeded Konaré in 2002, and because he is a Northerner many felt that things would finally begin to change in the North. Campaigns and conversations over decentralization were prominent in 2004 and 2005, when I was in Mali, and it seemed to be a popular sentiment that removing control from Bamako and meting it out regionally would help the nation politically and

economically. But the state has not been able to provide sufficiently either way. As McCord et al, point out, poverty continues to be at the root of many African nations' inability to effectively govern (McCord, Sachs, and Woo 2005). In my estimation, Mali's status as one of the poorest countries in the world has hampered the state's ability to deal with chronic food insecurity and overall poverty. Thus, political and economic issues interweave and should not be conceived of as separate problems (cf: Ferguson 2006). As an African history professor of mine once said, the causes of famine after a drought cannot be conceived of as only a "failure of the rains;" they must also be understood as a "failure of the reigns." Thus, the Second Tuareg Rebellion was perhaps spurred by drought and the loss of livelihood that many Tuareg faced, but separatists saw the lack of attention and aid as a specifically political issue.

After the "Flame of Peace" in 1996, which effectively ended the 1990 rebellion, peace and prosperity reigned to some degree in the North (Lecocq 2010, 377). Lecocq believes that ample rains in the Sahara in the late 1990's were a large factor in this prosperity. But in 2004 a drought and a plague of locusts wreaked havoc on Mali's agricultural industries. In the North, once again, communities felt the effects with force. In 2006, a number of former rebels once again took up arms and renewed their rebellion, which was quickly dealt with by a peace agreement signed in Algeria known as the Algiers Accords. Between 2006 and 2009, unrest continued, but in 2009 a cease-fire was declared between Mali and the rebels, which was thought to have ended the rebellion (Lecocq 2010, 396-401).

The rebellion of 2012 is evidence that tensions never went away. Some link the timing of the renewed rebellion to the fall of Gaddafi. "As the Gaddafi regime crumbled

into dust during the summer and early autumn 2011, Touareg deserters from the Libyan army flooded into their native Mali, laden with the kind of heavy weaponry that Northern Mali had rarely if ever seen during fifty years of Touareg revolt" (Morgan 2013a, 10). The MNLA's first attack against the Malian army occurred at Ménaka, a town in the Eastern region of Gao. The next day they attacked Tessalit, hometown to members of Tinariwen. This time the separatists were far better equipped than earlier attempts and clashes with Malian forces proved Tuareg fighters, who numbered as many as 3,000, this time had a decided edge. What gave this movement further advantage, according to many, was the leadership involved, coupled with more training.

Because of the defeats that Malian forces were experiencing, contempt against the government grew as the MNLA pushed further south, aiming to take over Timbuktu and areas around Mopti. With these defeats and advances, military discontent began to fester around the capital of Mali, and by March of 2012 a military junta staged a coup and ousted president Touré. Many believe that the take over by the military was provoked by embarrassment over being defeated by the MNLA. Others argue that because ATT was accused of being invested in the rebellion because he is a Northerner. The junta was led by Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, a Malian soldier who taught English in Kati, Mali[84] and had studied in the United States and been trained by U.S. military as well (Morgan 2013a).

With chaos in the South, and without an official head of state, the insurgency coursed on in the North, gaining its own momentum, taking over Timbuktu by the end of March. But the Tuareg movement gained its own chaos. Over the course of 2012 the

[84] 16 kilometers northeast of Bamako in the southwestern region of Koulikouro.

MNLA took on many forms. In May of 2012 the MNLA signed a pact with Ansar ud-Dine (led by the leader of the 1990 rebellion Iyad Ag Ghaly), and together declared an *Islamic* State of Azawad.[85] Soon aftyerwards Ag Ghaly purportedly broke ranks with the MNLA and partnered with the North African faction of Al Qaeda known as AQIM[86] as well as the movement for Jihad in West Africa, MUJAO.[87] To be an Islamic state is not truly the problematic part of this connection as the majority of Tuareg are Muslim, like most Malians. It was in the next steps after this declaration that caused such an uproar across the country, specifically when Salafism took over in the North. Next, Ansar ud-Dine, and/or its affiliates, took over Timbuktu and instituted Shari'a law sending shock waves across the country as musicians (and music) were forced into exile.

As the conditions became unlivable, more and more refugees left the area every day heading to neighboring countries and refugee camps. In Mauritania, the number of refugees swelled from 16,000 in January to more than 100,000 by September of 2012. The UN estimated that the insurgency affected perhaps 380,000 people in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal, which cover about 800,000 square miles in the North of Mali. According to Intagrist El Ansari, a Tuareg journalist from Essakane: "In the beginning, the reason for the flight from the conflict areas was the people's belief that the Malian Army would exact reprisals following their confrontation with the MNLA…But the next wave occurred due to the pressure exercised by the Islamists" (El Ansari 2012).

---

[85] The Independent State of Azawad has several different permutations regarding whether it is conceived of as secular or Islamic (See Morgan 2013).

[86] Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. See Morgan 2013.

[87] *Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Movement for Jihad in West Africa)

Horror stories from this period began circulating among those of us concerned with populations in Northern Mali. The worst part began on August 22, 2012, when insurgents declared Shari'a law in Timbuktu. This effectively outlawed all forms of secular music; militants confiscated tapes and equipment as they made attacks on radio stations and musicians' homes in Timbuktu and other northern cities. Not only was music banned, but Shari'a law was imposed broadly and without impunity. On one end of the extreme are stories of people having property damaged. For instance, one young man whose phone rang playing a Tinariwen tune had it taken from him and smashed. On the other end of the spectrum, a young couple who had a child out of wedlock were stoned to death. Suspected thieves were given no fair trial before hands and/or feet were cut off; women who did not veil in public (as many Malian Muslim women do not) were whipped. The local radio station was taken over and it was announced that the devil's music would not be played there anymore, and warned citizens in Timbuktu of the seriousness of their implementation of the law (Morgan 2012, 2013).

The Caravan for Peace

Obviously, the Festival in the Desert was cancelled in 2013. With Mali in chaos, particularly with an armed rebellion being fought in the streets of Timbuktu, the issue of whether the Festival would happen was answered for us. According to Manny, AQIM had already been threatening the Festival, making it harder and harder every year to organize; Western donors refused to fund the event, leaving the Festival without any European or American donors in 2011 (and 2012 I assume). As already mentioned, the move to Timbuktu was due to threats by AQIM that they would target Westerners, and it turned out, the threats were more real than any of us could have imagined in 2011.

Manny and other Tuareg with whom I spoke in 2011 said that most Northerners are generally not sympathetic to Salafism or Wahhabism,[88] in fact, most said that true Islam is not extremist, seeing it as 'naturally a tolerant religion.' However, elders in the area were in contact with certain leaders of AQIM, according to Manny. Manny regularly met with elders from his village to discuss the ramifications of holding the Festival, especially when Al Qaeda had started to move closer to Timbuktu. As the following quote makes clear, Manny had insight into the threats posed by AQIM discussed in the previous chapter.

> "2007... that's when the red lines were first drawn," Manny remembers, "and the Foreign ministries in Europe and America began to issue all kinds of warnings against travelling to the north of Mali…The Al Qaida people were wandering around the desert at that time," Manny continues. "But they weren't aggressive. They visited the camps near Essakane and said, 'don't worry, we're Muslims like you.' But then later, their argument began to change. The first alert was when they said, 'we've got nothing against you. We just have the same enemy, which is the West, the non-believers.' That's when I understood that things were going to get difficult, because our festival was based on people coming from all over the world, without distinction." (Morgan 2013a).

As already mentioned, the Kel Ansar clan, that Manny belongs to, is considered to be the defender of Islam and they trace their roots back to the Prophet. As I was told, the

---

[88] Wahhabism is an offshoot of radical or orthodox Islam named for the 18th century preacher from Saudi Arabia Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with Salafism which is actually an offshoot of Wahhabism.

marabouts (religious scholars) of the area are almost all Ansar. Thus, Manny said that he felt that this connection is largely what kept the Festival safe for so long. Over the years leaders in the area were starting to have concern, however, that the Festival was spreading debauchery, "some kind of Sodom and Gomorrah in Essakane," though they understood that it was also benefitting many in the area (Morgan 2013). Over the years, things continued to worsen and hostages were taken in areas remote in relation to the Festival, but connected to it nonetheless. As discussed above the Festival began losing attendees in the last few years.

Even with Shari'a law in Timbuktu, the Festival did not die off. In fact Manny stepped up his charge that the Festival could keep its peacekeeping mission. After the events in the summer of 2012, organizers began envisioning a Caravan of Peace that would take the Festival and its statement of peace and reconciliation on the road. With the 2013 edition canceled, Manny and other Festival organizers planned to have the Festival happen in the desert in neighboring Burkina Faso. In his report for Freemuse, "Music, Culture and Conflict in Mali," Andy Morgan shared this statement from Manny:

> "At a certain point, after the beginning of the uprising and the arrival of the Islamists, I wanted to throw in the towel. The whole situation seemed so desperate and hopeless. Then after thinking about it for a while, and talking to my team, to the artists, to certain partners and friends of the festival, I understood that my only way to resist all that...was to continue to be involved in music and to carry on promoting festivals. It was my way of fighting back and showing that you can't kill off music just because Timbuktu has been occupied. It was my way of

> showing that Tuareg and Malian music must be heard even more often and even further afield. If they've closed the doors of Timbuktu we'll open up the doors to the rest of the world. We'll go and sing in Tokyo. We'll play *igbayen* in Rio de Janeiro, we'll sound the *tindé* drum in Dubai and dance the *takamba* in Toronto, right up until the day when we can return to Timbuktu... Before our music was heard in Essakane, at the Tamadacht Festival or in Essouk. Now it'll be heard in all the big festivals in the world. So it's the opposite of what you, the Islamists, want. It's our victory and your defeat" (Morgan 2013a, 29).

It is with this vision that the "Festival in Exile" launched the "Caravan of Artists for Peace and National Unity." The plan was to travel through Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Algeria, Niger and then meet in Burkina Faso, where the official festival would take place. The caravan was set to begin in Bamako in February 2013 and head to the town of Kobeni in Mauritania. There the first "Concert of Peace" was planned to take place on the 8th and 9th of February. Following the Festival website for updates, it was unclear how much of these events actually took place and to whom they were open. Organizers ended up having to divide the Festival into an east and west leg and some performances were not open to foreigners because of permit issues.

At the end of 2013, three festivals, Festival au Desert, Festival sur le Niger, and Festival Taragalte, joined together to form the "Cultural Caravan for Peace" which was launched at the Taragalte Festival in M'Hamide, Morocco on November 16, 2013 and finished at the Festival sur le Niger on February 6, 2014. The Festival sur le Niger held in Segou, Mali since 2004 carried the theme of "Cultural Diversity and National Unity" in

2014, and had a specially designated night called the "Great Night for Peace" to highlight this new initiative. According to the *Festival sur le Niger* website, the goal in bringing these three festivals together was to encourage "a dialogue of peace, cultural exchange, and environmental protection throughout the region" as political instability and ecological disasters are leading nomads away from the traditions of the caravan which are thought to promote peace ("Festival Sur Le Niger, Ségou - Mali - 10ème Édition" 2014). According to Halim Sbai, Director of the Festival Taragalte:

> "The role played by the caravan was not only economic, but more significantly, cultural. These caravans meant that different cultures were in contact with each other and connected. Exchanges passed through…music, poetry, art and lifestyle. These activities brought people together, creating an awareness of other cultures, leading to innovative ways of working together and solving difficult challenges… that's exactly what role of the caravan we want to revitalize and revalorize."[89]
>
> ("Festival Sur Le Niger, Ségou - Mali - 10ème Édition" 2014)

Under the direction of Manny, the Festival in the Desert has now become a movement fighting to reunite Mali and to share its message of "peace and pluralism" with the world. The Festival, now the "Caravan for Peace," has presented its music and message in Florence, Berlin, and Arizona, as well as other locations around the world. Malian musicians traveling internationally are also part of this process as they often take time during their performances to discuss the problems that Malians are facing. However, some are careful to not take sides specifically. As Rasmussen has noted, touring

[89] Original text was in French. Translations are mine.

musicians must be careful to balance their loyalties, as well as to promote as peaceful an image to their audiences as possible (2004, 2005). As one consultant noted, musicians cannot effectively take sides, for the safety of their families and the unpredictability of which way the situation will go. But as a Festival on the move, Manny and many others hope to continue promoting their goals of bringing Mali back together and continuing the Festival in the Desert.

Conclusions: Where Nationalism Fits In

Note the way that competing notions of nationalism are played out in the same place, both by "Tuareg." In terms of the Festival in the Desert, there are some with whom I spoke that felt that Manny was siding a little too heavily with the state of Mali. One consultant said, "To seek peace is the same as siding with the state." At the time of my fieldwork, I did not ask Manny as to his opinion of the state of Mali, but I can venture a guess that because it came to fund a lot of the Festival, he was at least grateful, and thus was not about disparage it outright. But he was privy to (and perhaps sympathetic to) the historic tensions that led to the rebellions. As Tinariwen's manager in the 1990's, he was close to the cause of the ishumar. However, Manny also said that he is against violence and his main goal is to spread peace through music. "As I'm a pacifist through and through," he told Andy Morgan, "against all arms and violence…I understood that my only way to resist was to continue to be involved in music, to continue promoting festivals" (Morgan 2013a, 29).

It is unclear how exactly the MNLA, who was for an independent Tuareg nation, came to be associated with Ansar Dine, AQIM, or MUJAO who are forcing a strict adherence to Islam by violence and coercion. No one is sure how it is that certain Tuareg

individuals began to succumb to the call of Salafist Muslims in the first place. As Andy Morgan posits:

> "Perhaps it was due to a general disillusion with the nationalist cause, fuelled by the bitter in fighting and recrimination between different Tamashek tribes and clans that followed the Tamanrasset Accords and the National Pact of 1994. Perhaps they were sick of petty politics and yearned for something loftier, purer, holier. Perhaps the very notion of dividing up Muslims into nation states seemed suddenly ungodly. The Wahhabi have always preached that national boundaries are a Western imposition, designed to divide and weaken the Islamic umma, which should by rights exist in one borderless and divinely ruled polity."
>
> (Morgan 2013a, 25).

As this quote highlights, contested nationalisms may not only be an issue for minority groups like the Tuareg who feel left out of nationalist discourses. In fact, we may have a global contestation of these same borders by Muslim fundamentalists. National borders are in large part a Western (colonial) fabrication, and they can be contested from several angles. This fact dovetails with my argument that through an analysis of tourism and terrorism we have evidence of competing globalizations. To some degree this brings to light Barber's controversial thesis on globalization, "Jihad vs. McWorld" (Barber 1992). I personally think that much of his thesis is ethnocentric and false, however I find that his title is somewhat instructive for understanding these competing globalizations: one in the form of neoliberal capitalism (McWorld) and the other in Islamic fundamentalism (Jihad).

Many have argued that neoliberal globalization challenges the sovereignty of nation-states, evidenced in the ways that capital, products and people move relatively freely across national borders. On the other hand, we find increased policing of these

borders as the state seeks to control bodies and product, but often in new ways (cf: Ong 1999, 2006; Ferguson 2006). The "Caravan for Peace" sought to spread its message of peace around the globe, but many musicians could not gain a visa in order to travel, and the Festival itself ran into bureaucratic obstacles throughout its initiation. Most of what was manifested under the guise of the "Caravan for Peace" was its grafting onto the Festival sur le Niger in Segou, though there were several 'one-offs' that happened, including performances by Tuareg musicians at the "South by Southwest" (SXSW) Festival in Austin, Texas in 2013 and 2014. As I have shown here, the process of using music as a weapon of peace is not a simple strategy.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS: THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Can cultural productions such as the Festival in the Desert, or the Caravan of Peace, create or maintain peace? Does a music festival have the power to negotiate political or cultural pluralism in Mali or around the globe? In concluding my dissertation research I wanted to take my consultants' words at face value. I wanted to believe that something as seemingly trivial as a music festival in Timbuktu could bring together people from all over the globe to promote intercultural dialogue and create bridges between different religions and cultures and ultimately avert terrorism. But what does the recent rebellion in Mali tell us about the nature of politics in postcolonial multiethnic nations such as Mali? What can it tell us about the true possibilities of tourism for providing economic and social development to some of the world's most disenfranchised peoples?

Several years ago, I set out to discover why Malian Tuareg would want to invite international tourists to a cultural event that could potentially be undermined through its commodification. Ultimately, it was not its commodification that threatened its existence. One could argue that the presence of foreigners made it a target for Ansar Dine or AQIM who saw in it a debauchery that needed to be reigned in, but this is a fairly short-sighted simplistic understanding of the complexity of the issues that led to the recent rebellion and ensuing occupation in Northern Mali. Instead of showing how tourists undermined the integrity of the Festival, I have showed how global and local politics threatened Festival organizers' ability to achieve their multifarious goals. Initially, I thought that

local Tuareg would oppose being a spectacle to western tourists—instead I found that tourists were more often than not a welcome addition to the event; this was one of the many manifestations of their culture of hospitality. Although the Festival was intended to continue a tradition, locals in attendance did not have anxiety about its 'authenticity.' The Festival was understood to be both continuing a tradition and starting a new one—it remains an important space for nomadic Tuareg to meet after seasonal migrations. It is also relevant to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, though there is an awareness that preservation does not equate to safeguarding it from change. Inviting outsiders was essential to its foundation.

In fact, the Festival was part of several development projects that sought directed change, not encapsulation of an age-old practice. The Festival's economic goals were intended to be achieved through both selling tickets and raising money to go toward development projects, as well as through inviting international donors to the area to attract investment funds for local projects. Through providing services onsite to local participants through health clinics and workshops, the Festival was also able to directly impact locals' social development. These aspects were understood to be in sync with the Festival's traditional aspects while also opening up new opportunities to improve the lives of many in the area. In many ways, these services are related to other nomadic festivals after which the Festival in the Desert was modeled. Of course, the Festival was never able to achieve the level of success in promoting economic development as had been hoped. Whether this is an issue of mismanagement or extreme overhead costs (or a combination of both) has yet to be determined.

An equally important goal had always been to share Tuareg culture with the world. Having been left out of the majority of development and nationalist discourse in the South of Mali, many Northerners felt neglected by the state of Mali since independence. But they also felt that the international community had turned a blind eye on them in times of drought and famine. Many Northerners, largely Tuareg in the Timbuktu region, hoped this would be remedied by promoting their existence in the global space provided by tourism. As stated in the opening quote from the Festival website, the Festival was a way of being "listened to and then recognized," both within Mali and beyond. Tuareg believed that the world needed to know who the Tuareg were, in the way that other African groups were recognized—recognition in the form of international aid, for instance, but also as an entity legitimized by media attention and tourist interest.

The Festival still aims to be a bridge between cultures through the Caravan of Peace. Development goals may be somewhat diverted at this point, but the Caravan still continues the Festival's goal of bringing attention to the situation of Tuareg in Mali. It is also aims to show a softer side to Islam by denouncing the recent acts by Ansar Dine and AQIM in Timbuktu. Manny has specifically tried to address the importance that Islam still holds for locals, but he underlines that they do not subscribe to fundamentalist versions of the religion. Many Malians (including A.T.T., Manny, several musicians and consultants) still feel that Islam is inherently a peaceful and hospitable religion.

Unfortunately, radical Salafists *were* able to gain a foothold in Timbuktu, sending local musicians, international tourists and development workers, and the Festival into 'exile.' Manny had known about the tensions in the desert, but he felt that the Festival

was bringing enough attention and opportunity to the region that Tuareg leaders and elders could to keep Salafists from targeting the Festival. But the separatist movement, followed by a coup d'etat in Bamako, and the subsequent cooptation of the MNLA by AQIM supporters ultimately won. This is only now beginning to be sorted out. Thus, this shows the tenuousness of relying on international music fans, tourists, or even development agencies to keep the Festival and its goals afloat.

So where does Tuareg identity or heritage sit within the space of these politics? Through my exploration of toumast and the Festival in the Desert, I discussed how minority groups attempt to maneuver within the structures of neoliberal global capitalism often using tourism to achieve economic, political, and cultural goals. But how much can cultural productions negotiate regional, national, and international disenfranchisement? The "fields of struggle" and "fields of forces" (Bourdieu 1993) are too often unbalanced, as small minority groups like the Tuareg have little agency in adapting to and manipulating structures within the global political economy. But these fields of struggle are not only between the "West and the Rest." Ultimately actors from the "East" sent the Festival into exile and thwarted organizer's goals. These goals were largely based on Western development discourse, as are the majority of the stereotypes that organizers and promoters use to draw tourists to the Festival and Mali.

What image of Tuareg will ultimately have influence in the popular (Western) imagination? Issues of representation have held particular sway over the ways that tourists and other outsiders experience and perceive certain groups of people. People on the African continent involved in tourism (and elsewhere) coexist with a legacy of outsider stereotypes and discourses that severely limit the range of experiences foreign

tourists seek out in an African destination. Africans have been held up as the quintessential Other according to many—Muslims as well . At present, media are the main socializing force for youth in the United States, if not around the globe. Global recognition is an interplay of utilizing different media to influence opinion and generate recognition and interest, often with economic repercussions. Although media is becoming more available (and perhaps democratic) with YouTube and Facebook accessibility, huge media conglomerates still have much power in generating representations of certain groups of people. In the context of the global War on Terror, I fear that the image of Northern Mali in the hands of Al Qaeda will leave a lasting (negative) representation of Tuareg.

The issue of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is always ripe for contestation, and for Tuareg this occurs on several levels. By appealing to international entities like UNESCO, Tuareg culture brokers must make use of their own past in a way that is recognized and appreciated by certain global players. What is ultimately appreciated is often dictated through so-called 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (L. Smith 2006) and legitimized in ways that privilege already powerful groups. In Mali, Mandé culture is privileged because of political power and control being largely in their hands since independence. But among the Tuareg power is in the hands of local elites. Although much of Tuareg heritage (art and music for instance) is created by inaden, they are not considered 'Tuareg' by some elites.

Through the Festival in the Desert, Kel Ansar Tuareg were vying for their place in the state of Mali, while simultaneously subverting the state by appealing to an international community for recognition. Ultimately it worked to a certain degree. For

one, within the ten years that I have been following the Festival and tourism in Mali, I saw national interest in the Festival go from silence to praise. The attendance of then-president Touré was profoundly significant; also the last several years of the Festival were largely funded by national agencies because of an awareness of its economic importance, and also its significance for maintaining peace.

But how much did it change relations between Tuareg and others in the nation? Non-Tuareg Malians likely enjoyed the Festival as a place to see their favorite bands and mingle with tourists, but unfortunately on the day-to-day level, Northern Tuareg still feel left out of the nation. As Manny mentioned in an interview, Northern bands were rarely invited to perform in the south, even though the Festival had included Southern musicians since its inception. Lastly, as the recent conflict in Mali shows, tensions between the north and the south are ongoing. During the separatist uprising in 2012 many Tuareg were subject to prejudice that erupted into violence against individuals and businesses (many of whom did not support the MNLA) in southern cities and villages.

As we attempt to unravel the complexities of translating "culture," we see that to speak of "the Tuareg" is a fiction in its own right. When I speak of the Festival in the Desert as a Tuareg festival and then turn around and discuss a Tuareg separatist movement that was co-opted by Al-Qaeda we see that we are not talking of a unified "Tuareg" or Malian culture. My project questions the definition of Tuareg as a unified cultural whole. I also add to our understanding of the ways that international, national, regional, and local factors must be taken into account when looking at cultural productions and touristic events. As Malians strive to create a sustainable development solution based on tourism, these facts need to be taken into account. Events in Mali have

historic and political dimensions that interweave with contemporary issues that are pertinent to understanding globalization and its many effects, interpretations, and problems. Understanding the complexity unfortunately does not make an easy fix. There is no way to really predict when these conflicts may arise or how powerful they will be in affecting different areas of the world. The overarching problem that I see is that continued economic hardship in postcolonial nations makes it nearly impossible to have an effective government. Whether there was corruption or not in ATT's party is almost irrelevant in my opinion because so many of the issues relate back to the fact that the Malian state is in a perpetual cycle of debt and poverty which continue to hamper its ability to govern effectively.

On the international level, Mali's crisis is a global issue that relates to the Washington Consensus that started with Structural Adjustment Policies that scaled back state control of major industries (cf: McCord, Sachs, and Woo 2005). The subsequent move in the last decade to promoting culture as a renewable resource has meant that tourism has been rendered the magic bullet to all small and developing economies' struggles. Without an understanding of the ways that larger economies continue to underdevelop countries like Mali by protecting their own competiveness, means that even if tourism were to work, it can only be a short-term solution until the larger picture is addressed. The effects of the poverty trap that Mali has been in since independence means that an economy based on tourism is inherently unstable. As such, further research needs to be done on how certain global economic policies and histories affect the ability of developing economies to actually develop.

The Festival in the Desert was able to achieve some of its goals, but ultimately it was not able to create a sustainable solution to the economic issues that plague many nomadic communities in Mali. It was able to use the global space of tourism to play into the nation of Mali, but this only worked on a superficial level, and only for those Tuareg who sought acceptance into the nationalist discourse. Part of this relates to the fact that Tuareg who ended up in Libya or Algeria in the 1970's, were there because of economic and political factors, not cultural ones. There are cultural differences between Southern and Northern Malians, but the perceived economic disparities are the ones that give them fire. It is easy to brush off complicated issues and explain them according to race or culture while turning a blind eye to the global economic dimensions of these conflicts.

Impoverished nations and disenfranchised cultural groups are forced to vie for a place in the global economy. Either by seeking recognition through force or through identity based projects and cultural productions. Festivals and tourism are used to appeal to outsiders for recognition through tourism, as the Festival in the Desert did. But it reveals how challenging it is to rely on tourism because it is so vulnerable. Tourism is not a durable enough 'export' on which to base an economy, though it is not without possibilities. However, the very reasons that tourism is promoted as a development strategy are the same reasons that make it unsustainable. When disaster hits, whether it be armed conflict or environmental disaster, small economies have a harder time bouncing back. I end with the hope that further insight into the intersections of history, culture, politics, and economies at multiple levels will provide a better understanding, and perhaps better solutions, to problems that plague Mali and other postcolonial multiethnic nations in Africa and beyond.

APPENDIX

U.S. TRAVEL ADVISORY 2011

The U.S. Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens of the risk of travel to Mali, and to recommend against all travel to the north of the country due to kidnapping threats against Westerners. This revision of the March 9, 2011, Travel Warning for Mali updates security-related information. As noted in the Department of State's Worldwide Caution dated July 26, 2011, al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM) has declared its intention to attack Western targets. The Department is aware of several separate sources of information indicating AQIM's ongoing interest in kidnapping Westerners throughout the Sahel region. Joint Mali-Mauritania military operations against AQIM in July-August 2011 have also increased the risk of terrorist retaliation in Northern Mali. The U.S. Embassy in Bamako has issued several emergency messages for U.S. citizens regarding these threats, as have the U.S. Embassies in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Nouakchott, Mauritania and Niamey, Niger.

On January 5, 2011, an individual claiming connections to AQIM attacked the French Embassy in Bamako with a handgun and an improvised-explosive device. Two injuries were reported. On January 7, 2011, two French nationals were kidnapped in Niamey, Niger. They were found dead less than 24 hours later following a rescue attempt by French and Nigerien military forces. On February 2, 2011, a vehicle containing explosive materials failed to stop at a security check point outside of Nouakchott, Mauritania. Mauritanian security forces opened fire and the vehicle exploded, killing the vehicle's passengers. Mauritanian security forces were on alert for suspected AQIM vehicles that possibly had entered Mauritania to conduct terrorist

attacks. In early February 2011, an Italian woman was kidnapped in southern Algeria, and it is possible she is being held in Northern Niger or Northern Mali.

In September 2010, seven people, including five French nationals, a Togolese national, and a Malagasy national, were kidnapped from the mining town of Arlit, Niger. Four of these people are still being held hostage by AQIM. On July 24, 2010, AQIM executed a French hostage in retaliation for the killing of six AQIM members during a Mauritanian-launched hostage rescue operation with French assistance in Northern Mali. As a result of Western involvement in these operations, it is possible that AQIM will attempt retaliatory attacks against other Western targets of opportunity.

AQIM has also claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two Canadian citizen UN officials in Niger in December 2008; the kidnapping of four European tourists in January 2009 on the Mali-Niger border; the murder of a British hostage from the above group in Mali in June 2009; the murder of a U.S. citizen in Mauritania in June 2009; the suicide-bombing near the French Embassy in Mauritania on August 8, 2009; and the kidnappings of three Spanish and one French citizen in November 2009, two Italian citizens in December 2009, and another French national (who was taken hostage in Niger in April 2010, and then murdered on July 24, 2010,as noted above).

In addition to threats posed by AQIM and potential hostage takers, violent confrontations between rival drug and arms traffickers have occurred in Northern Mali over the past year. The threat posed by AQIM, sporadic banditry, and the porous nature of Mali's northern borders with Algeria, Niger, and Mauritania all reinforce longstanding security concerns affecting travel to Northern Mali.

The Department of State notes that the U.S. Embassy in Bamako has designated Northern regions of Mali as "restricted without prior authorization" for purposes of travel by U.S. government employees, contractors, grantees, and their dependents. Prior to traveling to these areas, U.S. government employees in Mali are required to have the written approval of the U.S. Ambassador to Mali. This designation is based on the presence of AQIM, as well as banditry in the region. This restriction does not apply to travelers who are not associated with the U.S. government, but should be taken into account when planning travel. The restriction is in effect for the regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu.

U.S. citizens are specifically reminded that these areas include the Timbuktu site of the popular Festival au Desert music festival, as well as the sites in the regions of Kidal and Gao where many other musical and cultural festivals are traditionally held between December and February. It should be noted that – in addition to the potential terrorist and criminal threats – these festivals are located in particularly remote locations, and the Malian authorities would have extreme difficulty rendering assistance should an emergency occur at any of them.

Source: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/mali-travel-warning.html [Accessed December 2011]

REFERENCES CITED

Adams, Robert, and Charles Adams. 2005. *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Barbary Captive: A Critical Edition*. Critical Ed edition. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ag Ewangaye, Mohamed. 2006. "The Inadan, Makers of Amazigh Identity: The Case of the Air Region." In *The Art of Being Tuareg*, 56–69.

Akama, John S. 2000. "The Efficacy of Tourism as a Tool for Economic Development in Kenya." *Tourism and Africa Development: Trends and Critical Issues* 7 (1). http://fama2.us.es:8080/turismo/turismonet1/economia%20del%20turismo/turismo%20zonal/africa/efficacy%20of%20tourism%20as%20tool%20development%20in%20Kenya.pdf.

Amico, Marta. 2013. "The Staged Desert: Tourist and Nomad Encounters at the Festival Au Désert." In *The Globalization of Musics in Transit: Music Migration and Tourism*, 86–100.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London ; New York: Verso.

Appadurai, A. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (2): 295–310. doi:10.1177/026327690007002017.

Baldauf, Scott. 2010. "Mali Moves Music Festival as Tourism Threatened by Al Qaeda Threat." *Christian Science Monitor*, January 8. http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/basic/World/Africa/2010/0108/Mali-moves-music-festival-as-tourism-threatened-by-Al-Qaeda-threat.

Barber, Benjamin R. 1992. "Jihad vs. McWorld." *The Atlantic*, March. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/03/jihad-vs-mcworld/303882/.

Belalimat, Nadia. 2010. "The Ishumar Guitar: Emergence, Circulation and Evolution from Diasporic Performances to the World Scene." In *Tuareg Society Within a Globalized World: Saharan LIfe in Transition*, edited by Anja Fischer and Ines Kohl. New York: Tauris Publishers.

Bendix, Regina. 2009. *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*. Univ of Wisconsin Press.

Bendix, Regina, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann. 2012. *Heritage Regimes and the State*. Universitätsverlag Göttingen.

Benjamin, Walter. 2009. *On The Concept of History*. New York: Classic Books America.

Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. Rowman Altamira.

Boorstin, Daniel Joseph. 1992. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. Vintage Books.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Randal Johnson. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Briggs, Charles L. 1996. "The Politics of Discursive Authority in Research on the 'Invention of Tradition.'" *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (4): 435–69.

Brouet, Lionel. 2004. *Festival In the Desert*. World Village USA.

Brown, Michael. 2012. "Safeguarding the Intangible." *Museum Anthropology Review* 6 (2): 93–97.

Bruner, Edward M. 1989. "Of Cannibals, Tourists, and Ethnographers." *Cultanth Cultural Anthropology* 4 (4): 438–45.

Bruner, Edward M. 1991. "Transformation of Self in Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (2): 238–50. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(91)90007-X.

Bruner, Edward M., and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. 1994. "Maasai on the Lawn: Tourist Realism in East Africa." *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (4): 435–70. doi:10.2307/656384.

Burns, Georgette Leah. 2004. "Anthropology and Tourism: Past Contributions and Future Theoretical Challenges." *Anthropological Forum* 14 (1): 5–22.

Carberry, Sean. 2004. "Rock Paper Scissors - Festival In the Desert (World Village) - Press Release." http://www.rockpaperscissors.biz/index.cfm/fuseaction/current.alt_press_release/project_id/108/alt_release/50.cfm.

Card Wendt, Caroline. 1982. *Tuareg Music and Social Identity*. Indiana University.

Certeau, Michel de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chambers, Erve. 2009. *Native Tours: The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism*. 2nd ed. Waveland Pr Inc.

Cohen, Erik. 1979. "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences." *Sociology* 13 (2): 179–201. doi:10.1177/003803857901300203.

———. 1988. "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (3): 371–86.

Comaroff, John L, and Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity, Inc.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Conley, Chip. 2013. "Timbuktu Is calling...To Mali or Not To Mali? | Fest300 Blog." http://www.fest300.com/blog/timbuktu-is-calling-to-mali-or-not-to-mali/.

Crick, Malcolm. 1985. "'TRACING' THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SELF: Quizzical Reflections on Field Work, Tourism, and the Ludic." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 17 (August): 71–92. doi:10.2307/23171794.

Daniel, Patricia. 2006. "Mali: Everyone's Favourite Destination." *Open Democracy*. May 10. http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-africa_democracy/mali_3531.jsp.

De Bres, Karen, and James Davis. 2001. "Celebrating Group and Place Identity: A Case Study of a New Regional Festival." *Tourism Geographies* 3 (3): 326–37. doi:10.1080/14616680110055439.

Denselow, Robin. 2004. "How the Desert Festival Began." *The Guardian*, January 7, sec. Music. http://www.theguardian.com/music/2004/jan/08/popandrock1.

DeWalt, Kathleen M., and Billie R. DeWalt. 2010. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Second Edition edition. Lanham, Md: AltaMira Press.

Diakité, Stephanie. 2013. "'The Evacuation of the Tumbuktu Manuscripts and Their Life in Exile: The Work of T160K' University of Oregon Video." http://media.uoregon.edu/channel/2013/03/13/stephanie-diakite-the-evacuation-of-the-tumbuktu-manuscripts-and-their-life-in-exile-the-work-of-t160k/.

El Ansari, Intagrist. 2010. "Memoir: 'Le Festival Au Désert.'" http://www.africultures.com/php/?nav=article&no=9796.

———. 2012. “Mali in Crisis: Tens of Thousands of Refugees.” *openDemocracy*. September 21. http://www.opendemocracy.net/intagrist-el-ansari/mali-in-crisis-tens-of-thousands-of-refugees.

Embassy, U. S. 2012. “Warden Messages 2009.” *Http://usembassy.state.gov/travel-Warning-for-Mali.html*. November 28. http://mali.usembassy.gov/travel-warning-for-mali.html.

Errington, Frederick, and Deborah Gewertz. 1989. “Tourism and Anthropology in a Post-Modern World.” *Oceania* 60 (1): 37–54. doi:10.2307/40332400.

Escobar, Arturo. 2001. “Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization.” *Political Geography* 20 (2): 139–74.

Ferguson, James. 2006. *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Duke University Press Books.

“Festival Sur Le Niger, Ségou - Mali - 10ème Édition.” 2014. Accessed March 7. http://www.festivalsegou.org/caravane-culturelle-pour-la-paix.

Fisher, Angela. 1984. *Africa Adorned*. New York: Abrams.

Forrest, Joshua B. 2006. “Nationalism in Postcolonial States.” In *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*, edited by Lowell Barrington. University of Michigan Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1991. “Governmentality.” In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell and Peter Miller, 87–104. Hemel Hempstead and Chicago: Harvester Wheatsheaf and University of Chicago Press.

Friedman, Jonathan. 1987. “CRICK’S CRACKS.” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 21 (August): 80–83. doi:10.2307/23169554.

Fürsich, Elfriede, and Melinda B. Robins. 2004. “Visiting Africa: Constructions of Nation and Identity on Travel Websites.” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 39 (1-2): 133–52. doi:10.1177/0021909604048255.

Gardi, Bernhard. 2006. “Review of The Art of Being Tuareg, ‘Smiths: Makers of Tuareg Identity.’” H-AfrArts, H-Review. http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=12586.

Geertz, Clifford. 1977. *The Interpretation Of Cultures*. Princeton, NJ: Basic Books.

Gellner, Ernest. 2008. *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press.

Giorgi, Liana, Monica Sassatelli, and Gerard Delanty. 2011. *Festivals and the Cultural Public Sphere*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Gmelch, Sharon Bohn. 2009. *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Waveland Pr Inc.

Graburn, Nelson H.H. 2004. "Secular Ritual: A General Theory of Tourism." In *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*, 23–34.

Greenwood, Davydd J. 2004. "Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization." In *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*, 157–69.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 2002. "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." In *Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, 65–80.

Harvey, David. 1991. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Wiley-Blackwell.

———. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

"History: Festival Au Désert." 2013. Accessed July 24. http://www.festival-au-desert.org/index.cfm?m=0&s=2.

Imperato, Pascal James. 2008. *Historical Dictionary of Mali*. 4th ed. Historical Dictionaries of Africa 107. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press.

"In Pictures: Tourism in Mali." 2014. *BBC*, January 30, sec. In Pictures. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-25910148.

Inda, Jonathan Xavier, and Renato Rosaldo. 2002. *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Keenan, Jeremy. 2003. *The Tuareg: People of Ahaggar*. London : Chester Springs, PA: Sickle Moon Books.

———. 2004. *The Lesser Gods of the Sahara: Social Change and Indigenous Rights*. London; Portland, OR: Routledge.

———. 2009. *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa*. London; New York: Pluto Press.

———. *Sahara Man: Travelling with the Tuareg*. First edition. London: John Murray.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1998. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley [Calif.]: University of California Press.

———. 2004. "Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production1." *Museum International* 56 (1-2): 52–65. doi:10.1111/j.1350-0775.2004.00458.x.

Koenig, Dolores, Tiéman Diarra, and Moussa Sow. 1998. *Innovation and Individuality in African Development: Changing Production Strategies in Rural Mali*. University of Michigan Press.

Konopinski, Natalie. 2013. *Doing Anthropological Research: A Practical Guide*. Routledge.

Kurin, Richard. 1997. *Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View from the Smithsonian*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Lecocq, Baz. 2002. "'That Desert Is Our Country' Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Contemporary Mali (1946-1996)."

———. 2004. "Unemployed Intellectuals in the Sahara: The Teshumara Nationalist Movement and the Revolutions in Tuareg Society." *International Review of Social History* 49 (Supplement): 87–109.

———. 2010. *Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Lett, James. "Epilogue." In *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 275–79.

MacCannell, Dean. 1999. *The Tourist*. New Ed. University of California Press.

Mann, Gregory. 2012. "The Mess in Mali." *Foreign Policy*, April 5. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/05/the_mess_in_mali.

Marshall, John. 2001. "Death by Myth: A Kalahari Film Series, Episode 5."

Maurer, Bill. 2002. “A Fish Story: Rethinking Globalization on Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands.” In *Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, 100–135. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

McCord, Gordon, Jeffrey D. Sachs, and Wing Thye Woo. 2005. “Understanding African Poverty: Beyond the Washington Consensus to the Millennium Development Goals Approach.” *Africa in the World Economy*, 23.

“Millennium Development Goals.” 2014. Accessed April 29. http://www.usaid.gov/mdg.

“More on Mali.” 2014. Accessed April 9. http://www.fromhere2timbuktu.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=31&Itemid=315.

Morgan, Andy. 2003. *Liner Notes To, Festival in the Desert, [sound Recording]*. World Village USA.

———. 2012. “Mali: No Rhythm or Reason as Militants Declare War on Music.” *The Guardian*, October 23, sec. World news. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/23/mali-militants-declare-war-music.

———. 2013a. “Music, Culture and Conflict in Mali: A Report for Freemuse”, February.

———. 2013b. “WOMEX 2013 AWARD SPEECH: What the Festival in the Desert Did for One Dumbfounded Tourist...” *Andy Morgan Writes*. November 16. http://www.andymorganwrites.com/womex-2013-award-speech-what-the-festival-in-the-desert-did-for-one-dumbfounded-tourist/.

Nash, Dennison. 1989. “Tourism as a Form of Imperialism.” In *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, edited by Valene L. Smith, 2nd ed., 37–52.

Newberry, Barbara. 2004. “The Remotest Festival in the World [Electronic Version].” *Geographical*, no. 76: 53–58.

Noyes, Dorothy. 2006. “The Judgment of Solomon: Global Protections for Tradition and the Problem of Community Ownership.” *Cultural Analysis* 5: 27–56.

Nunez, Theron A. Jr. 1963. “Tourism, Tradition, and Acculturation: Weekendismo in a Mexican Village.” *Ethnology* 2 (3): 347–52. doi:10.2307/3772866.

Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. 2nd printing, edition. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

———. 2006. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. First Edition edition. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press Books.

Picard, David, and Mike Robinson. 2006. "Remaking Worlds: Festivals, Tourism and Change." In *Festivals, Tourism and Social Change*. Channel View Publications.

Porch, Douglas. 2005. *The Conquest of the Sahara*. 2nd edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Poulton, Robin Edward, Ibrahim Ag Youssouf, and United Nations Institute for Disarmament. 1998. *A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking*. TSO.

Pratt, Mary Louise. 2007. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2 edition. London : New York: Routledge.

Rasmussen, Susan J. 1999. "The Slave Narrative in Life History and Myth, and Problems of Ethnographic Representation of the Tuareg Cultural Predicament." *Ethnohistory* 46 (1): 67–108.

———. 2000. "Between Several Worlds: Images of Youth and Age in Tuareg Popular Performances." *Anthropological Quarterly* 73 (3): 133–44.

———. 2005. "A Temporary Diaspora: Contested Cultural Representations in Tuareg International Musical Performance." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (4): 793–826. doi:10.1353/anq.2005.0060.

———. 2006a. *Those Who Touch: Tuareg Medicine Women in Anthropolotical Perspective*. 1 edition. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

———. 2006b. "Moving beyond Protest in Tuareg Ichumar Musical Performance." *Ethnohistory* 53 (4): 633–55. doi:10.1215/00141801-2006-017.

———. 2009. *The Poetics and Politics of Tuareg Aging: Life Course and Personal Destiny in Niger*. 1 edition. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

Richardson, Robert B. 2010. "The Contribution of Tourism to Economic Growth and Food Security". Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics. http://aec.msu.edu/%5C/fs2/promisam_2/Tourism_and_food_security_in_Mali_A4.pdf.

Rosenberg, Matt. 2014. “Where’s the Real City of Timbuktu?” *About.com Geography*. June 9. http://geography.about.com/cs/worldfacts/a/timbuktu.htm.

Ruggles, D. Fairchild, and Helaine Silverman. 2009. *Intangible Heritage Embodied*. New York: Springer.

Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed edition. New York: Vintage.

———. 1997. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. Revised edition. New York: Vintage.

Salazar, Noel B. 2012. “Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 39 (2): 863–82. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2011.10.004.

———. 2013. “Imagineering Otherness: Anthropological Legacies in Contemporary Tourism.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (3): 669–96. doi:10.1353/anq.2013.0045.

Sattin, Anthony. 2004. “Hurry, We’ll Be Late for the Party: Mali’s Celebration of Tuareg Culture Has Become a World Party.” *The Sunday Times*, November 28.

Scher, Philip W. 2002. “Copyright Heritage: Preservation, Carnival and the State in Trinidad.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (3): 453–84.

Seely, Jennifer C. 2001. “A Political Analysis of Decentralisation: Coopting the Tuareg Threat in Mali.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39 (3): 499–524.

Seligman, Thomas K, Kristyne Loughran, Edmond Bernus, Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, Los Angeles University of California, and Fowler Museum of Cultural History. 2006. *Art of Being Tuareg: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World*. Los Angeles: Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University : UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Silver, Ira. “Marketing Authenticity in Third World Countries.” *Annals of Tourism Research*, no. 2: 302–18. doi:10.1016/0160-7383(93)90057-A.

Silverman, Carol. 2014. *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*. Oxford University Press.

Smith, Laurajane. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. London: ZED BOOKS LTD.

Smith, Valene L., ed. 1989. *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Snyder, Maria, and Thomas Walker. 2008. "LETTERS; A Malian Festival." *The New York Times*, May 25. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html.

Stafford, Mary Rose, and Gerry Gallagher. 2011. "A Chronological Review of the Tourism Industry's Reactions to Terrorist Attacks, Using Bali (2002), London (2005), Madrid (2004) and New York (2001) as Case Studies." http://pc.parnu.ee/~htooman/EuroChrie/Welcome%20to%20EuroCHRIE%20Dubai%202008/papers/A%20chronological%20review%20of%20the%20tourism%20industry.pdf.

Standifer, James A. 1988. "The Tuareg: Their Music and Dances." *The Black Perspective in Music* 16 (1): 45–62. doi:10.2307/1215126.

Stronza, Amanda. 2001. "Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (January): 261–83. doi:10.2307/3069217.

Tanat. 2013. "Population Estimates for Tuaregs." *Tuareg Culture and News*. http://tuaregcultureandnews.blogspot.com/2013/04/population-estimates-for-tuaregs.html.

"The Battle for Mali's Soul Is a Battle for Its Music." 2014. *The M&G Online*. Accessed March 8. http://mg.co.za/article/2013-01-25-00-the-battle-for-malis-soul-is-a-battle-for-its-music/.

"Timbuktu - UNESCO World Heritage Centre." 2014. Accessed April 9. http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119/.

Tinariwen. 2001. *Radio Tisdas Sessions*. World Village USA.

Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. University of Chicago Press.

"TripAdvisor, Safety in Mali." 2010. December 1. http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g293812-i9977-k4082387-Safety_in_Mali-Mali.html#32510499.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2004. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

UN General Assembly. 1994. "A/RES/49/60. Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism." December 9. http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r060.htm.

UNESCO. 2005. "Definition of Intangible Heritage." October 1. http://www.unesco.org/services/documentation/archives/multimedia/?id_page=13&PHPSESSID=743f303f0b2452205c4a672fde9310bc.

UNESCO (8.COM). 2013. "Practices and Knowledge Linked to the Imzad of the Tuareg Communities of Algeria, Mali and Niger (UNESCO)." *UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List*. http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/00891.

UNWTO. 1995. "Why Tourism? | World Tourism Organization UNWTO." http://www2.unwto.org/en/content/why-tourism.

Urry, John. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London [etc.]: Sage.

Van den Berghe, L. Pierre. 1994. *The Quest for the Other : Ethnic Tourism in San Cristóbal, Mexico*. http://www.bcin.ca/Interface/openbcin.cgi?submit=submit&Chinkey=203575.

"Volkswagen Group Water for the Desert Riders." 2014. Accessed March 29. http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/content/en/sustainability_and_responsibility/CSR_worldwide/Water_for_the_desert_riders.html.

Whitehouse, Bruce. 2014. "How US Military Assistance Failed in Mali." *Bridges from Bamako*. http://bridgesfrombamako.com/2014/04/21/how-us-military-assistance-failed/.

Wikipedia, Acntx at English. 2005. *Mali Regions*. Own work (Original text: "Made by User:Acntx.") This raster graphics image was created with GIMP. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mali_Regions.png.

Wilk, Richard. 1995. "Learning to Be Local in Belize: Global Systems of Common Difference." In *Worlds Apart: Modernity Through the Prism of the Local*, edited by Daniel Miller, 110–33. London: Routledge.

Wooten, Stephen R. 2009. *The Art of Livelihood: Creating Expressive Agri-Culture in Rural Mali*. Durham, N.C: Carolina Academic Press.

World Bank. 2013. "Tourism in Africa." http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Africa/Report/africa-tourism-report-2013-overview.pdf.

"World Bank. Mali | Data." 2013. Accessed July 12. http://data.worldbank.org/country/mali.

WTTC. 2012. "WTTC | Economic Impact Research." http://www.wttc.org/research/economic-impact-research/.