

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF WILD-THINGS: NEGOTIATED WILDLIFE

IN MALI, WEST AFRICA

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: The Social Life of Wild-Things: Negotiated Wildlife in Mali, West Africa

Two markets located in Bamako, Mali, West Africa specialize in the commodification of wildlife, and in so doing contest western-centric notions of globalization. Founded in traditional medicine, the *Marabagaw Yoro* sells wildlife to serve the needs of the local community, while the *Artisana*, a state sponsored institution, manufactures fashion accoutrements from wildlife and is oriented towards meeting the demands of tourists. Actors in both markets effectively curb the impact of national and international forces and demonstrate the necessity of putting local-global relations at the heart of transnational studies. Malians are not weak and reactive, but potent and proactive. They become so by engaging in networks that move out from the two markets and that intersect to a degree. Through these networks, local actors negotiate and/or manipulate national and international forces for personal benefit for example, using wildlife for profit, despite national and international sanctions. As such, these markets are sites of articulation, where local resource users engage the world at large and actively negotiate a myriad of values as well as mediate political and economic pressures. Investigating these networks helps us understand the actual, empirical complexities of globalization while allowing for the agency of local actors.

Supplemental Files: Wild Species of the APT and their Conservation Status

This file is an Excel spreadsheet of all wild species recorded in association with the Animal Parts Trade (APT) of Mali. It includes the following classes of vertebrates: Pisces, Aves, Reptilia, and Mammalia, as well as provides their conservation status and additional details.

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This study is dedicated to the people of Mali, my wife, son and daughter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Research Background	4
International Conservation and Mali	9
Theoretical Orientations and Frameworks.....	14
Methodology	21
Historical Background	24
II. A VISIT TO DJONFAKULU	28
The <i>Gin Gin Gran</i>	34
Preparing the Sands	37
No Bull Networks	39
Hunters and Wildlife.....	44
Making Medicine	48
Community and Sacrifice	51
The Rural Side of the Animal Parts Trade.....	54
III. WELCOME TO THE <i>ARTISANA</i>	61
<i>Nyamakalaw</i> and <i>Artisana</i> Craft Specialization	65
Market Composition, Consultants, and Wildlife Commodities.....	71
Notes	82
IV. WILDLIFE ACTORS OF THE <i>ARTISANA</i>	83
Hunters.....	85
Middlemen	91

Chapter	Page
General Opportunists	98
Wholesale Distributors	104
Notes	106
V. WILDLIFE PRODUCT VENDORS	107
Owners	110
Managers.....	114
Staff.....	118
Extra Shop Members	121
Notes	124
VI. WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE <i>ARTISANA</i>	125
Situated Values	128
Knowing the Consumer	134
Finding Money and the Art of <i>Nanbara</i>	150
Notes	164
VII. LEATHER SHOP CLIENTELE.....	165
Foreign Clientele.....	166
Malian Clientele.....	181
Notes	190
VIII. THE STATE AND THE <i>ARTISANA</i>	191
Notes	206
IX. WELCOME TO THE <i>MARABAGAW YORO</i>	207
Institutional History	212

Chapter	Page
Market Composition	218
Consultants and Wildlife Parts	221
Notes	226
X. WILDLIFE ACTORS OF THE <i>MARABAGAW YORO</i>	227
Hunters	229
Middlemen	233
General Opportunists	238
Notes	253
XI. ANIMAL PARTS VENDORS	254
Stall Owners and Co-Owners	255
Apprentices	265
Extra Members	272
XII. WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE <i>MARABAGAW YORO</i>	275
Situated Values	278
Knowing the Consumer	283
<i>Nanbara</i> and the Art of Finding Money	299
XIII. ANIMAL PARTS CONSUMERS	310
Malian Clientele	312
Foreign Clientele	336
Notes	348
XIV. THE STATE AND THE <i>MARABAGAW YORO</i>	349
XV. WHERE THE WILD-THINGS GO	357

Chapter	Page
REFERENCES CITED.....	373
SUPPLEMENTAL FILES	
WILD SPECIES OF THE APT AND THEIR CONSERVATION STATUS	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Key actors and places of the APT.....	7
2. A complex model of the APT.....	362
3. Wildlife in circulation.....	371

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Nationally protected wildlife	11
2. Touré’s purchases from Kara.....	56
3. Touré’s additional purchases	57
4. Summary data on participating leather shops	72
5. Wild mammals and commodity type	79
6. Wild reptiles and commodity type.....	80
7. Overview of roles and actors encountered in the <i>Artisana</i>	84
8. Hunters by region who directly supply vendors in the <i>Artisana</i>	88
9. Middlemen by region who directly supply wildlife to vendors in the <i>Artisana</i>	92
10. General opportunists by profession who directly supply the <i>Artisana</i>	99
11. Summary data on actors and their roles within leather shops of the <i>Artisana</i>	107
12. Summary data on leather shop clientele	166
13. Summary data for foreign clientele	166
14. Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region	167
15. Hassim’s order from a generalized leather shop.....	177
16. Hassim’s purchases and average resale price in Spanish flea markets.....	179
17. Summary data for Malian clientele.....	182
18. Detailed data on Malian male purchases from leather vendors	182
19. Detailed data on Malian female purchases from leather vendors	183
20. Summary data on state agents of the <i>Artisana</i>	193
21. The conservation and trade status of wild mammals sold in the <i>Artisana</i>	196

Table	Page
22. The conservation and trade status of wild reptiles sold in the <i>Artisana</i>	196
23. Summary data on participating APV stalls.....	219
24. Overview of roles and actors encountered in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	228
25. Hunters by region who directly supply APVs in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	230
26. Middlemen by region who directly supply APVs in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	234
27. Sale made by Touré to large-scale APV	236
28. General opportunists by profession who directly supply APVs.....	239
29. Summary data on actors and roles within APV stalls of the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	255
30. Summary data for apprentices working for large-scale owners	265
31. Summary data on extra members of APVs of the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	272
32. Summary data on APV clientele.....	311
33. Summary data for Malian clientele.....	313
34. Key species sold in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	314
35. Summary data for foreign clientele	337
36. Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region	337
37. Fial's stock	364
38. Fial's sales to APVs.....	365
39. Fial's sales to <i>Artisana</i> vendors	366

LIST OF IMAGES

Image	Page
1. Wildlife goods for sale in the <i>Artisana</i>	2
2. Wildlife parts for sale in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	2
3. Primary research site.....	3
4. Leatherworker making a Nile crocodile handbag in the <i>Artisana</i>	358
5. Large-scale APV stocking his stall in the <i>Marabagaw Yoro</i>	358

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

At its most basic, globalization is the increase in connections between people and places on a global scale (Inda and Rosaldo 2002). Earlier theorists examining these processes conceived of these connections in a “top-down” or “core to periphery” manner, presenting the West as the “globalizer” and the Rest as the “globalized” (Frank 1967; Hannerz 1989, 1991, 1992; Kopytoff 1987; Kroeber 1948; Moore 1966; Shils 1975; Scott 1990; Tomlinson 1991, 1997, 1999; and Wallerstein 2004). However, as Appadurai (1986, 1996; 2001, 2002) and others have noted, this is far from the truth (Biersack 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Bourdieu 1977; Dirlik 2001; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Ortner 1984, 1994; and Tsing 2005). Local actors actively adopt, resist, challenge and/or shape their relations with others at all levels of interaction from global to local, based on an individual’s particular circumstances and perceived interests. From both a conservation and humanistic ethical standpoint, one of the great challenges presented by globalization is the tension between the attempted protection and commercial use of wildlife. On one hand, species are declining furthering the loss of biodiversity, underscoring the fragility of the environment and the need for conservation. On the other hand, many communities rely on wildlife resources to survive, highlighting their rights to use through cultural traditions, economics, and politics. Given the inherent conflict that exists between conservation and wildlife use, investigating their articulations provides insight into globalization and human practices.

Here, I explore the agency and heterogeneous interconnections of local actors traced through two unique markets in Mali, West Africa that specialize in the sale of

wildlife in part and whole; the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and *Artisana*. Approaching these markets as sites that illuminate the relations between global conservation policy and implementation, and wildlife use in Mali, I offer an ethnographic account of what I refer to as the social life of wild-things. These markets, which exist within a block of each other in the capital, Bamako, Mali present partially overlapping spaces and actors in the animal parts trade. Thus, the markets provide a unique place from which to examine the social networks and relations of the Malian wildlife trade. The *Marabagaw Yoro* is an informal market organized around meeting local demands in the form of ingredients to medicine, while the *Artisana* is an official market that caters to the wants of tourists and other affluent individuals. For example, amulets comprised of wildlife parts to protect against snakes, *djinn* (bush devils), and infidelity are for sale in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, whereas a leopard fur purse, cobra skin wallet or crocodile hide attaché case can be found for sale in the *Artisana* (see Image 1: Wildlife goods sold in the *Artisana*, Image 2: Wildlife parts sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and Image 3: Primary research site).



Image 1: Wildlife goods for sale in the *Artisana*.



Image 2: Wildlife parts for sale in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.



Image 3: Primary research site (Google Earth 2012).

Approaching these markets as “places,” or sites of local-global articulation (Biersack 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Dirlik 2001), in combination with an ethnographic framework with a focus on agency, reveals a diverse population of Malians engaging in networks that move out from the two markets in different ways, but that intersect to a degree and connect them to various people in other places. Through these networks, local actors negotiate a myriad of values as well as mediate economic and political pressures for example, using wildlife for profit despite national and international conservation policy.

Research Background

In large part, this dissertation emerged directly through the process of my own life history. My interest in wildlife use, international conservation, and globalization began as the product of a lifelong emersion in international conservation, via my father’s twenty-plus years of work for the World Conservation Union, and as an advisor to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). I thus grew up in an environment steeped in international conservation, and I developed an inside understanding of its structure, policies and collaboration with state agencies at an early age, attending policy meetings, international conservation congresses and rural biodiversity assessments. As a result of my father’s occupation, I also moved to Switzerland (headquarters of the World Conservation Union), and acquired French as a secondary language, for which I earned advanced proficiency based on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

After completing my undergraduate degree in anthropology, I joined the Peace Corps, for whom I served as a natural resource management technical advisor in Mali, West Africa. As a Peace Corps volunteer (PCV), I worked in collaboration with multiple state agencies and international conservation NGOs to manage the Bafing Faunal Reserve – BFR, a unique and biologically diverse faunal preserve, and gained firsthand insight into regional Malian biodiversity, conservation strategies as they were conceived of and carried out in Mali, and their relation to the activities and interests of various local stakeholders. I also learned Bamana and Malinké, the two predominant local languages of my research area. Most importantly, this work made me acutely aware of the inherent conflict that exists between local Malian resource users, state policies, international law and development programs implemented by state agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). What came into sharp focus were the moral and ethical complexities that were being masked by national or international policies, as they were being instituted in Mali. Officially, hunting was prohibited in the BFR, yet it was also home to several hundred people who regularly harvested game to feed themselves and their families.

For two years I worked with hunters of the BFR to develop an understanding of their motivations in harvesting wildlife. As a PCV I used this knowledge of local wildlife values and practices to assist in the development of policy that permitted local resource users rights of access, and I helped develop a culturally sensitive natural resource management education program for upper-level students in the regional school system. In addition, I prepared a guide of wildlife species and their status (i.e., threatened, protected, and endangered) in Bamana, Malinké, Peul, French and English for Peace

Corps – Mali. The goal was to provide individual volunteers and the Peace Corps - Mali natural resource management program with much needed information and a local reference guide.

Recognition of the conflict that exists between conservation ideology, law, and my experience of Malian wildlife practices fueled me to pursue my Master's degree in applied anthropology, in which I focused on natural resources and community values. During that time I conducted several ethnographic investigations of African resource use strategies, the culmination of which was my master's thesis, *The Fetish Market and Animal Parts Trade of Mali, West Africa* (Edwards 2003). This text was a first; no Westerner had ever apprenticed to a Malian *karamogo* (a supernatural diviner, hunter, and healer) and vendor of wildlife before. The emic perspective this apprenticeship granted me not only furthered my understandings of local wildlife practices, but also permitted me to provide a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of the lives of those involved, focusing on their agency in negotiating the animal parts trade. Rather than pass judgment on their activities, I sought to understand and describe the intricate systems of wildlife harvesting and distribution. This dissertation, in turn, builds upon my Master's research by providing a detailed ethnographic description of the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* as sites of local-global articulation.

The unique pattern of trade in wildlife known as *donsow barra* (hunter's work), or the animal parts trade (APT), in Mali involves networks in which wildlife harvested in rural areas is transported to urban centers for sale to the public at markets like the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* (Edwards 2003; see Figure 1: Key Actors and Places of the APT).

Figure 1: Key actors and places of the APT.



Figure 1 presents a simplified flow chart of the APT, highlighting the key actors and places involved. The diagram illustrates linkages based on the exchange of wildlife for money, which can be seen to connect suppliers (located in rural communities) to the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*, as well as to the end consumers of wildlife goods.

Both markets include relationships between local resource users/producers and the world beyond, highlighting what I will describe as the fundamental nature of these markets as sites where disparate values and ideals from distant peoples are engaged by and through local logics. For example, most patrons of the *Marabagaw Yoro* are Malian, but some patrons come from as far away as Burkina Faso, France, Mauritania, Morocco,

Senegal, Spain, and even the United States of America to buy wildlife from vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Similarly, although the *Artisana* is a site of production and sale of “tourist goods” fabricated from wildlife that caters to an international clientele predominately from Europe and other Western nations, the *Artisana* also serves the demands of wealthy Malians who can afford luxury items. Both markets thus include a wide range of interactions ranging from initial suppliers (hunters), to middlemen who transport the animals and/or parts, to craftspeople or vendors, to Malian and foreign consumers, all in the larger context of international conventions on wildlife use. The primary goal of this dissertation is to provide an ethnographic account of this trade, and the driving forces (i.e., values and practices) behind wildlife use in Mali, focusing on the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*.

To be clear, the conflicts inherent in my role as anthropologist, participant observer, apprentice and conservationist were complex. As an anthropologist who believes in the value of conservation, engaging in participant observation involving wildlife use forced me to question my ethics and morality on a daily basis. To negotiate them I set certain restrictions. For example, while I directly aided Malians in preparing and selling wildlife, I never aided in harvesting protected species. While this may seem an arbitrary distinction it was important for me to establish boundaries as to how far I was willing to go in understanding Malian practices. The fact that I had a hand in commodifying species that I valued for their contribution to biodiversity, regional ecology, and sheer beauty scarred me; stacking primate parts every morning for nine months leaves its mark on you. However, being a cultural ethnographer I felt bound to *understand* Malian wildlife practices from as close to an emic perspective as possible,

and to do so required that I immerse myself and experience it firsthand. Initially, setting aside my own values was not easy, but after a while it became easier and easier, taking me closer to a Malian perspective. While I take pride in the relationships I have developed and the understandings I have gained through my fieldwork, it is hard to ignore the impact it has had on me, and the Malians with whom I worked.

International Conservation and Mali

In the past three decades international conservation has become a fixture of the existing global order and has been cited as a prime example of “top-down” globalization (Berkes 2004; Brosius 1999, 2006; Brosius and Russell 2003; Brosius et al. 1998; Gezon and Paulson 2005; Neumann 2004; Peluso 1993). However, international conservation activities vary widely in both approach and philosophy as they are applied in specific contexts, including important examples of projects which attempt to integrate local needs and values into conservation practice (Decher 1997; Deng 1998; Duffy 2000; Edwards 2006; Hulme and Murphree 2001; Kone 2001; Prins et al. 2000; Walley 2004; Weber et al. 2001; Wezel and Rath 2002). Outstanding examples include the Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe (Child 1996) and the Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP), at Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA) near Maimafu, Papua New Guinea (West 2006). In the case of CAMPFIRE, state agencies directly place control of wildlife resources in the hands of participating communities (Child 1996; Hulme and Murphree 2001). As a result, local stakeholders are able to collectively decide on how certain wildlife resources are to be used. For instance, some CAMPFIRE communities sell the

right to outside sport-hunters to hunt “Big Game.” In the CMWMA project, West (2006) describes the historical relationships that have been created between local inhabitants and conservation groups. What is particularly striking about West’s description of the CMWMA is that it highlights not a disjuncture between local stakeholders and conservation (they have a long history of working together), but rather what was to come from their collaboration. In particular, local residents saw their relationship as a form of reciprocal exchange, where conservation is adopted for development. While this may seem to run counter to the goals of ICDPs, it does not. Rather, West stresses the choices of local actors in their negotiation of how development is imagined and realized.

Nevertheless, international conservation organizations and state agencies spend millions of dollars to conserve and protect biodiversity, particularly wildlife, establishing a system of “global environmental governance” allowing outside authorities (i.e., conservation organizations and environmental NGOs) to have a strong influence upon, and sometimes to dictate, wildlife policy to state agencies (Brosius 1999, 2006; Peluso 1993). This is largely the case in Mali, which is signatory to a number of international conservation accords. In particular, Mali, has been a state member to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) since 1990, as well as adopted the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1994. In 2001, Mali developed its *Strategie Nationale en Matiere de Diversite Biologique* (National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan - NBSAP) reflecting its commitment to conservation.

According to Mali’s National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP), three species (leopard, dorcas gazelle, and red-flanked duiker) and two “groups” of wildlife

(i.e., female antelopes without horns, and young hippopotamus’) are prohibited from being harvested due to their conservation status (i.e., endangered) or contribution to biodiversity (*Strategie Nationale en Matiere de Diversite Biologique* 2001; see Table 1).

Table 1: Nationally protected wildlife.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Partially Protected*	Completely Protected**
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	<i>Wara Ba</i>	1	-
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	<i>Wara Ni Kalan</i>	-	X
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	<i>Mali</i>	1	-
Dorcas Gazelle	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	<i>Son</i>	-	X
Red-Fronted Gazelle	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	<i>Sine</i>	3	-
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	2	-
Red-Flanked Duiker	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	<i>Mangalani</i>	-	X
Roan Antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	<i>Daje</i>	1	-
Female Antelopes Without Horns	N/A	<i>Bishie Muso</i>	-	X
Young Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	<i>Mali Den</i>	-	X
Key:				
*Partially Protected – The number represents the quantity of specimens allowed for harvest each year.				
** Completely Protected – Species not allowed to be harvested according to national legislation.				
<i>(Strategie Nationale en Matiere de Diversite Biologique</i> 2001).				

At the same time, five other species are partially protected, meaning that a limited number are allowed by the national government to be harvested. These include lion, hippopotamus (adults only), red-fronted gazelle, bushbuck, and roan antelope. However, as I will show, in Mali there is no difference between the exploitation of partially, completely protected, and various unprotected species; all are harvested, transported, and distributed to vendors in the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* without concern for their nationally appointed legal status.

In addition to Mali's NBSAP, Mali is signatory to two international conventions concerning wildlife: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

What is now the CBD started in 1988, when the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) called for a group of experts (Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity) to explore the need for an international convention on biological diversity (CBD 2010). By 1992, the group of experts was known as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and they had developed the text of the CBD, which was first presented at the Nairobi Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD 2010). Later that year at the "Earth Summit" (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the CBD was opened for signatures (CBD 2010). In 1993, the CBD entered into force with three central aims: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources (CBD 2010). All three of these goals Mali has agreed to uphold at a national level through its NBSAP (*Strategie Nationale en Matiere de Diversite Biologique* 2001).

In addition to the CBD, Mali is also a signatory to CITES. Put simply, CITES is an international agreement among signatory nations specifically designed to limit wildlife trafficking (currently 175 national governments are signatories to the convention, including Mali). CITES central "aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival" (CITES 2009).

Framed as an international agreement, CITES is legally binding, requiring all members to implement the convention at the national level. However, adherence to the convention is voluntary. Those countries that agree are encouraged to develop their “own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level” (CITES 2009). In 2002, Mali formally adopted national legislation (law No. 02-017) to uphold the principles of CITES (Mali Biennial CITES Report 2003-2004). Interestingly, Mali’s NBSAP identifies implementation of CITES as part of meeting its 2010 target goals for the CBD.

Key to CITES is specie specific data that is provided by another international entity – the World Conservation Union (formerly known as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and still retains its original acronym – IUCN). Wildlife data is provided to CITES by IUCN’s “Red List of threatened species.” Though not overtly stated, the subtext of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CITES and IUCN highlights their intimate relationship:

The CITES Secretariat and IUCN have a long history of co-operation in ensuring the most effective possible implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). IUCN was instrumental in stimulating the creation of CITES, from a General Assembly resolution (7th GA, Resolution 14) and IUCN Environmental Law Centre (IUCN ELC) provided a first draft of CITES as did the Government of Kenya. Over the years, CITES has made increasing use of the IUCN networks, in order to execute the Decisions and Resolutions of the CITES Parties. Several Decisions and Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties specifically mandate IUCN to work with the CITES Secretariat and the Parties, (MOU, IUCN-CITES 1999).

In creating the “Red List,” IUCN uses several categories to describe a species conservation status, including extinct (EX), extinct in the wild (EW), critically

endangered (CR), endangered (EN), vulnerable (VU), near threatened (NT), least concern (LC), data deficient (DD), and not evaluated (NE). These categories are then used by CITES on a global scale to inform which species are at greater risk of exploitation than others. Given the institutional framework of CITES, parties to the convention vote on which species be prohibited or closely controlled from international trade. To do so, CITES uses three appendices (I, II, and III). CITES appendices (I, II, III) provide a system of classification that identifies a species and its trade status to be applied on a global scale. Appendix I species are the most endangered, and CITES prohibits their commercial trade. Appendix II species are not currently threatened with extinction, but may become so without control mechanisms, and they may only be traded with special permission. Appendix III species are submitted for inclusion by member nations seeking assistance in protecting a species that may be overexploited, and require specific permits and certification for harvesting (CITES 2009). Under the auspices of the *Ministère de L'Environnement et de L'Assainissement: Direction National de la Conservation de la Nature* (Ministry of the Environment and Sanitation: National Direction for the Conservation of Nature), the national government has outlawed the harvesting or sale of any appendix I species and allows limited export permits for appendix II and III as provided by CITES (Malian national legislation, Law No. 95-03, *Strategie Nationale en Matiere de Diversite Biologique* 2001).

Theoretical Orientations and Frameworks

The information included in the ethnographic description in this dissertation is designed to allow the reader to understand the animal parts trade of Mali associated with the

Artisana and *Marabagaw Yoro*. In framing my description, I focus on what I refer to as the Place/People/Values (PPV) framework. The PPV orients us toward exploration of the relationships and values that exist in a particular place around wildlife resources, in a way that recognizes the different types of actors involved, their relation to each other and others, as well as the agency they possess in the context of the central place in which they operate.

The PPV draws on three nodes of social theory (Globalization; International Conservation; and Agency/Practice) and articulates them so as to lend insight into the human dimensions of wildlife use. In so doing, the PPV leads us to focus on how individual actors are connected in dynamic and complex arrangements, with other actors, from other places, with their own connections and interests. Such a formulation highlights individual and group practices, as well as their underlying values, as fundamental to linkage formation. The linkages presented offer a unique perspective: wildlife use as a “lens” on to the processes of globalization.

While the concept of globalization as an increase in connections between people and places on a global scale (Inda and Rosaldo 2002) appears unproblematic, many assume such connections reflect systems of domination. From this perspective connections are made in a “top-down” or “core to periphery” manner, presenting the West as the “globalizer” and the Rest as the “globalized” (Wallerstein 2004). As outlined by Wallerstein, globalization equates to a homogenization of a world capitalist system (2004). Not only is this a western-centric perspective, but also such conceptualizations disallow the fact that those who reside along the periphery may have wants and needs

that are not in-line with the West. Moreover, those who reside in the periphery are not passive bystanders (Nash 1981, 2005).

Arjun Appadurai (1986, 1996, 2001, 2002) conceptualized globalization and transnational processes by highlighting the “social life” that commodities acquire through their circulation via “global flows.” Here, I borrow Appadurai’s notion of commodities as having a social life and trace how commodities (medicine or tourist goods) are acquired, manufactured out of wildlife, and sold to a wide range of consumers, in so doing providing an ethnographic description of “The Social Life of Wild-Things.”

While Appadurai’s strong social perspective on material culture is essential to revealing the everyday reality of wildlife use in Mali, application of his notion of “global flows” does not specify the actual terrain through which flows circulate, nor the constraints and structures of the physical and cultural environment through which they travel, which in any case will be quite specific to particular contexts.

To address the reality of the terrain through which flows move, Anna Tsing advances the notion of the “channel-making activity of circulation” (2000: 464). In doing so, Tsing (2004) shifts from Appadurai’s “flow,” which is unfettered, to her own notion of “channel,” which is constrained. By focusing on the relationship between movement (i.e., the global) and stasis (i.e., the constraints upon that movement generated by the very terrain the flow moves through – that is the local level), channels form through the relationship between the global and the local. Additionally, Tsing uses the concept of “friction” (2004) as a symptom of the conflict in values arising across local, national, and/or global arenas. This kind of friction is apparent at multiple levels, as different

actors and practices involved with wildlife use in Mali conflict with international conservation agendas and national policy.

The concept of “place,” as enunciated by Biersack (2003, 2006a, 2006b) and Dirlik (2001), is useful for framing my research in ways that are consistent with Tsing’s channel metaphor for processes of globalization. The notion of place focuses analysis on local-global articulations and intersections while underscoring the fact that all processes of globalization (or nation-building, for that matter) involve the complex interplay of endogenous and exogenous forces (i.e., local and foreign wildlife values). In this way, place, like Tsing’s channel, may be conceived as the relationship between the local and the global. In other words, places are not only intimately connected to other places; they bridge singular notions of the local, and the global, by highlighting the relationships that span multiple scales (i.e., local, national, global), across both physical and metaphorical spaces, and people (i.e., those who act across scales and space).

While conservation is valued for its ability to protect biodiversity, upon which all life is balanced, conservation is not a universal value (Blakie and Jeanreunaud 1997; Kottak 1999; Shiva 2000), or practice, even in cases where species overharvesting is not apparent (Alvard 1993, 1995; Alvard et al. 1997; Hames 2007). In his discussion of the “New Ecological Anthropology” (1999), Conrad Kottak draws on the foundational work of Roy Rappaport and the roots of cultural ecology. In his vision of a new ecological anthropology, Kottak develops a dynamic and plural perspective of human-environmental relations – what he terms “ethnoecologies” (1999). In brief, ethnoecologies are any society’s set of environmental perceptions, or cultural models of the environment and its relation to people (Kottak 1999). Key to his contributions to my theoretical framing is

Kottak's description of ethnoecological clashes – a notion that dovetails nicely with Tsing's concept of friction as a symptom of conflict in values. Specifically, Kottak identifies that two western ethnoecologies (developmentalism and environmentalism) are frequently in conflict with local ethnoecologies (1999). These ethnoecological clashes highlight fundamental differences in values associated with environmental resources (i.e., wildlife). In the case of the *Marabagaw* Yoro and Artisana, wildlife is valued as an economic resource that is used to create local medicine as well as tourist goods, which stands in conflict to international conservation agendas and imposed state policy. Moreover from a political ecological perspective (Brosius 1999, 2006; Brosius and Russell 2003; Gezon and Paulson 2005), ethnoecological clashes reflect conflict in the relations of power as well as human rights.

To understand the differences in the relations of power between various institutions involved, I turn to the work of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci. Based on Foucault's conceptualization, power does not exist in a vacuum – it is intimately related to knowledge. Specifically, Foucault recognizes that “[i]t is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power,” (1980: 52). In addition to this, I turn to Antonio Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony, where institutions develop and maintain certain apparatus' to support their position within society.

Taking these two sets of theory, it becomes clear that international conservation (i.e., global environmental governance) is an institution that supports asymmetrical relations of power through a hegemonic system. In particular, international conservation

organizations work to inform resource use policy through international agreements with nation-states.

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argue that under these conditions the state can no longer be assumed to be superordinate to the province, the town, or the village. The ability of the state to encompass local levels is necessarily achieved (if it is achieved at all) through state spatializing practices. Such practices are exemplified in Ferguson's exploration of international development in Lesotho, South Africa (1994), where development agencies remade local communities in their own political image. These articulations are similar to what some scholars describe as occurring through global environmental governance (Berkes 2004; Brosius 1999, 2006; Brosius and Russell 2003; Brosius et al. 1998; Gezon and Paulson 2005; Neumann 2004; Peluso 1993; West 2006). These relations may happen in a top-down, or core to periphery fashion, but that should not suggest that they are the only relationships or interactions at play; hierarchical models of domination-resistance (Scott 1990) and top-down social interaction underestimate the agency of local actors in the processes of globalization.

Shifting from the structural models of globalization that make Scott's (1990) focus on resistance useful, to models that place local and national actors within the same field of activity as global actors, *agency* and *practice* become paramount factors. Drawing on Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977), Giddens' *structuration* (1976), and Sahlins' "cosmological dramas" in combination with historical specificity (1985), Sherry Ortner (1994) outlines a theory of practice as seeking an understanding of "the genesis, reproduction, and change of form and meaning of a given social/cultural whole" (1994: 393). An emphasis upon *agency* and *practice* is fundamental to my research, as it directs

attention to actors, their actions, and the byproducts of these – networks and negotiated outcomes. This actor- and action-centered focus affords the researcher an opportunity to interrogate more “top-down” structural approaches to the process of globalization.

To develop insight into key interactions between various actors associated with the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*, I draw on the work of Christopher Steiner, who studied the African Art trade in Cote d’Ivoire (1994). By delving into the imbrications between producers, wholesalers, importers and consumers, Steiner (1994) postulates that local actors actively negotiate the tastes of consumers through “cultural brokerage” and “the mediation of knowledge.” Taking earlier notions of “cultural brokerage” (see Barth 1956, 1966, 1969; and Paine 1971, 1974, 1976), Steiner outlines how local actors interpret the desires of consumers through their physical and social position (as vendors in a public market) and in turn use their insight to cater to clients. This conceptualization is particularly helpful in understanding how wildlife is “brokered,” or negotiated to meet a wide range of wants and needs, as seen in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* of Mali.

The current research contributes to our understanding of wildlife use in a globalized era where biodiversity conservation has taken center stage. By using wildlife use as a “lens” onto globalization, this study provides empirical evidence that supports globalization as a complex engagement between the local and the global (Appadurai 1986, 2002; Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Nash 2005; Tsing 2004). This is achieved through perceiving the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* as “places,” or sites of local-global articulation (Biersack 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Dirlik 2001; West 2006), where key individuals engage the world at large and actively broker, or mediate extra-local values (Steiner 1994). In an effort to distill key practices and values associated with wildlife use

in Mali, I use an agency-focused approach and richly illustrate intricate interactions between the local and the global. By using an ethnographic framework these dynamic social interactions are presented so that an actor's agency is understood within a particular context, underscoring the value of ethnography.

Methodology

A central research question informed this study and provides the basis for an ethnography of Malian wildlife use that is attentive to actors, species, as well as the values and logics that support wildlife consumption in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana*: What are the forces that influence wildlife use in Mali? In answering this question I pay close attention to what constraints are imposed and by whom. For instance, how do organizations (NGOs, other transnational groups like the Peace Corps and international conservation groups like the World Conservation Union) impinge upon local communities and their practices? Similarly, since local actors may be forces in and of themselves, I explore how local actors negotiate, or broker wildlife in pursuing their own ends.

To aid in identifying and categorizing actors, as well as the various relationships such actors have in relation to wildlife and each other, I apply a hybrid version of Actor Network Theory (ANT). Drawing on Law and Hassard (1999), Law (1999) and Latour (1999), I use ANT to define relationships between human and non-human actors (i.e., wildlife); they engage with each other through networks. Through such engagements human actors negotiate individual and group wants. The virtue of a network approach is that it dispenses with *a priori* notions of scale and allows the researcher to identify

linkages between local actors, the wider world, and the manner in which they are made and maintained. By paying attention to the different types of actors involved in the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*, as well as their relationships with each other, clear patterns of interaction are seen, highlighting networks that span rural-urban and local-global spheres.

With a focus on actors, their networks and practices, I engaged in participant-observation, conducted interviews, and regularly surveyed the practices and activities of each market (Bernard 2000). Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected over the course of nine months starting in November 2007. Qualitative data was organized around local practices, the role(s) of key individuals within a given market (suppliers, vendors, patrons, state agents, and international agents) and their relationship with others. Snowball and targeted sampling were employed with each identified group to develop a base of individuals willing to participate (ibid); this was greatly facilitated by my previous experience in each market. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of these identified groups. In general, questions focused on networks of interaction, individual choices and actions of participants, as well as internal and external pressures felt by participants (i.e., subsistence strategy, financial need, and existing policy).

More specifically, interviews with suppliers and vendors of each market took place on a schedule set by participants, allowing for individuals to clarify previous conversations and expand upon the researcher's understanding of a given practice. Conversations with suppliers and vendors were in-depth and extended; focusing on the species they traded, specific strategies they used, as well as their relationships with other

individuals in and outside of the market. Interviews with patrons of either market were brief and focused on the item(s) purchased, reason for purchase, their use and value. Conversations with state agents and members of international organizations, specifically the *Eaux et Forêt* (Malian agency responsible for managing natural resources), and the World Conservation Union, were brief and focused on which species were protected, current monitoring efforts, and existing policy on wildlife use. Other international agents interviewed included Peace Corps volunteers that were encountered in either market.

In addition to “thick” ethnographic and highly qualitative data on market practices and networks, quantifiable specifics were gathered on the species for sale in each market, their representative form and function, and economic value. Additionally, details as to the number of species used in the manufacture of a given product were recorded along with time to produce, and rate of sale. This data was collected through spot surveys (Bernard 2000) of vendor’s stalls in both the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana*; three times a week, time was allotted to record vendor sales, and their general activity within each market. These quantifiable specifics have been used to complete a comparative analysis (ibid) between markets. From this analysis patterns of wildlife use have been discerned for each market. This data has already been shared with both state (*Eaux et Forêt*) and international conservation organizations (the World Conservation Union) to aid in the development of ethical wildlife policy that is attentive to the wants and needs of local communities.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods granted me the ability to code the data collected according to themes presented in the course of research, such as financial need, economic or subsistence strategy, as well as traditional and modern

practices among others. Conversations, observations and inventories have been cross-referenced to provide ethnographic examples of local agency and the cultural logics that support existing practices within each market. Understanding these interactions and relationships provides invaluable insight not only into the commoditization of wildlife, but also allows for a better conceptualization of the processes of globalization.

Historical Background

To address my research questions it is first necessary to present Mali, not as an undeveloped and poor country, but as a *place* (a site of local-regional and local-global articulations) that has a long history of interaction with different groups of people from different locales. In short, one must understand Mali as an articulated, rather than an insulated, entity over the course of time. As a place, Mali has engaged the wider world for thousands of years. Archaeological records and palynological (pollen) analysis indicate that much of what is now arid was once lush and plentiful, allowing for human occupation (Nicholson 1979).

The earliest organized state in West Africa was the Ghana Empire, which was comprised of a federation of lesser kingdoms in what is now northwestern Mali (Imperato 1996, Konare 2000). Shortly after the Ghana Empire reached its peak the Almoravids, Islamic reformers, brought the region under their control through proselytization and military conquest (Imperato 1996). By the beginning of the 13th century the Ghana Empire no longer existed. Much of its territory and sphere of influence was to be assumed by a small Malinké kingdom located on the upper Niger River. This is where the current nation that we know of as Mali has its roots.

Around A.D. 1230, a man of great importance to Malian history takes center stage: Soundiata Keita, the son of a Malinké chief (Konare 2000). Ask most any Malian about Soundiata Keita and be prepared for an afternoon of oral histories regaling the god-like hero and founder of Mali. Though these oral histories are enlightening, suffice it to say that, once he had taken his position as a chief, Soundiata consolidated other Malinké chiefdoms under his control to overthrow the ruling kingdom of Sosso. The kingdom of Sosso, under the leadership of Soumangourou Kante, described through oral traditions as an evil sorcerer, was defeated at Kirina (near modern day Koulikouro, Mali) in 1235 by the army of Soundiata (Imperato 1996). It was through this victory that Soundiata was able to transform a loose alliance of independent Malinké chiefdoms into the Mali Empire (Konare 2000). By the 15th century the Mali Empire had started its decline and subsequent kingdoms and empires replaced it in rapid succession, including the Songhay Empire (1335-1600), a Moroccan invasion and occupation (1591-1660), the Peul Kingdom of Macina (1600-1862), the Bambara Kingdom of Segou (1600-1862), and the Bambara Kingdom of Kaarta (1633-1854) (Imperato 1989).

The second half of the 19th century revolved around the development and expansion of the Tukulor Empire and French annexation of what is present day Mali. French annexation was achieved through several decades of “diplomatic maneuvering and military confrontation with indigenous political states...” (Imperato 1996: 3). By 1895, the French had appropriated the vast majority of what are present-day Mali, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritania, and Senegal into the colonial entity known as “French West Africa” (also known as the French Sudan) (Konare 2000).

During the French occupation of West Africa, natural resource management (i.e., western conservation) was introduced in the form of two decrees. On July 4th, 1935, the “forestry regime” was put into effect and in November 1947, colonial authorities passed legislation to control hunting in French territories (Sanogho 1983). Key to these colonial decrees was that the state controlled all unoccupied lands, and from these, the establishment of hunting reserves to serve European needs (Sanogho 1983). France remained in control of Mali until the 22nd of September 1960, when the country gained its independence.

After Mali gained independence, it implemented new laws to protect its natural resources. In 1969, the “hunting code” (*code de chasse*) was passed, but has since been replaced with law No. 86-43/AN-RM. (IUCN 1992). Under the 1986 legislation, conservation of wildlife and its habit is achieved through different categories of protected land. For example, there are nature reserves, national parks, faunal reserves, and special reserves where hunting is prohibited. Based on law No. 86-43/AN-RM, wildlife can only be harvested in hunting zones designated by the Minister for Water and Forests.

Malians comprise a rich and varied tapestry of ethnic and cultural heritage. Approximately half of the people living in Mali belong to the Mande peoples (Bambara, Malinké, and Soninke), the largest ethnic group within the country. Another 17% of the population are identified as nomadic Peul, 12% as Voltaic, 10% as Tuareg and Moor, 6% as belonging to the group Songhay, as well as another 5% as “other” (CIA 2012). With approximately 90% of the population identified as Muslim, Islam is the faith of choice. Traditional beliefs (9%) and Christianity (1%) comprise the remainder (CIA 2012). However, these figures mask a great deal of interplay between different religious

traditions and sociocultural practices reflecting syncretism between Islam and “traditional” beliefs. Hybridization has been ongoing.

Since independence, Mali has retained strong ties to France, most notably in terms of currency regulation. The value of CFA (local currency) is directly tied to the French franc. Moreover, the CFA is employed in all former French colonies in West Africa (Mali, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire). Though Mali has been a player on the world stage for some time, it has recently entered into a modern global economy. Founded on agricultural exports (primarily rice and groundnuts) Mali’s incorporation into the global economy “cuts both ways.” Transnational networks of capital, markets, and tourism embed themselves in local realities and the socio-cultural logics of Mali, even as these logics are exposed to foreign ones.

While Mali has a rich history that highlights its engagement and interaction with others (and continues to do so), it is considered to be one of the poorest nations in the world, being ranked 175 out of 187 in the Human Development Index does not (HDR 2011). Imagine in your mind’s eye a country roughly twice the size of Texas (1.24 million square kilometers) with 65% of that immense area being desert or semi-desert, and you begin to conjure Mali. The country is further divided into three geographical regions: the southern, intensely cultivated semi-tropical forest zone; the central, semiarid Sahel; and the northern, extremely arid Sahara. With only 4% of the total land area considered arable, and a population of nearly 14 million, Mali is continually faced with agricultural-economic hardship (HDR 2011).

CHAPTER II

A VISIT TO DJONFAKULU

To grasp the realities of rural life in Mali, I offer a narrative of my experience in a Malian village where wildlife resources are key to daily life, rural-urban linkages, as well as local-global relationships.

It was a little after seven in the morning as the bus left the Bamako station known as “Manantali Placi.” This was the bus station that provided service to the towns and villages situated along the Manantali Road that extended northwest from Bamako, the capital of Mali, to the town of Manantali, located in the Kayes region of Western Mali. We had arrived at the bus station at five that morning loaded down with baggage to secure our seats on the transport that would take us to the village of Djonfakulu. Four of us were traveling together in the very back seat of the bus. To my left sat my wife Stephanie, known as Djenaba in Bamana; to my right was seated Kara, my mentor and teacher. On the far side of Kara sat Melody, a French woman born in Martinique. My six-month-old son, Marshall, known as Kibiri in Maninka, crawled over our laps and drew much attention from other travelers, some of whom asked to hold him. Our group was a sight to behold as it was not often that an American family was seen traveling in the company of a Malian sorcerer and French national.

The purpose of our trip was to take Melody to Kara’s natal village of Djonfakulu in order to prepare “traditional” medicine and conduct a sacrifice. My role in all of this was as Kara’s apprentice, right-hand man and as an anthropological researcher interested in globalization through a lens of Malian wildlife use. I had started as an apprentice to Kara in 2002 when conducting an exploratory study into wildlife use. It was now five

years later and my initial research had paved the way for an in-depth exploration of the dynamic relationships and interactions that support and facilitate two markets that specialize in the commodification of wildlife: the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*. While the *Artisana* is a state institution that caters to the wants of tourists and other affluent individuals, the *Marabagaw Yoro* is oriented toward “traditional medicine” and local beliefs known as *La Tru* (Bamana; also known as *bougouri*) or the sacred sands (*les sable sacre*; French). As such, one can find a leopard fur purse for sale in the *Artisana*, while chimpanzee parts are sold as medicine in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. In both of these instances, the wildlife is harvested in the rural environment and transported by an extensive network to their respective markets in the capital city of Bamako, and to a lesser extent other urban centers. It was with this in mind that my family and I accompanied Kara and Melody on what amounted to a business trip into the bush.

Djonfakulu is a village of roughly 250 individuals, divided into approximately 20 extended families. Each family tends to live within a single compound that encompasses several residences, some of which are traditional mud huts with a thatch roof, others of which are more modern square huts with corrugated metal roofs. The key subsistence strategy and economic activity of the village is small-scale farming-horticulture. Key crops include peanuts, sorghum, millet, corn, and some cotton. Some wealthy families and individuals plant over 10 hectares, while others sow a half-hectare, a small garden, or nothing at all. Several of the families supplement their farming with small herds of goats, sheep, and/or cattle; a few families have invested in raising chickens and guinea fowl. Serving the needs of the village, a couple of families have opened small boutiques that sell sugar, tea, rice, cooking oil, batteries, cigarettes, and other sundries. A few

enterprising men have become the sole purveyors of palm wine (*ban ji*) in the community and sell it in the village as well as export it to Kita and Bamako.

In the same vein that the palm wine extractors harvest a wild resource and sell it for profit, hunters of Djonfakulu (and the Kayes region in general) exploit wildlife to provide protein and much needed cash. Though some might categorize these hunting practices as part of the “bushmeat” trade, they are not. Counter to bushmeat systems that focus on the harvesting, distributing and selling wild game meat (see Brashares et al. 2004; Caspary 1999; Cowlshaw et al. 2005; and Wilkie et al. 2001), Malians tend not to harvest wildlife to sell its meat. Rather, when Malian hunters make a kill, they butcher out all that is edible and redistribute it to family and friends. At the same time, Malian hunters collect select parts (i.e., heads, horns, fat, bones, internal organs, tails, hooves, paws, and the like) of their kills that they then sell (directly or indirectly via a vis middlemen) to supply two markets in the capital: the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana*. In turn, the money generated from the sale of wildlife parts helps support rural communities like Djonfakulu. This focus on parts of kills, rather than the meat as a commodity differentiates what I call the *animal parts trade* from a bushmeat supply system. Particularly significant is that this animal parts trade relies on the active negotiation of wildlife values as they relate to urban and international consumers.

At the heart of the village resides Kara’s family, descendents of the Maninka historical elite. Kara’s father, Mourundi, now blind and retired, held the title *dugutigi* (headman) of Djonfakulu for 30 years. This title made Mourundi responsible for allotting land for farming and housing, settling grievances, and approving all activities and functions held in the village. One of the benefits of being the *dugutigi* is that you receive

“tribute” (gifts) from villagers and visitors. While the position of *dugutigi* is a traditional role, *Chef du Village* was part and parcel to the French colonial project. When the French colonized West Africa they practiced “direct control” and outlawed many local practices and institutions. In place of local systems the French opted to transpose their own institutions and created the position of *Chef du Village*. Many times existing *dugutigi* were given the new French political position of *Chef du Village*. In other instances the French selected an individual that was not the *dugutigi* creating a schism between traditional titles/roles/responsibilities and the new French constructs. This often times resulted in a feud-like situation between the “traditionals” and the “colonials” (i.e., Malians empowered by the French). The conflict between the two factions continues to this day and is but one of many colonial legacies that are ongoing.

In the case of Djonfakulu, the French initially entitiled a rival of the presiding *dugutigi* to the position of *dugutigi* creating a conflict that did not end until Mourundi’s father (historic heir to the *dugutigi*) was elected *Chef du Village* in the 1950s. Mourundi inherited both titles, after his father’s death (a couple years after independence). As *Chef du Village*, Mourundi was accountable to the governor of Kita (the capital of the *arrondissement* in which Djonfakulu is located). Mourundi’s duties as *Chef du Village* focused on collecting taxes, recording births, deaths and marriages. Prior to being *dugutigi* or *Chef du Village* he was a well-known intellectual. He published four books on Latin, was the headmaster of a prestigious school in Bamako, and was a commentator for Malian National Radio at the time of independence. During that time he worked closely with Leopold Sanghor (the first president of Senegal) and Modibo Keita (the first president of Mali).

Kara showed us our quarters, a square mud-brick structure with a tin roof. Our bags had already been deposited in the single room that we would all be sharing. Taking me by the hand, Kara and I left my wife, son and Melody to settle in while we went to greet the rest of Djonfakulu. As we prepared to leave, Kara took a moment to whet my research appetite. He took a crate, up-ended it to use it as stepping stool, and had me climb up to see the roof of his house. I carefully balanced on the rickety crate and held onto the edge of the tin roof for support. Cautiously I poked my nose above the roofline and came face to face with the head of a very large warthog. Large tusks curved inches from my nose. Along with the large warthog head there were four smaller warthog heads, five baboon heads, four vervet monkey heads, two badger heads, two bushbuck heads, a hyena head, and the desiccated remains of a vulture. I could tell that Kara was very proud of his collection as he explained how he had harvested these animals five months ago when he was last in Djonfakulu; the edible parts of the harvested animals had been consumed locally by family and friends while select parts had been set aside to dry. The hides of the animals that decorated Kara's roof had already been transported to the capital for sale to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. The heads had been left behind as an economic resource for Kara to draw on if in need of money. There is also the distinct possibility that Kara was "playing the market," so to speak: waiting until certain species were in high demand to maximize his profits. Given his association with both markets, Kara possesses a considerable amount of "insider information" with regard to species, their uses, and their economic value. Combine this insight with his rural and urban networks and Kara has an advantage that other Malians do not: he is uniquely positioned to both disseminate information and generate new knowledge as it pertains to wildlife use.

After showing me his collection of wildlife heads, Kara took me around the remaining family compounds to greet the rest of Djonfakulu. Before entering each family compound Kara would give me a few details about whom I was about to meet. “This man drinks too much,” he whispered to me as we greeted the son of the village imam (Islamic priest). I assumed that Kara was informing me of the alcohol abuse because he did not like the man. Nothing could be further from the truth; the two men were very good friends. In fact, after being introduced, Kara asked the man if he could procure some palm wine for later that night. Sidi (son of the village imam) assured Kara that it would not be a problem.

On we continued winding along dirt tracks that spider-webbed from one family compound to another. At another residence Kara instructed me that the man I was about to meet, Django, was the *kuntigi* of Djonfakulu. *Kuntigi* is a special title held by individuals that protect the village from malevolent forces. Like Kara, the *kuntigi* practices *soma* (magic/sorcery). What sets the *kuntigi* apart from others is that he is recognized as being inherently dangerous. As explained to me, though the *kuntigi* performs a critical service for the village, they are also known to be “close to crazy.” As such they may just as easily do harm as good. It would be poor form to insult a *kuntigi*, or not abide by his directions. Kara and Django spoke for a bit and then it was time for us to move on. The sun had set and darkness was spreading fast. I could barely see the path as Kara guided me back to his family’s compound where we rejoined my wife, Melody, and my son for dinner.

Shortly after eating dinner, Kara again requested my company. “They should start arriving soon,” Kara told me as we made our way to what appeared to be an

abandoned hut. “Who is coming,” I asked. Kara never missed a beat. “All the others,” he responded. “We need to get things ready,” Kara explained as he started sweeping out the inside of the hut. I stood outside of the hut while Kara methodically swept out the dirt. After a few minutes of picking up, Kara invited me into the hut. He held aside a hanging piece of fabric that acted as a privacy screen, and I stepped through the doorway. Inside was a low bamboo bed frame that offered a place to sit. The interior of the hut was painted in rusty red, black, and white. Along one portion of wall was a large crate that served as an altar - several power-objects could be seen poking out from underneath tattered rags. Kara laid out some mats on the floor as Sidi (son of the imam) arrived.

The Gin Gin Gran

Sidi stood outside the door and announced “*Kon Kon*,” a verbal low-tech doorbell that indicated his presence outside the doorway (it is poor form to walk into anyone’s residence without declaring themselves). Kara pulled back the fabric screen and in walked Sidi with a large calabash of palm wine. “*Karamogo Ba* (Big Teacher/Master),” Sidi intoned, with an air of grandeur as he handed the calabash to Kara and then took a seat next to me on the bamboo bed. Kara was now sitting on a mat directly on the floor of the hut, distributing palm wine to his guests. Sidi was the first of many Malian men that came that night to pay their respects to Kara, head of the “*Gin Gin Gran*.” The *Gin Gin Gran* can be conceptualized as an informal secret society, or social club, that strives to serve the supernatural wants and needs of the surrounding community.

The power of the *Gin Gin Gran* is found in its secrecy. As Kara once described it to me, “We live and work in darkness.” *La Tru*, the foundation of Kara’s practice and

source of his power is premised on the concept of the unknown, *dibi*. *Dibi* means more than “unknown,” it also means “darkness.” This gives a special insight into not only *La Tru*, but also the *Gin Gin Gran* (who practice *La Tru*). By “living and working in darkness”, Kara is referencing his unique set of skills that allow him to be a professional diviner/sorcerer/healer as well as indicating that it is inseparable from his everyday life. The two aspects are linked like a ying and a yang; they are each constitutive of the other.

It is by living and working in darkness, that the members of the *Gin Gin Gran* generate a reputation steeped in secrecy. Further contributing to their shadowy existence is reference to *Gin Gin*, the Bamana/Maninka word for owl: a creature associated with the night and the unknown—metaphorically darkness (*dibi*). As such, the owl personifies the society in its association with the supernatural. Though the secret society does not officially exist, everyone in the area is aware of the *Gin Gin Gran*, and some come from far away seeking its services. In conversations with members of the *Gin Gin Gran*, I learned that the primary reason a person seeks their services is for retribution. Husbands and wives of unfaithful spouses were typical clients who sought retaliatory curses. Other clients made use of the *Gin Gin Gran* services to attain political office or more commonly to prevent others from usurping the office they held. More extreme cases concerned the supernatural assassination of select individuals.

All night long members and close associates (mostly hunters) of the *Gin Gin Gran* dropped by, some staying for a few minutes, others sitting down to partake in the *ban ji* (palm wine). It quickly became clear that normal rules of social interaction were modified for this event. Typically, elder men hold a high social position, but, in the interactions that I witnessed that night, younger men tended to be elevated above their

station. Case in point: a young man (approximately 20 years old) arrived and an older hunter offered him his place on the bamboo bed. The young man took the seat and was immediately offered palm wine. Kara had always told me that, in the realm of *Soma*, age means nothing; ability is everything. *Soma* is the Bamana/Maninka word for supernatural ability, or sorcery. Many might translate *soma* as “magic,” but this would only serve to confuse the issue. For Malians (particularly *soma* practitioners) there is a difference between sorcery and magic. Sorcery requires the ability to control supernatural forces in your interest, while magic is understood as slight of hand and misdirection (what we might call parlor tricks, or a smoke and mirrors routine).

Later I would learn that, Bocar (the young man who the older hunter relinquished his seat to) was recognized as the leading botanical authority in the area (he was referred to as “the arborist”) and was an old student of Kara. He was also the youngest member of the *Gin Gin Gran*. Much like the Django the *kuntigi*, Bocar was perceived by many as uncertain and a potential threat due to his intimate knowledge of the region; he could tell you the names of all the plants of the area and more importantly, what each was used for.

Soon after he arrived, Kara approached Bocar and asked him to acquire a list of twenty-three different botanical specimens. These items were key ingredients to medicine that Kara would be preparing for Melody. Since Bocar was illiterate, Kara recited the list several times so that Bocar could remember all the different types requested. Given that it was a long shopping list Bocar allowed that it would take him a couple of days to find them all. This worked for Kara, as there were more preparations to make. That night Kara made arrangements for the acquisition of a live *nyamatutu*, or Senegalese coucal (a bird that is known as the “hunters guide”). Other “orders” that were

placed that night as we drank palm wine and exchanged stories included rocks from a sacred river (*ba bele*), a puff adder (*dangalan*), the left front foot of an aardvark (*timba tege*), and forepaw of a hyena (*surukou tege*). Kara selectively approached different men for each of these items, based on his knowledge of the individual and their ability to acquire the needed ingredient. For instance, Kara knew (thanks to cell phone technology) that the hunter Sylva had trapped a hyena two days before we had arrived, and chances were good that at least one paw still remained.

Preparing the Sands

The next morning Kara woke me and had me accompany him as he collected a few specialty items, without which he would not be able to complete Melody's medicine. Gathering together my field pack that held my notebook, camera, and water bottle, Kara dug around in the rafters of his house and pulled out a handful of plastic bags, a *murru*, or knife (it was the size of a machete), and a hoe/axe called a *daba*. With our gear we wandered along a dirt path that took us East out of Djonfakulu. The goal of our excursion was to collect sacred dirt from four specific locations in order for Kara to conduct divinations.

Once the dirt was collected, Kara and I took it to the hut that we had used the previous night. It turns out that this hut is Kara's office when he is visiting Djonfakulu. It is where he consults the sacred sands (i.e., divination), makes medicine, and performs *soma* (sorcery). Moreover it is a strictly male structure; women are not allowed inside. One might think of the hut as a clubhouse as it serves as the headquarters of the *Gin Gin Gran* (Owl secret society). Upon entering, Kara asked for the bags of dirt, which he up-

ended and poured into a pile on the floor. He then bent over the pile and recited an incantation while mixing the dirt together. While mixing the dirt he sifted the material, discarding bits of twigs and small rocks. For about a half an hour Kara communed with the pile of dirt. Then he smoothed it out to make roughly a one-meter square patch (this is the sacred sands, or medium through which one practices *La Tru* and interprets the darkness) that he set a mat next to and took a seat. He then requested the bundles of tree bark we had collected. Setting them out on the sacred sands, Kara stuck his head out of the door and called a young boy over. He held the hem of the child's shirt and loaded the bundles of tree bark into the makeshift bag. He then gave instructions to the boy to take the bundles to his mother and have her *sousou* (pound) each into a fine powder.

While waiting for the boy to return, Sidi showed up. He brought word that a boy had killed a *dangalan*, or puff adder (*Bitis arietans*). Kara asked that Sidi bring the boy and the snake to him. Ten minutes later a boy of about 12 years announced himself at the door and Kara gave him permission to enter. Dangling from his hands was the broken body of a large *dangalan* the most widely distributed viper in Africa, and arguably the most dangerous due to the fact that it lives in close proximity to humans (Alden et al. 1995; Cansdale 1961). Kara inspected the snake and congratulated the boy on his skill; he had used a length of bamboo and neatly broken the snake's back about 7cm behind the head. Kara passed the snake to me to examine, and I took rough measurements; it was about half a meter long from head to tail and weighed about 3 kilograms (6.5 lbs, a very large *dangalan* indeed). As I finished noting the measurements of the snake, Kara instructed me to cut off the snake's head.

Feeling a bit put on the spot and worrying that I would botch the job, I used my pocketknife to remove the snake's head. I held out the body with one hand and the head with the other. Kara took the body of the snake and gave it back to the boy, setting the snake's head aside to be used later. There was never a mention that Kara had taken the puff adder's head without consent from the boy. Thanking him for his help, Kara dismissed the boy. I took the opportunity to question Kara about how it was that he was able to take part of the puff adder without recompense; usually one gives something of equal value in return. "You know that the head is dangerous," started Kara appealing to my sensibilities. "The boy is young and could be bitten even though the snake was dead." I began to understand. "So, you took the head so the boy would not get bitten?" I asked. "Yes," agreed Kara, and then added, "no one eats the head, just the body." Kara's actions followed two lines of logic, the first based on potential risk to the boy, the other based on known eating practices. Kara's explanation did not address why he did not give something in payment for the head that he took. Though from other examples where a young boy has something Kara wants/needs and he takes it without asking, he usually offers about \$.50, or sometimes if he does not have any small change on hand he will at a later date make good by buying some sweets for the boy.

No Bull Networks

Though Kara was able to make arrangements for a wide variety of wild items, it was the more domestic items that proved difficult. Critical to Melody's visit was the need to sacrifice a bull. Unlike the wild flora and fauna that Kara had placed orders for, which did not require a discussion of compensation, acquiring a bull was all about money. To

make matters more complicated, Melody had failed to convert her Euros to CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine – African Financial Community: the national currency of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo) before heading to Djonfakulu. When this information came to light, Kara found himself in a difficult position. On the one hand Melody was his top client (i.e., he made more money from her than anyone else), and he desired to do good by her; on the other, we were now two hundred kilometers from the closest bank (in Kita), and there was little we could do. After consulting with several villagers to ascertain the possibility of paying for a bull with Euros, it became clear that the currency had absolutely no value in Djonfakulu. Bearing this in mind, Kara borrowed a motorcycle for us to travel to villages along the Manantali Road to continue to search for a bull and CFA for Euros. We stopped in seven villages without success. Dusk was falling as we finally returned to Djonfakulu.

It was the next day when Kara decided to ask his younger brother Touré if he could assist in finding a bull and converting Euros to CFA. Touré was more than willing for several reasons. First off, knowing a bit of the history between the two brothers, Touré was in debt to Kara. About ten years ago Kara had loaned Touré a large sum of money (approximately \$800.00) to open up a village boutique. Rather than follow through with his business plan, Touré “ate” the money, spending a large portion of it on alcohol. Given that Touré had still to repay the loan, he had no choice but to agree to help Kara. In addition to owing Kara, Touré was also in a unique profession that could potentially aid him in securing a bull and CFA: he was a professional middleman. Incidentally his profession as a middleman was also a result of Kara. After years of not

paying back on his debt, Kara decided to help his brother by giving him a job. The job was to purchase and transport wildlife parts from Djonfakulu (the Gangaran territory in general) to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* of Bamako. Once there he would sell the wildlife parts to vendors for a profit. As a result of Kara's assistance, Touré became a very successful middleman, eventually becoming the single largest supplier to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. He had expanded his operation to include dozens of villages in the Gangaran (territory in which Djonfakulu is located) as well as the Bafing (a territory adjacent to the Gangaran). In addition to the Gangaran and Bafing, Touré did brisk business with hunters from northern Guinea (the border is 30 kilometers from Djonfakulu). Returning to the problem at hand, Kara hoped to make use of Touré's diverse networks to search for a bull and convert Euros into CFA.

Touré set off on his motorcycle to consult with his contacts. Roughly four hours later Touré returned with a possible solution. He had met and spoken with a Fulani man in a village about 10 kilometers away. The Fulani man had a bull he was willing to sell, but he did not want Euros. However, he was willing to sell the bull on credit. Kara consulted with Touré. Touré would be returning to Bamako at the end of the week to sell animal parts. Kara arranged for Touré to convert the Euros to CFA while in the capital and pay off the Fulani man when he returned to the Gangaran. Touré had little choice in the matter and agreed to Kara's demands. With the details hammered out, Touré returned to the Fulani man to arrange delivery of the bull. The sacrifice was scheduled for Thursday, "a good day to perform sacrifices for women," according to Kara. Today was Monday, which gave us two full days to acquire the remaining ingredients and prepare medicine for Melody.

The next day we sat in the “clubhouse” and socialized. Kara could tell that I was confused about our schedule. After all, there were ingredients to be found and medicine to be prepared, and there we were sitting in the cool interior of a hut chatting. Kara reminded me that he had made arrangements two nights earlier with hunters and Bocar (the arborist). All we could do now was wait. To pass the time we prepared tea. Tea in Mali is a social experience; you cannot prepare tea without others dropping in to have a glass. The tea is prepared in three rounds, the first being the most potent (stronger than a shot of double espresso). The following two rounds are progressively weaker, but increasingly sweet. From start to finish, it can take over three hours to finish a pot of tea (i.e., complete all three rounds).

Not long after we started preparing the first round of tea, Sidi dropped by and took a seat next to me on the bamboo bed frame, we were becoming good friends and he offered me insight into previously inaccessible cultural spheres. For example, Sidi had brought news that his father (the imam) had agreed to conduct the sacrifice on Thursday. This was good news indeed and reflected the duality of rural belief systems. On the one hand Djonfakulu was a “traditional village” rooted in historic practices, such as *soma* (sorcery), divination (*La Tru*), and medicine (*fura*), while, on the other hand, the village had welcomed Islam and built a mosque. According to many in Djonfakulu, building the mosque was politically motivated and did not necessarily reflect local belief. Several community members cited the breaching of Islamic convention (the consumption of alcohol and pork) as proof that the village was “traditional” and not Moslem. However, this is not to suggest that Islam does not play a key role in village life. The mosque itself was a place of learning and many children learned to read and write Arabic by attending.

In addition, the imam is recognized as a key community spiritual leader and is routinely sought out for advice and to perform specialized tasks, such as sanctified sacrifices. This holds special meaning for “traditional” sacrifices because Islam is the official state religion. As such, traditional sacrifices conducted by the village imam validate “old” beliefs via modern/state ideology. In the same vein, “traditional” sacrifices carried out by the imam “doubled” the potential for such sacrifices to be effective because of the incorporation of two beliefs systems.

While I chatted with Sidi, son of the village imam, about the role of Islam in Djonfakulu, the young boy from the previous day returned with the powdered bark. Kara gave the boy a couple hundred CFA (about .50 cents) for having his mother pound the bark into a fine powder. Each powdered bark was wrapped up in a paper packet, which Kara opened and inspected. Approving of the fineness of the powders, he poured the contents of each packet onto the sacred sands (the 1 meter by 1 meter patch of dirt) and mixed it all together while reciting an incantation in Maninka. After several minutes of mixing, Kara announced that the sands were ready. Smoothing the sands out to create a writing surface, Kara incised a set of characters that framed the question he was about to pose to the sands. Kara wished to know if the purpose of our visit to Djonfakulu (to prepare medicine and perform a sacrifice for a client) would end well. After quieting his mind, Kara began to go into a trance-like state as he randomly generated a set of sixteen characters that he drew in the sand with his right hand. The three of us examined the characters together discussing possible interpretations of symbols in relation to each other. After several minutes of drawing connections between characters and the meaning

of such relationships, it became clear that there would be obstacles to overcome, but in the end our visit would be successful.

Hunters and Wildlife

For the rest of the day we sat and drank tea while friends of Kara's dropped by to socialize. It was a veritable who's who of hunters. "This man has killed three lions, a dozen leopards, six hyenas, many crocodiles, a hippo, and a buffalo," Kara reported. The list of animals and numbers of each acted much like a résumé – it reflects a hunter's abilities, and similar to a résumé, it only highlights certain information/skills. This hunter had harvested many more animals than the short list identified. The listed species hold greater status than other fauna and suggest significant accomplishments. For example, a hunter announcing that he has killed a bushbuck is commonplace because a bushbuck is not rare or a direct threat to the hunter/people. Conversely, a hunter that successfully harvests a lion, leopard, hippo, crocodile, buffalo, or some of the larger ruminants/ungulates such as roan antelope, hartebeest, and eland gains significant prestige. Everyone in the community was aware of each hunter's contribution to community wellbeing by sharing/distributing meat, eliminating predators, and pest control (i.e., crops attract many species of antelope, birds, even hippos). Similarly villagers know specialized skill sets of hunters: which hunters use traps, which dogs, and/or which firearms. In my talks with community members I was reminded of how much hunters were like professional athletes as villagers recited detailed specifics of hunts they had heard about by word of mouth.

That evening Kara and I stayed up chatting with the hunters. The palm wine flowed and the stories became more and more elaborate. Though I was well aware that Kara possessed special skills when it came to hyenas (five out of seven hyenas at the National Zoo were trapped by Kara), I had never heard a story of his exploits told by anyone but Kara. That night I was in for a treat as a hunter plucked the strings of his Kora (a guitar-like instrument) and sang of how, when Kara was just a boy, he killed his first hyena. Once the music began it was hard to stop. Hunters made requests, “Sing of Kante and the hippo,” called out one elderly hunter. This tale of old related how a hunter known as Kante had been selected by a *dugutigi* to rid a river of a mad hippo that killed all who tried to cross. Though I do not recall its title, there was a song about a young hunter who shot and killed a juvenile chimpanzee and then was killed himself by the chimpanzee’s mother, who came down out of the trees and beat the hunter and his dogs to death. The moral of the story was clear: chimpanzees are intelligent and are harvested at great risk to the hunter; the young hunter had been too ambitious and paid the price for his recklessness. All the songs that were sung that night presented a specific species of fauna (i.e., a hyena, a hippo, and a chimpanzee) and that species’ relationship with its human neighbors.

The hyena is considered a sacred animal on one hand and a threat to people on the other. Contributing to its supernatural characteristics are certain observable behaviors. For instance, the hyena can travel great distances, is extremely fast, eats on a daily basis, is calculating/intelligent, and has jaws strong enough to crush bone. Many of the stories that I have heard paint the hyena in the light of a “trickster,” similar to the Coyote in Native American mythology; however, the hyena has the additional trait of being “lucky”

(French: *chance*, Bamana/Maninka: *guardike*), a positive trait that the Coyote of North America lacks. This “luck” is reflected in how well the hyena exploits its environmental niche. The hyena travels far, increasing the possibility of encountering prey. Its speed increases the chance of actually catching prey, but not without first having approached from down-wind. Finally, its strong jaws give the hyena an advantage in consuming otherwise inedible parts of prey. When added up, these characteristics ensure that the hyena eats everyday in a relatively harsh environment--a set of characteristics held as valuable to humans as well. However, because humans and hyenas share the same environment and are both skilled opportunists, they are often in conflict. Especially, hyenas prey upon livestock that directly supports rural communities (a pattern that is repeated between people and other predatory species).

The old tale of Kante and the hippo also concerns a human-fauna relationship. In this example nature is seen as reasserting itself to its human neighbors; the hippo kills all who try to cross its river. But at the same time the story reflects the triumph of humanity over nature, for in the end Kante successfully kills the hippo (but not before the hippo has taken many lives). In defending its river from human intrusion, the hippo is constructed as an almost unstoppable force of considerable strength and endurance. The valuation of these characteristics is in turn reflected in the nation’s namesake: *Mali* is Bamana for hippo. In the case of the chimpanzee, the primacy of nature is again highlighted, but with a twist. Where westerners might focus on *Homo sapiens*’ closest relative teaching us a lesson, Malians’ emphasis is on the overzealousness of the young hunter as the reason for his demise. In other words, the young hunter was the cause of his own death. This suggests that the bush is a dangerous place for the inexperienced.

While all of these songs/stories reveal intimate human-environmental relationships, they also define hunters as the key agents to bridge two worlds: nature and civilization, the wild and the human. The terms that are closest in meaning to the western word nature are *kungo* (bush) and *wula* (forest). Similar to a western formulation, Malians construct *kungo* and *wula* in opposition to *dugu* (village). Though many rural villagers have an extended understanding of what *the bush* means, few villagers can negotiate it; to do so requires specialized skills and knowledge. Hunters are set apart from other villagers because they are able to move between the relatively safe arena of the village and the decidedly hazardous venue of the bush. Those who successfully negotiate the bush accrue status and prestige in direct relation to their accomplishments. For example, Kara gained respect at a young age because he outwitted a hyena, while Kante bested the immutable force of a hippo. Those who fail in their interaction with the bush go the way of the inexperienced young hunter.

That evening as Kara hosted another social, the remaining ingredients to Melody's medicine arrived. Sylva presented Kara with the right forepaw of an adult hyena. It was clearly from a relatively recent kill as the limb was still flexible. Bocar the arborist arrived with his bicycle loaded down with bundles of tree branches. Kara and Bocar spent several minutes unloading and inspecting the botanicals then stacked them against the outside wall of Kara's office. Another hunter handed Kara a handful of quartz river pebbles (*ba bele*) collected from a sacred stream. Kara took the pebbles and placed them in one of the many pockets of his hunter's tunic. Later that night a hunter known as Soulaman showed up with a live *nyamatutu* (Senegalese Coucal). He had caught the bird by stunning it with a small rock shot from his slingshot. Kara took the tether attached to

the leg of the bird and tied it to a bamboo rafter above all our heads. The *nyamatutu* perched on the rafter looking down on us with a watchful eye. Madu, a hunter from the village of Togomare (about 7 kilometers southeast of Djonfakulu) brought a desiccated and slightly worm-eaten left front-paw of an aardvark. Though the paw was not the quality that Kara would have hoped for, it would suffice for his purposes.

Making Medicine

The next morning Kara gathered together all the ingredients to prepare Melody's medicine. We sat in the office with the privacy screen in place while Sidi sat outside preparing tea. Though Sidi was brewing tea, he was also serving the function of a lookout. It was his job to keep children and other would-be spies away while Kara and I prepared Melody's medicine. The purpose of the medicine was to neutralize a curse that had been put on Melody's daughter. From my previous conversations with Melody, through multiple consultations of the sacred sands, Kara had determined that Melody's ex-husband had hired a sorcerer to place a curse on the daughter (Kara identified the perpetrator as a Mauritanian living in Paris). The ex-husband's move was an attempt to extort money from Melody that she had been awarded in their divorce settlement several years earlier.

In essence we were preparing three different medicines: one to remove the curse, another for retribution, and a third to provide extended protection from further supernatural afflictions. By preparing three different medicines, we were optimizing our chance of success. The first medicine to be prepared was based on the aardvark paw. Oral tradition holds that the left front paw of an aardvark is a very powerful object and

capable of undoing/reversing certain actions. “If it rains, the aardvark holds its hand (left front paw) over its head, and the rain stops.” Nestled in the palm of the paw Kara placed several botanical samples along with a pebble from the sacred river and some feathers from the *nyamatutu*. The botanicals used in this medicine (and others) are a closely guarded secret, and I have omitted further details out of respect for my teachers. The quartz pebbles come from a river in the Gangaran that is said to possess “mysterious” qualities; it flows in different directions depending on the season. In addition to having a unique hydrology, the river and its rocks are said to be “very old” and represent the history of the region and the power of the Maninka who live there. This bundle was then wrapped in a white cloth that had been inscribed with select characters from the sacred sands. These characters focus the medicine in a particular direction. In this case, the characters were arranged in such a way as to redirect a curse at its maker.

The second medicine to be made was founded on the hyena paw. As mentioned earlier, hyenas are socially constructed in Mali and possess characteristics similar to that of the Coyote in Native American mythology. Their “trickster” trait, in combination with the motif of “luck” and an ability to range far and wide, hold great value in combating supernatural forces. The trickster inherently has the ability to get the better of you through a variety of devices such as manipulation and misdirection. The luck of the hyena helps ensure that whatever trick is about to be played is successful. Lastly, the ability of hyenas to travel great distances makes it well suited for addressing a curse located in Paris, France. Several botanicals along with a single quartz pebble were placed between the toe pads of the paw and then wrapped in a white cloth decorated in a specific

pattern of characters. These characters were designed to transmit pain and suffering (the trick) to Kara's adversary (the man who placed the curse on Melody's daughter).

The third medicine prepared was a cold infusion of approximately twenty different botanical species. Kara took small samples of each species and placed them in a plastic soda bottle filled with water. Sometimes the botanical sample was a leaf, a few leaves, a thin strip of bark, or even a thorn. In addition to the botanicals, Kara added a pinch of the sacred sands. This liquid medicine was in effect a highly concentrated supernatural shield. Because Kara knew that this medicine was very valuable and was sought by many in the capital, he prepared a large quantity; an excellent example of Kara's business sense. Melody's prescription was poured into a small recycled-vaccine vial and corked with a rubber stopper. Because the medicine is highly concentrated, the patient only needs to use a little of the liquid at a time. Patients typically add a single drop of the medicine to their bathwater every couple of weeks. After it is applied, it is said to provide protection from supernatural forces, much like an invisible shield that encapsulates the patient's body. With time the invisible barrier wears thin and needs to be reapplied.

After a very long day preparing medicine in Kara's office it was time to give our work to Melody. We found her sitting in Kara's family compound attempting to teach children French (I found this fascinating as Melody did not speak Bamana/Maninka – she genuinely felt that the village children *needed* to speak French and that she had the responsibility of teaching them, if only a word). After running the children off, who were more interested in *cadoux* (French for gifts, and the one of the few French words village children knew), Kara sat down to give Melody instructions on the medicines she was

about to receive. He handed her the vial of supernatural protection first and outlined how to apply it. This medicine was for both Melody and her daughter. Kara stressed that the medicine was extremely concentrated and was more than adequate for the both of them for a year. When she ran out, he would happily make more and send it to her in France.

The two remaining medicines (hyena paw packet and aardvark paw packet) were each to be buried in a secret location known only to the client (Melody). The need to maintain secrecy is key to the efficacy of the medicine. If others knew the location of a packet it would provide an opportunity to circumvent the medicine and make the client vulnerable. In addition to needing to be buried, each packet required an incantation to activate it on her behalf. Kara translated the incantation from Maninka to French, which Melody wrote down on a scrap of paper. With incantation, medicine bundles, and Kara's *daba* (hoe/axe) in hand, Melody walked out into the growing darkness to bury her medicine in secret.

Community and Sacrifice

The next day was Thursday and was scheduled for sacrificing the bull that Touré had acquired. When we woke that morning we found that a boy had herded the bull from his village located about 10 kilometers south of Djonfakulu. The boy had departed on Wednesday night and marched the bull along the Manantali road to reach Djonfakulu Thursday morning. The bull was not the largest that I have seen, but it wasn't the smallest either. Just like myself, everyone sized the animal up; after all it is not common for a bull to be sacrificed. Sacrifices are scaled to the economic worth of the individual seeking to conduct a sacrifice. The logic is that, if you are rich and buy a mediocre

sacrifice, you are “cheating yourself” (*I yere djanfa ye*). A person is to buy the biggest, best sacrifice he or she can possibly afford. However, not everyone can afford the biggest and best, creating a scale of domestic animals used for sacrifice (wild animals are also used in sacrifice but can be prohibitively expensive – a live rock python for sacrifice costs \$100.00 - 150.00). For instance, the most common animal sacrifices tend to be chickens and guinea fowl because they are relatively inexpensive (\$2.00 – \$5.00) and readily available. Next up the scale are goats and sheep (adult rams being the most prestigious of this group), which are significant economic expenditures but still manageable for many (\$30.00 – \$200.00). Bulls are the second highest sacrifice; their cost (\$300.00 – \$800.00) makes them prohibitive for all but the wealthy. The most prestigious sacrifice is a white horse; the scarcity of this animal assures that only a select few have the means (\$1,000.00 - \$3,000.00) to purchase it.

With this sacrificial rubric in mind, it was no wonder that Melody’s bull drew a lot of attention in the small village of Djonfakulu. All morning the bull stood tied to a young baobab tree, trying to hide in its shadow (maybe it knew what all the fuss was about). Children and adults would pass by and take a minute to examine the bull. Many gave positive comments on the quality of the bull. “He is young, but strong,” one man told me. Another man ran a hand along the neck of the bull feeling its muscle in an appreciative manner. Kara instructed a young boy to fetch fodder and water for the animal. Providing sustenance for the bull is key to preparing the animal for sacrifice; it underscores the economic investment while providing a barometer of the animal’s disposition. The bull ate and drank signifying its preparedness for sacrifice. Had the bull refused food and water, the sacrifice would have been delayed until such time as it did eat

and drink. It is interesting to note that such concern tends to correlate with the economic worth of the sacrificial animal (e.g., chickens and guinea fowl are rarely provided food and water).

It was mid-afternoon when the show got underway. Sidi arrived with two other men and set about preparing the bull. The bull was untied from the tree; Sidi directed the other two men to truss the animal's legs to keep it restrained. The men then carefully eased the animal over onto its side, making sure it faced East (toward Mecca), and took up positions to keep the bull sedate. A crowd of children, women, and men (my wife and son in the midst) gathered in a loose circle around the prostrated animal, among them the imam of Djonfakulu. Kara spoke with the imam and gave him further details on the sacrifice that was to be performed. Normally, the imam would orate on the qualities of the individual providing the sacrifice, but Melody had decided not to attend and had wandered off on her own. Though one might think that Melody's absence might hinder progress, such was not the case. Sidi firmly grasped the horns of the bull to tilt the animal's head, exposing the throat for the imam. Wielding a long slender blade, the imam knelt next to the bull, placed his free hand on the animal's brow, and began speaking under his breath. It was all quite anticlimactic. Without fanfare, the imam drew the blade across the bull's throat in a precise and effortless manner. Sidi and the other two men held the bull in place as it frothed from its wound and slowly bled out.

As soon as the cut was complete the crowd began to disband. One by one villagers returned to what they had been doing before the sacrifice, leaving Kara, Sidi, the two men who helped hold the animal, and myself (Melody was still absent) to continue with the sacrifice. The two male assistants job was just getting started. It was now their

task to butcher the bull and to prepare bundles of meat for all the families in Djonfakulu. Over the next couple of hours, the two men efficiently dissected the bull, placing meat and organs into piles that would then be distributed. Though each family in Djonfakulu would receive a portion of the sacrifice, the amount they would receive was far from equal. Kara had final say on who was to get what. He knelt beside the piles and reorganized them several times until he was satisfied with the distribution. One pile was comprised of just the bull's head; this was given to the imam and his family for the service he provided. Other piles tended to have a greater proportion of choice cuts and were destined for those with high social status, such as the *dugutigi* and *kuntigi*. Once all the piles were finalized, Kara called village children over to take bundles of meat to specific individuals and families. All of Djonfakulu ate meat that night. Save for one, Melody: it is poor form for a person to consume part of a sacrifice that they offered; this would undermine the efficacy of the sacrifice and render it null.

The Rural Side of the Animal Parts Trade

As I was packing my bag inside our room, I heard Kara climbing up on the roof. Going outside to see what he was up to, I found Touré standing next to the same crate that I had previously climbed on to witness Kara's head collection. Kara was up on the roof dislodging dried heads, which rolled off the edge and landed at our feet. Touré in turn picked up each head and inspected it with the eye of a connoisseur. After a close examination, Touré sorted the heads into piles while Kara returned to the ground.

What followed is a prime example of Malian bartering skill and provides insight into the role of middlemen involved in the animal parts trade. I quickly figured out that

the piles Touré had sorted Kara's heads into directly correlated with their economic value. For example, the single striped hyena head constituted its own pile, whereas the olive baboon and badger heads were lumped together based on unit price: 2,000 CFA each (i.e., olive baboon heads and badger heads cost the same price). Similarly, the small warthog and Vervet monkey heads shared a base unit price of 1,500 CFA each. However, it is important to keep in mind that the economic value of a given animal part is highly relative and takes into account the quality of an object, its size, and existing demand for such an item.

Starting with the large warthog head, Touré asked Kara how much he would sell it for. Kara, being intimately tied to the *Marabagaw Yoro* in Bamako, was in the position of power as he not only knew how much each item could be sold for, but he also knew how much specific vendors in the market would pay for each. If Touré is the biggest middleman to sell wholesale, then Kara is the prince of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Kara's extensive knowledge and association with the *Marabagaw Yoro* put Touré at a distinct disadvantage. "You can sell this to Keita for 10,000 CFA," offered Kara. Touré countered with "I'll pay 5,000 CFA." Knowing that he held all the cards, Kara stated matter-of-factly, "I'll take 7,000 CFA for it," and the price was set. The two men went through the rest of the piles, going back and forth with counter offers until all the heads had their prices fixed. Given Kara's position, Touré did not fair well in the negotiations (See Table 2: Touré's purchases from Kara)

Table 2: Touré's purchases from Kara

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Price Paid
5	Olive Baboon heads	<i>Papio cynocephalus</i>	<i>N'Gon</i>	10,000 CFA
4	Vervet Monkey heads	<i>Cercopithecus pygerythrus</i>	<i>Gobani</i>	6,000 CFA
1	Large Warthog head	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Lai</i>	7,000 CFA
4	Small Warthog heads	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Lai</i>	6,000 CFA
2	Bushbuck heads	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	10,000 CFA
2	Badger heads	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	4,000 CFA
1	Striped Hyena head	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	<i>Surukou</i>	35,000 CFA
1	Lappet-Faced Vulture (whole)	<i>Aegypius tracheliotus</i>	<i>Duga Masa</i>	15,000 CFA
Total				93,000 CFA

When Kara drafted Touré into service to find a bull, he had taken advantage of the situation (most notably the loan of a motorcycle and money for fuel) to ply his trade: the acquisition and sale of wildlife (in part and whole). When Touré returned from securing the bull, he brought with him a large rice bag strapped to the back of the motorcycle. Once the negotiations were over, Touré loaded the heads into another large rice bag, and it was at this point that I was able to see what animal parts Touré had acquired when he had gone in search of Melody's bull. Seeing the full rice bag, next to the one that Touré was filling with Kara's heads, I took the opportunity to ask if I could inspect the goods (See Table 3: Touré's additional purchases). Touré agreed and I opened up the bag to make note of its contents.

Table 3: Touré’s additional purchases

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Price Paid
6 pr	Bushbuck horns	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	4,000 CFA
3 pr	Roan Antelope horns	<i>Hippotragus equines</i>	<i>Daje</i>	5,000 CFA
6 pr	Hartebeest horns	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	<i>Tanko</i>	6,000 CFA
2	Badgers hides with heads and paws	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	5,000 CFA
1	Badger penis	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	2,500 CFA
1	Badger vagina	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	2,500 CFA
1	Egyptian Cobra (whole)	<i>Naja haje</i>	<i>Goronko fi'ma</i>	2,000 CFA
1	Rock Python hide	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	2,000 CFA
Total				29,000 CFA

While pulling items out of the bag, Touré explained a bit about each. “*Goronko fi'ma*,” or “black cobra,” he announced as I pulled the dried body of a large Egyptian Cobra from the sack. The snake had been coiled when it was dried and was now permanently frozen in a rather life-like position. Touré explained that this snake had been caught and killed in a village that he had visited while searching for our sacrificial bull. Apparently the snake was found in a villager’s field and was killed on sight. Such is often the case when a snake is encountered, be it in a rural village or urban center, regardless if the snake is venomous or not. Given that many species of snake are venomous in Mali, the practice reflects a “better-safe-than-sorry” mentality with regard to human-snake interaction. Interestingly, hunters tend to know the different types of snakes as well as their behavioral characteristics, and know that many snakes are beneficial to humans. Even Touré noted that the Egyptian Cobra was most likely hunting cane-rats in the villager’s field, reducing crop loss for the farmer. Touré paid 2,000 CFA

for the snake that if uncoiled would measure roughly two meters. This was a good price indeed, as I knew from previous experience that the head alone could fetch 2,500 – 5,000 CFA in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Along with the Egyptian Cobra, I extracted the rolled-up skin of a moderately sized rock python. Measuring approximately two meters long, Touré explained that the skin had been purchased from another man in the same village that he had purchased the cobra.

Reaching back into the bag I extracted a bundle of mixed horns. Touré helped me sort them into three piles based on species. The first pile was identified as “*mina*” (bushbuck), a common species of antelope found across southern Mali. There were six adult bushbuck (or 6 pairs of horns). The next pile was identified as “*tanko*” (hartebeest) and also represented six adult animals (6 pairs of horns). The third pile was identified as “*daje*” (roan antelope) and represented three adult animals (3 pairs of horns). Touré explained that he had purchased all the horns from a single individual, a “retired” hunter, in the same village that he had found the bull. Touré allowed that he had paid 15,000 CFA for all the horns (4,000 CFA for the bushbuck, 6,000 CFA for the hartebeest, and 5,000 CFA for the roan horns--a steal by any definition as a single roan antelope horn can fetch between 5,000-10,000 CFA depending on size and quality. Touré knew that he had scored a great deal and confided in me, “The hunter did not know the value of what he sold.” Such a statement underscores Touré’s central business tenet: buy low and sell high.

Reaching back into the sack, I pulled two relatively fresh “*dame*,” or ratel (honey badger) hides complete with heads and paws. Unfolding the *dame* hides, I was able to get rough measurements: one meter long, suggesting that they were adults. I asked Touré

where he had acquired them and was informed that he had purchased them from a young hunter (son a regionally renowned hunter). The young hunter had harvested the badgers a couple of days before Touré went in search of a bull. With a broad smile on his face, Touré reached into the bottom of the rice sack and handed me two amorphous chunks of flesh that had been salted and dried in the sun. Inspecting them closely I realized that I was holding the genitalia of a male and female badger and quickly set them down with the rest of the animal parts. Touré laughed at my discomfort, but at the same time was clearly pleased with his acquisition. The sexual organs of a badger were highly prized items and could fetch upward of 25,000 CFA in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Touré had purchased both organs from the young hunter for 5,000 CFA, while the badger hides had cost another 5,000 CFA.

Realizing that time was slipping by and that we needed to catch a ride to Bamako, we quickly packed up the animal parts, made our farewells, and headed out to the road. As upon our arrival in Djonfakulu, village children grabbed our bags and hauled them to the road to await a bus.

My trip to Djonfakulu is important for several reasons. At a basic level, it helps to illustrate the rural, and often neglected, side of Mali (its periphery if you will). Of key significance are the interrelationships between the various social, political, religious, and economic institutions of Djonfakulu. As such, it should be clear that rural villages may be located in the periphery, but that does not mean they are inactive players in how their wildlife resources are valued and used (regardless of any legal statutes). In short, actors like Kara and Touré are highly aware of the economic potential of harvesting and selling wildlife parts. To be so, such actors possess knowledge of the demand for wildlife parts

(i.e., Malian and foreign consumers). Moreover, actors like those found in Djonfakulu care little for international and state efforts to conserve and protect species that otherwise help support individual and village needs.

CHAPTER III

WELCOME TO THE *ARTISANA*

The *Maison des Artisans de Bamako* (locally referred to as the *Artisana*) was founded in 1933 under the French colonial administration and carried the name of *Ecole Artisanale du Soudan*, or the Sudan Crafts School (Konaté 2007, Council of Ministers 2005). In 1948 the school was renamed the *Maison des Artisans du Soudan*, or House of the Craftsmen of Sudan (Konaté 2007, Council of Ministers 2005). In 1963, after independence, the old House of the Craftsmen of Sudan was renamed the *Institut National des Arts* (INA), or the National Institute of Art (not to be confused with the modern day Malian institution), with Law No. 63-98/ANRM (Konaté 2007). Law No. 86-93/ANRM of July 20, 1986 renamed the INA the *Maison des Artisans du Mali*, or the House of the Craftsmen of Mali (ibid 2007). Interestingly, it was during this same period of time that the World Bank was completing its first Urban Development Project (ID# P001703) in Bamako. As part of its mission, the World Bank assisted Bamako's informal sector by providing "market facilities" and "artisans lots" (World Bank – Mali Urban Development Project 1979). Several consultants from the market recall this period of time and cite the World Bank as having built the *Maison des Artisans du Mali*.

Until 1995, the *Maison des Artisans du Mali* remained "the only public structure specifically dedicated to the crafts of our country [Mali]," (Council of Ministers 2005). At the same time that the site was renamed, institutional reforms (part of a decentralization program) created the *Centre National de la Promotion de l'Artisanat*, or the National Center for the Promotion of Handicrafts (Council of Ministers 2005). The mission of the National Center for the Promotion of Handicrafts is to manage artisans and

the production of local handicrafts across Mali. In line with this, on May 4th 2005, the Council of Ministers of Mali adopted draft legislation to create regional handicraft markets in different cities including Menaka, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. Due to this restructuring, the *Maison des Artisans du Mali* was transformed into the *Maison des Artisans de Bamako*, or the House of the Craftsmen of Bamako, reflecting its new decentralized and regional status. Though now one of several state sponsored handicraft markets, the *Maison des Artisans de Bamako* is known far and wide as the “*Artisana*.”

One of the first lessons I learned about the *Artisana* is that there are many perceptions and understandings of it. For example, a U.S. embassy employee with whom I spoke when I returned to Mali in 2007 referred to the *Artisana* as a “crafts market,” highlighting it as a place where a wide variety of goods were produced and sold. The embassy employee was particularly fond of the gold and silver jewelry for sale in the market and went on to show me a pair of earrings she had purchased a few weeks earlier.

Similarly, other Westerners I encountered during my time in Mali expressed their desire to visit the *Artisana* to purchase gifts for their friends and family. One American tourist that I came across in the *Artisana* described it in economic terms, explaining all the “bargains” she had made in purchasing items hard to come by in the United States. Though she did not intend to resell any of her purchases, she nonetheless prided herself on “never paying too much.” She was particularly proud of a “leopard fur purse” she had purchased for her daughter in-law.

While these examples offer some initial insight into Western perceptions of the *Artisana*, it also provides a point of comparison to Malian views. Once while listening to the radio, I heard the radio disk jockey announce a requested song for someone in the

“*Artisana*.” The DJ did not mean the artist colony per se. Rather he was referencing a roughly two square block area located in the heart of downtown Bamako (see Image 3). This area is a hub of activity and encompasses the craft market (i.e., *Maison des Artisans de Bamako*), the *Grand Mosque* (the largest mosque in Mali), the *Marabagaw Yoro* (the largest “traditional medicine” market in the country), as well as the *Assemblée Nationale* (the National Assembly building). Along its periphery are street vendors, taxi stands, and *bashé* stops. As such, for many Malians, “the *Artisana*” is first and foremost a socially significant landmark within an ever-expanding city.

However, “the *Artisana*” is more than a cultural reference to a geographic landmark. It is made up of significant structures and institutions that reflect political, religious, and economic values, not least among which is the crafts market. In conversations with Malians about their perceptions of the market, many expressed that it “is a place where *tubabuw* (Westerners) go,” or that it was a “*tubabu* market.” Over the course of interviews with Malians, it was clear to me that many distanced themselves from the market by underscoring that the *Artisana* existed only for Westerners. For instance, Felix, a Malian friend, snapped at me when I continued to inquire into his perception of the craft market, “Why do you ask me this; you know what it is for! They make things to sell to rich people. I am not rich, so I do not care about the *Artisana*.” Such sentiments were not uncommon, however this case stands out because of the connections it makes and insights it provides. First, Felix suggests the function of the *Artisana* is self-evident; it’s a market that makes and sells things. Second, he further contextualizes the goods and clientele of the market; it sells luxury items to rich people. This expands our understanding of what *tubabuw* are; not only are they Westerners, but

also they are “rich” by default. Lastly, he grounds his perception of the market based on his inability to access it; he cannot afford the goods it sells.

In my survey of Malian perceptions of the *Artisana* I eventually encountered individuals who provided an opposing perspective. Umu, a secretary to a state bureaucrat, explained to me how she enjoyed buying jewelry, shoes, and bags from the *Artisana*. In another case, I spoke to a Malian businessman who had just purchased a Nile crocodile hide attaché case from one of my consultants. In our conversation, the businessman highlighted that he got a good deal on the briefcase (30,000 CFA) because his younger sister was married to a brother of the shop owner. At the same time, the businessman also related that he purchased the case as a symbol of his new rank; he was in the process of starting a business and wanted a briefcase because he had become a *patron-ba*, or “big boss.” This theme of *Artisana* goods as reflective of socio-economic status and social position is common to all the Malians I spoke with that also purchased goods from the market.

In conversations with Malians working in the market, new perceptions and meanings became evident. Souri, one of my primary research consultants, described it as more than his workplace; it helped shape him, he said: “My father worked here [the *Artisana*]. This [the *Artisana*] is where I learned to be a leatherworker. Now I work here [the *Artisana*] and teach my sons.” Other vendors who had a long history with the *Artisana* offered similar perspectives by highlighting the *Artisana* as a formative institution; the place where they learned a trade to make a living.

As an institution, the *Artisana* specializes in four craft disciplines: jewelry, carving/sculpting, leatherwork, and weaving. These four craft disciplines correlate to the

different categories of goods the *Artisana* produces and sells from eighty-nine (89) shops, or boutiques. However, these four craft disciplines (and categories of goods produced) are much more than they appear on the surface (i.e., a craft), they are modern representations of *Nyamakalaw*, a historically rooted (pre-colonial) professional class of artisan (Conrad and Frank 1995). As such, *Nyamakalaw* is of fundamental importance for not only understanding status and identity in Mali in general, but for also linking contemporary craft disciplines (as expressed in the *Artisana*) with pre-colonial occupational specialists, more specifically.

In the sections that follow, I outline and describe *Nyamakalaw* and how it helps to contextualize modern day actors in the *Artisana*. I then introduce my primary research consultant in the *Artisana* (Souri), outline field methods employed, as well as provide a description of the market. Following this, I describe the twenty-five species of wildlife that are commodified by the *Artisana*, paying special attention to the forms they take and why. After outlining the species and their forms, I attempt to richly illustrate the players, or actors involved (vendors, their staff, clientele, and other associated individuals), their practices and supporting values, as well as the social networks that facilitate and inform wildlife use.

Nyamakalaw and Artisana Craft Specialization

In pre-colonial times, Mande peoples (Bamana, Maninka, Dyula, and Soninke language groups – see Greenberg 1966) exhibited social hierarchies akin to a caste system. The basic structure of Mande social organization is predicated on a noble class of farmers known as *horonw* (Conrad and Frank 1995). Malian consultants relate that *horonw*

served the *masaw*, or ruling elite. According to oral tradition, *horonw* relied on a subservient class of serfs and slaves known as *jonw* to supply the labor for agricultural production. Though social status was often ascribed, individuals have been known to achieve a higher social rank. For instance, one legend tells of a *jon* who achieved *horon* status through his devotion to his master; it was rewarded by giving the serf a title to land. Another example related by a research consultant recounts how a *horon* led a series of successful raiding-parties. With his success and accumulation of wealth, he supplanted the reigning *masa*.

In addition to these social classes, there were other occupational specialists, including blacksmiths (*numuw*), bards (*funew*, *jeliw*ⁱ and *griot*), as well as leatherworkers (*garankew* and *jeliw*). These three classes of specialists are referred to in common as *Nyamakalaw* and they were instrumental (and still are) to “maintaining the social, political, and economic fabric of the Mande world” (Conrad and Frank, 1995:1). In short, *Nyamakalaw* did not just provide services, or produce key economic resources. Rather, their unique status and position within Mande social organization allowed them to serve as mediators to settle disputes, as well as be the principal spokesperson for rulers (Conrad and Frank 1995). This is important to my study because modern day specialists continue to mediate – though no longer for rulers, but for themselves. This is seen in the ways in which contemporary *Nyamakalaw* mediate knowledge of their clientele toward specific ends, namely economic gain. However, before discussing current practices, it is best to provide a brief overview of the occupational specialists (e.g. blacksmiths, bards, and leatherworkers) of pre-colonial times.

Numuw, or blacksmiths have historically been responsible for producing tools and weapons made with iron. As one of my participants explained, when asked about the historic role of the *numuw*, “the *numuw* made everything we needed. We were farmers and needed their tools to work the fields. You cannot farm without tools.” In addition to producing utilitarian tools, *numuw* were sculptors of ritual objects and supplied masks and other carved wood objects that were of importance to religious practice. In this light, it is not surprising that *numuw* “served as religious specialists and sorcerers, respected and feared for their knowledge of the occult” (Conrad and Frank, 1995:1).

Today, many “traditional healers,” sorcerers, and diviners in Mali claim *numuw* ancestry as a means of linking their contemporary practices to those of historic times in an effort to reify their position within society and legitimize their work. Similarly, many jewelers, sculptors and wood carvers in the *Artisana* assert *numuw* origins in defining themselves as well as their profession. For example, a jeweler I came to know in the *Artisana* once told me, “I’m a Kanté. We were the first to learn the secrets of metal.” Whether this is true or not is not important. What is of significance is that the jeweler defines his identity/profession by and through his *Nyamakalaw* status; he is a Kanté, he is *numuw*. Such sentiments are common among jewelers in the *Artisana* as well as sculptors and carvers. One woodworker, specializing in modern abstract figures carved from ebony wood, stated that his family history was intimately intertwined with that of a *numuw* secret society known as *Komo*. His point was clear: he had a greater connection to his medium because of his *Nyamakalaw* status/identity. In another conversation with a carver whose medium of choice was warthog tusk (he used modern electric tools to “carve” the tusk), he described how he used to make his own tools, the mark of a “true

numu.” He offered that his use of modern power-tools made him no less a *numu*; they were necessary to increase his rate of producing carvings to be sold to tourists. In other words, he only used modern tools to meet the demand put forth by tourists.

Funéw, *jeliw* and *griot*, or bards, of pre-colonial times were distinguished by their power (*nyama*) of speech, music, and song. As Conrad and Frank describe, bards were “guardians and shapers of perspectives on the past,” highlighting their oral traditions, knowledge of genealogy, and historic events (Conrad and Frank, 1995: 1). In pre-colonial times, bards often served *horonw* and *masaw* in a patron-client type relationship. Several modern day *griots* in Mali describe this historic relationship as singing the praise of nobles and elites, announcing significant events, as well as providing a crucial link between territories. One consultant outlined how bards were used to announce weddings, judgments, and religious events. Another consultant highlighted the pivotal role bards played as “messengers,” memorizing messages and traveling great distances to deliver them.

Unlike *numuw*, who are strongly represented in the craft disciplines of the *Artisana* (i.e., jewelers, carvers and sculptors), bards are not. Rather, modern day bards in the *Artisana* are found associated with one specific profession, making musical instruments. In particular, *balafone* (similar to a xylophone), *n’goni* and *kora* (stringed instruments akin to a guitar), and several types of drum, are made in the *Artisana* by individuals claiming *funéw* or *griot* lineage/descent. Aside from the inclusion of a few modern materials, the instrument specialists in the *Artisana* assure anyone interested that “these [the instruments] are made the same way our *griot* ancestors made them.” To prove their point, the modern bards will grab an instrument and put on a performance.

Interestingly, many of the instruments made by the modern bards of the *Artisana* require leather for drumheads, and to enclose resonance chambers of guitars. This is of particular significance, because leatherwork is the domain of yet another class of artist associated with *Nyamakalaw*, the *garankew*. In speaking with modern day bards, particularly *jeliw*, they offer conflicting perspectives on how they came to work leather. Some say they learned the basic skills from the *garankew*, while others say *jeliw* developed their own practices separate from those of the *garankew*. Others still, say *jeliw* and *garankew* were originally one and the same and it was only through the historical development of *Nyamakalaw* that some *jeliw* became bards, while others became *garankew*. Given the ambiguity I include *jeliw* in the following description of leatherworkers.

Garankew and *jeliw*, otherwise known as leatherworkers, are of special significance with regard to wildlife use in the *Artisana*, as they are the class of artist who, throughout history, are responsible for transforming animal hides into tanned leather; a commodity of considerable practical and economic value. From a collections perspective, Mande leatherwork is exceedingly difficult to categorize as a distinct form due to its historical linkages with Islamic tradition (Frank, 1998). Contemporary understandings suggest that though associated with Islam in West Africa, “Mande leatherworkers share certain features that set them apart from... other major leatherworking traditions in the region” (Frank, 1998: 45). However, it is still not possible to discern clear differences between individual groups (Bamana, Maninka, and Soninke) associated with Mande leatherwork (Frank 1998).

From a historical perspective, leather is fundamental to the Mande world; it is used to make clothing, foot-ware, war regalia, horse trappings (i.e., bridles, saddles, reins, etc.), bags, belts, and “amulets of protection” known as *seben* or *gris-gris*. Starting with the archaeological record, leather artifacts are found dating from the 11th to the 16th century, from the Bandiagara region of Mali (Bedaux 1972). Among the 250 leather objects recovered at Bandiagara were, bags, aprons, bracelets, sandals, boots, knife sheaths, and quivers (Frank 1998). Also contributing to our understanding of pre-colonial leatherwork in Mali are insights gathered from non-leather objects like, terra-cotta figurines. Terra-cotta figures recovered from sites like Djenne-djeno (McIntosh and McIntosh 1982) support the importance of leather to life in pre-colonial times by depicting leather objects in everyday use (Frank 1998). For instance, figures are found with leather-sandal clad feet, braided leather bracelets and necklaces, leather belts, and knife sheaths.

Further evidence of the practical uses of leather comes from early Arabic and European accounts. In A.D. 903, Ibn al-Faqih described the people of Ghana thus: “Their clothes are [made of] panther skins, panthers being abundant there,” (Hopkins and Levtzion 1981: 28). Though a description of wild animal “skins,” there is no way to know if these skins were tanned (Frank 1998); the key process used to convert a raw animal hide into leather. Similarly, in the fifteenth century, Venetian explorer Cadamosto described the people he encountered along the Senegambian coast as being naked, “except for a goatskin fashioned in the form of drawers, with which they hide their shame,” (Crone 1937: 31). In the late eighteenth century, Scottish explorer Mungo Park, traveled through what is present day Mali and noted that *garankew*, “are to be

found in almost every town, and they frequently travel through the country in exercise of their calling. They tan and dress leather with great expedition,” (Park 1799: 282).

However colorful these early accounts are, they underscore the importance of animal skins, leather, and the services of *garankew* in pre-colonial times.

These key artisan actors of old become key in the present. Today, *garankew* and *jeliw* still play a crucial role in Mali - they tan animal hides converting them into leather, repair leather goods, as well as manufacture cultural objects like a “fly-wisk” (a symbol of certain privileges associated with elders), and specialized gear for hunters and local practitioners (i.e., traditional healers and diviners). In the *Artisana*, *garankew* and *jeliw* tend to specialize in tanning select species of wildlife to be used in fabricating a wide range of “tourist goods,” such as a python skin wallet, leopard trim sandals, or antelope throw rug.

In short, though the *Nyamakalaw* (blacksmiths, bards, and leatherworkers) of pre-colonial times no longer exist in the *Artisana*, their contemporaries are found throughout the *Artisana* (and elsewhere), plying their trade as modern day jewelers, carvers, instrument makers, and leatherworkers. With this in mind, we now turn to the modern composition of the *Artisana*.

Market Composition, Consultants, and Wildlife Commodities

Of the 89 shops that comprise the *Artisana*, the most numerous are those that produce and sell jewelry (n = 45). These shops focus on making and selling a wide range of gold and silver jewelry to a predominantly local clientele. Common items produced and sold by such shops include rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. Next come the leather shops

(n = 30), which are subdivided into general and specialized genera (see Table 4: Summary data on participating leather shops). General leather shops (n = 22) produce a wide range of goods made with animal hide (both domestic and wild species), such as wallets, belts, passport-holders, and bags in a variety of styles and forms. Of the 22 generalized leather shops present, 15 took part in my study.

Table 4: Summary data on participating leather shops.

	Generalized Leather Shop	Specialized Leather Shop
Total Number of Shops	22	8
Total Number of Participating Shops	15	3

In comparison to generalized boutiques, specialized leather shops (n = 8) tend to manufacture a specific type of commodity made from animal hide (both domestic and wild species). For example, there are leather shops that specialize in shoes, bags, and commissioned work. Specialty leather goods sell for a premium and reflect the profitability of wildlife commodities. For instance, a commissioned briefcase made from Nile crocodile can sell for over 100,000 CFA. Similarly, a pair of stiletto-heeled shoes trimmed with leopard fur can sell in excess of 150,000 CFA. Out of 8 specialized leather shops, 3 participated in my study. These include 2 shoe shops and 1 boutique specializing in wildlife trophies (i.e., whole, tanned animal hides).

In addition to jewelers and leatherworkers, there are shops that produce and sell carvings and sculpturesⁱⁱ. These shops tend to use wood as their medium of choice (i.e., woodworkers), from which they carve statues of human and animal figures, abstract forms, game sets (i.e., chess, checkers, etc.), masks, stools, and small tables. Two of these sculpture shops also work with wild animal parts as, such as carved hippo and

warthog tusk. Weavers are the last group of vendors represented in the *Artisana*. Though the least represented (n = 5), they produce an amazing variety of goods, including *bogolan fini* (mud-cloth), *batik* (a type of “tye-dye”), and woven fiber (cotton and wool) that is used to make blankets, shirts, and wall hangings. Most of the goods produced by weavers are done off-site. Only during tourist season are the weavers found manning their looms, underscoring the public performance aspect of being a vendor in the *Artisana*.

Of all the groups that occupy the *Artisana*, I am primarily concerned with those that utilize wildlife on a regular basis: leatherworkers and to a much lesser extent the few woodworkers that carve wild animal tusk. These categories claim those *Artisana* “artists” who participate in extensive national and international networks. They do so by manufacturing and selling wildlife commodities (i.e., goods made with/from wild vertebrate species), such as a leopard fur purse, a crocodile hide attaché case, or a cobra skin belt. My studies suggest that most of the wildlife that is used in this trade is harvested in or around Mali (i.e., the Mali-Guinea border is known for its high concentrations of leopard), creating informal, yet highly efficient systems of supply that facilitate the rural harvest, transportation, and distribution of wildlife to the *Artisana*. For instance, rural hunters and others harvest select species for their hides knowing that it provides much needed income in a harsh economic climate. Many Malians subsist on less than two dollars a day (HDR 2011) but a single leopard hide (prepared as a trophy) sells in *Artisana* for more than 100,000 CFA. Though rural harvesters (i.e., hunters) rarely see significant sums of money for their efforts, the middlemen who transport and

distribute rurally harvested wildlife hides do. So do the leather vendors who manufacture and sell wildlife commodities to a diverse clientele base.

Commodities made from wild species reflect a mixture of inspirations, including, but not limited to, foreign fashion and aesthetics, local and “traditional” aesthetics, and the imagination of both the artist and the client. In addition to wildlife being commodified for various ends, wildlife commodities circulate at different levels. For instance, a wealthy Malian businesswoman might commission a pair of python trimmed sandals from an *Artisana* leatherworker. As such, these sandals would circulate in local spheres, those of a modern Malian woman living and working in Bamako. Similarly, a European tourist might purchase a readymade python skin wallet from a leather vendor. In this case the wildlife commodity would move in transnational circles, returning with its owner to their home country (and maybe beyond). Given that the *Artisana* is a site of articulation, the practices and relationships associated with its actors provide insight into how and why wildlife is used the way it is in the *Artisana*. To get at these practices and relationships one must be attentive to how leather shops are organized and run.

For example, Souri, my primary research consultant in the *Artisana*, rents a boutique measuring about two by four meters. The shop was lit by a pair of neon tubes that hung by scrap wire from the ceiling. An oscillating fan in the corner blew hot air around the room. The walls were covered in merchandise: python skin bags (one was florescent pink!); a two-meter long Nile crocodile hide hung in the center of one of the walls; belts, wallets, necklaces, watchbands, attaché cases, and accordion-style briefcases made from rock and ball python; Nile and savannah monitor; black and Malian cobra; Nile crocodile; leopard and serval.

Seated on the floor of the single room were three men: one was in his early twenties, another in his mid-thirties, and the third in his mid-forties. All three men were related to Souri by blood (they were all his sons, but from two wives) and served as his staff. There was Salif (mid-forties), born of Souri's first wife; Lassina (mid-twenties), born of Souri's second wife; and Bakary (mid-thirties), also born of Souri's second wife. As Souri and I entered the shop, he barked orders for the floor to be cleared of all work, for tea to be prepared, and for meat to be bought. Salif reiterated the commands to Bakary and Lassina, then took a seat with Souri and myself. Over the next couple of hours we caught up, reminisced over old times, ate grilled goat meat (one of my favorites!), and sipped tea so strong that I had difficulty sitting still for the rest of the day.

Souri's shop provides a prime example of a typical leather shop found in the *Artisana*. To further contextualize his operation, he owns and operates one of twenty-two generalized leather shops, meaning that he manufactures and sells a wide range of commodity types. Souri's three sons also work in the shop to help produce bags, belts, wallets, and trophies, making Souri a generalized leather manufacturer and his shop a generalized leather shop, the most common type of shop in the *Artisana*. In addition to offering insight into the everyday operations of a generalized leather shop, Souri's shop enabled me to discover the not so public aspects of the *Artisana*, including political alliances, rivalries, and "secret" strategies. For these reasons and many others, Souri became my key research consultant in the *Artisana*.

Though my relationship with Souri provided unparalleled access to the public and private spheres of the *Artisana*, much of this research would be incomplete without a host of other consultants. Many of these consultants I was acquainted with from my previous

time in the market (1997-99, and 2002); others I met in the course of conducting fieldwork (2007-2008). These included both generalized and specialized leather vendors, their staff, state agents, suppliers, and clientele.

To identify Souri and other vendors who manufactured and sold wildlife commodities, I used a combination of targeted and snowball sampling strategies. Targeted sampling was used to identify vendors who produced and sold wildlife products. This worked in two ways. First, because of my previous experience in the market I already knew several vendors, like Souri, who manufactured wildlife goods. Second, to identify other vendors who worked with wildlife, a comprehensive survey of shops was conducted. The purpose of the survey was to determine which additional shops/vendors met the basic criteria to participate. In other words, which vendors used wildlife, besides the ones I already knew? A visual scan of a vendor's shop was adequate to determine if wildlife was present. If a shop was observed with wildlife products, the vendor was approached to participate in the study.

With regard to snowball sampling, all identified vendors (i.e., previously known and those identified in the course of survey) were asked if they knew other individuals who might be interested in participating in the study. These other individuals could be anyone who worked with wildlife and/or had some connection to the market. Through this technique I was able to access not just other vendors in the market, but also clientele, a host of wildlife suppliers, state agents, and international actors – all organized around the commodification of wild species.

Within the *Artisana* I was able to work with a total of eighteen leather shops (fifteen generalized and three specialized). However, the actual number of

leatherworkers who participated is significantly greater (n=76), as a single shop can have more than four leatherworkers working under the same roof. In practice, if the owner of a leather shop agreed to work with me, he typically instructed his staff to “answer my questions.” Being socially conscious and ethically grounded, I approached all leather shop staff individually to ascertain if they wished to help with my research.

By working closely with several leather shops (n=18), I was also able to collect data on specific wildlife species, the forms they take (i.e., commodity types), rates of production and consumption, as well as a host of associated practices and strategies. To gain insight into the demands that fuel the manufacture of wildlife goods and the spheres through which such commodities circulate, I informally interviewed 95 leather shop clients. Most of these clients (n=72) were foreigners (predominantly European tourists), but others like wealthy Malians (n=23), and expatriate workers (n=32) living in Mali, were also interviewed. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would ask clients questions about their purchases (some bought items that I had either contributed to making or had observed being made). In particular, I interviewed clients about their reasons for making a purchase (i.e., was it a gift, keepsake, or for practical use?), as well as their perception of a wildlife commodity (i.e., what did it mean to them, how did they identify with it?).

Just as leather vendors provided me access to clients and their demands as consumers, they also facilitated my understanding of market dynamics. For instance, though I had formal and official contacts within the upper echelon of *Artisana* administration (I had to present myself to the Governor of the *Artisana* when I started my research), it was largely through vendors’ engagements with the administration and with

each other that I gained insight into the political and social hierarchies of the market. Equally so, by working closely with leather shops, I was introduced to a series of suppliers and middlemen that furnished the hides and skins of twenty-five species of reptile and mammal, the raw materials from which a wide variety of wildlife commodities are produced and sold.

Based on data collected in 2002 and again in 2007-2008, there are a total of 25 wild species for sale, in some form or other, at the *Artisana*. Examination of the data reveals that wild species are divided between two classes of vertebrates: reptilian (n=12) and mammalian (n=13). Between the two classes of species, six standard commodity types are made including bags, belts, carvings, shoes, trophies, and wallets. A standardized commodity type is defined as a commodity that is regularly reproduced. It is important to keep in mind that though a commodity type is regularly reproducedⁱⁱⁱ, it is often reproduced using different combinations of materials (i.e., species), and in a wide range of styles. As such, in classifying types of goods, I looked to an item's function as a means to create a basic typology for wildlife commodities. However, this should not suggest that these commodities are strictly made using wildlife. In fact, most wildlife commodities rely on leather made from domesticated species like cow, goat, or sheep. For example, a wallet will be constructed out of sheep or goat leather (e.g., a domestic species) and have its exterior surface laminated with a reptile skin like python (e.g., a wild species). The overall effect is that the wallet appears to be made out of python skin. When a commodity appears to be made with one species of wildlife, that species is considered the dominant material. This differs from other commodities where wildlife is

found as trim, or accents to a commodity made from some other dominant material (i.e., typically leather made from a domesticated species).

After surveying the breadth of wildlife commodities made and sold in the *Artisana*, it became evident that certain commodities were only made with select species of wildlife. Moreover, there seemed to be a distinction between the ways in which wild mammals were used in comparison to how wild reptiles were used (see Table 5: Wild mammals and commodity type; and Table 6: Wild reptiles and commodity type).

Table 5: Wild mammals and commodity type.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	BG	BT	CV	SH	TR	WT
Caracal	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	Warani, Monoko	D/T	-	-	T	D	D/T
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	N'golo K'adi	D/T	-	-	T	D	D/T
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Wara Ba	D/T	-	-	T	D	D/T
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Waranikalan	D/T	-	-	T	D	D/T
Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Kungo Lai, Lai	-	-	D	-	-	-
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	Mali	-	-	D	-	-	-
Dorcas Gazelle	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	Son	T	-	-	-	D	-
Red-Fronted Gazelle	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	Sine	T	-	-	-	D	-
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	Mina	T	-	-	-	D	-
Red-Flanked Duiker	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	Mangalani	T	-	-	-	D	-
Maxwell's Duiker	<i>Cephalophus maxwellii</i>	Kokounani	T	-	-	-	D	-
Common Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	N'goloni	T	-	-	-	D	-
Roan Antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	Daje	-	-	-	-	D	-
D = Dominant Material		BG = Bag	SH = Shoe					
T = Trim Material		BT = Belt	TR = Trophy					
- = Not Present		CV = Carving	WT = Wallet					

Table 6: Wild reptiles and commodity type.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	BG	BT	CV	SH	TR	WT
African Slender-Snouted Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus cataphractus</i>	<i>Bama, Bama Je'ma</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	D	D/T
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	<i>Bama</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	D	D/T
West African Dwarf Crocodile	<i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i>	<i>Bama, Bama Fi'ma</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	D	D/T
Desert Monitor	<i>Varanus griseus</i>	<i>Chen-Chen Koro</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	-	D/T
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	<i>Kana</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	-	D/T
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	-	D/T
Ball Python	<i>Python regius</i>	<i>Tomi, Minea Tomi,</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	-	D/T
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea, Minea Donso</i>	D/T	D/T	-	D/T	D	D/T
Smyth's Water Snake	<i>Grayia smythii</i>	<i>N'Gran, Ji La Sa</i>	-	D/T	-	-	-	D/T
Mali Cobra	<i>Naja nigicollis, N. katiensis</i>	<i>Gorongongo Bileman</i>	-	D/T	-	-	-	D/T
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongongo Fi'ma</i>	-	D/T	-	-	-	D/T
Egyptian Cobra	<i>Naja haje</i>	<i>Gorongongo Je'ma</i>	-	D/T	-	-	-	D/T
D = Dominant Material		BG = Bag	SH = Shoe					
T = Trim Material		BT = Belt	TR = Trophy					
- = Not Present		CV = Carving	WT = Wallet					

In general, twelve species of wild reptile are used to manufacture five out of six identified commodity types: bags, belts, shoes, trophies, and wallets. The only commodities not made with wild reptiles are carvings – they are made from warthog and hippo tusks. In comparison, thirteen species of wild mammal are used to fabricate five types of commodities: bags, carvings, shoes, trophies, and wallets. As such, the only commodities not involving wild mammals are belts – they are made exclusively from wild reptile and domestic mammal (i.e., cow, goat, or sheep leather). In addition to these basic divisions between wild reptilian and mammalian commodities, more subtle patterns are also present. They are seen through the cross referencing of wild species, commodity

type, and how the leather is used - as dominant material, trim material, or a combination of both.

With regard to wild mammals, four species including, caracal, leopard, lion, and serval are used as both dominant and trim material in the manufacture of bags and wallets. At the same time they are also used as trim material in shoes and serve as a dominant material in trophies. The remaining nine species of wild mammal are used strictly as a dominant or trim material in the production of other commodity types. In particular, six species of antelope including, Dorcas gazelle, red-fronted gazelle, bushbuck, red-flanked duiker, Maxwell's duiker, and common duiker are used as trim material in bags. These same six species, with the addition of roan antelope, are also used as dominant material in trophies.

In comparison, eight species of wild reptile including, African slender-snouted crocodile, Nile crocodile, West African dwarf crocodile, desert monitor, Nile monitor, savannah monitor, rock python and ball python, are used as both dominant and trim material in the manufacture of four different commodity types: bags, belts, shoes, and wallets. Four other species of wild reptile including, Smyth's water snake, Malian cobra, black cobra, and Egyptian cobra are used similarly, but only in the fabrication of two commodity types – belts and wallets. However, one commodity type associated with wild reptiles stands out: trophies. This is because only four species of wild reptile are prepared as trophies. Wild reptiles used to make trophies include three species of crocodile (slender-snouted, Nile, and West African dwarf varieties) and one species of snake (rock python).

These patterns of wildlife commodities are not arbitrary. They are reflective of the imagination of leatherworkers and a body of knowledge they have come to possess regarding the tastes and preferences of their clientele. As outlined by Steiner (1994), market actors are physically and socially positioned in such a way as to acquire and mediate knowledge to successfully broker wildlife goods. More to the point, it is a body of knowledge built upon the experiences of individual actors and their engagement with others, highlighting the agency of market vendors. As such, the patterns of wildlife commoditization outlined above may be interpreted as social drama (Walley 2004), replete with a host of players who come and go across a stage that is Mali. Some hold leading roles like the leather vendors of the *Artisana*, while others are more tangential like those who harvest and supply wildlife from the hinterlands.

Notes

ⁱ Jeliw are described as both bards and leatherworkers (Conrad and Frank 1995).

ⁱⁱ Though only occupying ten shops, there are approximately a hundred carvers and sculptors who have subleased space from shop owners. The result is an extremely crowded and chaotic section of the *Artisana*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Other commodities using wildlife are also found, but they tend to be singular items and are not reproduced. For instance, in 2002 I recorded a duiker hide rug in a vendor's inventory. When I returned in 2007, the rug was still there. Nor did it sell before I left in August of 2008. As such, singular items that are not reproduced are not classified as a standard commodity type; at best they are experimental.

CHAPTER IV

WILDLIFE ACTORS OF THE *ARTISANA*

The players, or actors involved in this Malian wildlife drama are a highly diverse group of individuals including, but not limited to, suppliers, middlemen, leather vendors (i.e., shop owners and their staff), general opportunists, state agents, and clients. However, when I first started to work in the *Artisana*, I had only a rudimentary understanding of the market and the “types” of actors found in it. For example, I could not distinguish the difference between a shop owner and an employee. Similarly, what I might assume to be a client window-shopping, might in fact be a market administrator, middleman looking to make a deal, or someone looking for the restroom.

Christopher Steiner notes a similar issue in exploring the commodification of African art from the Plateau market in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire:

Among this bustling and diverse crowd of people, one wonders, as an anthropologist, who are the art traders that are supposed to be selling in the market place? Who are the suppliers bringing goods from afar? Which of these people are merely idlers and curious bystanders? Where are the customers? Who owns which space in the market place? To whom do all these wondrous objects belong (1994: 17)?

From this initial position of not knowing, Steiner came to understand that though the market may appear chaotic or in a state of disorder, “the market place is in fact a scrupulously structured social space in which every object has its rightful owner and in which every person has a specific status and a recognized set of social and economic roles,” (1994:18).

Though Steiner was exploring a different commodity and in another country, his insights are equally applicable to wildlife goods from the *Artisana*. Applying Steiner’s

perspective allows me to distinguish between the different social and economic roles found surrounding wildlife use in the *Artisana*. These social and economic roles are filled by what I refer to as players or actors, the individuals who make up the cast for this wildlife drama.

Summary data on the various roles and actors encountered in the course of conducting fieldwork in the *Artisana* are presented in Table 7: Overview of roles and actors encountered in the *Artisana*. In the following sections I briefly describe each role (Wildlife Suppliers, Wildlife Vendors, State Agents, and Clientele) and the specific types of actors encountered. Once a given role is outlined, ethnographic examples of various actors and their activities are provided to help illustrate values present as well as how different actors interact in the negotiation of wild species in the *Artisana*.

Table 7: Overview of roles and actors encountered in the *Artisana*.

Role	Type of Actor	Individual Actors	Total
Wildlife Supplier	Hunter	12	40
	Middleman	17	
	General Opportunist	9	
	Wholesale Distributor	2	
Wildlife Vendor	Generalized Leather Shop Vendor	64	83
	Specialized Leather Shop Vendor	12	
	Other <i>Artisana</i> Vendor	7	
Clientele	Maliens	23	95
	Foreigners	72	
State Agent	<i>Artisana</i> Administration	8	13
	Law Enforcement	5	

Wildlife suppliers are responsible for harvesting, transporting, and distributing approximately five hundred (493) species of wildlife to both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* of Bamako (see Supplemental File). Most of this wildlife ends up in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, while only twenty-five species make their way to the *Artisana*.

Four types of actors are found to supply wildlife, including hunters, middlemen, general opportunists, and wholesale distributors.

Hunters

As previously described, hunters, also known as *donsow*, often harvest wild animals for protein and hold aside valuable parts like hides and skins to use themselves, or sell to a middleman at some point in the future. Other times, hunters have a standing agreement with another agent (i.e., market vendor, middleman, wholesale distributor, or even local practitioner) for select parts of specific species. For example, in Chapter II, Kara a well established local practitioner (diviner-healer) used his social connections to acquire several unique wildlife parts from rural hunters. Similarly, several hunters described in Chapter II exemplify how individuals harvest wildlife and set valued parts aside to sell later, like the hunters whom Touré purchased parts from.

Over the course of conducting fieldwork in the *Artisana* twelve hunters (n=12) were encountered directly supplying wildlife hides to both leather shop vendors and wholesale distributors. Use of the term “directly supplying” is significant as it denotes that the hunter traveled to Bamako from the rural environment to sell animal parts to an established vendor (i.e., leather shop vendor or wholesale distributor). This differs from most hunters who indirectly supply wildlife by selling it to middlemen who then resell the parts to vendors in Bamako. Given certain study limitationsⁱ, accurate data on the number of hunters who indirectly supply wildlife is unknown. However, based on conversations with a wide range of wildlife suppliers, vendors, state agents, rural and urban Malians, it is estimated that several thousand rurally based hunters indirectly

supply wildlife through their normal hunting activities. Yet, this should not suggest that hunters who indirectly supply wildlife parts are ignorant of what they do; rather most are keenly aware of market demand and seek to profit from it.

For example, when I visited the rural village of Djonfakulu to conduct a sacrifice for a French national, I was fortunate to be in the company of Kara, a well-known hunter, diviner-healer, and head of the secret society known as the *Gin Gin Gran*. Through my relationship with Kara I was introduced to eighteen different hunters (n=18) based in and around Djonfakulu. Over the week that I spent in Djonfakulu I was able to speak with these hunters about their practices. From these conversations hunters informed me that intact hides from certain animals like *waranikalan* (leopard), *monoko* (caracal), *n'golo k'adi* (serval), *bama* (crocodile), *kana* (Nile monitor), *koro* (Savannah monitor), *muso sa* (ball python) and *minea* (rock python) with few blemishes (i.e., a quality hide) demanded a high price because they were used in making “*tubabuw fenw*” (Western things, a reference to what I call “tourist goods”) in the *Artisana*. Hides with holes (i.e., a low/poor quality hide) and other wildlife parts (i.e., paws, organs, bones, etc.) were not used in making “*tubabu fenw*,” but were of value as ingredients to “*fura*,” or medicine, sold from the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

When I asked the hunters of Djonfakulu and surrounding area if they sought out specific animals for specific parts, all confirmed they had done so at some point in time. For example, one hunter explained that each time his wife gave birth he would go into the bush to kill a Savannah monitor the grease from which would be rubbed into the skin of the newborn to protect it from malevolent forces, such as *subagaw* (supernatural “soul-suckers”). The hunter went on to describe how other valued parts of the monitor were

used toward different ends; the meat was consumed by the local community while the head and hide were sold to a middleman for profit (about 100 – 200 CFA for the head and 500-1500 CFA for the hide depending on size and quality). Another hunter described how he once snared a *mangalani* (duiker), the horns from which were used in preparing a treatment for a family member stricken ill with convulsions and hallucinations. The hunter outlined how the horns from the *mangalani* were key to treating curses and supernatural possession (as directed by a local practitioner), the likely cause of the family members illness. Just as with the previous example, the hunter distributed the meat from the duiker to his family and friends and set aside the hide and hooves to sell to a middleman (the hide sold for 2,500 CFA, while the hooves brought 100 CFA each).

Though all the hunters I spoke with in Djonfakulu had at one point harvested select species for specific parts, they also described that such was not the norm. More common was the practice of hunting by opportunity. As one hunter described it, “you cannot know what is out there [in the bush], until you are there [in the bush]. The point is clear: uncertainty is fundamental to wildlife harvesting; you never know what you might come across, let alone be able to harvest. Case in point, one hunter recounted how he was walking along a trail between villages on his way to see relatives, when he came across a large rock python (reported at three meters) crossing the trail. Knowing that the snake was dangerous if the snake got too close, he opted to throw a well-aimed rock at its head. Similarly, another hunter described how he had set snares for monitor lizards and ended up capturing a civet.

Table 8 shows the relative distribution by region of the twelve hunters who directly supply leather shop vendors and wholesale distributors in the *Artisana*. Four out

of Mali’s eight geographic regions are represented (based on the home of record for participating hunters) including Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, and Sikasso. Of particular significance is the fact that the majority (58%) of hunters found to directly supply the *Artisana* come from the Kayes region of Western Mali. Given that most hunters hunt in and around their residence, the majority of wildlife supplied the *Artisana* comes from the Kayes region. This is significant as it supports the position that Kayes region is among the most biologically diverse areas of Mali; first-hand field observation, harvest records and hunters reports further support the Kayes region as a biodiversity hotspot.

Table 8: Hunters by region who directly supply vendors in the *Artisana*.

	Hunters by Region				Total
	Kayes	Koulikoro	Mopti	Sikasso	
Number of Hunters (%)	7 (58%)	3 (25%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)
Supplying Leather Shops (%)	7 (100%)	3 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	12 (100%)
Supplying Wholesale Distributors (%)	3 (42.8%)	3 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	8 (66.6%)

Almost all hunters directly supplied both leather shops and wholesale distributors. Only a few hunters from the Kayes region (n=4) were found to do exclusive business with leather shops and had no dealings with wholesale distributors.

Interestingly, of the seven hunters directly supplying wildlife from the Kayes region, two of these hunters are from Djonfakulu. Known as Mouq’tar and Zouri, these hunters regularly harvest leopard along the Mali-Guinea border (an area located immediately to the south of Djonfakulu and known for its high concentrations of leopard). Though it is not uncommon for hunters to work cooperatively, Mouq’tar and Zouri are unique in having worked together for many yearsⁱⁱ. Over the course of the nine

months that Mouq'tar and Zouri worked with me, they supplied a total of nine leopard hides to the market. Six of these hides were sold to a single leather shop (a shop specializing in trophies), while the remaining three were sold individually to different vendors (two generalized leather shops and a wholesale distributor). The only other hunter from the Kayes region who supplied wholesale distributors was a man from the town of Kita. This man was unique in that he wore two hats: one of a hunter who actively harvested wildlife, the other of a middleman who purchased wildlife parts from other hunters in his area and who sold them to vendors in the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*.

It was much more common for hunters (from any region) to seek out the best price for their goods by visiting a wide range of vendors. While working in the *Artisana* one day I observed a man dressed in typical hunter's garb (a *bogolan* tunic and pants) carrying a bulky rice sack enter a shop that I was familiar with. My interest piqued, I moved closer and saw the man unrolling rock python hides from the rice sack and displaying them to the shop vendors. One of the vendors caught sight of me and called me over for a better look. After introducing my research, I learned that the hunter was from the Sibi area (Koulikoro region) and was visiting the *Artisana* for the first time in the hopes of selling fourteen rock python hides that he had harvested over the course of several months. When I asked how he knew to come to the *Artisana*, the hunter explained that a middleman had purchased wildlife parts from him a few years earlier. In their exchange the middleman had asked the hunter if he could collect rock python hides because he had a buyer in the *Artisana*. Hoping to make some easy money, the hunter then spent several months harvesting rock pythons, never to see the middleman again.

The Sibi hunter went on to explain that he had gotten a ride with a friend (who had other business in Bamako) to come to the *Artisana* to see if he could sell the snake hides himself. I met him in the middle of his first attempt to sell the python hides to a generalized leather shop vendor.

Unlike the Sibi hunter who was doing business for the first time in the *Artisana*, other hunters directly supplying wildlife to the *Artisana* (n=11) have done so before. For example, Mouq'tar and Zouri are regular suppliers of leopard hides to a leather shop that specializes in trophies, but also supply other species and parts to different vendors. Similarly, most of the other hunters in my sample related that they had their own network of vendors with whom they did business. A hunter from Mopti stated that he worked with four different leather shops and both wholesale distributors in the *Artisana* as well as vendors in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Likewise, a hunter from Kayes detailed that he supplied wildlife parts to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and quality hides of select species to the *Artisana*. In fact, of the eleven hunters who directly supply the *Artisana* (removing the first time seller, the hunter from Sibi), all simultaneously supply the *Marabagaw Yoro*. This pattern is seen in only one other group of suppliers: middlemen.

With regard to the hunters supplying leather shops of the *Artisana*, they highlight the market as a key location to sell “high quality” wildlife hides. “You cannot sell a leopard hide with holes in the *Artisana*,” explain Mouq'tar and Zouri. Similarly, the hunter from Mopti related that he reserved his best hides (i.e., those without holes or blemishes) for his top paying buyers in the *Artisana*. At the same time that hunters underscore the *Artisana* as a place to sell high quality wildlife hides, they also stress the

need to have a business contact (i.e., know a leather vendor) in order to maximize their profits.

The comments and observations of the hunters with whom I worked, paint a picture of the *Artisana* as a place that facilitates economic security for more than just hunters. The profits generated through the harvesting and selling of wildlife hides to the *Artisana*, are typically reinvested by hunters and distributed directly or indirectly to their families and the communities of which they are a part. For instance, the hunter from Sibi planned to purchase rice and cooking oil to directly provide for his family. Other hunters described how they lent money earned from harvesting and selling wildlife to family and community members. Still others used their profits to purchase urban commodities (i.e., items for sale in Bamako), to resell in their rural communities. In short, hunters perceive and utilize the *Artisana* as a place to convert a raw resource (i.e., a quality wildlife hide), through a business contact (i.e., leather vendor), into another, more malleable resource: money.

Middlemen

Middlemen, locally described as “*coxeur*” (French for “a person that coaxes,” or “broker”), “*itermediaires*” (French for “intermediaries”), and “*fournisseurs*” (French for “suppliers”), purchase wildlife parts from hunters and transport them to Bamako where they sell their goods to various vendors (see Table 9: Middlemen by region who directly supply wildlife to vendors in the *Artisana*). Several middlemen (like Touré, from Chapter II) have long-standing relationships with vendors in both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* and supply wildlife to both markets on a regular basis. These

relationships have been built over years of doing business, just like many hunter-vendor relations.

Table 9: Middlemen by region who directly supply wildlife to vendors in the *Artisana*.

	Middlemen by Region					Total
	Kayes	Koulikoro	Mopti	Segou	Sikasso	
Number of Middlemen (%)	6 (35.2%)	3 (17.6%)	2 (11.7%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	17 (100%)
Supplying Leather Shops (%)	6 (100%)	3 (100%)	2 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	17 (100%)
Supplying Wholesale Distributors (%)	5 (83.3%)	3 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	13 (76.4%)

Unlike hunters, who only represent four out of eight regions in Mali, middlemen represent five out of eight regions, including Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, and Sikasso. Though representing a greater number of regions, the distribution of middlemen by region reveals a similar pattern to hunters (see Table 8: Hunters by region who directly supply vendors in the *Artisana*). The majority of middlemen (35.2%) come from the Kayes region as do the majority of hunters (58%). Using the basic logic, as supported by field observations, that middlemen tend to operate in the same area in which they reside, wildlife they purchase is from the same area. For instance, Touré from Djonfakulu – a village in the Kayes region – purchases wildlife harvested by hunters who live in the same general vicinity. Other middlemen from the Kayes region were based out of the towns of Kita, Manantali, Nyantanso, as well as two from the city of Kayes (the regional capital). Middlemen from the Koulikoro region reported their homes of record to be in Kangaba, Boro, and Mourdiah. Of the two middlemen from the Mopti region, one came from Youwarou, while the other was from the city of Mopti (regional

capital). Two middlemen from the Segou region reported coming from the city of Segou, while one other noted San as his residence. Middlemen from the Sikasso region identified, the regional capital (the city of Sikasso), Kadialo, and Bougouni, as their respective base of operations.

Hunters tend to have extensive social networks through which they acquire and sell their wildlife parts in both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*, and the same is true of middlemen. All but three middlemen reported selling wildlife parts to both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*. Of these middlemen, all had an extended, or long-term relationship with an established leather shop or wholesale distributor in the *Artisana*. These relationships may be based on kinship ties.

For instance, a middleman from the Mopti region, known as Yousef, has a family relative who is a leather vendor in the *Artisana*, David. In the 1990s, when visiting family in Bamako, David approached Yousef with a business opportunity: to collect monitor lizard hides (Savannah, Desert, and Nile varieties). In return for the hides David promised to pay top dollar. Moreover, David advanced Yousef 50,000 CFA to “get started,” in becoming a middleman. When I asked Yousef why he took David up on his offer, Yousef started by explaining that David is his *koroke* (elder brother, not literal). He went on to describe how his “elder brother” was a great man and helped many people by giving gifts and “lending” money. “I used to have nothing, but David gave me a job and now I make money,” he continued. As proof of his success and possibly as an indicator of his social debt to David, Yousef added, “I married my second wife last year.” In short, when David offered Yousef a job as a dedicated supplier, it was literally

an offer he could not refuse given his own financial need and social obligation to an elder and respected family member.

Over fifteen years later, Yousef still supplies wildlife skins; though no longer just monitor lizards, nor strictly to David. In the two instances that I encountered Yousef in the *Artisana*, one was associated with David and the other with one of the two wholesale distributors located in the *Artisana*. On this second occasion, I asked Yousef why he was not selling his goods to his elder brother David, as I would have expected given their relationship. Yousef explained that he had been to see his elder brother, but that David was trying to cheat him: “*a ye nanbara che*,” (he is a cheating man). Apparently, Yousef had initially taken his stock to David, but had been offered a lower price than he typically received. Feeling that David was trying to take advantage of him, Yousef had taken his inventory to one of the wholesale distributors to sell. According to Yousef, David’s behavior was not unusual. In fact, Yousef went on to describe that, after each disagreement with David, he sold his goods to a wholesale distributor, thereby forcing David to pay more than he normally would for the same hide if he had bought it direct from Yousef. Though Yousef also lost out by selling to a wholesaler rather than to his elder brother, he noted that it worked out in the end: “I lose money now, but next time I come to sell, David will pay more.”

The case of Yousef helps to describe the nuances of an extended relationship with a leather vendor in the *Artisana* (David) and the agency of middlemen. Key to the relationship is that it starts with a single vendor and extends to other leather merchants in the *Artisana* (as well as the *Marabagaw Yoro*) based on the need of the middleman. Out of seventeen middlemen, fourteen relate similar stories of being hired by “family”

members who work in the *Artisana*. In fact the theme of an elder male relative providing an employment opportunity too good to refuse was universal among this group of middlemen.

However, Yousef and other middlemen are not fixed in a static relationship with a single leather vendor. All fourteen middlemen with extended relationships also cite that they sought out other buyers in the *Artisana* to try and improve their profit margins. This is significant as it demonstrates the agency of middlemen and suggests that middlemen are savvy players with specific wants – namely to improve their revenues from trafficking wildlife. Yet, no middleman completely severs an extended relationship with a leather vendor – it would not be in his interest. Rather, middlemen continue to sell wildlife hides to their original employers and seek out additional buyers. In the case of Yousef, he expanded his network beyond David to include a wholesale distributor. In doing so, Yousef was not severing his relationship with David; on the contrary, Yousef was reinforcing his relationship with David by selling to another. According to Yousef, his actions were a ploy to get his “elder brother” to not cheat him and pay a fair price for the hides he supplied.

In comparison to middlemen like Yousef who only supply the leather vendors of the *Artisana*, fourteen out of seventeen middlemen do brisk business with both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*. A prime example of such a middleman is seen in Touré. In Chapter II, Touré (Kara’s younger brother) was introduced as a professional middleman who made his living by trafficking in wildlife. Furthermore, every time Touré traveled to Bamako to sell wildlife parts (five times over a nine-month period), he set aside any quality hides (i.e., no holes or blemishes) of the twenty-five species used in

making “tourist goods” to sell to vendors in the *Artisana*, where such hides demand a high price. He sold internal organs, paws, horns, bones, and poor-quality hides (i.e., those that are incomplete, having holes, or noticeable blemishes that detract from their aesthetic) he sold to the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Within the *Artisana*, middlemen tended to deal with both leather shop vendors and wholesale distributors; only four middlemen strictly supplied leather shops and did not deal with wholesale distributors, whereas thirteen middlemen supplied both leather shops and wholesale distributors, much like Yousef and Touré. In speaking with the few middlemen that only dealt with leather shops, it was found that that they did not trust wholesale distributors because they “lied” (*galon tege*) about what hides were worth. In other words, these four middlemen avoided wholesale distributors because they felt that they would lose potential profit if they did business with them. As a result, all four middlemen dealt exclusively with leather shops in an effort to maximize their profit margins through their individual agency as actors in the *Artisana*.

For example, Ba is a middleman from the Sikasso region, who supplies three *Artisana* leather shops. In speaking with Ba about his profession he outlined that he only bought “*premiere qualité*” (first quality, high quality) skins from rural hunters, unlike other middlemen who bought whatever they came across. Because Ba is discerning and only buys the “best” skins, he is able to solicit a higher price when reselling them to vendors.

Specifically, Ba supplies three different leather shops in the *Artisana*; two generalized and one specialized shop. According to Ba he supplies reptiles (cobra, python, monitor and crocodile) to the two generalized shops, but holds aside the best

python (i.e., large rock python hides) and crocodile skins to sell to a shop that specializes in trophies because he knows he will get a better price for them than if he sold them to a generalized shop). What this amounts to is Ba selectively selling his stock so as to maximize the return on his investment (i.e., purchasing high quality hides from rural hunters).

Yet, according to Ba, the same logic does not apply if he sold the same skins to a wholesale distributor. This is because a wholesale distributor can never pay top dollar for the hides they purchase from suppliers if they desire to turn a profit. As such, a professional middleman like Ba is in competition with wholesale distributors over access to leather vendors – the actors who pay top dollar for quality hides. Only by buying the best hides does Ba ensure access to leather vendors because his hides are recognized as being of higher quality than those of other suppliers. Furthermore, by engaging in niche marketing, Ba circumvents the need to sell to a wholesale distributor, a fall back position for most other middlemen (as seen with Yousef).

Though middlemen are unique individuals, as seen in the examples of Yousef, Touré, and Ba, they demonstrate their agency by choosing whom to sell their goods to or not. In particular, middlemen highlight the compounding nature of business relations in the *Artisana* – where middlemen seek out other buyers but never dissolve a previously established relationship. This is done for two key reasons. First, since most middlemen have extended relationships with leather vendors, middlemen clearly value the benefits they receive through such relations (i.e., a steady business partner). Second, all middlemen highlighted the need to improve their profit margins (i.e., make more money). To do so, middlemen have developed specific strategies including finding additional

business partners in and outside of the *Artisana*, withholding stock and selling it to a competitor to effect a renegotiation of terms, as well as developing a niche, or particular service that a middleman can capitalize on.

In sum, middlemen are not just “*intermediaires*” (intermediaries), or “*fournisseurs*” (suppliers) they are also active players in the wildlife drama that surrounds the *Artisana* – a role highlighted particularly well with the term “*coxeur*” (French for “a person that coaxes,” or “broker”). Such a term aids in portraying middlemen as dynamic agents of the *Artisana*. Leather vendors do not only engage middlemen, middlemen also interact and articulate with leather vendors to meet their own ends. Though only part of the wildlife drama, the articulations between middlemen and leather vendors helps to ensure a steady supply of quality wildlife hides to the market, while at the same time serves the economic needs of middlemen.

General Opportunists

Similar to middlemen is the role of general opportunists, the key difference being that middlemen regularly supply wildlife (i.e., make a living at supplying wildlife), while general opportunists are doing so for the first time and under a unique set of circumstances. Three different professions were identified that facilitated access to wildlife; truck drivers, herdsman, and farmers. Common to all three professions is their tendency to operate in or near the bush (i.e., the rural environment where wildlife is to be found). Furthermore, general opportunists regularly visit Bamako as part of their primary profession and as such are not explicitly trafficking wildlife. Rather, they travel to Bamako for other reasons and sell any wildlife they happen to have while there.

A total of nine general opportunists directly supply leather shops and wholesale distributors in the *Artisana* (see Table 10: General opportunists by profession who directly supply the *Artisana*). In looking at the summary data provided in Table 10, general opportunists present a different pattern than seen in either hunters or middlemen. Specifically, a greater percentage of hunters (100%) and middlemen (100%) supplied leather shops, than wholesale distributors (hunters = 66.6% and middlemen = 76.4%). In contrast to this pattern, a greater percentage of general opportunists (77.7%) supply wholesale distributors, than leather shops (22.2%). This pattern is most likely the result of general opportunists being unfamiliar with the *Artisana* (i.e., wholesale distributors typically pay less than leather shop vendors).

Table 10: General opportunists by profession who directly supply the *Artisana*.

	Primary Profession			Total
	Truck Driver	Herdsman	Farmer	
General Opportunists (%)	4 (44.4%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	9 (100%)
Supplying Leather Shops (%)	1 (25%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)
Supplying Wholesale Distributors (%)	3 (75%)	2 (66.6%)	2 (100%)	7 (77.7%)

Four out of nine general opportunists are truck drivers, while three are herdsman, and two are farmers. In the following sections each of the three professions associated with general opportunists are outlined, with ethnographic examples of each, to provide some insight into the practice of supplying wildlife as an income supplement (i.e., not a primary source of income as with middlemen).

Truck drivers are highly mobile individuals who often travel great distances through the bush providing easy access to a wide range of wildlife. Of particular interest

is the fact that two of the four truck drivers I spoke with operate within Mali, while the other two travel outside of Mali. Of the truck drivers operating within Mali, one travels between Bamako and Gao, while another travels between Bamako and Kayes (the capital city of the Kayes region). Of the truck drivers operating internationally, one travels between Bamako, Mali and Conakry, Guinea, while another's route runs between Bamako, Mali and Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

For example, Tomas operates between Bamako, Mali and Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. I ran into Tomas while on my rounds within the *Artisana*. I was just about to leave a wholesale distributor, whom I had stopped to greet and note any new acquisitions from, when a man approached carrying a small duffle bag, the sort commonly given away to new health club members in the United States. After introductions, Tomas opened his duffle bag and extracted three animal hides; an adult serval hide, a three-meter rock python hide, and a bush baby pelt (a type of West African prosimian – *Galago senegalensis*). Taking each in turn, the wholesale distributor examined them for defects and flaws. When Tomas offered the bush baby pelt, the wholesaler looked annoyed and said that he was not interested in it. Handing it back to Tomas, the wholesale distributor purchased the serval hide (5,000 CFA) and rock python hide (5,000 CFA).

The importance of acquiring key market knowledge to effectively traffic wildlife is particularly evident in the case of Tomas. Moreover, the case of Tomas highlights a central point outlined by Christopher Steiner in his discussion of art markets in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, that "knowledge or information is one of the most valuable commodities in the African art market (1994: 76). Though not speaking about the *Artisana* or wildlife,

Steiner's insights help to contextualize the importance of knowledge in negotiating a market system. Steiner notes:

With market knowledge, traders are able to have a better understanding of the buying and selling price of the objects they trade; they have a greater sense of supply and demand; they are more capable of recognizing quality and authenticity, as well as the fungibility and grading of object types; and they are better suited to predict market trends – thereby being able to buy objects before their value increases and to sell before it declines (1994: 76).

Toward these ends, Tomas began surveying the *Marabagaw Yoro*, asking vendors about the goods they offered, the prices they fetched, and how to harvest particular species.

Much like truck drivers who travel through the bush, so too do herdsmen. However, while truck drivers use a vehicle to travel, herdsmen rely on their feet. A total of three (n=3) general opportunist herdsmen supply wildlife to the *Artisana* (none supplied wildlife to the *Marabagaw Yoro*). Of the three herdsmen supplying wildlife, all were from the Koulikoro region; two from just outside Bamako, while another came from Kati. Interestingly, herdsmen only supplied a single type (i.e., order: *squamata*; suborder: *serpentes*) of wildlife to the *Artisana*, snakes.

For example, one herdsman from the Koulikoro region killed a five-meter rock python that was in the process of eating one of his goats. The skin of the snake was removed and salted to preserve it from decay. When the herdsmen returned to Bamako, he took the snakeskin directly to the *Artisana*, where he sold it to a wholesale distributor. The money he made from the skin was equivalent to the replacement price for the goat that he had lost (about \$25.00).

Another herdsman from the Koulikoro region came across a black cobra and young rock python while grazing his herd of cattle. In typical Malian fashion, the herdsman dispatched the snakes as he encountered them, taking special care to remove their heads and bury them, in fear that they could bite one of his herd. The herdsman and his family consumed the meat of these snakes when he returned to the outskirts of Bamako after a day grazing his herd on the periphery of the bush. The following morning, I found the herdsman selling his snake skins to one of the *Artisana*'s wholesale distributors. Getting a brief moment to ask a few questions I was able to gather the herdsman story and record that he was paid a total of 3,500 CFA (2,250 CFA for the python, and 1,250 CFA for the cobra).

In addition, I was able to ask the herdsman how he knew to bring the skins to the *Artisana*. His response was insightful and helps to highlight the social relationships that inform wildlife use. According to the herdsman, he was well aware of the fact that the *Artisana* purchased snake skins, most who he knows (i.e., other herdsman) sell there or the *Marabagaw Yoro*, though he had never done so himself. In speaking with the herdsman, I learned that his elder brother had advised him to take the skins to the *Artisana* as he had had a good experience there previously. The elder brother even advanced the herdsman bus fare to travel from his residence (located on the far side of the river, on the outskirts of Bamako) to the city center where the *Artisana* is situated.

Unlike the previous categories of general opportunists, two farmers were found to only supply wholesale distributors. Both farmers came from the periphery of Bamako (one from near the airport, the other from the top side of the plateau that overlooks Bamako). The farmer from near the airport tends a mangrove orchard for a wealthy

Malian who lives in the city, while the farmer from the plateau owns several acres and plants a mix of millet, peanuts, and corn. As with all general opportunists, both farmers harvested wildlife to supplement their primary income.

Sam, the orchard tender, killed a large black cobra (roughly two meters in length) while harvesting mangos. “I used my bamboo [pole] to kill it,” he explained as we sat in the shade of the *Artisana*; Sam had just finished selling the skin of the cobra to a wholesale distributor, for which he received 2,500 CFA.

Giving me a sly look, Sam went on to explain that the meat of a black cobra was *fura* (medicine); consumed to increase penis size and male sexual stamina. Based on my experience in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I was well acquainted with the local uses of cobra as medicine. However, playing dumb (as a good *tubab* should), I asked Sam if it worked? He broke out in a wide grin and laughed. “Work?!” he guffawed. “*A be barrake de!*,” (It works!) he bellowed and doubled over.

When he recomposed himself, I was able to find out that Sam regularly killed and ate cobras for medicinal use; the skins of which he normally set aside to sell to middlemen, much like rural hunters. On this occasion, he had harvested the cobra while picking mangos to be brought into market and sold. Taking advantage of being in Bamako, Sam brought the cobra skin to the *Artisana* to sell; a place he knew of through a middleman-friend (a bus driver). However, since Sam was unfamiliar with the market, he sold his skin to the first person he encountered, one of two wholesale distributors located in the *Artisana*. The farmer from the plateau was equally unfamiliar with the *Artisana*, and sold a ball python skin and small savannah monitor hide to the other wholesale distributor for 3,500 CFA.

While I never encountered Sam or the farmer from the plateau again, their cases help to further contextualize general opportunists and their engagement with the *Artisana*. Though some general opportunists are able to deal directly with leather vendors (e.g., one truck driver and one herdsman), all others sold their goods to wholesale distributors. This pattern is likely due to the fact that most general opportunists (77.7%) are unfamiliar with the market. In short, they lack the knowledge to effectively traffic wildlife (i.e., use wildlife as a primary source of income). Conversely, one might say that general opportunists possess enough market knowledge to supplement their primary income with proceeds generated through harvesting and selling wildlife. In this light general opportunists are not wanton actors who wander in from the periphery. Rather, they are everyday Malians (e.g., truck drivers, herdsman, and farmers) who articulate with the *Artisana* to improve their individual financial situation.

Wholesale Distributors

While hunters, middlemen and most general opportunists (save farmers) are highly mobile, wholesale distributors are sedentary. In practice, hunters, middlemen and general opportunists approach and negotiate directly with vendors. In contrast, wholesale distributors, also known as wholesalers, require leatherworkers and vendors to travel to them. Two wholesale distributors are located within the boundaries of the *Artisana*, and several more are scattered about in the area – all within a few minutes walk from the *Artisana*. Though I spoke with a few of the wholesalers outside of the *Artisana*, I focused on getting to know the two operating in the *Artisana*.

Each of the two wholesale distributors found in the *Artisana* position themselves to cover the main entrances to the market in an effort to attract potential sellers, many of whom are not familiar with the market and how it works. The wholesalers take position at opposite ends of the market so as to avoid competing for the same supplier. At the north end of the *Artisana* is Doumbia, a man in his forties from the town of Severe. At the south end of the *Artisana* is Bisse, a man also in his forties, but born and raised in Bamako. Both of these men have colorful histories, but suffice to say that they do not care for one another, largely because they are in competition with each other; each perceives the other as a threat.

For instance, it was a regular occurrence, when in the company of Bisse, to hear him speak derogatorily of Doumbia, and vice versa. However, the two men never seemed to voice their dislike to each other, rather they opted to share it with those around them (me among them). I got the sense that the men had some sort of falling out as some vendors informed me they used to be friends. Regardless, the litany of their curses drew much amusement from their listeners; they were like organized comic relief for the market. In fact, I saw several vendors solicit reactions from the men. “Do not buy from Bisse! He is not clean!” I heard Doumbia shout for all to hear, after a leather vendor asked him if Bisse had a certain type of animal hide in his inventory (a fact he was not really interested in). Similarly, Bisse had less than pleasant things to say about Doumbia, regularly citing that “he [Doumbia] sleeps [has sexual intercourse] with the animals he sells.”

Aside from sharing their animosity of each other with the rest of the market, Doumbia and Bisse also supplied an incredible amount and variety of wildlife to the

leather vendors of the *Artisana*. They spent their days waiting at opposite ends of the *Artisana*, for hunters, middlemen, and general opportunists to sell to them, or leather vendors to buy from them. Unfortunately, I was never able to build a strong enough rapport with either man for them to allow me access to their inventories (several rice sacks filled with wildlife hides). Similarly, though each wholesaler would answer a few of my questions, they were tight-lipped when it came to their business practices. Rather than waste time, I shifted my efforts toward those who were open to speaking with me, wildlife product vendors of the *Artisana*.

Notes

ⁱ Given that my primary research sites are located in the capital city of Bamako, little time was spent seeking out rurally based hunters. Rather, I relied on the social networks of my consultants to reveal those hunters who interacted with actors in either the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro*.

ⁱⁱ I first met Mouq'tar and Zouri, both in their late thirties, as a Peace Corps Volunteer working in the Bafing area of the Kayes region (1997-99). At that time they were well-established hunters who specialized in difficult to acquire specimens. Based on conversations with the men, they grew up as friends and hunters and have been supplying wildlife to both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* since they were young men (in their twenties).

CHAPTER V

WILDLIFE PRODUCT VENDORS

In the *Artisana*, wildlife product vendors (n=83) are associated with three different types of shops including generalized and specialized leather shops, as well as a couple of shops that produce carvings and sculpturesⁱ. As such, the term “wildlife product vendor,” is a blanket term used to describe anyone who produces and/or sells wildlife commodities, be it a crocodile hide belt, leopard trimmed purse, or carved hippo tusk.

Narrowing the context, wildlife product vendors that are associated with a generalized or specialized leather shop are referred to as “leather vendors;” my focal group of participants (n=76). Though this distinguishes my primary research group in the *Artisana* from others present, the term “leather vendor” is still problematic as it does not differentiate actors or roles within a given shop.

In surveying leather shops four different types of actors are identified including owners, managers, staff, and extra members (see Table 11: Summary data on actors and their roles within leather shops of the *Artisana*). From this initial survey of leather vendor actors, two key trends are made apparent. First, leather shops are comprised of formal and informal kin, and second, within a shop actors are hierarchically organized.

Table 11: Summary data on actors and their roles within leather shops of the *Artisana*.

	Shop Actors	Owners	Managers	Staff	Extra Members	Total Actors
Generalized Leather Shop	44	15	5	24	20	64
Specialized Leather Shop	9	3	1	5	3	12
Totals per category of Actor	53	18	6	29	23	76

For instance, in the introduction of my key consultant, Souri, it is known that not all individuals within a shop are considered equal in their rights and duties. Specifically, Souri owns the shop (i.e., he pays rent for the space); his eldest and only married son (Salif) manages the shop on a day-to-day basis, while his remaining two sons (Bakary and Lassina) serve as staff, doing the bidding of their superiors. As recompense, Souri's sons are paid a base salary every month (ranging from 15 – 30,000 CFA), as well as receive bonuses after profitable sales (200 – 15,000 CFA).

Similar to the example of Souri's shop, is the case of Traoré. Like Souri, Traoré owns a shop (specializing in foot-ware) and has his eldest son (Aliou) manage it in his stead. Unlike Souri, Traoré also employs a leather worker (the son of a family relative from Segou) to work under the direction of Aliou. In return for working in the shop, the family relative receives room and board with Traoré's family and is given small sums of money (5-10,000 CFA) after large sales; what amounted to an allowance, or stipend.

Of the eighteen leather shops surveyed (generalized = 15, specialized = 3), all managers (n=6) and staff (n=29) recognized the shop owner (n=18) as kin. In some cases, like Souri's, the relation to other shop members is formal and clear (i.e., they are his sons, his *denw*). Other examples that highlight clear familial connections are seen in the use of terms like "*barinke*" (father-in-law), and "*benke*" (uncle; mother's brother).

In other cases, like that of Traoré, the relationship can be informal or vague (e.g., the son of a family relative from Segou who came to work for him). Still other shop members, described shop owners as "*fake*," a term used to mean "father" or "uncle;" an elder of the male line. Similarly, some owners and managers referred to staff as "*dogoke*" and "*dogonin*" (younger brothers), "*denke*" (sons), and even "*batraden*"ⁱⁱ

(bastard child). Though such terms might seem to imply formal familial relationships, they do not. For example, elder shop owners commonly referred to me as their *denke*, *dogoke*, and yes, *batraden* too (I spilled some dye and received a verbal lashing from the shop owner). Similarly, those who were younger than me, tended to refer to me as their elder brother, or *koroke*. The point is that though clear familial relationships cannot be established for all my participants, it is a moot point, as they recognize some form of kinship with each other (be it formal, or informal), and to a degree, even me.

Though some shop actors identify formal familial relations among each other, while others noted informal relations, what is of key importance is that the relationships are hierarchical. Moreover, the type of hierarchy presented is patriarchal and parallels Malian intra-male familial relations, where an elder male (i.e., patriarch) has authority over younger men related to him. In terms of a leather shop this means that owners have authority over managers and staff. Similarly, managers have authority over staff, but are also held accountable by the owner. At the bottom of a shop's hierarchy is the staff that is directed by both owners and managers.

With each member of a shop holding a specific role and position within a shop's hierarchy, leather shops internally differentiate and distribute the workload based on skill and experience. At the same time, shops are structured so certain roles can be performed by different actors, creating a built-in redundancy system. Should the need arise one member can aid another in the completion of a large task, such as tanning several wildlife hides. Similarly, by overlapping roles shop members are prepared to temporarily take over the daily duties of another shop member if they are absent. In combination, these

internal structures provide resilience and allow a leather shop to function as an efficient machine geared toward producing leather goods.

In the following sections I further outline each of the four types of wildlife product vendors (owners, managers, staff, and extra members). After describing the position and roles of each of the four categories of wildlife product vendors I provide ethnographic examples highlighting their values regarding wildlife. Subsequent to this I analyze and provide insight into significant value patterns presented by wildlife product vendors. Specifically, how leather shop actors situate their wildlife values, and the bodies of consumer knowledge they have gleaned through their experience in the *Artisana* – knowledge leather vendors put to good use in meeting a wide range of demand.

Owners

At the top of a leather shop's hierarchy is the owner (n=18), also known as the *patron* (boss), or *chef* (chief); a man tasked with the financial responsibility of paying rent for his workspace (20-40,000 CFA per month depending on size of shop) and providing for his staff. In conversations and informal interviews with shop owners, all note hardships of being a boss by drawing attention to specific responsibilities they are required to perform. All shop owners (n=18) identify the need to direct shop production, pay for supplies, pay their employees (in varying degrees), and often provide staff room and board. Given the economic and financial basis of their responsibilities, it is not surprising that all participating shop owners (n=18) regularly note their need to “*ka wari soro*” (find money) in order to meet the many demands placed on them and make a profit at the same

time. Given the breadth of responsibility of owners, they are the ultimate authority and have final say in all internal shop matters. However, all shop owners recognize that they are held accountable for shop activity by the *Artisana* administration.

In addition to identifying the essentials to organizing and running a shop, owners are repositories of leather working knowledge. This is particularly true for elder shop owners who have accumulated years of technical and professional experience and are considered master leatherworkers, as is the case for eight owners who literally grew up working leather. Two of these “elder” owners have already been introduced – Souri and Traoré. Other elder shop owners include Djiwarra, Yousef, “Grandpa” Sylla, Camara, N’Djai, and Coulibaly. All of these men started working leather at a young age under the tutelage of master leatherworkers – a prerequisite to becoming a master leatherworker oneself.

This is particularly significant because it is the means by which I identified who is considered a master practitioner and who is not. In speaking with a range of shop actors including owners (n=18), managers (n=6), and some staff (n=13), they highlighted the need to complete a formal apprenticeship as well as accumulate years of experience (i.e., build a reputation) before being considered a master leatherworker. In short, the title of master leatherworker is bestowed by the greater *garankew* community to select individuals who have “proven” their skill through a combination of structured training and professional experience in a public arena.

Camara explains that he was around the age of six when he went to live with his uncle to begin his training as a *garanke*. “*A ye mogo djugu ye*” (he was a mean person), recalled Camara as he reminisced over his uncle training him. Camara went on to

describe that his uncle lived outside Bamako and served as a regional *garanke* – tanning goat-, sheep-, cow-, and horse-hides, along with the occasional wild animal hide – for several “suburban” neighborhoods. At the same time that Camara’s uncle processed animal hides for a fee, he also bought hides and sold them for a profit in urban markets like the *Artisana*.

In addition to training Camara in tanning and selling hides, his uncle also instructed him on how to manufacture leather goods – another aspect of the business. When his uncle died in the late 1970s, Camara took over the business. In doing so he moved into the city and worked as a neighborhood *garanke*, much like his uncle had. However, Camara focused more on manufacturing leather goods than processing and tanning hides for profit. After several years of saving his money and building a reputation as a skilled craftsman, he married and had children. After his first son was born in 1984 Camara found an opportunity (i.e., he used his social network) to rent a shop in the *Artisana*. He has been there ever since, making and selling a wide variety of leather goods made from both domestic and wild animal hides. His son has followed his footsteps and works along side him. In addition to training his son, since the mid-1990s Camara has also accepted two apprentices to learn the art of working leather.

Camara, like the other seven elder shop owners, is recognized as an individual who possesses a high degree of skill and knowledge of working leather – individuals like him are repositories of leatherworking knowledge. They have acquired these characteristics through years of instruction, practice, and building reputations as skilled craftsmen. This is not to suggest that other shop owners are not knowledgeable about working leather, or without skill. Rather, it suggests shop owners possess varying

degrees of experience and knowledge. Moreover, those with the most experience and knowledge (i.e., elder leatherworkers) are sought out to share what they know. This occurs through formal apprenticeships, where an individual works for several years under a master craftsman, as well as informal exchanges between leatherworkers.

To elucidate, the ten shop owners not recognized as elder master leatherworkers, regularly seek out those who are for advice. In fact, Coulibaly, one of the eight elders, regularly commented on being pestered by another younger shop owner, Maiga: “*a ye ni tooro ye*” (he annoys me). When Maiga opened his shop in the *Artisana* in 1998, he was relatively inexperienced and turned to his neighbor, Coulibaly, for aid. At first, Coulibaly offered his help by introducing Maiga to suppliers and other key individuals in the market. Over time, Maiga went from asking about where to get supplies and materials at low prices, to inquiring about specific leatherworking techniques – knowledge unique to master leatherworkers. For example, “he [Maiga] wanted to know how I made a bag,” explained Coulibaly – a technique he did not want to share with the newcomer. Diawarra, another elder shop owner, provides further support commenting on how younger shop owners “they want to know, but can not learn.” Souri, my primary research consultant and one of the most respected elder shop owners in the *Artisana*, echoed Diawarra’s observation: “they are businessmen, not ‘*garankew*’ - they want what has taken me all my life to learn”.

However, while elder shop owners often withhold their unique knowledge from younger shop owners, they also provide leatherworking knowledge to a select few. For example, Coulibaly initially aided Maiga in making business connections in the *Artisana*. When I asked him why he would do this (i.e., aid a potential competitor), he explained

that by helping Maiga, Maiga would be indebted to him: “before, I thought I could help him, after he could help me.” This theme of reciprocity is part and parcel to the development of alliances between shops. Had Maiga proven himself to be a “*mogo bonyan*,” or respectable person, I suspect Coulibaly would have shared some of his knowledge. By repeatedly asking Coulibaly for insight and information, Maiga made it clear that he had little to offer the relationship. As such, Coulibaly stopped sharing with Maiga altogether.

In summary, leather shop owners are a diverse lot. In general there is a division between elder master leatherworkers and younger novice shop owners. Elder master leatherworkers are recognized as repositories of *garanke* knowledge and are often sought out by new shop owners for a variety of reasons. Some need help in developing contacts to facilitate their business, while others desire intimate details on the production of specific leather goods. Depending on how the elder master leatherworker assesses the newcomer (i.e., their potential contribution to the relationship), they may or may not become allies. If the elder master leatherworker values the skills or abilities of a newcomer, they may adopt them as an ally, and share their leatherworking insights. However, these relationships are based on reciprocity and nothing is given away freely – allies are expected to return favors and insights to maintain the relationship.

Managers

Interestingly, there is a division among owners who regularly work in their shop and those who do not. If the owner is not present in the shop (i.e., spends significant amounts of time away engaged in other activities) they tend to select a single individual from

within the shop to serve as a manager, occasionally referred to as a *lieutenant* (n=6), directing shop operations and producing wildlife goods in the place of the owner. This is what is seen in the examples of Souri and Traoré (both use their eldest sons as managers in their absence). In fact, all six owners that used managers (see Table 11: Summary data on actors and their roles within leather shops of the *Artisana*) drew on family members that they had trained to fill their shoes, sort to speak. In line with this, other owners (n=5) report having inherited the position of *patron* from a family relative that they worked with or even apprenticed under.

To further describe the position and roles of managers I will draw on the cases of Salif (Souri's eldest son) and Aliou (Traoré's eldest son). While Salif manages a generalized shop that produces a wide variety of leather goods, Aliou manages a boutique specializing in foot-ware. Though each manages a different type of leather shop, both perform the same basic duties as managers. For example, both Salif and Aliou are sons of elder master leatherworkers who trained them from a young age to become *garankew*. Salif once recounted how Souri (his father) would make him tan animal hides, "everyday, morning to night." Aliou voiced similar, *nenafin*, or nostalgia over his father (Traoré) teaching him how to stitch leather shoes by hand when he was boy: "it used to be hard - now, I have become strong!" To drive his point home he flexed his arm for me to see the strength he had acquired through his apprenticeship – his arm rippled with muscle.

After formally apprenticing under their respective fathers, Salif and Aliou took on more responsibilities and became full-fledged leatherworkers in the *Artisana*. Both men began to make and sell leather goods (many made with wildlife) under the direction of their fathers. In the case of Salif, he was later joined by two of his younger brothers

(Bakary and Lassina) after they had undergone the same apprenticeship he had endured. In the case of Aliou, his father hired the son of a relative who had already completed an apprenticeship under another master *garanke* in the town of Segou.

With additional shop staff on hand, Salif and Aliou were immediately elevated to supervisory positions (i.e., managers) based on their level of experience in comparison to the newcomers. At the same time, Souri and Traoré began to spend less time working in their shops, letting their eldest sons manage day-to-day activities. However, both shop owners keep regular tabs on the happenings in their boutiques, checking in with their lieutenants and directing production as necessary.

As managers, Salif and Aliou take on many of the responsibilities of shop owners – positions they will most likely inherit. Of the six participating managers, all identify their daily duties as oriented around routine shop operations. For instance, managers often use phrases like, “*ne be ta ka boutiqi diale*” (I am going to open the boutique), or “*kalo sera*” (the month has ended – implying that rent is due). Other examples come from conversations between managers and the staff they are responsible for. To paraphrase in English, “he [the shop owner] wants the rest of the belts and wallets finished today,” outlined one manager to his underlings. Another manager I came to know was more heavy handed in directing shop operations, using threats to coerce his staff: “I [the manager] will tell the big boss that you are lazy and do nothing all day but drink tea!”

Though Salif and Aliou are managers, they have different feelings about their duties and the future that awaits them as shop owners. In speaking with Salif, he highlights the value of his father’s instruction: “he taught me to be a *garanke*, now I teach

my son.” Specifically, Salif cites his father’s training as formative to his status as a *garanke*. Moreover, Salif values the lessons he acquired from his father enough to impart them to his first-born son.

In addition to valuing the leatherworking knowledge provided by his father, Salif also has the personal goal of achieving the status and reputation his father currently holds – an elder master leatherworker. “I can make many things, but I want to become a ‘big leatherworker,’” explains Salif, nodding his head in his father’s direction. Salif’s point is clear, he aspires to be as big a leatherworker as Sourì, his mentor and father.

In comparison to Salif stands Aliou. Unlike Salif, Aliou is not very interested in becoming a *garankeba*, or big leatherworker (i.e., a master leatherworker). Rather, Aliou looks forward to the day when he takes over his father’s shop: “he cannot work hides because he is an old man – his hands tremble,” suggesting Traoré has outlived his usefulness as a leatherworker. In line with this Aliou believes: “soon, Allah will greet him, then I will be the boss and I can make the decisions.” In particular, Aliou wants to diversify shop production to include more than just *sanbara*, or shoes – the shop’s current specialization based on the expertise of Traoré. “People want shoes, but people also want other things,” explains Aliou. “Other things” is a reference to other leather goods like belts, bags, and wallets. “If we make other things, we can find money,” clarifies Aliou.

In summary, while Salif and Aliou are each managers (albeit in different types of leather shops), they highlight a range of values shared with the other four managers, in varying degrees. At one extreme is Salif, who values the mentorship of his father and aspires to be as great a leatherworker as Sourì. At the other extreme is Aliou, who is

patiently awaiting the passing of his father and mentor to inherit the position of patron, to run the shop as Aliou sees fit.

Staff

At the bottom of a shop's hierarchy is its staff (n=29), commonly referred to as "baradenw," or workers. Unlike previous shop positions, which tend to be supervisory or executive in nature (i.e., owners and managers), staff positions reveal an amazing array of activities in working for leather shops of the *Artisana*. Shop staff is regularly advanced money by owners and managers to purchase supplies necessary for producing wildlife commodities (i.e., wildlife hides, sewing needles, high-strength nylon thread, leather dyes, tanning chemicals, paste wax, and contact cement). Similarly, owners and managers also use staff to run errands associated with maintaining a shop, but not part of producing wildlife commodities (buying tea, sugar, kola nuts, lunch, serving as couriers, storing inventory, and sweeping out the shop on a daily basis). In addition to providing unskilled labor (i.e., running errands), shop staff are also given the task of soaking and tanning wildlife hides, a process noted by all to be unpleasant at best. "A *kasa mine*," (it smells bad) noted one staffer as he maneuvered himself up-wind of a tub of soaking hides. Another, in the process of scrapping the excess flesh from several pegged out (i.e., stretched and nailed to a large flat board) monitor hides, wore sunglasses as eye protection and covered his nose and mouth with a cloth to avoid inhaling fine particulates.

Though staff spend a lot of time running errands, maintaining their shops, and doing unpleasant labor associated with tanning hides, they also help produce and sell

wildlife goods. For example, staff are often found producing standardized items like wallets or belts as they are “*a ma gelan ka dilan*,” (not hard to make) according to experienced leatherworkers (i.e., shop owners and managers). In fact, all shop owners (n=18) and managers (n=6) note that wallets and belts are the least complicated wildlife commodity to manufacture, as do many staff members (n=16). Other items that are more complex, like a bag or pair of shoes, require the skills of an experienced craftsman. Though owners and managers tend to be the most experienced members in a shop, other experienced staff (or particularly talented staff), also manufacture complex items (i.e., more than basic belts and wallets). In short, though staff are at the bottom of a shop’s hierarchy, they differ in experience and skill.

In general, the older the staff member, the more experience he has as a leatherworker, and the more responsibility he takes on in a leather shop. Younger staff members (under 20 years of age) tend to be unfamiliar with the finer details of leatherwork and as a result are given simple tasks designed to familiarize them with shop protocol and becoming a professional leatherworker. In comparison, older staff members (over 20 years of age) are given more complicated tasks to expand their skill set. Out of the 29 participating staff members, 16 are over the age of 20, while 13 are under. This roughly translates as 16 “experienced” staff and 13 staff “in training.”

In the previous example of the staff member commenting on the smell of his work, he was young and being “trained” in how to prepare wildlife hides – a prerequisite to being able to manufacture a wildlife commodity. In the second example where the man wore protection while scrapping hides, he was experienced enough (in his early

forties) to know that such work was potentially hazardous: “these things [the scrapings] burn if you get them in your eyes or mouth.”

Other examples of leather shop staff help to further elucidate the various roles they play in producing and selling wildlife goods. Kone, one of the 16 experienced staff members, has worked in the same generalized leather shop since the late 1980s. Kone describes how when he first started in the *Artisana* at the age of 15 (after a formal apprenticeship) his duties were restricted to soaking and tanning domestic animal hides before he was allowed to prepare more valuable wildlife hides like crocodile. “My boss wanted to know if I [Kone] could really work,” explains Kone. After a year of demonstrating a basic level of leatherworking skill, was Kone given the chance to prepare his first crocodile hide. “It cost a lot of money, you understand,” comments Kone. “My boss watched me closely, because he had given me a high quality crocodile hide,” clarifies Kone.

After proving his competence with tanning domestic and wild animal hides (the process that converts a raw hide to leather), Kone began to spend more time making items like belts and wallets. For roughly twenty years Kone worked in the same shop, and now has become a highly skilled and talented leatherworker (as recognized by the shop owner and Kone’s peers). He is respected by many and uses his experience to make bags and briefcases from a wide variety of wild species.

Bakary, Souri’s second eldest son, serves as another exemplar and highlights the graduated roles leather shop staff undergo working in the *Artisana*. For Bakary, he was born into the life of a *garanke* and completed a formal apprenticeship with his father. After commencing work as a low ranked leatherworker, Bakary too went through a series

of assessments that tested his leatherworking ability. However, unlike Kone, Bakary's employer was his father (Souri) and mentor (i.e., oversaw his apprenticeship). As such, Souri was much more familiar with Bakary's abilities than Kone's employer was of Kone. Because of this basic difference, Bakary did not have to prove himself able to tan domestic or wild animal hides as Souri has an intimate knowledge of his skills.

However, Bakary had to demonstrate his skill in manufacturing goods to a standard set by his employer and father. A standard that Bakary notes is very high indeed: "we only make the best things. "Before, he [Souri] used to hit me if I made a mistake," continues Bakary with a distant look on his face. "Now, he [Souri] cannot do anything – I do not make mistakes again," declares Bakary. Thinking twice, Bakary adds, "he [Souri] talks a lot of nonsense if he sees something bad [mistakes being made]."

In summary, shop staff range in experience and must demonstrate proficiency in specific leatherworking techniques and practices before receiving greater responsibilities within a leather shop. Shop staff, like Kone and Bakary, did not start in the *Artisana* as accomplished leatherworkers. Rather, they were indoctrinated into the world of leatherworking through an on-going process of trial and error. When novice leatherworkers exhibit their skill in a given technique, their employers grant them additional duties within a shop. The most extreme version of this is seen particularly well in the promotion of Salif and Aliou to managerial positions.

Extra Shop Members

In addition to regular shop actors (owners, managers, and staff), other individuals were also found to occasionally "work" in the same shop. To differentiate regular shop

positions and the actors that fill them, from those who are not typically present, I have created the category of “extra member” (see Table 11: Summary data on actors and their roles within leather shops of the *Artisana*). These extra members (n = 23) are highly diverse ranging from extended family and friends of shop vendors who just happen to spend their day hanging-out in the shop (much like I do), to individuals in need of shop materials. For example, Bagayago is a retired traditional *garanke* who spends a couple of days a week hanging out in the shop of an extended family member, a man named Sekou. Similarly, Fassim, an unemployed thirty-year-old man, routinely visits and spends several hours a week in his uncle’s shop. The primary reason Bagayago and Fassim spend so much time in their relatives leather shops is that they are in need of financial assistance. Interestingly, Bagayago receives small sums of money (500 – 5000 CFA) fairly regularly from Sekou, while Fassim rarely collects a token handout of a couple hundred CFA. Based on my understanding of the actors involved, I suspect that Bagayago receives more aid, more frequently than Fassim, because he is a retired *garanke* who has achieved the respected status of an elder. In comparison, Fassim is physically fit and able to work, but often falls short of his family’s expectations. He was last gainfully employed as a security guard – it lasted a week because he kept falling asleep on his night shift.

In addition to extended family hanging out and seeking financial assistance, some leather shops allowed outsiders to use their space and equipment to manufacture their own goods. Some of the goods produced by extra members remain in the shop they are made (to sell on commission), while other objects travel with their maker to be sold elsewhere, like western hotel gift shops. Such is the case for Ousmani and Abdou, two men who are related to two different generalized leather shops. I met Ousmani only

once, but learned that he works in the gift shop of one of the largest western hotels in Bamako. To supply the gift shop with leather goods (a few wildlife products among them), Ousmani makes use of his relationship to the owner of a generalized leather shop. Through this relationship with the owner, Ousmani has negotiated use of the shop's equipment and space (though he has to pay for his own supplies). Abdou, on the other hand, is the son of a generalized leather shop owner and occasionally makes a few items like belts and wallets to be sold in the shop. For this work, his father allows that Abdou receives half of whatever his products earn.

Still other shops hire on staff to work outside of the shop. For example, a few generalized leather shops (n=4) hire extra members to sell their goods on the street (i.e., outside of the *Artisana* – a practice deemed illegal by the *Artisana* administration according to shop actors). To illustrate, Fodé and Tasa work “under the table” for two different generalized leather shops. Their work requires them to load backpacks with shop merchandise and sell it on the street (particularly in front of western hotels). In recompense, the respective shop owners Fodé and Tasa work for pay them a small percentage of the profits they generate. According to Fodé he earns ten percent of what ever he sells. Tasa describes his pay as, “*a ma ca*” (it is not a lot).

Other times, shop owners (n=12) bring in additional help when needed. This tends to occur during tourist season, the coolest part of the year (November to January) when leather shops increase production to meet demand (it also serves as a cultural display, or performance to attract potential clients). One standout involved four regular shop members (an owner and three staff) working collaboratively with four additional family members to produce wallets. Much more typical examples include calling in one

or two additional helpers. For instance, Ibrahim and Diakari are the sons of a generalized leather shop owner. Both men are in their early-twenties and attend college at the University of Bamako. During tourist season, Ibrahim and Diakari are hired by their father to help produce wildlife goods like belts and wallets made from black cobra, monitor lizard, rock and ball python. For their labor, Ibrahim and Diakari earn a portion of what their father believes he can sell their work for.

In summary, extra shop members are a highly diverse category of actors. They range from extended family hanging out, to outsiders negotiating use of shop space and equipment, to calling on kin to help meet increased demand for wildlife goods during tourist season. Though extra shop members provide additional insights into the operations of leather shops, their contribution to my primary research focus – wildlife use – is limited. However, the few extra shop members who directly comment on wildlife and its use in leather shops of the *Artisana* help to describe a spectrum of wildlife values across multiple types of leather shop actors.

Notes

ⁱ I do not include the few carvers and sculptors in my primary research group.

ⁱⁱ *Batraden* is an insult common among family and non-family members. In either case it calls into question an individual's paternity, a strong insult indeed given the central nature of family to Malian life (i.e., family is your primary support network). Many times I have seen the term used by an elder in scolding the actions of a younger individual. For instance, I once saw a young Malian boy (approximately 3-5 years old) running around wildly. Unfortunate for the boy, he ran into a passerby, an elderly Malian man (approximately 50-60 years old). Upon being bumped into and almost knocked down, the *kekoroba* (elderly man) began berating the young boy. He demanded to know where his mother was and when the boy hesitated, the *kekoroba* seethed the words “*batraden*,” and went on his way.

CHAPTER VI

WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE *ARTISANA*

Leather shop actors (i.e., owners, managers, staff, and extra members) present a spectrum of values associated with specific species, and wildlife products in general. Through informal interviews with leather shop actors over the course of nine months several key themes were encountered. Perhaps the most fundamental theme highlighted by shop actors is that wildlife is valued as an economic resource. After all, wildlife is the very medium through which leatherworkers make a living (i.e., it is instrumental to their profession). As such, it is no surprise that 100% of participating shop actors (e.g., shop owners, managers, and staff) cite wildlife primarily as an economic resource.

To get a better sense of the ways in which wildlife is valued primarily as an economic resource, consider the ways in which different shop actors refer to wildlife. For shop owners, 100% discuss wildlife in relation to its monetary worth, or highlight key species as essential to their profession as leatherworkers and businessmen. For example, Sekou, a generalized leather shop owner, comments: “wild animal hides are money!” Oumar, the owner of a shop specializing in foot-ware, individually highlighted several species as key to his business: “I want crocodile, savannah monitor, Nile monitor, ball python, and rock python.” As he lists his desired species, Oumar points to examples of each hanging on the walls of his shop, exuding pride in his craftsmanship. Similarly, “Grandpa” Sylla, the elderly owner of a shop specializing in trophies, itemizes a lengthy list of species he seeks to ply his trade: “leopard, lion, serval, caracal, bushbuck, red-flanked duiker, common duiker, I want all crocodiles, and roan antelope.” Each of these species Grandpa Sylla prepares as trophies primarily for “Arabs and Westerners.”

Managers present comparable statements that also underscore wildlife primarily as a resource essential to their livelihood. In fact, 100% of managers speak of wildlife in relation to its instrumentality. For example, Salif (Souri's eldest son and lieutenant), tells me: "we want wild animal hides to make things." Aliou too, shares the same basic conceptualization of wildlife as a vital economic resource: people come here to buy shoes – they really like crocodile shoes." Others like Yaya and Abdoulaye, the managers of two different generalized leather shops further highlight wildlife hides as key to their trade. According to Yaya: "Wild animal hides are attractive/pretty." We make things with wild animal hides because people want attractive/pretty things," explained Yaya. Abdoulaye comments: "Westerners give me money to make bags – they all want wild animal hides!"

Leather shop staff were equally vocal about the essential nature of wildlife hides to their work in the *Artisana*. Given the hierarchical, yet intimate, structure of leather shops, it is not surprising that 100% of participating staff (be they "experienced" or "in-training") highlight the importance of wildlife as an economic resource. For instance, Samba, a man in mid-twenties and staff member of a generalized leather shop observes: "if there are no wild animal hides, we cannot make anything." Though Samba is not being literal (i.e., that he cannot make anything but wildlife products), he is suggesting wildlife hides are crucial to leatherwork. Cissé, a leather worker in his early-twenties and staff member of another generalized leather shop, similarly notes the centrality of wildlife to his profession of a leatherworker: "every day I work wild animal hides to make things for westerners." Kelly, another generalized shop staff member, in his mid-thirties,

remarks: “we want wild animal hides to find/win money,” further underscoring that wildlife hides are key to making a living as a leatherworker in the *Artisana*.

Just as owners, managers, and staff emphasize the economic importance of wildlife to their trade, so do extra shop members. However, unlike regular shop members (e.g., shop owners, managers, and staff), who regularly work with wildlife hides, extra shop members may or may not. Of the 23 participating extra shop members, roughly 75% (n=17) highlight the economic value of wildlife in our dialogues.

For example, Bagayago a distant relative to Sekou, a previously mentioned generalized leather shop owner, is a retired traditional *garanke*. Though he never worked in the *Artisana*, he now spends a day or two each week in Sekou’s shop – largely in search of financial assistance from his younger relative (Sekou). On one occasion while speaking with Sekou about the species he uses in producing wildlife commodities, Bagayago interrupts and offers his own perspective. To paraphrase: “rich people do not want goat leather – they want pretty things.” Bagayago’s comment strikes me for two reasons. First, he suggests that “rich people” (*patron ba*) are the primary clientele base for leather shops, and second, that they have discerning tastes. Specifically, “rich peoples” tastes are geared toward “pretty things” (*fenw joli*) – wildlife goods.

In another case, Fodé, a street vendor in his late-twenties associated with a generalized leather shop in the *Artisana*, provides further support of extra shop members stressing the need for wildlife to make a living. In short, Fodé takes goods made in a generalized leather shop and sells them to tourists on the street as well as in front of western hotels throughout Bamako. Though he is not a leatherworker, Fodé readily recognizes: “westerners like wallets, but they like snake and crocodile skin.” For selling

wallets and other small wildlife goods to tourists Fodé receives a small percentage of the profits from the shop owner.

Situated Values

Though owners, managers, staff and extra shop members emphasize the fundamental value of wildlife to leather shops and actors of the *Artisana* (i.e., its economic value), each category of actor contextualizes their values of wildlife in different ways. All (100%) elder shop owners and master leatherworkers (n=8) regularly describe their understanding of wildlife through the oral history and traditional practices of *garankew*. For instance, Yousef, an elder shop owner and master leatherworker notes: “a long time ago, leatherworkers used to work wild animal hides to give to the king.” “Now, we work wild animal hides to sell to big bosses/rich people,” explains Yousef. Such insight speaks to the position of the actor and highlights how relative knowledge and personal experience situates a given actor’s wildlife values. In this case Yousef is situating his valuation of wildlife through his understanding of the historic role that *garankew* played in pre-colonial times, in comparison to his contemporary role as a modern *garanke* producing wildlife goods for the new elite – rich people.

Other owners similarly situated their wildlife values *vis a vis* their knowledge and experience. For example, Grandpa Sylla, the elderly owner of a shop specializing in trophies, also contextualizes his valuation of wildlife through oral traditions. Specifically, Grandpa Sylla recalls: “*garankew* used to make ‘robes’ with lion and leopard.” “They would give the ‘robes’ to the rulers,” explained Grandpa Sylla. “Only

rulers used to be able to wear lion and leopard,” continued Grandpa Sylla. “Now, everyone can buy lion and leopard hides,” concluded Grandpa Sylla.

Such sentiments parallel those of Yousef, underscoring the oral history of *garankew* as providing wildlife goods to the ruling elite in pre-colonial times. Furthermore, both Yousef and Grandpa Sylla recognize a fundamental shift in how wildlife was previously used by *garankew*, in comparison to how it is used today. However, the relative perceptions of contemporary leatherworking practices of Yousef and Grandpa Sylla differ to a small degree. While Yousef suggests the modern equivalent of a *masake* (male ruler or king) is a *patron ba* (big boss or rich person), Grandpa Sylla offers that in the contemporary world, *everyone* has access to what were once commodities reserved for the elite.

Though elder shop owners and master leatherworkers tend to have their unique perception on contemporary wildlife practices, all highlight the historic role of *garankew* in serving the wants and needs of the pre-colonial elite, or *masaya*. Interestingly, 100% of younger shop owners (n=10) also note the history of *garankew* and its relation to contemporary practices in the *Artisana*. However, while elder master leatherworkers tend to present details as to the ways in which *garankew* served the *masaya*, younger shop owners offered more generalized comments. In other words, most (80%) younger shop owners mention their historic connection to traditional *garankew*, but provide little (if any) detail as to specific relationships between leatherworkers and the pre-colonial ruling elite. For instance, where Yousef and Grandpa Sylla provide some insight into exchange systems between *garanke* and *masaya*, younger shop owners tend to gloss the relationship. Specifically, most younger shop owners describe the historic relationship

between *garankew* and *masaya* along the lines of “*pratiques traditionnelles*” (traditional practices), “*traditions anciennes*” (ancient traditions), or “*laada*” (tradition/custom). The remaining two younger shop owners (20%) are unique in that they present details akin to the knowledge of elder master leatherworkers. In particular they each note that *garankew* are but one of several service oriented classes organized under the pre-colonial institution of *Nyamakalayaw*.

Though there are differences between elder and younger shop owners, all (100%) emphasize that using wildlife has always been an essential aspect of being a *garanke* and will continue to be so. Similarly, 100% of participating managers and staff present analogous understandings of the role of *garanke* and their special claim over wildlife. This is understandable given that many managers and staff have completed apprenticeships under master *garanke*. Others, who have not completed a traditional apprenticeship, acquire this knowledge through working in a leather shop. In either case, elder, more experienced *garanke* impart the oral history of leatherworking to the younger generation. However, just as elder master leatherworkers possess extensive knowledge of *garanke* history while younger shop owners tend not to, we see a similar pattern with “experienced” staff and those who are “in-training.” Specifically, 100% of experienced staff (n=16) provides details of the historic relationship between *garanke*, wildlife and the ruling elite; in comparison, roughly 30% of staff in-training (n=13) note particular details regarding the historic role of *garanke*. The remaining 70% of staff in-training tend to speak in general terms, like younger shop owners.

Other leather shop actors situate their wildlife values to underscore pride in their craftsmanship. Out of 53 participating leather shop actors (i.e., owners, managers, and

staff^d), approximately 73% highlight great satisfaction, if not outright pleasure, in converting wildlife into commodities. In juxtaposition to this, the remaining 27% of shop actors (many of whom are relatively young and inexperienced) perceive working as a *garanke* along the lines of “*barra be barra*” (work is work). This latter group highlights the financial gains they make as a result of working as *garankew*.

Individuals like Oumar, the owner of a shop specializing in foot-ware, takes great pride in crafting wildlife hides into functional, yet artistic commodities. “I like to make crocodile shoes,” shares Oumar. Pulling a pair of shoes off the wall behind him, Oumar hands them to me and explains: “You see? I put the ‘points’ down the middle.” The “points” he is referring to are the bony scutes (keeled scales) that run down either side of a crocodile’s dorsal surface. By placing the keeled scales in two parallel lines down the front and heel of the shoes, Oumar thinks the shoes look more like living crocodiles: “they become real crocodiles!”

In another ethnographic example, Alassane, an experienced and talented *garanke* working for a generalized leather shop (i.e., a staff member), expounds on his latest creation, what he calls a “*sac de chasseur*,” or hunter’s bag. “Hunters used to make bags out of the entire lizard - they gutted it and used the tail as a strap,” explains Alassane. However, Alassane’s creation, is just that, *his* creation, and bears little resemblance to the hunter’s bag he describes. Through his craftsmanship, Alassane makes it appear as if the monitor lizard has been compressed accordion-style, with its head and feet stuffed and hanging as accents. The tail of the lizard serves as the shoulder strap, however it is no longer recognizable as the tail. This is because Alassane cut off the tail, transforming it

into a uniform strip of monitor leather, that he later reattached to serve as a shoulder strap.

Admittedly, I found Alassane's hunter's bag amusing and disturbing at the same time. However, the situated wildlife values of the different types of leather shop actors bring to light the question of who buys wildlife goods? Or more precisely, what "types of people" (*mogow jumen*) do leather shop actors identify as clientele. The answers I received to this line of questioning are wide ranging and present a spectrum of insight. On one end are general insights, or knowledge into wildlife product consumers, while on the opposite end of the spectrum are much more specific comments on who purchases what, and preferences associated with particular types of clients.

In terms of general knowledge into wildlife product consumers, leather shop actors identify several "types" of clients. There are *patron ba* (big boss/rich person), *waritigi* (rich person/proprietor of money), *waritigiba* (big rich person/proprietor of large sums of money), *tubabuw* (westerners/white people), *les gens riches* (rich people), *les Blancs* (the Whites), and *touristes* (tourists). All of these terms are often used synonymously, but are not necessarily the same given the positionality and specific context of the actors who voiced them. In other words, just as leather shop actors situate their wildlife values in relation to their personal experience and history, so to do they situate their knowledge of their clientele.

Case in point, in the previous section (wildlife values), Abdoulaye, the manager of a generalized leather shop enthusiastically responds to me asking him: "which people buy wild animal hide things?" "Westerners give me money to make bags – they all want wild animal hides," replies Abdoulaye. Previously mentioned leather shop actors like

Grandpa Sylla, Cissé, Bagayago, Fodé, Ibrahim and Diakari, as well as Yousef, present comparable statements where a general type of client is identified in relation to their work - particularly *tubabuw* and *patron ba*.

However, as alluded to above in the descriptions of Sekou and Bagayago as well as Yousef and Grandpa Sylla, *patron ba*, or rich people, are not by default foreign white people, or *tubabuw*. As such, *patron ba* can refer to a western tourist, expatriate, or a wealthy Malian. This is an important point to clarify; otherwise one might suspect that only rich *tubabuw* purchase wildlife goods from the leather shops of the *Artisana*, when in fact, affluent foreign nationals and Malians are the primary consumers of wildlife goods.

Moving beyond general descriptions of wildlife product consumers, many leather shop actors voiced specific associations between commodities, styles, species and clientele. In doing so, leather shop actors further contextualize clients as either being foreigners, or Malian. In describing foreigners, leather shop actors often use the terms *tubabuw* (westerners/white people), *les Blancs* (the Whites), and *touristes* (tourists) interchangeably, whereas when identifying a Malian consumer, terms like *maliden* (child of Mali - Malian), *malikaw* (person of Mali - Malian), *malice* (Malian man), *malimusso* (Malian woman), *Malien* (French for Malian), are used. In addition to these categories, leather shop actors on occasion provide others details that can help identify a client as being a foreign national, or Malian, such as ethnicity or nationality. In describing a foreign national, or tourist, leather shop actors may know their country of origin and cite it. For example, “*a bora Esipanyi*” (he/she came from Spain), “*a be bo Ameriki la*” (he/she came from America), and “*u bora Faransi la*” (they came from France).

Similarly, vendors can also discern ethnic identities and often use them to describe Malian customers. For instance, “*a ye fula*” (he/she is Fulani), “*a ye bamanan*” (he/she is Bamana), or even “*koroboro*” (a derogatory term for someone of the Songhrai ethnic group).

Using these identifiers aids in distilling bodies of existing knowledge (i.e., customer tastes, preferences, and inferred purchasing trends) for foreign and Malian wildlife product consumers. These tastes, preferences, and inferred purchasing trends, when taken together, constitute a body of knowledge – consumer knowledge, or knowledge of consumers – that facilitates leather shop actors meeting a wide range of demand. Within this body of consumer knowledge, leather shop actors discern patterns for foreigners and Malians, men and women alike.

Knowing the Consumer

In the sections that follow I outline and provide ethnographic examples of vendor knowledge concerning wildlife product consumers. Wildlife product consumers of the *Artisana* are divided into the following categories: foreigners and Malians. In outlining each category of wildlife product consumer, further subdivisions are made for males and females. I start with tastes, preferences and trends leather shop actors associate with male and female foreigners. I then elaborate patterns associated with Malian customers, paying special attention to distinctions made between men and women.

Foreign nationals are hands down the largest category of wildlife product consumer identified by leather shop actors of the *Artisana*. Leather shop actors comment more frequently about foreign consumers than they do Malian clients. Of the 53

participating shop actors (i.e., owners, managers, and staff), 100 % draw attention to the tastes and preferences of foreign wildlife product consumers, while at the same time roughly 65% underscore Malian values. In line with this difference in discussing different types of clients and their tastes, nine months of recording sales from participating leather boutiques supports the fact that foreigners purchase more than Malians. Of 95 sales recorded in 18 leather shops (15 generalized and 3 specialized shops), 72 transactions were with foreign nationals, whereas only 23 were with Malians. In other words, a little over 75% (75.78%) of all recorded sales were for foreign nationals, while Malian customers constituted roughly 24% (24.21%) of sales over a nine-month period.

Moustapha, an experienced staff member of a generalized leather shop, provides an excellent example of discerning the tastes and preferences of foreign wildlife consumers. In so doing, he makes distinctions between male and female predilections – a pattern repeated by approximately 80% of participating shop actors. The 20% of shop actors who did not differentiate male and female tastes opt to speak in general terms like “*tubabuw be saki fe*” (westerners like bags), or “*tubabuw be sintri fe*” (westerners like belts).

Moustapha confides in me that male tourists like: “backpacks made of crocodile and savannah monitor.” He goes on to identify that: “western women like all the bags!” Interestingly, roughly 70% of shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) make reference to western women and their apparent desire for bags. Asking Moustapha to clarify what types of bags (i.e., the style and species) *tubab* women prefer, he identifies “*les sacs à main, et les sacs à bandoulière*” (handbags and shoulder

bags) made with “*l’iguane, crocodile, et python*” (iguana, crocodile, and python). The French word “*l’iguane*” (iguana) is a colloquial descriptor for any of the three species of monitor lizard (*viranidae*) found in Mali (Nile, savannah, and desert varieties).

Other staff members voiced similar understandings of foreign tastes, marking differences between men and women. Soumaila, another experienced staff member of a generalized leather shop, offers additional insight and helps to further contextualize male and female preferences. “Western men like belts and wallets a lot,” notes Soumaila. In fact, roughly 75% of shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) note a similar pattern for western men.

In particular, Soumaila identifies that western men desire belts and wallets made from several reptilian species including black cobra, rock and ball python, Nile and savannah monitor, as well as crocodile. He further explains that he does not make many black cobra wallets because western men prefer black cobra belts: “westerners do not like black cobra wallets, they like black cobra belts.” However, Soumaila does not recognize such specificity with regard to rock and ball python, Nile and savannah monitor, as well as crocodile, highlighting foreign consumers as valuing them equally, regardless of the form they take (i.e., belt or wallet).

With regard to the wildlife and commodity preferences of foreign women, Soumaila remarks that: “western women like bags and big wallets [pocketbooks].” This commentary provides further support of Mustapha’s claim that western women like *all* the bags and adds large wallets to the repertoire of foreign women. This is particularly significant as approximately 70% of shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) point out that western women desire large wallets and/or pocketbooks.

Questioning Soumaila as to which species of wildlife *tubabuw musow* favor their bags and pocketbooks made with, he lists: “crocodile, savannah monitor, Nile monitor, ball python, and rock python;” some of the most common species used in producing wildlife goods. In fact, 100% of participating shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) identify these four species of reptile as fundamental to producing wildlife goods in the *Artisana*. Yet, after listing the four species of reptile women like (as bags and pocketbooks), Soumaila adds as an afterthought: “they [western women] like fur also.”

Though an afterthought, Soumaila’s comment parallels the perception of many other leather shop actors – 92% of participating shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) note that western women are known for appreciating the aesthetic contributions of fur trim to a variety of leather goods, while in general, western men do not. In particular leather shop actors identified four primary types (species) of fur that western women are attracted to: *waranikalan* (leopard), *waraba* (lion), *n’golo kadi* (serval), and *warani* (caracal) also known as *monoko* (*monogo*). As such, leatherworkers use these four species extensively to trim “female commodities,” or goods intended for women (i.e., shoes, handbags, purses, shoulder bags, and pocketbooks). For example, Traoré, the elder owner of a shop specializing in foot-ware, notes that western women: “like leopard [shoes] because it is pretty/attractive.” Aliou, Traoré’s son and shop manager, starts pointing out all the examples of women’s shoes trimmed or made with “*waranikalan*” currently for sale in the shop. Upon closer inspection, the shoes were in fact trimmed or made with a mix of *waranikalan* (leopard) and *n’golo kadi* (serval), the fur of which is a near perfect mimic to leopard. This issue of selling mimics of species

like leopard – part of a wide spread cultural practice known as *nanbara* – is discussed in detail in the following section: Finding Money and the Art of Nanbara.

While foreign women are understood (by leather shop actors) as being drawn to certain commodities trimmed or made with leopard, serval, lion, and caracal, foreign men are equally singled out for particular aesthetics. For instance, Grandpa Sylla, the owner of a shop specializing in trophies, identifies leopard, lion, serval, caracal, bushbuck, red-flanked duiker, common duiker, crocodiles, and roan antelope as primarily sought by, Arabs and westerners.” Probing further, Grandpa Sylla elaborates and clarifies that he is speaking specifically to the habits of foreign men. “Western men buy leopard [trophies] to say ‘I am a big boss!’ while Arab men buy leopard [trophies] to say ‘I am a big Muslim!’” explains the elderly and often sardonic Grandpa Sylla.

Though often cutting with his wit, Grandpa Sylla’s identification of leopard trophies as desirable to foreign men is shared by roughly 60% of participating shop actors (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes), while approximately 70% identify Nile crocodile and large rock python hides as particularly attractive as trophies. In addition to leopard, Nile crocodile and rock python, around 30% of shop actors mention foreign men being attracted to lion hide trophies.

Another preference identified by leather shop actors regarding foreign men is their desire for embossed and recessed accents like the customer’s initials, a silhouette of Mali, Africa, and the stylized image of a Malian deity – the *ciwara*. Of the 53 participating shop actors, roughly 35% (of the 80% who identify foreign male and female tastes) draw attention to the fact that foreign men appreciate embossed accents (be it a design or initials). Diarra, a staff member of a generalized leather shop, put it very

clearly when discussing tastes of foreign men and women when it came to wildlife goods: “men like ‘designs,’ women like pretty fur.” Sidiki, another generalized leather shop staff member, notes: “western men like the *ciwara* [design] a lot!” Keita, a staff member of a generalized leather shop that offers clients the option of having their purchase instantly embossed with initials, comments: “western men really like it [embossed initials]!”

In another ethnographic example, Bakary, the second eldest son of Souri, and staff member of a generalized leather shop, inspects the stitching on twenty wallets he is in the process of making. As he does so, I can see that each has one of three different designs on the exterior surface: an outline of Mali, an outline of Africa, or a depiction of the *ciwara*. Asking him about the designs, Bakary explains: “some like the Africa design, others like the *ciwara*, or Mali [designs],” stating the obvious. But then again, sometimes the obvious is often overlooked (Walsh 2005). Bakary underscores this exact point as I try to get his insight on who (i.e. what type of clients) purchase wallets with designs. “Those with money [in hand],” explains Bakary with a wry smile. In short, Bakary takes my question literally, and in so doing suggests that the type of client is not important (to him) as long as clients (foreign or Malian) have money in hand to purchase wallets and other wildlife goods.

Bakary’s statement of the obvious helps to contextualize vendor’s perceptions of non-foreign clients – Malians – as wildlife product consumers. Though not the primary clientele of leather shops in the *Artisana*, approximately 65% of participating shop actors (n=53) recognize that wealthy and affluent Malians purchase wildlife commodities. Furthermore, just as leather shop actors accumulate a body of knowledge regarding

foreign clients (their tastes, preferences, and purchasing trends), vendors possess analogous insights concerning Malian wildlife consumers.

Roughly 80% of participating shop actors (of the 65% who identify Malian wildlife consumers) note their Malian clients as being wealthy and having a high social rank, or status. Boubacar, a staff member of a generalized leather shop shares his perception of Malian wildlife consumers: “some are businessmen, some are rich people, some others are women/wives whose men/husbands gave them money to come here [the leather shop].” Such a statement helps to contextualize Malian clients as being businessmen, or *hommes d'affaires* (i.e., they work for their money), while others are inherently rich, or *nafalotigiw* (i.e., they were born into a wealthy family). Interestingly, descriptors like *nafalotigiw* are not gender specific and in this case could refer to either Malian men or women. Others still, are described as wives of men. Vendors often assume that only rich men are able to give their wives money to purchase luxury goods like wildlife commodities from leather shops of the *Artisana*.

Other shop actors, like Cheick, the owner of a generalized leather shop since the early 1990s, distills his clientele: “some [clients] are westerners, some [clients] are rich Malians.” To elucidate, Cheick describes how several famous (and by default wealthy) Malians visit his shop to purchase wildlife goods – a (sub)theme shared by approximately 50% of shop actors (of the 65% who discuss Malian wildlife consumers). In particular, a popular Malian musician commissioned Cheick to make a rock python bag to carry his electric guitar – the price for which was 80,000 CFA. Cheick tells me that when the musician picked up his order, he liked it so much “he gave me another 20,000 CFA” – for a grand total of 100,000 CFA. Another wealthy Malian who regularly travels to Europe

on business trips purchases small items like crocodile wallets; python bill folds, and monitor lizard change purses from Cheick's shop to give as gifts to his foreign colleagues. In this case, Cheick highlights the repeat business of the Malian customer and the profits he generates: "every time [he comes] he buys ten to twenty wallets – I can find 35,000 to 50,000 CFA." According to Cheick, the Malian businessman visits his shop once every few months – creating a repeat customer whom the shop anticipates. Roughly 35% of shop actors (of the 65% who discuss Malian wildlife consumers) highlight repeat business from Malians. However, all shops that highlight repeat business with Malians also identify specific practices to retain the client for future business.

To ensure that a high profile Malian client is served and retained for future business, many shops set aside specific and high quality commodities for their perusal. Cheick sets aside wallets that he thinks the businessman will be interested in. "He likes the very best [quality], you understand," explains Cheick. Pulling a beat-up cardboard box from under the bench we sat upon, Cheick shows me some of the "quality" pieces that he has set aside for the businessman – all are made with crocodile, savannah monitor, or rock python. None had any *disini*, or designs embossed on their exterior surface, but all were superior examples of craftsmanship in comparison to the wallets Cheick had out on display to sell to others customers (i.e., non-Malian, or foreign clientele). However, Cheick confirms that he is not opposed to selling the quality wallets to someone other than the wealthy Malian businessman. As such it is clear that while Cheick anticipates the profits he can generate through repeat business with the Malian businessman, he is also ready to sell them to anyone and make an immediate profit.

In speaking with leather shop actors about the tastes and preferences of Malian men and women, several commodities and species are identified in common. The most frequently mentioned commodities sought by Malian men include wallets and briefcases; made with crocodile, rock python, savannah monitor, or Nile monitor. Approximately 90% of participating shop actors (of the 65% who identify Malian wildlife consumers), note this pattern. In addition to wallets and briefcases, roughly 30% (of the 65% who identify Malian wildlife consumers) also note that Malian men purchase belts made of the same species.

With regard to the wildlife commodity tastes and preferences of Malian women, another pattern is highlighted. The wildlife goods most desired by Malian women include bags and pocketbooks; made with crocodile, ball python, or savannah monitor. Moreover, shop actors stress that Malian women are attracted to goods trimmed and/or accented with the fur of leopard, serval, lion, or caracal. In fact, 86% of participating shop actors (of the 65% who identify Malian wildlife consumers), identify the same pattern for Malian women.

For example, Nouhoum, a generalized leather shop owner, recognizes Malian men: “like briefcases and big women/rich women like bags.” Dramane, another generalized shop owner and peer of Nouhoum, reports that Malian men “like wallets and belts, women like bags and big wallets [pocketbooks].”

Lamine and Balla, two more generalized leather shop owners, echo similar understandings of Malian wildlife consumers. “Malian men like crocodile or savannah monitor wallets and belts,” expounds Lamine. “But, others [Malian men] like crocodile or rock python briefcases,” adds Lamine. Expanding on his understanding of Malian

wildlife consumers, Lamine identifies that women are particularly partial to “leopard bags.”

Balla, a neighbor and colleague of Lamine, reports that “Malian women like all the bags!” To help explain the wildlife preferences of Malian women, Balla pulled several examples off the walls of his shop and showed them to me. “This bag, is made with savannah monitor; this one too is made with savannah monitor.” By going through several examples Balla outlines that Malian women prefer bags made from savannah monitor, crocodile, python (rock and ball varieties), “leopard” and “lion” (actually a mix of leopard, serval, and caracal – lion was not present in any of the goods Balla showed me).

After showing me the wildlife commodities Malian women tend to purchase, Balla points out that Malian men are fond of *porte-documents* (brief cases), *portefeuilles* (wallets), and *sintiri* (belts). Moreover, Balla identifies crocodile, savannah monitor, and rock python as three species that Malian men find attractive. As such, Balla and other shop owners make a point to direct the production of wildlife goods that are in line with their understanding(s) of male and female Malian clientele.

In addition to generalized leather shop owners monitoring and accumulating a body of knowledge concerning the wildlife preferences of Malian men and women, so too do specialized leather shop owners. To illustrate, Traoré and Oumar own leather shops specializing in foot-ware – both shop owners identify similar wildlife commodity trends for male and female Malian clients. However, unlike generalized leather shops whose primary clientele are foreigners, shops specializing in foot-ware primarily serve Malian men and women. In the case of Traoré, he proclaims that Malian men (*patron ba*)

“love crocodile shoes!” “They [Malian men] also love ‘iguana’ and python skin,” details Traoré. Looking around the shop it was clear that all of the men’s shoes were made from crocodile, savannah and Nile monitor (often referred to as ‘*l’iguane*’), as well as rock python.

Oumar, as previously noted, likes to make crocodile shoes. In the previous example, Oumar describes how he has incorporated the keeled scales of a crocodile into the design of a pair of shoes – believing that the overall effect make the shoes appear more like living crocodiles: “they become real crocodiles!” Asking who might purchase his “real” crocodile shoes, Oumar explains: “only big bosses can buy these shoes.” Probing further, Oumar shares his vision of what constitutes a *patron ba*: “he is a proprietor of large sums of money!” Continuing, Oumar believes: “maybe he works in a bank, or is a politician who works at the ‘Congressional Palace.’”

Asking about the other male foot-ware for sale in his shop, Oumar notes that: “big bosses buy a lot [of shoes], but sometimes western men buy a pair [of shoes].” Elaborating, Oumar breaks down the species desired by Malian men to include: *bama* (crocodile), *koro* (savannah monitor), *kana* (Nile monitor), and *minea* (rock python). For western men, Oumar identifies the same species, with the addition of *tomi* (ball python), and laughs at his own observation. Apparently, Oumar is committing a cultural *faux pas* by making male shoes with ball python. This is because ball pythons are associated with Malian women – an alternative term for ball python in Bamana is *muso sa*, or woman’s snake.

In going over the species considered desirable to Malian women, Oumar identifies ball python and savannah monitor as being particularly attractive. Yet, just as he made

distinctions between western and Malian men, he does the same for western and Malian women. In particular, Oumar notes that in addition to ball python and savannah monitor, western women find rock python, crocodile, and Nile monitor to be attractive – species often associated with Malian men. However, both Malian and foreign women desire fur trim on their shoes and Oumar uses this insight in producing goods to meet their demand. Specifically, Oumar ensures that he always has a selection (five to ten pairs) of women’s shoes on hand, trimmed or accented with leopard, serval, and caracal fur. Similar usages of fur trim to accent female wildlife commodities (shoes, bags, and pocketbooks) are seen throughout leather shops (generalized and specialized types) of the *Artisana*.

Managers follow suit in discerning the tastes and preferences of Malian women and men. Mama (short for Mamadou) and Issa are managers of generalized leather shops, much like Abdoulaye, Salif, and Yaya – previously mentioned generalized leather shop managers. In fact, when taken together, Mama, Issa, Abdoulaye, Salif, and Yaya account for all generalized leather shop managers (the remaining, Aliou, is the manager of a leather shop specializing in foot-ware). All five generalized leather shop managers identify two types of commodities made from three specific species that Malian men are particularly fond of: briefcases and wallets made from crocodile, rock python and savannah monitor. Interestingly, Aliou identifies the same species (crocodile, rock python and savannah monitor) with the addition of Nile monitor, as attractive to Malian men in their foot-ware.

With regard to Malian women, all five generalized leather shop managers provide details as to their tastes and preferences in wildlife commodities. For instance, Mama outlines that Malian women specifically desire “*saki*” (bags) and “*portefeuilles ba*” (large

wallets, or pocketbooks) made with “leopard, crocodile, savannah monitor, ball python and rock python.” Issa names the same commodities and adds a few more species to the growing body of knowledge, including “waraba” (lion), and “monogo” (caracal). In the same vein, Abdoulaye expands the list of species Malian women prefer (as bags and pocketbooks) to include “*n’golo kadi*” (serval), “*mangalani*” (red-flanked duiker), “*son*” (Dama gazelle), and “*siné*” (red-fronted gazelle). However, Abdoulaye is quick to point out that species like leopard, lion, serval, caracal, red-flanked duiker, Dama gazelle, and red-fronted gazelle are most frequently used as trim or accenting in bags and pocketbooks.

Other generalized shop managers note the same species and commodity types as attractive to female Malian clientele, though they use different terms to describe them. For example, Issa uses the phrase “*portefeuilles belebele*,” rather than “*portefeuilles ba*,” to describe female wallets, or pocketbooks. Others still, used the term “*portefeuilles belebeleba*” to describe the same commodity. Abdoulaye with his specialization in manufacturing bags for both Malian and foreign women uses specific French terms to describe particular types of bags, like “*sac à main*” (handbag), “*sac à bandoulière*” (shoulder bag), and “*porte-monnaie*” (purse). Though occasionally used by other shop actors, most tended to use the Bamana word “*saki*” as a general term for all types of bags.

Given the consistency of shop owners and managers to associate the same commodities and species for male and female Malian consumers (and foreigners as well), it is no surprise that leather shop staff follow-suit. Tyson, a fan of Mike Tyson (the world renowned boxer), is in his early twenties and has worked as a staff member to a generalized leather shop for roughly ten years. Based on his experience as a

leatherworker in the *Artisana*, Tyson observes that “Malian men and Malian women are not the same: men come here to buy big bags [briefcases] and wallets; women come here to buy small bags [purses] and big wallets [pocketbooks].”

Doudou, another experienced staff member working in a generalized leather shop remarks that Malian men often purchase, “wallets and briefcases in crocodile, boa and monitor [lizard].” In the case of Doudou, he uses the French terms “*le boa*” and “*le varan*” to describe rock python and savannah monitor, respectively. In terms of Malian women and their purchasing trends, Doudou points out about a dozen bags and pocketbooks as examples of what (he believes) Malian women desire – all are made from crocodile, savannah monitor, and ball python. Moreover, most of the purses and pocketbooks Doudou provides as samples, incorporate leopard, serval, and caracal fur trim in their manufacture.

In summary, when leather shop actor’s comments, remarks, examples and insights are taken together they reflect both general and specific bodies of knowledge concerning foreign and Malian wildlife product consumers. In general, leather shop actors recognize both foreign and Malian clientele to be wealthy – a prerequisite to being able to purchase wildlife commodities. More specifically, leather shop actors identify particular correlations between species and commodity types for foreign men and women as well as Malian men and women.

From the existing body of consumer knowledge for foreign men, leather shop actors identify three key commodities types as desirable – backpacks, belts, and wallets. However, this should not suggest that foreign men do not buy anything else – they do (e.g., trophies). Rather, these three commodities represent a general trend that leather

workers associate with foreign men (i.e., they make them with such men in mind). These three commodities are made using several species of wildlife that leatherworkers define as attractive to foreign men. These species include crocodile, savannah and Nile monitor, rock and ball python, as well as black cobra. In addition, leather shop actors also note that foreign men appreciate three types of designs in the wildlife goods they purchase (particularly on wallets) – a silhouette of Mali, Africa, or a stylized image of the *ciwara*. Others still, prefer their initials to be embossed on their purchase.

In comparison, leather shop actors present a different body of consumer knowledge for foreign women. Leather shop actors identify bags (e.g., purses, handbags, and shoulder bags), and pocketbooks (e.g., large wallets) as appealing to foreign women. However, just as is the case with foreign men, foreign women purchase other wildlife commodities as well (e.g., shoes). Bags and pocketbooks are made for foreign women with wild species that leatherworkers believe are attractive to them. Specifically, bags and pocketbooks are manufactured with one or more of the following species: crocodile, savannah and Nile monitor, rock and ball python, leopard, serval, lion, and caracal. With regard to the use of wild cats (e.g., leopard, serval, lion, and caracal), they are most frequently applied as trim or accenting to bags and pocketbooks, but on occasion is used as the dominant material in a given commodity.

For Malian wildlife product consumers, leather shop actors distill relative sets of knowledge for men and women and apply it in the fabrication of specific commodities. In particular, leather shop actors identify that Malian men tend to purchase wallets and briefcases made from crocodile, savannah and Nile monitor, as well as rock python. Yet,

these are not the only wildlife goods Malian men buy – they also have a fondness for shoes made of the same species.

With regard to the preferences and purchasing trends of Malian women, leather shop actors routinely identify two commodities: bags and pocketbooks. In addition to bags and pocketbooks, other shop actors note Malian women being attracted to shoes. Across these three commodity types (e.g., bags, pocketbooks, and shoes) leatherworkers name several species as central to manufacture and meeting the aesthetics of Malian women. Specifically, leather shop actors identify crocodile, ball python, and savannah monitor as being particularly attractive to Malian women. Moreover, leatherworkers incorporate (to varying degrees) fur trim and accenting from four species of wildcat – leopard, serval, lion, and caracal – in fabricating all three commodity types for Malian women.

However, things are not always what they appear to be. Case in point, leather vendors use select species of wildlife to mimic others in fabricating tourist goods – a cultural practice known as *nanbara*. *Nanbara* is not unique to the *Artisana*, it is found across Mali, and is practiced by men and women alike, regardless of age, social class, or ethnicity. It comes in many forms and serves different ends, depending on the actors involved. According to one of the most current lexicons of Bamana (2010), *nanbara* is a noun meaning “dishonesty” or “injustice” (www.bambara.org/lexique/lexicon/main.htm). However it is also utilized as a verb, as in “*nanbara ke*,” meaning “to be dishonest,” or “to cheat.” As one particularly eloquent Malian explained to me, “*nanbara* means getting the advantage” in a given context. This might be strictly social, as seen in young men attempting to secure favors with women (and vice versa). Or, more commonly, an

economic strategy oriented toward increasing ones financial standing at the expense of another. As such, *nanbara* is more than being dishonest, or being a cheat, it is a complex situation of wanting something and figuring out a way to get it. In the *Artisana*, *nanbara* is a key tactic employed by leather vendors to “find money.”

Finding Money and the Art of Nanbara

As highlighted in the previous sections on shop member values, leather vendors (i.e., shop owners, managers, and staff) rely on wildlife primarily as an economic resource. It is the bread and butter of their profession as leatherworkers. In other words, producing and selling wildlife commodities is done towards one specific end: “*ka wari soro*,” or to find money. To find money leather vendors apply the knowledge they have accumulated regarding their clientele toward meeting their particular wants and desires in the wildlife goods they produce. Moreover, leather vendors have such a keen insight into the tastes and preferences of their clientele (i.e., foreign men and women, as well as Malian men and women) that they are able to sell them mimics of the species they desire. Selling mimics of desirable species represents one of the most common forms of *nanbara* that is employed by leather vendors in their quest to find money.

Though several species are considered desirable by leather vendors, only two are routinely mimicked with other species: leopard and lion. Moreover, according to a survey of wildlife goods produced by leather shops (see Table 5: Wild mammals and commodity type), leopard and lion are predominantly utilized as the dominant and/or trim material in fabricating four commodity types: bags, shoes, trophies and wallets. All four of these commodity types are frequently manufactured with mimics of leopard and lion

fur in their respective shop types (i.e., generalized and specialized leather shops).

For example, Souri's shop has several items made with "leopard," including purses, wallets, pocketbooks, and a backpack. However, none of these items contain genuine leopard; all are made with serval. Souri and other vendors know the difference between leopard and serval, intentionally using one to mimic the other. To drive the point home, Salif, Souri's lieutenant coldly stated, "Westerners do not know anything," implying that most clients are none the wiser as long as the vendor maintains that the species in question is "leopard." In other words, vendors use their unique position and knowledge of their clientele to selectively negotiate one species for another.

To the untrained eye, serval fur looks similar to leopard fur. The key to distinguishing one from the other is found in the spots of each: leopards have spots arranged in a rosette pattern, while servals do not. Vendors bank on the fact that clients cannot tell the difference – one of the four principles of being a successful vendor (i.e., knowing more about what you sell than a client). If on the offhand chance that a customer knows the difference, vendors may keep a few authentic leopard products on hand. Serval is less expensive for a vendor to purchase in comparison to leopard. Vendors can purchase an average sized (1m x 50cm) serval pelt for 15-25,000 CFA, while an average sized leopard (1.5m x 1m) pelt costs 30-60,000 CFA. In addition to this cost differential, serval hides are better suited to the needs of vendors than leopard. Oftentimes vendors only require a small amount of fur to trim a commodity. However, wholesale suppliers and middlemen do not sell pieces of hides, they sell whole pelts. As such, it would not be in a vendor's interest to purchase an entire leopard pelt from a wholesaler; the cost exceeds their means. Vendors tend to only purchase leopard hides

when the price is too good to pass up – this is not uncommon when dealing with opportunist suppliers unfamiliar with hide prices in the *Artisana*.

Unlike “leopard,” which relies on a single species (i.e., serval), “lion” is mimicked by multiple species, including domestic cow, caracal, red-fronted gazelle, duiker, and roan antelope. Each of these species is used to varying degrees of effectiveness by vendors in *nanbara*-ing customers into believing that a product is made with lion. According to vendors, caracal is the best mimic as it is also a wildcat. The similarities continue in the length and coarseness of caracal fur – a near match to lion. Without any distinctive markings or patterns to distinguish it, caracal is a near perfect match to lion fur.

Unlike leopards, which appear to have sizable populations in western and southern Mali and are regularly harvested, lion populations have been greatly reduced in West Africa and are regionally endangered (Bauer and Nowell 2004). Mali has fewer than one thousand lions, most located in isolated areas in Western Mali – the Gangaran and Bafing (Informal interviews: Colonel Nagiri 2008; Hunter’s Guild - Kayes Region 1997-99, 2002, 2007-08). This difference in relative specie populations results in fewer lion products being made than leopard.

Similar to the prohibitive cost of leopard, lion demands a high price by wholesale suppliers. A medium sized lion hide (2m x 1.25m) sells wholesale for 100-150,000 CFA, when available. This price restricts lion to all but the wealthiest vendors, who alone can afford to purchase it. On rare occasions a middleman or hunter may offer the means to purchase a lion hide at a reduced price. For example, a middleman sold a lion hide to a vendor for 50,000 CFA – it was quite a coup, for the vendor. More typically vendors opt

for caracal because it costs substantially less than lion, there is a steady supply of it, and most importantly, it is a near perfect mimic for lion. The medium size caracal hide measures roughly 1m by 50cm and is sold wholesale for 10-30,000 CFA, depending on quality. By substituting a cheaper material (i.e., caracal for lion, or serval for leopard), vendors can make a sizable profit.

For example, Oumar, the owner of a shop specializing in foot ware, custom made a pair of “leopard” dress heels trimmed with “lion” fur for a wealthy Malian woman. The negotiated price for the custom heels was 85,000 CFA. Over the course of a week I watched Oumar make the shoes and noticed that he did not use leopard, or lion, as specified by the Malian woman who placed the order. Rather, he replaced leopard with serval, and used caracal fur to mimic lion fur. Oumar said: “lion and leopard cost a lot - I can change the hides, it’s not a problem.” Oumar’s use of the phrase “*problem ta la*,” or “it’s not a problem,” helps highlight the ease with which leather vendors exchange costly hides (e.g., lion and leopard) for less expensive ones (e.g., caracal and serval) in meeting the desires of clientele. The purpose of this deception is equally clear: to make a greater profit. Removing the inflated price for “leopard” and “lion trim,” the shoes would sell for around 30,000 CFA, based on similar products sold by Oumar and other shoe vendors in the *Artisana*. In this case, the customer was none the wiser; in fact she went on to recommend the vendor to other Malians, emphasizing the quality of his work, his honest and respectful manner, and low prices.

While leather vendors like Sour, Cheick, and Oumar, apply the principles of *nanbara* to exchange one species for another in producing wildlife goods; other shop members use it in different ways. Specifically, out of twenty-nine staff members, eleven

described how their superiors (e.g., shop owners and managers) directed them to work out in front of the store to keep a lookout for potential customers, and most importantly, tempt them into the shop to make a purchase.

For example, Salif, Souri's eldest son and manager, instructs Lassina (the youngest shop member) to work on small projects while sitting on the front stoop of the boutique. From his vantage point, it is Lassina's job to keep an eye open for potential customers, particularly tourists that are recognized as being "*riche*" (rich). Lassina told me that, although he is usually working on something (i.e., preparing tea, or polishing leather goods, "mindless" tasks), his real job is to entice a potential client to stop and take a look at the leather goods of his shop. This is when Lassina and other lookouts begin to work their magic; or rather apply their unique skills of *nanbara*.

When Lassina spots a potential client coming his way, he observes whether the individual is male or female, how he or she are dressed, does he or she look "wealthy" ("*wari ba bolo*," literally translated "money in their hand" – i.e., jewelry, fancy items like cameras, cell phones, ipods/mp3 players, etc.), and what language does he or she speak? Most who visit the *Artisana* use French as their primary means of communication, however other visitors lack this skill and must communicate in another language. For some vendors this presents a problem as they typically speak French along with a few local languages, for Lassina it does not. Lassina is used as the lookout because he excels at foreign and local languages and has a personality conducive to relieving other people of money. In addition to speaking Bamana, Fulani, Maraka, and French fluently, Lassina also speaks English, Spanish, and German at near proficient levels. His ability to speak

four Western languages and three local languages makes him particularly valuable to Souri's business as it allows the shop to cater to a wider range of clientele.

After profiling the potential client, Lassina will greet the person and engage in small talk to acquire more information, such as where the person is from, what they are doing in Mali, where have they been so far, how long will they be in Mali, what sort of work the person does, etc. The longer the conversation, the more Lassina and other lookouts can learn about the client and ultimately what they might purchase. In this conversation Lassina is all smiles, exuding a warmth that is genuinely part of who he is, though he puts it to good use on unsuspecting tourists. I have seen Lassina charm (i.e., *nanbara*) an elderly French woman (she was an ex-colonialist that stayed on in Mali) out of 60,000 CFA for a faux leopard fur handbag (the bag was trimmed in serval, not leopard, and was only worth 15-20,000 CFA). Granted, most of those upon whom Lassina works his magic do not buy anything; rather they take a look and continue on their way. However, Lassina is very good at what he does and he tempts more clients than any other lookout, getting most potential clients to at least stop and look over the goods offered. Once a potential client stops to look, Lassina will entice him or her into the shop. "Come in, look. Many nice things inside." Inside the boutique Salif and Bakary are usually busy fabricating various goods with wild animal hides. The two usually remain busy at their work until a potential client crosses the proscenium of the shop entrance. When such an individual enters the shop, Salif immediately puts aside whatever he is working on and stands up to greet the customer. He smiles and gestures for the client to examine the leather goods hanging on the walls of the two by four meter shop. Lassina usually takes the lead in making a sale, having already built a rapport with

the client through small talk. Salif, the shop manager, stands ready to jump in if needed. Bakary continues to work, sitting silently on the floor in the back corner of the shop.

While Lassina inquires as to what the customer is looking for, Salif starts pulling samples of the walls. If a customer shows interest in a given item, Lassina starts the bartering process by asking, “How much will you pay?” Customers usually seem confused by this approach, responding, “What do you mean ‘how much will I pay for it?’” or words to that effect. Some customers get upset at the very notion that the price is not clearly marked and storm away. Others are lured in. It is a very deliberate bartering tactic based on maximizing profit through limiting information; a set up to *nanbara* the client into paying more than the item is worth. Those who take the bait are usually in the dark as to what any given item is actually worth (based on material costs and time to produce the item) and offer a sum that is either above or below what the vendor desires. Given that vendors desire to make as much as possible, they will manipulate the customer through deception – specifically misinformation.

For example, on one occasion an Austrian tourist showed interested in a crocodile hide wallet. Lassina asked the man how much he would pay for it. The Austrian took a wild guess and offered a low figure, 2,500 CFA (about \$5.00). Lassina knew exactly how much time and material it took to make the wallet in question: about 2,000 CFA in materials and one day to make. For Lassina, the offered price 2,500 CFA is almost an insult, and he played it up as such, making a face and advising the customer not to waste his time. Biting deeper on the hook, the Austrian asked how much Lassina would take for the wallet. Taking the wallet in his hands, Lassina highlighted the quality of the crocodile hide, explaining, “This [skin] is the very best quality.” He further added that he

had paid a premium for it (a deception as the hide had a few blemishes) and as such he demanded a higher price. Other vendors use similar tactics telling potential clients, “We only use the very best quality,” “You will not find better quality,” and “Vendor X sells poorer quality for more.”

On this occasion, the Austrian was stumped by Lassina’s refusal to provide a counter offer. Seeing the Austrian’s confusion, Lassina continued to itemize the cost of making the wallet, recounting all the little details, claiming the wallet took over a week to fabricate (another deception as I watched the wallet take shape over the course of a day). Processing Lassina’s (mis)information, the Austrian reconsidered his initial price, and offered 10,000 CFA. Not letting up, Lassina went on to explain to the Austrian that a specialty tailor stitched the wallet with superior nylon thread, a service that cost him 2,000 CFA (an exaggeration as the wallet was stitched by the apprentice of a local tailor for 100 CFA). With this final detail, Lassina convinced the Austrian to pay 12,500 CFA – a good sale indeed as similar crocodile hide wallets tend to sell in the 5-10,000 CFA range.

Occasionally different strategies (i.e., forms of *nanbara*) are needed to make a sale. Some of these tactics include “bait and switch,” where a customer is shown one item at an apparent bargain price, but then sold another item at a higher price. Through good salesmanship, the customer is “up-sold” (i.e., convinced to upgrade) to a “better” passport holder. The qualification of “better” is usually based on features found desirable by the customer such as number of pockets and compartments, type of hardware used (i.e., high quality magnetic clasps versus zippers and buttons), or type of materials used (black cobra, rock python, or savannah monitor).

For example, a bundle of passport holders hanging on the exterior of Nouhoum's (generalized leather) shop drew the attention of an Italian man. Like Souri's shop, where Lassina serves as a lookout and calculating salesman, Nouhoum has one of his staff sit outside the shop to coax potential customers inside. In this case I was sitting with Nouhoum's lookout when the Italian tourist approached and started looking through the bundle of passport holders. The lookout stopped preparing tea and turned his attention on the tourist. In French, the lookout asked what the tourist (a man in his forties) was looking for. However, the tourist had already indicated what he was interested in – he had stopped to examine the passport holders hanging on the outside of Nouhoum's shop. Without waiting for a response, the lookout untied the bundle of passport holders to allow the tourist to look at them more closely. In the bundle of passport holders were two made of goat leather with decorative tooling, two made of black cobra (with no tooling), and two made with rock python (one with an embossed outline of Mali, the other without). Going through the passport holders, the Italian tourist spoke in broken French and said "I want one with more pockets." Directing the Italian man into Nouhoum's shop, the lookout assured him, "we have the best in the *Artisana*, come, come inside and see."

In this case, the Italian tourist was initially attracted to three different models of passport holders – all low-end models selling in the range of 2,500 – 7,500 CFA. Through good salesmanship, the lookout convinced the tourist to enter the shop where there was more of a selection to peruse. Once inside the shop, the lookout presented more samples for the tourist to examine – samples that were worth more than the passport holders that initially attracted the tourist. Moreover, the lookout/salesman applied the knowledge that he had gained of the tourist's desires (e.g., a passport holder with more

pockets) to sell him a more expensive commodity – a savannah monitor passport holder with three internal pockets and magnetic closure. The tourist paid 13,500 CFA for the passport holder and left the shop content with his purchase.

Custom orders oftentimes result from trying to up-sell a client to a better product. On several occasions I have watched leather vendors use a “bait and switch” strategy to up-sell to a unique and singular product made for the client (i.e., it is not a stock item, but a customized item based on the tastes of the client). Clients may also approach vendors directly for a custom item. I have seen clients approach vendors carrying an image: typically an advertisement in a magazine, an image in a fashion catalog, or a hand-drawn sketch. Other customers peruse a vendor’s portfolio (folders of design templates) or stacks of western fashion catalogs (Macy’s, L. L. Bean, Nordstrom, Vogue, to name a few) amassed by vendors over the years, or they may work collaboratively with the vendor to develop a design. When consulting fashion catalogs, clients often mix and match various features of different items to create a new object specific to their taste. Other custom order clients opt to copy an existing item from a catalog. In either case, the client is able to choose what material they want. Depending on the commodity type (i.e., belt, wallet, bag, etc.) the client is given several wildlife species to select from (see Table 5: Wild mammals and commodity type, and Table 6: Wild reptiles and commodity type).

A good example of a custom order is seen in the case of Cheick, the owner of a generalized leather shop, and the popular Malian musician who commissioned a rock python carrying case for his electric guitar. According to Cheick, the musician came to him with a catalog of musical accessories and identified a particular type of case to be made. After identifying the style of carrying case (from an image in a catalog), the

musician specified that the case was to be made of rock python, and have padding to cushion the guitar it would hold. Additional examples are presented and discussed in the section devoted to leather shop clientele.

Another strategy employed by vendors to “find money” is the “false custom order.” In this instance, the customer roughly describes an item they desire to the vendor. In doing so, the client invariably uses an already existing item in the shop as an analogue for describing the actual item they desire. The vendor readily agrees to any and all design specifications and specialized features sought. Price is then negotiated and usually involves many of the previously described ploys. Once the price is fixed, some or all of the sum is paid; if the vendor is a good salesman, as in the case of Lassina, he can get the entire sum advanced to pay for supplies. When the client leaves, the vendor returns to the analogue, transforming it into the item described by the customer. When the client returns some days later to retrieve their custom order they anticipate a newly made item, not just modifications made to an already existing item. When the customer sees the item they are more often than not upset at the difference between what they imagined they were to receive and what they actually paid for.

For instance, a Russian man in his late forties to early fifties, employed at the Russian embassy in Bamako, entered Sekou’s generalized leather shop to custom order a briefcase. Using French as a common tongue, Sekou presented several samples of briefcases off the walls to the Russian in order to ascertain what he wanted in his briefcase. Picking out a crocodile hide briefcase to use as an example to describe what he desired, the Russian embassy employee explained that he wanted one like it. In particular, the Russian wanted the briefcase to have two combination closing clasps,

rather than one. Sekou assured the Russian embassy worker that his requests were not a problem and that he could have the briefcase ready in two days. Satisfied with Sekou's promises, the Russian advanced half of the negotiated price for materials (30,000 CFA).

After the Russian placed his order, Sekou instructed one of his staff to remove the single combination latch, and mask the hole left by it. To do this the leatherworker mixed sawdust with glue to create an epoxy-like paste with which he filled the hole. After this was done, the leatherworker searched through a pile of hide scraps to find two pieces of crocodile hide to apply over the filled latch hole. Once the single latch was removed and its hole concealed, the leatherworker installed two combination latches (one was the original latch removed).

Two days later the Russian returned to pick up his custom ordered briefcase and was shocked at what he found – merely a modified version of the example he had used to describe what he wanted (i.e., he imagined a new case made to his specifications). Drawing on his limited French, the Russian argued with Sekou over the briefcase. Sitting nearby, I heard the Russian comment: “This is not what I commissioned!” He went on to identify the pieces of crocodile hide that had been appliquéd over the single latch hole as particularly shoddy: “Look! You can see the hole you covered! I do not want a briefcase that has patched holes in it!” Using the pretense that he did not understand the Russian's French, Sekou feigned ignorance; in turn the Russian became increasingly frustrated. Reaching critical mass, the Russian gave up trying to argue his case, paid the remaining balance (30,000 CFA) and stormed out the door.

In addition to specific business strategies (i.e., *nanbara*) employed in “finding money,” vendors turn to one another for financial assistance. In times of financial

hardship, a vendor in need will typically borrow money with promises of repayment from his relatives. Such loans usually go unpaid in the strict sense. However, they create a debt that can be called in at a future time, should the creditor be in need of assistance. By banking debts allied vendors are not only meeting business needs, but also maintain crucial social networks in a world where who you know can mean the difference between eating or starving. In short, by banking debts, vendors (and Malians in general) practice a form of moral economy, which reinforces alliances between actors.

Perhaps the most common practice associated with vendor alliances is the “proxy sale;” where one vendor sells the goods of another vendor. This practice is very similar to what Steiner describes in his discussion of “market-place credit” and its supporting system of borrowing commodities on “*ràngu*” (1994: 58). In short, art traders in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, may borrow a commodity from another vendor to sell. As noted by Steiner, “[w]hatever the outcome of this rapid bargaining or price negotiation, the trader who pursues the client draws his profit by getting whatever he can above the owner’s asking price,” (1994: 58). Unlike, Steiner’s market, where traders cannot refuse to loan a commodity to another trader to sell (though they do inflate base price to prohibit certain traders from borrowing goods), in the *Artisana*, there is no such rule. Rather vendors turn to their support network of allied vendors within the *Artisana* if they need to borrow a commodity to sell to a client. Though I refer to this practice as a “proxy sale,” and Steiner describes it as “market-place credit,” Malians explained it as selling on “commission.”

Common to both Steiner’s case and selling on commission in the *Artisana*, is that by drawing stock from an ally, both parties stand to make a profit. Furthermore, by

loaning commodities to be sold on commission, any given vendor reinforces his alliance with another vendor strengthening his support base within the *Artisana*. For instance, a client desires something that is not available in a particular shop. Rather than let the client walk away (and lose potential profit) the vendor will use the information that he has acquired through his interaction with the client and seek the desired commodity from an ally. This tends to be a fellow vendor who is related by blood or marriage. In acquiring the desired item the ally will declare the minimum price that he will accept. Anything above this minimum price is the profit of the selling vendor. By having a minimum price the ally is ensuring a certain amount of profit without expending extra energy to receive it because the selling vendor does all the work. Conversely, the selling vendor, if a skilled salesman, is in a position to make a profit without having to make the commodity in question.

Special and custom orders offer another perspective on alliances and the moral economy of vendors. For example, a client may wish to buy an article with a particular design feature that the vendor does not know how to make. In order to not lose the sale, the vendor will draw on extended members of his support network. Case in point, one custom order purse required a very specific type of stitching. The stitching was not something the vendor could do without a sewing machine with a specific type of head used for decorative patterns. The vendor who took on this special order sorted through his mental list of associates and recalled that one of his brothers-in-law was a tailor and had the needed equipment. Without discussing the matter with his brother-in-law, the vendor assured the client that the special stitching was not a problem. A couple of days later, when the requisite parts had been prepared, the vendor sought out his brother-in-

law and had him assemble the purse with the special sewing machine. In assisting his brother-in-law, the tailor indebts his brother-in-law, and can be expected to collect on that debt later on.

Though leather vendors have their unique strategies and supporting values, so too do their clientele. In the following chapter I outline and describe those actors that are known as clientele: individuals who purchase wildlife commodities from leather shops of the *Artisana*ⁱⁱ.

Notes

ⁱ Extra shop members are not included in this analysis, as they tend not to be formal members of leather shops.

ⁱⁱ Though I spoke with clientele (n=95), the actual numbers of individuals I spoke with in the *Artisana* is much greater. For instance, I spoke to many tourists who did not purchase anything; rather they came to “experience” the *Artisana* as a cultural place.

CHAPTER VII

LEATHER SHOP CLIENTELE

The clientele of *Artisana* leather shops are a very diverse group of people. To gain access to clientele I worked closely with fifteen generalized and three specialized leather shops. These eighteen shops allowed me to “hang out” (i.e., engage in participant observation) and informally interview shop members as well as the clients who purchased wildlife goods from them. While hanging out in the leather shops of the *Artisana* I would ask clients questions about their purchases (some bought items that I had either contributed to making or had observed being made). In particular, I interviewed clients about their reasons for making a purchase (i.e., was it a gift, keepsake, or for practical use?), as well as their perception of a wildlife commodity (i.e., what did it mean to them, how did they identify with it?).

In general, leather shop clientele can be divided into two categories: foreigners and Malians (see Table 12: Summary data on leather shop clientele). Out of 95 leather shop clients, 72 were foreigners, while another 23 were Malian. Though a distinction helps to highlight differences between local (i.e., Malian) and non-local (i.e., foreign) clientele, it also masks much. For example, the category of “foreigner” (French: *étranger* and *touriste*; Bamana: *dunan* and *tubabu*) includes individuals on vacation (i.e., tourists) as well as non-locals who live and work in Mali (i.e., expatriates). Furthermore, foreign clientele represent a wide range of nationalities. In comparison, Malian clientele are local (i.e., from the Bamako area), but also exhibited diversity in profession and social status.

Table 12: Summary data on leather shop clientele.

	Foreigners	Maliens	Total Clientele
Generalized Leather Shop	49	12	61
Specialized Leather Shop	23	11	34
Total per Category	72	23	95

In the subsequent sections I further outline the categories of leather shop clientele. In doing so, I augment descriptions of clientele and their values with ethnographic examples to provide context for their choices and actions. Starting with foreign clientele, I provide additional details (i.e., who and where they come from), as well as distill subcategories (tourists, expatriates, and importers). Following a discussion of foreign clientele, Malian clientele are further explored to gain insight into their values as reflected in their dealings with leather shop vendors.

Foreign Clientele

Foreign clientele are divided into the following subcategories: tourists, expatriates, and importers. Moreover, as one would expect, these subcategories are comprised of women and men from around the world (see Table 13: Summary data for foreign clientele; and Table 14: Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region).

Table 13: Summary data for foreign clientele.

	Tourist		Expatriate		Importer		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Generalized Leather Shop	16	11	12	7	3	-	49
Specialized Leather Shop	5	4	6	7	1	-	23
Total per Category	21	15	18	14	4	-	72
Combined Total	36		32		4		

Table 14: Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region.

Geographic Region	Country of Origin	Tourist		Expatriate		Importer		Shop Type		Actors per Region
		M	F	M	F	M	F	G	S	
Africa	Algeria	-	-	-	-	1	-	G	-	3
	Morocco	-	-	-	-	1	-	G	-	
	South Africa	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	
Asia	China	-	-	5	2	1	-	G	S	14
	Japan	2	2	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Pakistan	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Tajikistan	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	
Europe	Austria	1	1	-	-	-	-	G	-	37
	France	3	2	3	5	-	-	G	S	
	Germany	2	-	1	1	-	-	G	S	
	Holland	1	1	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Italy	2	1	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Latvia	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Portugal	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	
	Russia	1	1	4	1	-	-	G	S	
	Spain	1	-	-	-	1	-	G	S	
United Kingdom	1	1	-	-	-	-	G	-		
North America	Canada	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	14
	United States of America	2	4	3	4	-	-	G	S	
South America	Brazil	1	-	-	-	-	-	G	-	1
Oceania	Australia	-	-	2	1	-	-	G	-	3
Total per Category	21	23	13	18	14	4	-	-	-	-
Combined Totals		36		32		4				72
Key:										
M = Male					G = Generalized Leather Shop					
F = Female					S = Specialized Leather Shop					

Tourists (n=36) are foreign nationals that spend a limited amount of time in Mali (i.e., a few days to a couple of months). In other words, tourists are foreign nationals on vacation, sightseeing, or traveling for the sake of traveling; luxuries not afforded by many Malians. However tourists come in a variety of flavors (as I encountered them in the *Artisana*): there is the individual tourist, couples (i.e., spouses and/or significant others),

and groups of tourists – these are more than three people traveling together and may be organized by a tourist agency.

Out of 36 tourists, 23 were men (roughly 64%), while another 13 were women (approximately 36%). Roughly 77% of all tourists were individual travelers, meaning that they visited the *Artisana* alone and not in the company of another person. In comparison, 22% of tourists visited the *Artisana* with a partner (i.e., a spouse or significant other). Specifically, one couple came from Holland, another from the United Kingdom, while another two came from Japan. The two couples that came from Japan visited the *Artisana* as part of a tour organized by a travel agency.

Subsumed within these figures are additional details that aid in contextualizing the differences between types of tourists: local-level tourists and distanced tourists. Out of 36, 10 described their desire to have a different kind of vacation – namely to escape “Western things” and “experience Africa” (i.e., Mali) from the “local level.” I refer to these individuals as “local-level” tourists and they include a couple from Amsterdam as well as eight men from Brazil, Canada, Latvia, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, Tajikistan, and the United States of America – all were between the ages of 21 and 38. To experience Africa from the local level, all ten of these tourists explained how they avoided Western hotels and restaurants, preferring to stay with the local community and dine with them.

In the *Artisana* local-level tourists stand out as they are regularly seen “hanging-out” with vendors, much like I did. The parallel goes further in that many local-level tourists will make notes of what something is called. Moreover, through these extended interactions with vendors, a rapport (though limited) is developed that may allow a tourist to get a good price for what they seek. All 10 local-level tourists described how they had

made friends with leather vendors (and others) in the *Artisana* and received a “good-deal” on their purchase.

For example, a local-level tourist from Spain visited the *Artisana* and came to speak with a leather shop vendor. Though the Spaniard informed the vendor that he was not purchasing anything until just before he left Mali (to cut down on what he had to pack with him on his trek north), the two quickly became friends. In fact, the leather vendor offered his family name (Diawarra) to the tourist to cement their friendship. After finishing his trek north (to Dogon Country), the Spaniard returned to the *Artisana*, ready to purchase some keepsakes. Seeking out his vendor-friend, the Spaniard purchased a black cobra belt for 2,500 CFA (normally sells for 5-10,000 CFA), and a Nile monitor change purse for 500 CFA (normally sells for 1-2,000 CFA). In speaking with the vendor about why he had sold his goods so cheaply to the tourist, he responded, “*a jamu Diawarra*” (his family name is Diawarra), adding that other vendors would “*k’an tege*” (cut his throat – a reference to the extreme degree to which some vendors will *nanbara* foreign clientele). In short, because of their rapport, the vendor opted not to *nanbara* the Spaniard. Rather, because the vendor bequeathed his family name of Diawarra to the Spaniard, he felt obliged to give the tourist a discount.

Given the desire of local-level tourists to have a unique experience it is not surprising that all ten highlighted the wildlife commodities they purchased from leather shops as being more than just an object. According to the Spaniard, “these things [black cobra belt and Nile monitor change purse] are special because they were made by my friend, Diawarra.” Karl, a local-level tourist from Portland, Oregon, summed it up nicely when he explained what one of his purchases meant to him. Showing me a crocodile

wallet with an embossed silhouette of Mali on it, Karl explained that the wallet was “more than just an object.” By being “more than just an object,” Karl suggested that the crocodile wallet was reflective of his experience in Mali. “Whenever I look at it [the wallet] I will remember the time I spent here [Mali]. I will remember the people and the things we did together,” said Karl. As such, local-level tourists like Karl emphasize the socio-cultural context through which they acquired a wildlife commodity as being of greater value than the object itself.

In comparison to the 10 local-level tourists, who desire the experience low-budget travel affords them, are 26 tourists who distance themselves from “the real Africa.” All 26 distanced tourists described the need to see “Africa,” but at the same time stressed the desire for familiar and comfortable things – all were between the ages of 19 and 56. To see “Africa,” these tourists surround and insulate themselves with Western comforts. For instance, all 26 identified that they stayed in Western hotels while in Mali, where they could “relax” and “get away from it [Africa].” According to a German man in his forties, staying at a four-star hotel, “I love Africa! But you have to be able to relax and get away from it in order to enjoy it [Africa].” A French woman in her thirties, staying at the same hotel as the German, offered similar sentiments: “It is so beautiful here, but also very dirty, I have to shower three or four times a day!” Other distanced tourists described their need for swimming pools, Internet connections, satellite television, air conditioning, and room service – all creature comforts of a Western lifestyle.

With regard to the wildlife commodities distanced tourists purchased from leather shops of the *Artisana*, two key themes were highlighted: wildlife commodities as gifts and keepsakes, as well as “traditional” crafts. Out of the 26 distanced tourists, nearly all

(n=21) described the wildlife goods they bought as gifts and keepsakes of their visit to Mali. For example, a French man in his thirties purchased a serval-trimmed purse for his wife (identified by the vendor as “leopard” for 65,000 CFA), a black cobra belt for himself (10,000 CFA) and two rock python wallets (5,000 CFA each); one for each of his sons. The sum of his purchases was 85,000 CFA, noting that it was a “good deal” given what he bought. When I asked why he selected a “leopard-trimmed” purse as a gift for his wife, he explained that she loved handbags and that “a real leopard bag from Africa” would be a nice addition to her collection. The black cobra belt, that he purchased as a keepsake for himself he described as improving his looks; “it’s a nice black belt that will go well with some of my shoes.” Asking about his choice of python wallets for his two sons he explained, that if he bought different types of gifts for his sons, they would fight over “which had the better one.”

In another case, a French woman in her mid-twenties purchased several wildlife goods as gifts, including a ball python pocketbook for her mother (15,000 CFA), a crocodile wallet for her father (7,500 CFA), and six small change purses – two made with savannah monitor, two made with crocodile, and two made with rock python – for her siblings and close friends (9,000 CFA). For herself, the French woman bought a small crocodile purse (25,000 CFA). In describing the gifts she purchased, the French woman emphasized that they made good gifts because they were “real things, not trinkets from a hotel or airport gift shop.”

Other distanced tourists bought wildlife goods they interpreted as “traditional” leatherwork, highlighting their value for such goods. Out of 26 distanced tourists, 15 perceived the wildlife goods they purchased as examples of “traditional” leatherwork.

For example, an American male college student in his twenties on summer vacation bought a passport holder made with savannah monitor hide because it was “traditional.” When I asked why he thought the passport holder was traditional, he explained that, “it’s made with snake skin.” Though the student was off target with regard to the specific species the passport holder was made with, his association between wildlife hides/skins and “tradition” was not uncommon among tourists.

Another example of tourists valuing wildlife commodities as “traditional” crafts is seen in the case of a newly married couple from the United Kingdom. Touring West Africa as their honeymoon trip, Samantha and Richard spent two weeks in Mali and purchased several wildlife commodities from the *Artisana* prior to their departure. Though the goods they bought were to be gifts and keepsakes for themselves as well as friends and family back home, they primarily spoke about their purchases as representations of “historic practices” and “ethnic traditions.” For instance, Richard informed me that a rock python wallet he purchased from a leather shop was “made the same way they [Maliens] made it hundreds of years ago.” In other words, for Richard, the wallet was an artifact of a historic practice. Samantha identified four passport holders (two made with rock python, one with Nile monitor, and one with savannah monitor) as being “traditional objects made by the Bambara and Fulani ethnic groups.” As such, Samantha perceives passport holders as items associated with specific ethnic traditions.

Whether tourists like the American college student, or Samantha and Richard’s insights are accurate or not is not particularly important. What is important, is that tourists who perceive and understand wildlife goods as “traditional” objects (for whatever reason) are ignorant of the fact that leather vendors are keen observers and have

amassed a wealth of knowledge of their tastes and preferences. In short, vendors draw on this collective body of knowledge and produce goods to meet the demands created by tourists (i.e., vendors know tourists like “traditional” things). In line with this, leather vendors frequently present wildlife goods as being “traditional” to improve their chances of making a sale.

The values of gifts, keepsakes, and wildlife goods as “traditional” leatherwork are also reflected among expatriate clientele (n=32). Expatriates are foreign nationals who spend an extended period of time in Mali (i.e., more than a couple of months). Those who fall into this category include foreign nationals who work in Mali such as the staff of embassies, consulates, NGOs, foreign aid agencies (e.g., USAID, Peace Corps), and international corporations like Coke-a-Cola.

Out of 32 expatriates who bought wildlife goods from leather shops in the *Artisana*, 18 were men and 14 were women – all were between the ages of 22 and 49. All (100%) of expatriates highlighted their purchases as gifts and keepsakes. This pattern is similar to that presented by distanced tourists (see above). However, unlike distanced tourists where 15 out of 26 (roughly 57%) contextualized wildlife goods as “traditional,” only 9 out of 32 (roughly 28%) expatriates described their purchases as such.

Unique among the values noted by expatriates, is the ability to have custom goods made. As previously discussed (see *Finding Money and the Art of Nanbara*), custom orders are a unique service offered by some leather shops. Out of 32 expatriates, 12 placed custom orders. Moreover, in speaking with the 12 expatriates who commissioned specialty wildlife goods to be made for them, they cite their extended time in Mali as key to their ability to develop a rapport with specific vendors through repeated business

dealings. One USAID worker recounted how she had been buying goods from the same vendor for the three years she had been in posted in Mali. Over that time she had several bags made, all to her specification. In another case, a Peace Corps volunteer described how she custom ordered foot-ware from a specialized leather shop in the *Artisana*. She started when her American made sandals wore out and needed another pair. Being directed to a specialized leather shop by a Malian friend, she met a vendor who “replicated” her worn out American sandals with Malian materials. Rather than use nylon strapping, *Velcro*, and molded tread, the vendor used leather, standard buckle clasps, and rubber cut from a truck tire. The Peace Corps volunteer liked the sandals so much (noting how robust they were) she went on to have other shoes made including a pair of leopard fur high-heels (she always wanted a pair), and pair of fancy sandals that were copied from fashion magazine she had received in a care package from home.

Some of the more interesting custom orders placed by expatriates include a Russian who owns a local money transfer service. Having an extended relationship with a leather vendor in the *Artisana*, the Russian custom ordered a three-piece set of luggage (copied from an L. L. Bean catalog) made from lion, complete with monogram, for the pittance price of 150,000 CFA. Another case involved a female French expatriate (her husband worked for a major international corporation with a local office), who ordered a “patchwork” woman’s shoulder bag for 40,000 CFA (a moderate price). The patches were taken from several different wildlife species including serval (presented as leopard by the vendor), Nile, and savannah monitor; all specified by the client. The inspiration for the bag came from a fashion ad that the French woman provided the leather vendor. In a similar example, an Australian gold miner ordered a crocodile hide belt for 25,000

CFA. What set this belt apart from others was that the Australian requested the head of a juvenile crocodile be used as the closing fixture – something he had seen in a television commercial. He went on to describe how his “mates” at the mine would find it amusing.

These examples of custom ordered wildlife goods highlight a general trend among the 12 expatriates who comprise this category of leather shop client. Specifically, though expatriates highlight the need for an extended relationship with a leather vendor through repeat business, they also stress the uniqueness of their orders as important. The Australian who commissioned the crocodile head belt clearly valued the uniqueness of his wildlife commodity as he ordered it with the intention of amusing peers. As such, one might say that expatriates like custom orders as a way to express their individuality. Or conversely, expatriates appreciate the attention unique wildlife goods afford them.

Like tourists (both local-level and distanced) and expatriates, foreign importers (n=4) also purchased wildlife commodities from the leather shops of the *Artisana*. For the purposes of this text, importers are by default foreigners as all four⁴ reside outside of Mali, only visiting a couple times a year for a week or so. Furthermore, importers purchase large quantities of wildlife products and transport them out of Mali to be sold again to make a profit. This act of resale distinguishes importers from other consumers (e.g., tourists and expatriates) and highlights the transmutability of Malian wildlife: it is exchangeable for money all over the world.

Each of the four visiting importers had a standing arrangement with a single leather shop. Of the four importers that I spoke with all were men, one Algerian, one Moroccan, one Chinese, and one a Spaniard. All importers but the Spaniard dealt with generalized leather shops (the Spaniard dealt with a shop specializing in trophies).

Though each importer was unique, all reported placing one to two orders with leather shops per year that they then clandestinely transported out of the countryⁱⁱ. When asked why the need for secrecy, importers noted the steep taxes and fees associated with formally exporting goods; by circumventing formal avenues, importers improve their profit margins (i.e., less overhead).

For example, Hassim is an importer that did brisk business between Mali, Morocco, and Spainⁱⁱⁱ. With his home base in Casablanca, Morocco, Hassim transports wildlife products out of Mali and brings them to Spain via Morocco. Twice a year he visits the *Artisana* to pick up an order he phoned in months in advance. This usually occurs at the beginning and end of the off-season, April through October, when tourism slackens and vendors would otherwise have flat sales. For Hassim, and other foreign importers, the financial need of Malian vendors in the off-season is a windfall allowing him to buy low and sell high.

On his last visit in 2008, Hassim picked up: 100 belts; 100 wallets; 50 bags of varying size and style – all made from cobra, monitor, python, or crocodile. Though I do not know the individual prices paid for each item ordered by Hassim, the price agreed upon by he and the vendor filling his order was 160,000 CFA (roughly \$800.00 U.S. dollars). For this sum Hassim outlines the particulars, specifying exact numbers of select commodities (see Table 15: Hassim's order from a generalized leather shop). In addition to enumerating commodity type, size, and species, Hassim may also stipulate style by using an image of what he wants (i.e., a page torn from a magazine) or by selecting from existing styles hanging in a vendors shop. Similarly, Hassim may indicate hardware to be used in fabrication (i.e., zippers, buckles, magnetic clasps, etc.).

Table 15: Hassim's order from a generalized leather shop.

Commodity Type	Description	Species Used	Units Ordered	Total Units Ordered
Bags	Large Attaché Briefcase	Nile Crocodile	5	50
	Large Accordion Briefcase	Nile Crocodile	5	
	Large Shoulder Bag	Savannah Monitor	5	
	Medium Purse	Savannah Monitor with Serval trim	5	
		Savannah Monitor	5	
		Rock Python	10	
	Small Handbag	Black Cobra	5	
		Nile Crocodile	5	
Savannah Monitor		5		
Belts	Come in a variety of lengths	Black Cobra	25	100
		Rock Python	25	
		Savannah Monitor	25	
		Nile Crocodile	25	
Wallets	Come in a variety of styles and sizes	Nile Crocodile	50	100
		Rock Python	25	
		Savannah Monitor	25	
Total Price Paid		160,000 CFA (Roughly \$800.00 U.S. dollars)		

Hassim informs me that he plans to more than triple his investment of 160,000 CFA (about \$800.00 U.S. dollars) once his goods reach Spain. However, prior to seeing a return on his investment, Hassim must orchestrate the transport of his newly acquired stock out of Mali. Though one might imagine a series of meetings with shadowy figures in the dead of night, Hassim loads his order (already in boxes) in the back of his early 1990's Mercedes Benz 4x4, which has the rear and one side window replaced with wood sheeting. The vehicle looks like any other that the average middleclass Malian might drive. With the goods loaded, Hassim literally drives across the Sahara desert to Casablanca (usually through Mauritania, though occasionally through Senegal and Western Sahara), where the wildlife products are shipped via a freighter to Spain (the boat is owned by a family relative). Once in Spain, Hassim typically resells his Malian

wildlife commodities (along with other African goods) at flea markets, at inflated prices to cover his costs and make a profit. To do so, Hassim makes use of his extended family network to further transport and sell the goods he imports in urban centers like Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona.

Though I was not able to get detailed data on Hassim's previous dealings with the *Artisana*^{iv}, nor his overhead costs (i.e., transport, fuel, "taxes," etc.), I did gather several anecdotal descriptions of Hassim's business practices and the types of profits he expects from his most recent order. For example, Hassim explained to me that he could sell a large crocodile attaché case in a Spanish flea market for €100 – 130 (about \$135 – 175.00 U.S. dollars), while an accordion-style sells for €120 – 150 (about \$160 – 200.00 U.S. dollars). Slightly less expensive are large savannah monitor skin shoulder bags; selling for €80 – 120 (about \$100 – 160.00 U.S. dollars). In comparison to these relatively expensive goods, Hassim explained that even a simple belt or wallet fetches €20 - 40 (about \$25 – 50.00 U.S. dollars) in Spain.

Based on this information it is possible to calculate a conservative projected profit for Hassim that does not account for his overhead costs. By averaging Hassim's reported resale prices for the commodities he trades, it is calculated that he stands to make a considerable sum, about €9,925.00 (roughly \$13,632.00 U.S. dollars) (see Table 16: Hassim's purchases and average resale price in Spanish flea markets).

Table 16: Hassim’s purchases and average resale price in Spanish flea markets.

Commodity Type	Description	Species Used	Units Ordered	Average Resale Price in Euros (U.S. Dollars)	Units x Average Resale Price in Euros (U.S. Dollars)
Bags	Large Attaché Briefcase	Nile Crocodile	5	€115.00 (\$155.00)	€575.00 (\$775.00)
	Large Accordion Briefcase	Nile Crocodile	5	€135.00 (\$180.00)	€675.00 (\$900.00)
	Large Shoulder Bag	Savannah Monitor	5	€100.00 (\$133.00)	€500.00 (\$665.00)
	Medium Purse	Savannah Monitor with Serval trim	5	€165.00 (\$220.00)	€825.00 (\$1,000.00)
		Savannah Monitor	5	€65.00 (\$83.00)	€325.00 (\$415.00)
		Rock Python	10	€50.00 (\$63.00)	€500.00 (\$630.00)
	Small Handbag	Black Cobra	5	€35.00 (\$42.00)	€175.00 (\$210.00)
		Nile Crocodile	5	€35.00 (\$42.00)	€175.00 (\$210.00)
		Savannah Monitor	5	€35.00 (\$42.00)	€175.00 (\$210.00)
	Belts	Come in a variety of lengths	Black Cobra	25	€30.00 (\$38.00)
Rock Python			25	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€750.00 (\$950.00)
Savannah Monitor			25	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€750.00 (\$950.00)
Nile Crocodile			25	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€750.00 (\$950.00)
Wallets	Come in a variety of styles and sizes	Nile Crocodile	50	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€1,500.00 (\$1,900.00)
		Rock Python	25	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€750.00 (\$950.00)
		Savannah Monitor	25	€30.00 (\$38.00)	€750.00 (\$950.00)
Total	-	-	250	-	€9,925.00 (\$13,632.00)

To convert Malian wildlife commodities into money, Hassim relies upon an extensive social network, just as leather vendors do. Agents identified by Hassim as being part of his network include, the owner of the shop where he buys his goods, “*police de frontière*” (border police) and “*douaniers*” (customs officers) along his route, as well

as dozens of family members residing in Morocco and Spain. Through the articulation of his unique and extensive social network, Hassim is able to transport his merchandise out of Mali, to Spain, where extended family work to sell the goods in urban flea markets.

In addition to valuing the profits generated from selling Malian wildlife goods in Spanish flea markets through extensive social networks (including extended family), Hassim also highlights the unique role of importers as key actors in transnational commodity circles (Appadurai 1986). Unlike tourists and expatriates who purchase wildlife goods as keepsakes of their time in Mali, or as a gift for a friend or family member, foreign importers transport large quantities of wildlife goods to another country and resell them for a profit. Moreover, just as leather vendors are key actors in the social networks of foreign importers (i.e., they are the producers of wildlife commodities), foreign importers are valued members of a leather vendor's network. In short, the activities and practices of foreign importers augment a given leather vendor's network. A central benefit of this arrangement is that foreign importers are a great source of information that contributes to a vendor's ability to negotiate wildlife into consumable goods valued in distant places (i.e., foreign importers can expand the knowledge base of leather vendors regarding the tastes and preferences of foreign consumers). And conversely, leather vendors find that the new information provided by foreign importers like Hassim are of value in meeting local demand.

Case in point, the five large savannah monitor shoulder bags ordered by Hassim were copied from an ad in a magazine that he provided the leather vendor. Since it was a new design for the vendor, he made a "template" (cardboard cutouts of the requisite sections to make an item), and added it to his repertoire of bags that he sold from his

shop. Furthermore, the vendor went on to make two more copies of Hassim's custom order bag from material he had on hand, one in Nile crocodile, and another in rock python. Over the next couple of months both of these bags were purchased, not by a tourist or expatriate, but by Malian women.

This situation presents an important point: that information flows in multiple directions. Specifically, information gained is applied and learned from in a reiterative process. In this particular case, the leather vendor applied his new information (a new bag design) and produced two bags that were found attractive by Malian clientele, not the foreign consumers one might expect to purchase such merchandise. As such, information and knowledge move both vertically and horizontally through the social networks that surround leather vendors of the *Artisana*. Moving vertically is represented in the vendor's relationship with Hassim, while horizontal movement is seen in the Malian clients who purchased the bags informed through Hassim. By making mental note of the type of client who purchased the new bags, the leather vendor expanded his knowledge base of the sorts of goods desired by Malian clientele.

Malian Clientele

Customers of leather shops in the *Artisana* who identified themselves as Malian, are referred to as Malian clientele. Out of a total of 95 leather shop clients, 72 were foreigners, while only 23 were Malian. As such, roughly 75% of leather shop customers were foreigners, in comparison to only 24% who were Malian. This suggests that in comparison to foreigners, Malians rarely purchase wildlife goods from leather shops of the *Artisana* (see Table 17: Summary data for Malian clientele).

Table 17: Summary data for Malian clientele.

	Malian Clientele		Total
	Male	Female	
Generalized Leather Shop	4	6	10
Specialized Leather Shop	5	8	13
Total	9	14	23

Rather, Malians show a greater interest^v in the goods produced by the gold- and silversmiths; a new set of jewelry (ring, bracelet, necklace, and earrings) is a common wedding and anniversary gift. On the occasion that Malians visit a leather shop, it is usually for commissioned work such as a pair of shoes, monogrammed wallet, briefcase, or custom-order purse. Moreover, Malian men and women differ significantly in the commodities they purchase from leather shops (see Table 18: Detailed data on Malian male purchases from leather vendors; and Table 19: Detailed data on Malian female purchases from leather vendors).

Table 18: Detailed data on Malian male purchases from leather vendors.

Shop Type	Description of Commodity	Species Used	S / C	Units Purchased	Price Paid
Generalized Leather Shop	Attaché Case	Nile Crocodile	S	1	30,000 CFA
	Medium Briefcase	West African Dwarf Crocodile	C	1	42,500 CFA
	Monogrammed Wallet	Desert Monitor	C	1	7,500 CFA
	Belt with hidden compartment	Savannah Monitor	S	1	8,000 CFA
Specialized Leather Shop	Dress Shoes	Savannah Monitor	C	1 pair	25,000 CFA
	Dress Shoes	Savannah Monitor dyed black	C	1 pair	22,000 CFA
	Dress Shoes	Nile Crocodile	C	1 pair	35,000 CFA
	Large Briefcase	Rock Python	C	1	38,000 CFA
	Combination Laptop-Briefcase	Nile Crocodile	C	1	50,000 CFA
Totals	-	-	-	-	258,000 CFA
Key: S = Stock Item C = Custom Order					

Table 19: Detailed data on Malian female purchases from leather vendors.

Shop Type	Description of Commodity	Species Used	S / C	Units Purchased	Price Paid
Generalized Leather Shop	Large Shoulder Bag	Rock Python	S	1	28,000 CFA
	Large Shoulder Bag	Nile Crocodile	S	1	34,000 CFA
	Medium Purse	Ball Python	S	1	25,000 CFA
	Medium Purse	Leopard	S	1	35,000 CFA
	Pocketbook	Savannah Monitor with Serval Trim	C	1	12,000 CFA
	Pocketbook	Savannah Monitor	S	1	8,500 CFA
Specialized Leather Shop	Sandals	Rock Python	C	1 pair	12,500 CFA
	Sandals	Savannah Monitor with Serval trim	C	1 pair	20,000 CFA
	Sandals	Trimmed with Leopard	C	1 pair	28,000 CFA
	Dress Heels	Leopard with Caracal trim	C	1 pair	85,000 CFA
	Dress Heels	Savannah Monitor with Serval trim	C	1 pair	36,000 CFA
	Handbag	Ball Python	C	1	12,500 CFA
	Medium Purse	Savannah Monitor with Serval trim	C	1	32,000 CFA
	Medium Purse	Savannah Monitor dyed red with Red-Flanked Duiker trim	C	1	45,000 CFA
Totals	-	-	-	-	413,500 CFA
Key:					
S = Stock Item			C = Custom Order		

Out of 23 Malian clients who purchased wildlife goods from leather shops in the *Artisana*, a little over 39% were men, while roughly 60% were women. This stands in contrast to the pattern for foreigners, where men represent 62.5%, and women 37.5% of the clientele who purchased wildlife commodities. In addition, all 23 Malian clientele that I encountered purchasing wildlife goods lived in the Bamako area (either within the city limits, or just outside) and were between 19 to 52 years of age. Furthermore, all but one of the Malian clients (the wealthy woman who purchased leopard heels trimmed in caracal – a previously mentioned example of *nanbara*) had an existing relationship with at least one member (often times more than one member) of the boutique. Specifically,

21 out of 23 Malian clients described having a long-standing friendship with a leather vendor or identified the vendor as kin.

For example, a Malian businessman purchased a Nile crocodile hide attaché case from one of my consultants, a generalized leather shop owner. In our conversation, the businessman highlighted that he got a good deal on the briefcase (30,000 CFA) because his younger sister was married to a brother of the shop owner. The businessman also noted that it was not his first time purchasing wildlife goods from his in-law's leather shop; he once bought a savannah monitor belt. In short, the businessman was a repeat buyer, or return customer, who relied on his social network to facilitate purchasing wildlife goods. Out of 21 Malian clients who described knowing the leather vendors they purchased their goods from, 16 identified themselves as repeat customers.

Another key pattern in the purchases of Malian men and women is seen in the types (i.e., a stock item, or custom order) of wildlife goods they buy. Out of 23 purchases made by Malians, 7 were stock items, whereas 16 were custom orders (see Table 18: Detailed data on Malian male purchases from leather vendors; and Table 19: Detailed data on Malian female purchases from leather vendors). These 16 custom orders do not correlate to the 16 Malians who were repeat buyers of wildlife goods (though some were repeat buyers). Rather, they highlight a general trend for Malian clients; they frequently commission customized wildlife goods. Interestingly, this value pattern is similar to what is seen among expatriate consumers; they also frequently custom order unique wildlife goods.

Cached within the purchasing practices of both Malian men and women are two central values: social networks (i.e., purchasing goods from who you know – family and

friends), and the symbolic meaning of the goods themselves. As already mentioned, extended family represents an individual's primary support network and is used to facilitate everything from labor (most leather shops employ family members as staff) favors, loans, to a reduced price on wildlife goods (in comparison to prices paid by tourists and expatriates).

With regard to Malian clientele, all but two knew the vendor whom they purchased wildlife goods from. As such, many Malians described their purchases as acts that reinforced their individual networks with leather shop vendors. Another way of interpreting this pattern is through the social obligations that must be maintained amongst and between network members in order for the relationships to be mutually beneficial. Thus, clients seek out vendors they know, based on social etiquette (i.e., it is impolite to buy from a stranger if you already know someone who sells what you are looking for). In purchasing goods from vendors they know, the client fulfills their social obligation of turning to whom they know. At the same time, the vendor reinforces his relationship with the client by giving them a relative "good deal." By doing so, the vendor reciprocates the actions of the client so that they remain a supportive member, or expand the vendor's network.

For instance, a Malian entrepreneur (a man) custom ordered a combination laptop-briefcase made of Nile crocodile, for 50,000 CFA. In speaking with the man I learned that he owned three Internet cafes in Bamako and taught basic computer skills for a minimal fee (15,000 CFA pays for a two week course and a certificate upon completion). When his old briefcase wore out, he came to the *Artisana* to order a new one to his liking from a vendor who happened to be a family friend (they lived in the

same neighborhood – the *quartier* known as Medina Coura). Being a friend, the vendor gave the entrepreneur a fair price (50,000 CFA), given the client’s relative economic worth (i.e., owning three Internet cafes).

A more detailed example is seen in the case of the Malian businessman who purchased a stock (i.e., already made) crocodile hide attaché case from a generalized leather shop. The businessman explained to me, “whenever I need something, like a briefcase, I come here, to Souri's boutique.” “If I need furniture, I see my uncle; if I need a portable [cell phone], I see my brother,” said the businessman. “You always go to family first,” detailed the businessman. According to Souri, he was obliged to aid the businessman because he was part of the family: “he is an in-law.” More to the point, Souri added, “Who else will help him?” By commenting on such, Souri is drawing attention to the fact that family supports family. At the same time, by providing his in-law with a good deal on a briefcase, Souri knows that the businessman is indebted to him. Speaking about his in-law, Souri explained, “Today he is a little person, but maybe he will become a big boss.” As such, it is clear that Souri is sizing up the potential return for supporting his in-law when he was still a relatively inexperienced businessman. The inverse is true for the businessman; he came to Souri, because Souri has the reputation of being a person who helps others. Specifically, he owns a successful leather shop (i.e., is seen as wealthy by other Malians), is a master leatherworker, and serves as the patriarch for his large extended family (i.e., he is the eldest male in his family).

Another example helps illustrate how a new client (i.e., not a friend or relative) can also become a supportive member of a vendor’s network. For instance, a Malian woman custom ordered “leopard” heels with “lion trim” for 85,000 CFA from a vendor

she did not know personally, only by reputation: Oumar, the owner of a leather shop specializing in foot ware. The Malian client was known to be the wife of a member of the national administration (i.e., a high socio-economic status and social position). From Oumar's perspective the woman was wealthy and he inflated the price of her custom order to be more commensurate with her socio-economic worth (i.e., Oumar applied the principles of *nanbara* to improve his profit margin). However, Oumar needed to be very careful in how he treated this client as he wished for her to return and purchase additional goods (i.e., become a repeat buyer and supporting member of his social network). To do so, Oumar treated the woman as if she were royalty, barking at his staff to find her a seat, borrowing a neighbor's electric fan to keep her cool, and giving a young boy money to buy her a cold soda.

Oumar's offerings were graciously accepted by the wealthy Malian woman and she gave no indication that she was aware that Oumar was inflating the price as he planned to use mimics rather than genuine leopard or lion (as previously described in, *Finding Money and the Art of Nanbara*, he used serval and caracal to mimic leopard and lion respectively). In fact, the wealthy Malian woman went on to recommend the vendor to other wives of the national administration, emphasizing the quality of the vendor's craftsmanship, his honest and respectful manner, and low fee for the custom order shoes. According to Oumar, two other wives of the national administration custom ordered shoes from his shop based on the recommendations of the initial wealthy Malian woman. Neither of these two women (wives of the national administration) were observed purchasing goods from Oumar's shop. However, while working with another specialized leather vendor, I encountered a Malian woman ordering a medium-sized savannah

monitor purse, dyed red, and trimmed with red-flanked duiker (described by the vendor as “red lion”). In my conversation with her, she identified that she was the wife of a member of the national administration. Probing further I learned that she was a friend of the wealthy Malian woman who ordered the leopard heels with lion trim from Oumar. After hearing about her friend’s experience, she came to the market to buy a purse from a vendor who was a family friend. Such articulation highlights the ways in which individual customers can expand a given vendor’s network, as well as provide clients for other vendors in the market.

While the purchasing trends of Malian clients (both male and female) highlight a central value for the social networks that facilitate their purchasing of wildlife commodities, they also emphasize the symbolic meaning, or cultural significance, of the goods they purchase. This concept of wildlife commodities as symbolic is multifaceted. On one hand, the economic value of the commodity itself signals certain social values (i.e., socio-economic status, social position), while on another hand the species used can also hold meaning.

With regard to the social values reflected in the wildlife goods purchased by Malians, all 23 highlight their purchases as indicators of their socio-economic worth, or social position. For example, in the previously mentioned case of the businessman, he purchased a Nile crocodile attaché case, for 30,000 CFA, as a symbol of his new position in life (i.e., starting a business). Specifically, he selected a stock item (i.e., not a custom order) that he thought was fitting of his status: a Nile crocodile attaché case. According to the businessman, he thought “*bama*” (crocodile), was “*ce kine*” (pretty/attractive) and well suited for him.

The Malian entrepreneur, who custom ordered a combination laptop-briefcase made of Nile crocodile to replace his old case, did so to maintain (if not improve) an outward expression of his socio-economic status – he was a middleclass Malian and owner of three Internet cafés in Bamako. Much like the previous example, the entrepreneur ordered his combination laptop-briefcase to be made of Nile crocodile. In particular, the entrepreneur shared that a business colleague had mocked him, calling him a “*garibu*” after seeing his tattered and stained briefcase. When selecting the material to use in making his custom case, the entrepreneur noted that he liked two different wildlife hides: Nile crocodile, and rock python. In haggling with the vendor, the entrepreneur learned that crocodile was the more expensive of the two materials. Moreover, it was because of its greater economic value that he opted for crocodile over rock python: “I want the very best,” demanded the entrepreneur.

The wealthy wife of a member of the national administration who purchased leopard heels trimmed with lion (actually made with serval and caracal) for 85,000 CFA could only afford to do so based on her financial means. As such, her custom order is a statement of her upper-class socio-economic status. In selecting the species of wildlife to be used in fabricating her shoes, the wealthy woman identified “leopard” (really serval) and “lion” (really caracal) as the most exotic: “*ils sont les plus exotiques.*” Incidentally, what she identified as the most exotic hides, were presented as the most expensive types of materials by the vendor.

The Malian woman, who custom ordered a medium-sized savannah monitor purse, dyed red, and trimmed with red-flanked duiker (described by the vendor as “red lion”), selected the species she did because she found them attractive. The savannah

monitor hide she liked because of its “bead-like” scales, though she did not like its natural color, and had it dyed her favorite color: red. Adding a fur trim as many Malian women do, the client was fortunate that the vendor happened to have some “red lion” (actually red-flanked duiker) on hand to match her red motif.

While vendors and clients engage each other over economic exchanges surrounding wildlife, it is important to remember that these interactions are taking place within a state sponsored institution; the *Maison des Artisans de Bamako*. As such, understanding the state and the role that it serves in the market adds an important dimension to the commodification of wildlife in the *Artisana*.

Notes

ⁱ Foreigners frequently use the term “Africa” as a general descriptor when describing Mali.

ⁱⁱ Given the legal issues that surround such practices, many vendors hide their dealings with importers. Since importers and tourists tend to look alike, it was only by getting to know leather vendors that I was able to learn of importers, distinguish them from random tourists and expatriates, and develop an understanding of their unique role with regard to the leather shops of the *Artisana*.

ⁱⁱⁱ The three other importers I spoke with (the Algerian, Spaniard, and Chinese) were understandably guarded in answering my questions. In comparison, Hassim (the Moroccan) was boisterous in his demeanor and welcomed my questions, giving me details that other importers chose to withhold.

^{iv} I do know that Hassim has been working with the same generalized leather vendor since the 1990s. Furthermore, when I met him he was picking up his second order of the year.

^v This statement is based on the overwhelming numbers of Malians found in gold- and silver shops in comparison to those found in leather shops.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STATE AND THE *ARTISANA*

Initially the state was to be a larger component of my research. I had imagined being able to interview state actors and review state documents, such as export lists and tax records for the *Artisana*, as well as state conservation policy. However the reality of conducting fieldwork was another matter. After repeated attempts at interviewing state agents, including members of the *Artisana* administration, law enforcement, and the national conservation agency, it became evident that my requests fell on deaf-ears – but with good reason.

In the sections that follow I use current literature in combination with ethnographic descriptions of the state (i.e., its actors and their practices) to outline its role in the *Artisana* as well as its wildlife values. In general the state is highlighted as part of a system of global environmental governance (Brosius 1999, 2006; Brosius and Russell 2003; Brosius et al. 1998; Neumann 2004; Peluso 1993; West 2006) and receives benefits from doing so. However, at the same time, the state relies on wildlife use to generate revenue, provide indicators of social position, as well as provide a sense of security in an insecure world.

The state plays a special role in the *Artisana*. Put simply, the *Artisana* is the most current vision of a state institution that has evolved through history. According to scholarly and state documents (Konaté 2007; Council of Ministers 2005), The *Maison des Artisans de Bamako*, originated as a colonial institution in 1933 (see Chapter III). Not until after independence (September 22, 1960) did the market begin to take its contemporary shape and name. Through a national decentralization program, the

Artisana shifted from being the only state craft market, to one of several (others are located in Menaka, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal).

In accordance with national legislation, regional crafts markets are governed by management committees elected for three years by the National Center for the Promotion of Handicrafts, under the direction of the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism (Konaté 2007; Council of Ministers 2005). These management committees are comprised of state appointed “*functionnaires*,” or functionaries (a form of state agent), and are supported by hired clerical staff. Put together, both functionaries and clerical staff make up what is referred to as the *Artisana* administration (the state apparatus that manages the *Artisana*). However, these types of actors are not the only state agents associated with the *Artisana*. In addition to the market administration is a municipal police squad who also serves state interests in the *Artisana*.

Though hard to see at first with all the vendors and consumers who fill the public space of the *Artisana*, state actors are present and have a distinct political hierarchy (see Table 20: Summary Data on state agents of the *Artisana*). There is the *Gouverneur du Artisana* (the Governor of the *Artisana*) who holds the highest office in the institution, appointed by the Minister of Handicrafts and Tourism. As such, the Governor reports directly to the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism via the National Center for the Promotion of Handicrafts. Under the direction of the Governor, is the *Député de Gouverneur* (Deputy Governor), who serves as the Governor’s right-hand man, overseeing everyday market activities. Next in the hierarchy of the *Artisana* administration is the *Comptable du Artisana* (the bookkeeper/accountant of the *Artisana*). It is the accountant’s job to collect state taxes – specifically the rent vendors pay to use a

shop in the *Artisana*. Unlike the Deputy Governor, who reports to the Governor of the *Artisana*, the accountant reports to both the Governor of the *Artisana* and the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism. In addition to these positions, there is a handful of clerical staff that serves various parties in the *Artisana* administration. Specifically, the Governor, his deputy, and the accountant have secretaries (one each) that assist them in their *Artisana* duties. Two office clerks fill out the *Artisana* administration, working under the direction of state functionaries and their secretaries. Should law enforcement be needed, a squad of five police officers, replete with a *Chef du Poste* (Chief officer - typically holding the rank of lieutenant), is on call. All of these actors save the police squad are located within the confines of the *Artisana*; the police are stationed on the periphery of the market's parking lot. Incidentally, this police squad does double duty, serving both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Table 20: Summary data on state agents of the *Artisana*.

Role	Actor / Position	Individual Actors	Total Number of Actors
<i>Artisana</i> Administration	Governor	1	8
	Secretary to Governor	1	
	Deputy Governor	1	
	Secretary to Deputy Governor	1	
	Accountant	1	
	Secretary to Accountant	1	
	Office Clerks	2	
Law Enforcement	Chief Officer	1	5
	Subordinate Officers	4	
Totals	-	-	13

Each of these positions has unique responsibilities and is instrumental to the functioning of the *Artisana*. Key to the role of state actors in the *Artisana* (i.e.,

administrators and law enforcement) is the implementation of state directives, such as a prohibition on the sale of national antiquities. For instance, during my time in the *Artisana* there was a government raid on a vendor who was selling illegal antiquities. Needless to say the repercussions of this incident greatly affected my ability to work in the *Artisana*. A vendor who had a personal gripe with me (not sure why) accused me of being a spy and that I had been involved in the government raid (nothing could have been further from the truth and many of my consultants knew this, but the damage had been done).

Though this particular incident negatively impacted my research goals in the *Artisana*, it serves as a prime example of the extent to which formal legal action is applied. From conversations with vendors and the clerical staff of the *Artisana* administration I learned that upon receiving a tip that a vendor was selling national antiquities, the Deputy Governor informed the Governor, who then called upon the *Artisana* police (an office clerk was sent to fetch them). With the chief officer and two of his subordinates in tow, the Governor and his deputy searched the shop of the accused and found several terra cotta figurines, which were then confiscated (i.e., assumed to be national antiquities). In addition to having his goods confiscated, the vendor was arrested by the ranking police officer and taken to jail to await trial¹.

While a prohibition on the sale of national antiquities is closely monitored and enforced, the sale of nationally protected wildlife is of little to no concern to the *Artisana* administration (let alone the state). In fact, leather vendors tan leopard, lion, red-fronted gazelle, and other nationally protected species (see Table 1: Nationally protected wildlife) in plain view of state actors (i.e., the *Artisana* administration and law enforcement

officers) without repercussions. Similarly, some wives of the national administration purchase wildlife goods made with nationally protected species. Moreover, some state actors are wildlife commodity consumers, or are intimately involved in the APT. For example, several members of the *Assemblée Nationale* (National Assembly), located across the street from the *Artisana*, own wildlife commodities and carry them in public. Every morning when the assembly was in session, state politicians were deposited by a chauffeur at the front entrance. The elite men exit their vehicles, frequently carrying a briefcase made of either crocodile or rock pythonⁱⁱ.

The conservation and trade status associated with the wildlife sold from the *Artisana* is particularly relevant as it represents a discursive formation that reflects international and state ideals pertaining to the trafficking of wild species. These ideals, highlighted in Mali's NBSAP, as well as in being a signatory to the CBD and CITES, are in juxtaposition to the actual practices that surround wildlife in the *Artisana* and Mali in general. Species that are protected *vis a vis* national legislation and two international conventions are traded openly and without state monitoring.

Of the 25 species of wild fauna commodified in the *Artisana*, 13 were mammals, and 12 were reptiles. Taken together as a single data set reveals general trends with regard to the conservation and trade status of the wild mammals and reptiles encountered (see Table 21: The conservation and trade status of wild mammals sold in the *Artisana*; and Table 22: The conservation and trade status of wild reptiles sold in the *Artisana*).

Table 21: The conservation and trade status of wild mammals sold in the *Artisana*.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Red List	CITES
Caracal	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	<i>Monoko</i>	LC	II
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	<i>N'golo K'adi</i>	LC	II
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	<i>Wara Ba</i>	VU	I/II*
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	<i>Wara Ni Kalan</i>	NT	I
Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Kungo Lai, Lai</i>	LC	-
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	<i>Mali</i>	VU	II
Dorcas Gazelle	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>	<i>Son</i>	VU	III
Red-Fronted Gazelle	<i>Gazella rufifrons</i>	<i>Sine</i>	VU	-
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	LC	-
Red-Flanked Duiker	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>	<i>Mangalani</i>	LC	-
Maxwell's Duiker	<i>Cephalophus maxwellii</i>	<i>Kokounani</i>	LC	-
Common Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	<i>N'goloni</i>	LC	-
Roan Antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	<i>Daje</i>	LC	III

KEY:

<p>Red List EX = Extinct EW = Extinct in Wild CR = Critically Endangered EN = Endangered VU = Vulnerable NT = Near Threatened LC = Least Concern DD = Data Deficient NE = Not Evaluated</p>	<p>CITES I = Threatened with Extinction II = Not Currently Threatened with Extinction III = Overexploited in a Member Nation - = Not Listed</p> <p>* Lion is regionally endangered (I), but not on a global scale (II).</p>
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Table 22: The conservation and trade status of wild reptiles sold in the *Artisana*.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Red List	CITES
African Slender-Snouted Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus cataphractus</i>	<i>Bama Je'ma</i>	DD	I
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	<i>Bama</i>	LC	I/II*
West African Dwarf Crocodile	<i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i>	<i>Bama Fi'ma</i>	VU	I
Desert Monitor	<i>Varanus griseus</i>	<i>Chen-Chen Koro</i>	NE	I
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	<i>Kana</i>	NE	II
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	NE	II
Ball Python	<i>Python regius</i>	<i>Tomi</i>	NE	II
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	NE	II
Smyth's Water Snake	<i>Grayia smythii</i>	<i>N'Gran</i>	NE	-
Mali Cobra	<i>Naja nigricollis, N. katiensis</i>	<i>Gorongu Bileman</i>	NE	-
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi'ma</i>	NE	-
Egyptian Cobra	<i>Naja haje</i>	<i>Gorongu Je'ma</i>	NE	-

KEY:

<p>Red List EX = Extinct EW = Extinct in Wild CR = Critically Endangered EN = Endangered VU = Vulnerable NT = Near Threatened LC = Least Concern DD = Data Deficient NE = Not Evaluated</p>	<p>CITES I = Threatened with Extinction II = Not Currently Threatened with Extinction III = Overexploited in a Member Nation - = Not Listed</p> <p>*Nile Crocodile is regionally endangered (I), but not on a global scale (II).</p>
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In terms of conservation status, none of the species used were considered extinct (EX), extinct in the wild (EW), critically endangered (CR), or endangered (EN) by the IUCN “Red List.” However, 20% of all species were considered vulnerable (VU), while 4% were near threatened (NT). Another 36% of all species were considered least concern (LC), while 4% were data deficient (DD). In addition, 36% of wild species used in the *Artisana* had not yet been evaluated (NE) by the IUCN “Red List.” In terms of the international trade status of the wild species encountered in the *Artisana*, CITES recognized 16% as appendix I, 28% as appendix II, 8% as a combination of appendix I and II (e.g., I/II), another 8% as appendix III, while 40% were not listed.

To explore the disjunctures among national wildlife policy (i.e., Mali’s NBSAP, CBD, and CITES) that formally protects certain species of wildlife, and local practice (i.e., wildlife use in a state sponsored market), I attempted to interview state actors of the *Artisana*. Though I tried many times to interview state agents, many gave me the Malian version of the “run around:” state actors would not commit to interviews with me. In particular, the Governor, his deputy, and accountant accepted my presence in the *Artisana*, occasionally speaking with me on an informal level. Yet, when I approached these individuals to schedule a formal interview, they would agree and not show up at the specified place or time. When I tried intercepting these men in their daily activities to speak with them about wildlife in the *Artisana*, I was asked to come back another time. When I did return at a later date, I was coming at a “bad time” and would need to reschedule. After several rounds of getting the “run around,” I ceased trying to interview the Governor, his deputy, and accountant. Instead I focused on those actors who would engage me, namely the secretaries and office clerks who work for state functionaries.

Although I was not able to formally interview the Governor, his deputy, and accountant, I was able to observe each, using wildlife, or informally commenting on it. For instance, when I first arrived in the *Artisana* to conduct the current study, I was required to present my research, and official state documents (granting me permission to conduct research) to the Governor. After explaining my research agenda in the *Artisana* – an exploration of wildlife use – the Governor shared with me, “wild animals are very interesting to me – I like taking my family to the zoological park to see all the animals of Mali.” Such a comment provides a very limited perspective on wildlife and its place in Mali. To explain, consider the perspective of a rural villager. When asked where he sees wildlife, he explained to me “*u be brusi kono*,” (they are in the bush). The fact that the Governor identifies the national zoo as the place he (and his family) goes to see wildlife highlights the fundamental schism that exists between rural and urban populations. Rural communities live in close proximity to wildlife and have a basic knowledge and understanding of it via its relation to people. Urban communities are frequently distanced from wildlife and lack such insights, though they may know basic information like “chimpanzees are intelligent.”

On another occasion, I observed the Governor with a worn crocodile hide wallet. Owning such an object may reflect the Governor’s social status as seen among other elite Malians (see Malian Clientele). At a minimum, the wallet reflects the Governor’s acceptance of wildlife commodities; otherwise he would not possess such an object. From a symbolic perspective, state agents (i.e., functionaries, members of the national assembly, law enforcement, and other state actors) who own wildlife commodities are

echoing the general disposition of the state with regard to wildlife; it is woven into the socio-cultural, political, and economic fabric of Mali.

For instance, while engaging in participant observation in the *Artisana*, I saw the Deputy governor speaking with a Malian customer about his purchase. In brief, the Deputy was informing what appeared to be a friend, that he could get his purchase (what looked to be a savannah monitor wallet), monogrammed. Whether or not the Deputy governor was just trying to improve market sales, or had a specific vendor he wanted to benefit with a client, I do not know.

On another occasion, I observed the Deputy governor stop an illegal vendor (i.e., he was not a vendor who paid rent in the *Artisana*) and confiscate the bag of goods that he was trying to sell to tourists. After detaining the man and confiscating his goods in the middle of the *Artisana* for all to see, the deputy governor continued to humiliate the vendor and demonstrate his authority over him. Unzipping the bag, the deputy governor dumped its contents on to the ground. Picking through the items with toe of his shoe, the deputy governor admonished the illegal vendor for trying to sell “junk.” Opting not to pursue the matter further, the deputy governor released the vendor, but kept his goods. Among the goods was a rock python cell phone case with belt clip. Later that same day I observed the deputy governor on his afternoon rounds, clipped to his belt was his newly acquired python cell phone case!

Both of these examples help to underscore that the Deputy does not perceive any issues with trafficking commodities made with wildlife. One might go so far to say that paying attention to such details is counter to the directives of the *Artisana* – they are to produce Malian crafts, which are based on a pre-colonial system of specialization (i.e.,

Nyamakalaw). To monitor wildlife use and enforce national and international policy would negatively impact those vendors who produce and sell wildlife commodities in the *Artisana*. In turn this would impact the ability of the *Artisana* to meet demand (both local and foreign) and thus undermine the efficacy of the *Artisana* to serve state interests (i.e., the revenues generated through leather vendors who rent shops in the *Artisana*).

Such a perspective helps to provide insight into the role of the accountant of the *Artisana*. As the state appointed functionary, he is responsible for collecting rent from all the vendors in the *Artisana*, including thirty leather shops that sell wildlife commodities (eighteen of which participated in my study). Potentially, the accountant knows better than any other *Artisana* functionary the amount of wildlife that the state profits from, as he must seek out each vendor once a month to collect rent. From my understanding, business income is taxed, but through a different agency (the General Directorate of Taxes, under the direction of the Ministry of Economy and Finance), not the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism. Unfortunately I never encountered a state agent affiliated with the General Directorate of Taxes, though I did hear vendors bemoan the national requirement to pay business income tax. Interestingly, the source of their discontent is the very institution that they work within: the *Artisana*, a state sponsored crafts market. In comparison, vendors who sell on the street, or in informal markets (i.e., outside of the purview of the state), pay no business tax. In short, many vendors are jealous of the economic freedom of street vendors and informal markets, though many are quick to point out that working in the *Artisana* provides benefits. Specifically, vendors note that renting a space in the *Artisana* grants them access to the best type of customers – wealthy foreigners and Malians – as they have the most expendable income.

Though state functionaries like the Governor, his deputy, and the *Artisana* accountant, provide limited insight into the wildlife use in the *Artisana* and the role of the state, the secretaries and clerks who work for such individuals were a wealth of information and were more than forthcoming in sharing their attitudes and perceptions of wildlife commodities. Once a week I would drop by the main office of the *Artisana* where the secretaries and clerks often hung-out and socialized. When I first introduced my work and myself to this group of women I was well received and in turn gained access to a key node in the social grapevine that permeates the *Artisana*. It was this same social grapevine that clued me into the state raid on a vendor selling illegal antiquities.

After several months of informal conversations, I observed one of the secretaries carrying a ball python purse. When I asked her about it she informed me that she had purchased it years ago from one of the local vendors (they were distantly related by marriage). Asking her about her bag, Umu (the secretary) explained that she found the bag very attractive. In particular she noted the pattern in the python skin as the most significant feature of her bag. As Umu shared her thoughts, she traced her finger over the pattern of the skin – irregular, interlocking, black ovals, set against an almost orange background.

Another secretary, named Kadja, brought one of her most prized possessions – a savannah monitor pocketbook – to show me after she learned that I was interested in wildlife goods. After examining the pocketbook, I asked Kadja where she got it. Like Umu, Kadja purchased her wildlife commodity from a local vendor who she identified as a distant relative. When asked why it was so important to her, Kadja related that her vendor/relative had sold it to her for much less than it was worth (she would not tell me

how much though). Because Kadja had brought the pocketbook in just to show me I realized that she did not use it everyday, unlike Umu who frequently brought her ball python purse to the *Artisana*. This realization prompted me to ask Kadja when she typically used her pocketbook. Not surprisingly, Kadja explained that she used it for special occasions like marriages and going out to the *Biblos* (a Lebanese owned discothèque in downtown Bamako).

In addition to speaking to Umu and Kadja about their wildlife goods, I was able to conduct an informal group interview with all the secretaries and clerks about their perceptions of wildlife commodities. Specifically, I asked the women as a group what they thought of the wildlife goods sold in the *Artisana*. My hope was to generate some in-depth discussion regarding wildlife from a uniquely positioned group of women, however, that was not how my question was interpreted. Rather, the women interpreted my question as a “wish-list” of the wildlife goods that they each wanted.

After posing my question, there was a small pause as the women looked at each other, then Safi, one of the secretaries, announced that she really wanted a bag. When I probed as to which kind, she identified one very similar to Umu’s; it too was to be made of ball python. After hearing this Umu seemed to one up Safi by declaring that she wanted a pocketbook made (i.e., commissioned) to match her ball python purse. Kadja went for broke and offered that she wanted a leopard fur purse. The two office clerks (Fanta and Ma) argued over which was more attractive, leopard fur shoes, bags, or pocketbooks? Fanta decided she wanted a leopard fur purse, while Ma opted for shoes.

Even though my question was misinterpreted, the women of the *Artisana* administration provided me invaluable insight into their desires with regard to wildlife

commodities. All upheld wildlife as a resource to be converted into commodities they found attractive (i.e., bags, pocketbooks, and shoes). Moreover, there were distinct undertones of status associated with owning wildlife goods and this seemed to be related to the relative economic worth of the commodity in question. Though the women did not comment on the cost of the goods they desired, based on my own knowledge, the types of goods and the species the commodities were to be made from seemed to increase from one woman to the next. For instance, a ready-made ball python bag similar to what Safi described costs between 20-30,000 CFA. The custom ordered pocket book described by Umu could easily cost over 30,000 CFA, given that the pattern and colors would have to match her bag. The typical ready-made leopard fur purse, as desired by Kadja, sells in the 40-50,000 CFA range. Both Fanta and Ma selected items in a similar price range: 40-50,000 CFA. I suspect the reason Fanta and Ma did not identify more expensive items is due to their position within the *Artisana* administration – culturally speaking it is impolite to one-up someone who holds a higher status or social rank than oneself in a political hierarchy. Thus, Fanta and Ma might desire wildlife commodities that are more expensive (i.e., would impart them a higher social status), but are socially prohibited from expressing such in the context they were asked (i.e., among a group of higher ranked women of the *Artisana* administration).

In addition to the men (functionaries) and women (secretaries and clerks) of the *Artisana* administration, other state agents found to operate in the market include law enforcement officers. Though there are police officers stationed around the city, one squad is situated in the parking lot of the *Artisana*; its jurisdiction includes both the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*. Among this police squad is the *Chef du Poste*, a

lieutenant by the name of McIntyre (the name of a TV police detective he admired and adopted as a nickname), and four subordinate officers. Given their physical location, this police squad spends most of its time dealing with conflicts in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, but when needed are on call to maintain order in the *Artisana*. Such was the case when McIntyre was called upon along with two members of his squad to aid in searching a vendor's shop for illegal antiquities, culminating in his arrest of the shop vendor.

Interestingly, given the physical location and breadth of jurisdiction, these state agents (i.e., the police squad) are witness to a great amount of wildlife use, some of which is protected by national and international law. However, over the course of nine months, none of these officers took any action against those who sold or used protected species either in the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro*. This most likely is due to the fact that none of the officers were familiar with which species are protected and which are not. Of the entire squad, only McIntyre was aware that laws existed to protect wildlife, though he knew no specifics. This is most likely a reflection of fact that his superiors do not wish McIntyre (or other municipal police officers) to spend time dealing with such issues. Rather, municipal police are tasked with “keeping the peace” and spend most of their time settling disputes between individuals, not enforcing national wildlife policy. This is well evidenced in the fact that all the officers attached to the *Artisana* supported wildlife use as demonstrated by each possessing *gris-gris*, a form a traditional medicine, made with wildlife. In fact, McIntyre carried with him no less than a dozen amulets – each made with wildlife, and each with a unique function. Moreover, he attributed his success as a police officer to them. For example, one of his *gris-gris* protects him from knives and bullets, while another prevents people from sneaking up on him. One *gris-*

gris in particular he claims granted him the rank of lieutenant. To make matters even more complicated, some of McIntyre's amulets were made by Kara (a local practitioner and one of my key consultants) with ingredients purchased from the *Marabagaw Yoro* (a point that will be further discussed in Chapter IX – Welcome to the *Marabagaw Yoro*).

One type of state agent I expected to encounter in the *Artisana*, but did not, was some presence of the *Direction Nationale de la Conservation de la Nature* - DNCN (National Direction for the Conservation of Nature) – as they are a key state agency tasked with implementing national conservation policy, specifically those pertaining to the CBD and CITES.

Since agents of the DNCN were not present in the *Artisana*, I tried to find them. It took some doing, but by working through the social networks of my consultants I was able to sit down and talk with a colonel of the DNCN. I spoke with the colonel on three separate occasions, each time being asked to come back another time to ask my questions about wildlife use in Mali, and more specifically the *Artisana*, and the *Marabagaw Yoro*. It was clear that I was unwanted so I did not push it. What I did gather from these conversations was that the DNCN was focused on securing funding from organizations like the World Conservation Union and other donor organizations to conserve large areas of biodiversity. For instance, the Bafing Faunal Reserve (BFR), Boucle du Baoulé (a national park), and the inland Niger delta (a vast wetland and bird sanctuary) were priority areas noted by the colonel in our talks. In addition to these hotspots of biodiversity, the colonel also mentioned the “*projet d'éléphant à Gourma*” (a reference to a unique population of West African “desert” elephants – they have the longest migration route of any group of elephants in the world) as a national conservation priority.

These national conservation priorities stand in contrast to the state's (in)activity in the *Artisana*. Perhaps the greatest evidence that the state is uninterested in curtailing wildlife commodification in the *Artisana* is that they profit from it. In other words, conserving large areas of biodiversity through funds made available by donor organizations serves the state, as does ignoring the commodification of wildlife in the *Artisana*. By playing both sides of the field (i.e., conserving large areas of biodiversity, while at the same time facilitating wildlife commodification in the *Artisana*), the state ensures that its needs are served (i.e., they receive a portion of the revenues generated in meeting local and foreign demands for wildlife).

With the state taking no (legal) interest in wildlife goods produced or sold from the *Artisana*, leather workers are free to pursue their trade and make a profit. However, this does not mean that the state is not involved in wildlife use. Rather, the state's position on wildlife is key to allowing its commodification in the *Artisana*. Moreover, the same is true for the state and its relationship to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. These points are discussed in detail at the conclusion of this dissertation (Chapter XV – Where the Wild-Things Go).

Notes

ⁱ I never learned more about what happened to this vendor, but I do know that another member of the vendor's shop (a family relative) took over paying rent and maintained the shop in shop owner's absence.

ⁱⁱ Similarly, in 2002, while conducting a pilot study into the APT of Mali, I encountered my ex-supervisor from the Peace Corps, a Malian man who works as a state forester. Though he did not recognize me, I recognized him and was astonished at what I witnessed him doing: working as a middleman for an Eastern European exotic animal collector. The state forester placed a "special order" with a hunter to trap a live, juvenile, female leopard. After acquiring the specimen, the state forester secretly exported the animal out of Mali to its new owner.

CHAPTER IX

WELCOME TO THE *MARABAGAW YORO*

The smell was pungent and sickly sweet as I knelt stacking primate heads and other animal parts into a neat pile at seven in the morning. While stacking inventory I recorded species and parts in my grubby notebook: 11 *gobani kungolo* (vervet monkey heads), 8 *wara'ble kungolo* (patas monkey heads), 4 *minea kungolo* (rock python heads), 23 *lai nei* (warthog tusks), 12 vials of *mah tulu* (manatee oil), 9 *gorongo fi'ma* (black cobras), 18 *koro kungolo* (savannah monitor heads), 1 large *surukou kungolo* (hyena head), 6 pair of *daje giren* (roan antelope horns), 4 pair of *tanko giren* (hartebeest horns), 26 *mina giren* (bushbuck horns), ... my eyes began to water and I felt a little lightheaded, a signal that I needed fresh air, otherwise my meager breakfast would meet the pavement.

Lifting my head up from my task I took several deep breaths and surveyed the parking lot that serves as the home to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, or “secret keeper place” (see Image 3). Another possible translation of *Marabagaw Yoro* is “poison keeper place.” This meaning is derived from an alternative explanation of the conjugation of *mara* (to keep, take care of, manage, or govern) and *baga* (poison, or venom). The “w,” in *Marabagaw*, denotes a plural form, highlighting that there are multiple secrets (or poisons) that are kept in this unique place that takes the form of a market. Other names for the market include, *marché du fetishe* (fetish market), *marché d'amulette* (amulet market), and “traditional medicine market” – the usage of which depends on one’s understanding and exposure to the *Marabagaw Yoro* as well as Mali. For instance, one of the more memorable descriptions that I have come across describes the *Marabagaw Yoro* as, “fetish stalls not for the faint-hearted, offering up a stomach-turning array

of bones, skins, dried chameleons, and rotting monkey heads,” (Lonely Planet, 2006: 495). Such descriptions only serve to “fetishize” a unique and highly dynamic market oriented around providing ingredients for *fura*, or traditional medicine, to wide a range of clients, encompassing multiple ethnicities, beliefs and practices.

Run an online search for “Bamako Fetish Market” and one will be regaled with hundreds of personal stories and images of the “fetish” and “traditional medicine market” of Bamako – it is even located on Google Earth (2012). The following is an excerpt from an online discussion forum, where an individual shares their thoughts on the *Marabagaw Yoro* (identified as the “fetish” market):

While visiting the food and artisan markets of Bamako, we ran across the “fetish” market where all things voodoo permeate. There were cheetah fur, monkey, rat and warthog heads, whole rotting birds, shells, bones, skins, teeth, and i shall not go on. Much of these come from Benin the origin of voodoo. Supposedly, monkey heads hold power, and some of the fetishes are used for ‘medicine’ and ‘good luck’ (You Are What You Eat 2009).

What is particularly striking about this passage is that Malian traditional medicine is assumed to come from Benin and be a form of “voodoo.” Several American expatriates that I encountered in downtown Bamako had similar perceptions of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, telling me that the items sold in the market were for “voodoo” and laughed at the idea that people, in a modern world, found value in such practices.

A group of U.S. missionaries described the *Marabagaw Yoro* as the “devil’s work.” An elder male among the group was particularly upset at the presence of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, calling it “an abomination.” He went on to tell me how the group he was with was working to “educate Malians,” so that they could live a better life. The subtext of his comments were clear, institutions such as the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and the

practices that are associated with it, stand in opposition to the missionaries agenda in Mali.

Mr. Young, an employee of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), expressed similar sentiments. Asking Mr. Young about his experience with the market, he explained that he had walked through it (on his way to the *Artisana* as part of a group trip) and was “disgusted by all the animals cut up to be sold.” Mr. Young went on to explain that he was an avid conservationist, being a member of the U.S. National Audubon Society, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). According to Mr. Young, “they [Malians] are killing all the animals; if they [Malians] don’t stop, nothing will be left.” For Mr. Young, the “fetish market” represents one of the many obstacles in the way of Mali’s development.

Counter to the perceptions of many westerners, which highlight the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a place of mysticism, an abomination, and a contributing factor to the decline in wildlife, many Malians uphold the market as a unique place from which they are able to purchase ingredients to *fura*, as well as seek out specialized services through the social networks of vendors. Fatima, an elderly Malian woman described the *Marabagaw Yoro* as “the place you buy traditional medicine.” She went on to relate how she had visited the market “hundreds” of times over her lifetime in Bamako to buy everything from “love medicine” ingredients, to needing the services of a local practitioner because her sister (Geneba) put a curse on her.

Initially, Fatima did not know what was wrong with her – all she realized was that something was amiss because she did not feel right. Not feeling right caused Fatima to visit the *Marabagaw Yoro* to ask a vendor she knew (from previous visits) if he knew

anyone who could identify and treat her problem (of not feeling right). Hearing of her problem, the *Marabagaw Yoro* vendor directed Fatima to a local practitioner who specialized in divination and sorcery. By consulting with the local practitioner, Fatima learned that her sister (Geneba) was the cause of her not feeling right because Geneba had hired a sorcerer to place a curse on Fatima. Moreover, from Fatima's consultation with the diviner-sorcerer, she learned that Geneba was jealous of her recent marriage and wanted Fatima's husband for herself. Learning of her sister's intentions, Fatima paid the diviner-sorcerer to remove Geneba's curse and return the favor by having a curse placed on Geneba. Thus began a lifelong feud between Fatima and Geneba, with each countering the other's curse, and applying their own, in a back and forth fashion.

Old man Koulabali, a tailor in Bamako, describes the *Marabagaw Yoro* as the place he goes when he needs *fura* (traditional medicine). Koulabali explained that for some things like a high fever he takes aspirin (bought from the corner boutique). For other issues, like personal security and a desire for increased male stamina (sexual prowess), Koulabali consults with a local practitioner (they have been in a client-patron relationship for over 10 years). The practitioner, one of the most respected in the community, essentially writes Koulabali a prescription (a list of ingredients) to make a medicine that will satisfy his needs. Koulabali in turn takes the list of ingredients to the *Marabagaw Yoro* where he has established relations with several vendors over the years.

With regard to personal security, Koulabali is in near constant fear that someone, or thing, is trying to cause him harm. To counter potential threats, Koulabali carries several different types of *fura* in the form of amulets. One of the reasons that Koulabali stands out and values the resources of the *Marabagaw Yoro* is that he carries a variety of

amulets of varying degrees of power and function. These amulets, from least powerful to most powerful, are known as *gris-gris*, *seben*, *jo*, and *boli*. Each is unique to the owner and each serves unique purposes. One *gris-gris* that Koulabali wears around his upper-arm is designed to alert him to the presence of supernatural phenomena – in particular malevolent forces that desire to harm people. Some *seben*, worn on a leather strap around Koulabali’s neck, contain “sacred writings” (along with a host of faunal and floral ingredients), to protect him from other people who wish to cause him harm. Tied to a fob attached to his belt, and hanging in his pocket, is an anti-theft amulet (a type of *jo* – a more powerful version of a *seben*; includes sacred writing and blood sacrifice to empower the amulet), designed to prevent pickpockets from stealing his money. Lastly, Koulabali carries a *boli* type amulet (these are unique as they are considered to be “alive” and must be routinely fed with blood sacrifices), to prevent malevolent forces, or supernatural beings from possessing him (possibly his greatest fear). All of these amulets were made with ingredients bought from a handful of vendors in the *Marabagaw Yoro* over the years.

Given the stories of Fatima and Koulabali, it is clear to see that those Malians who make use of traditional medicine value the *Marabagaw Yoro* and the resources it provides. However, not all Malians value the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Some Malians described the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a “place of thieves,” suggesting that those who sell ingredients to *fura* are nothing but charlatans, snake oil salesmen if you will. Other Malians, described the *Marabagaw Yoro* in mixed terms, highlighting how some vendors are thieves, while others sell genuine ingredients. Others still, described how only

vendors of a particular ethnicity knew what they were talking about; all others were liars, suggesting inter-ethnic tensions.

Institutional History

Though the *Marabagaw Yoro* is known far and wide among Malians and foreigners (ask any Malian, or run a general online search for “Bamako fetish market”), there is very little scholarly information written about it. Key search terms included: Bamako, *Marabagaw Yoro*, Fetish Market, Traditional Medicine Market, and various combinations. Only a few academic references could be found, and most were out of date, such as Pascal James Imperato’s 1979 article “Interfact of Traditional and Modern Medicine in Mali.” In the article, Imperato identifies “Hausa barber-surgeons” operating in the area that the *Marabagaw Yoro* resides, “around the great mosque” (1979: 17). Interestingly, none of my consultants, some of which were selling animal parts in the *Marabagaw Yoro* in 1979, have any recollection of “Hausa barber-surgeons,” though they know of the several Hausa men and women who currently work in the area (selling goods from street-side stalls).

Other references encountered include a variety of ethnobotanical surveys. For example, in 2005, Maiga et al. published an article focusing on plant toxicology. In their article, “A survey of toxic plants on the market in the district of Bamako, Mali: traditional knowledge compared with a literature search of modern pharmacology and toxicology,” Maiga et al. identify that they collected samples from herbalists in the same area that the *Marabagaw Yoro* is located. None of the ethnobotanical surveys directly identify the market they got their samples from as the *Marabagaw Yoro*, nor do any give

mention to the animal parts that are sold as medicinal ingredients along side the botanical ones.

Turning to historic sources and scholars of Bamako, more evidence of the *Marabagaw Yoro* (or rather proto-*Marabagaw Yoro*) is found. In fact it appears that the *Marabagaw Yoro* evolved with the development of the Bamako, from a small camp to one of the most important commercial centers in the middle Niger valley. To understand these developments we must go back in history to a time of legends. As described by Marie-Louise Villien-Rossi (1966) in “*Bamako, capitale du Mali*,” three families claim responsibility for founding the village of Bamako: Niaré, Touré, and Dravé. Though dates vary, it is generally accepted that one of these families built a house and compound in the modern day neighborhood of Niarela, sometime in the 17th century (after 1640) (Villien-Rossi 1966).

Prior to the 1880s, the population of Bamako was estimated at roughly six to seven hundred (Perinbam 1997). In general, before the French colonized Bamako, it was a small, yet cosmopolitan community, consisting of a mixed population (Perinbam 1997). According to Perinbam, villages like Bamako attracted:

’stranger’ merchants en route to markets or religious fetes, transients on pilgrimage to Mecca, itinerant scholars either imparting or seeking knowledge, as well as desert-side populations on their transhumant trajectories, (1997: 21).

However, in February 1883, Borgins-Desbordes, French military commander of the Upper Rivers, established a fort at Bamako (Roberts 1987). The presence of the French greatly changed the small, cosmopolitan village, into a burgeoning hub of commercial activity. French history scholar Villien-Rossi, comments on Bamako in 1884, noting: “[t]he artisans are numerous,” and that “[t]here are also sorcerers and

surgeons,” (1966: 287) By 1885, Bamako held a special Wednesday produce market to augment the regular Saturday market that served locals and French alike (Roberts 1987). As described by Villien-Rossi, in 1896 a vast hall is noted as providing a space for the “*marchée indigène*,” or indigenous market (1966: 19).

From a French fort, Bamako would grow to become a keystone to French control of the middle Niger valley. As French expansion in West Africa shifted, so too did its colonial commercial and administrative center. Originally based in Kayes, the French colonial commercial and administrative center moved further east as their influence spread. By 1908, the French colonial commercial and administrative center had moved to Bamako (Roberts 1987). With the railroad connecting Bamako to Kayes (and beyond), Bamako continued to expand and drew merchants from far and wide. In 1908, Bamako had a population of roughly six thousand inhabitants (Perinbam 1997) and controlled the majority of commercial trade in the area (Roberts 1987). In 1933, French colonial Governor Louis Trentinian announced that Bamako was to become “one of the greatest, the most attractive towns of our African empire,” (as cited by Perinbam 1997: 244). By 1936, Bamako had grown into a town of roughly twenty-one thousand inhabitants, with approximately seven to eight hundred being Europeans (Villien-Rossi 1966).

Given this increase of population and the resulting urbanization, it is no wonder that the primary inhabitants of Bamako (i.e., Malians) would desire access to traditional practices and medicines (things readily accessible in the rural environment). To meet these needs it is suspected, based on oral histories and historic accounts (reviewed by regional and historical scholars) that early markets in Bamako were highly diverse, and as time progressed and the town grew, markets became more specialized and distinct from

one another. Rather than there be a Wednesday and Saturday market, neighborhood markets were created to meet community needs on a daily basis; including medicinal and supernatural needs. For instance, the Medina Coura market is among the oldest markets in Bamako (Villien-Rossi 1966) and to this day one can find a few *Marabagaw* vendors tucked amongst those who sell fruit, clothing, and cooking ware. However, even though *Marabagaw* vendors can be found in neighborhood markets, they are primarily found in the *Marabagaw Yoro* (i.e., the market space such vendors have created for themselves).

In the 1930s the French built *La Maison des Artisans* (see Chapter III), creating a place where virtually anyone could sell their goods and services. As such, the original *Artisana* was more than an artist colony, or school, it was a place where many occupational specialists associated with *Nyamakalaw* (see Chapter III) including *numuw* (blacksmiths), *garankew* (leatherworkers), *jeliw* (leatherworker-bards), and *griot* (bards), grouped together (based on shared status) to sell their services to the public.

According to oral tradition, many of the *numuw* and *garankew* were more than just blacksmiths and leatherworkers; they possessed *nyama*. Such specialized practitioners usually use the title of *Karamogo* (master teacher, diviner), *Soma* (sorcerer/witch), *Jotigi* (maker/master of fetishes), and *Bolitigi* (maker/master of fetishes), as an indicator of their status and skill set. Kara, a long time practitioner of *marabagaya* (the art of making traditional medicine), diviner, and descendent of several powerful supernatural specialists (*Somaw*, *Karamogow*, and *Bolitigiw*), describes the *Marabagaw Yoro* as having evolved with the city of Bamako through the years. “We have used *fura* for a long time and there have always been people who keep that knowledge and sell it to those who need it,” said Kara. “Some of the old *karamogow*

worked in the markets, making and selling medicine, just like American doctors,” proclaimed Kara!

It was only after independence (September 22, 1960) that the artisans and specialized practitioners separated into two distinct markets: *La Maison des Artisans* (a state sponsored handicraft market), and the *Marabagaw Yoro* (an informal market oriented toward serving supernatural and medicinal needs). *Karamogo* Faso, another long time traditional practitioner from a distinguished lineage explains, “they made a market next to the *Artisana*, it used to be a dirt field, and called it the *Marabagaw Yoro*.”

When I asked Faso about what types of merchants worked in the post independence *Marabagaw Yoro*, he identified two key specialists of old: *numuw* (blacksmiths) and *garankew* (leatherworkers). It was during this time (the early 1960s) that Faso began his apprenticeship in the *Marabagaw Yoro* under his father’s brother (a powerful *numuw soma*). Learning of Faso’s early experience in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I inquired how the market had changed over the years: “[w]hen I was young the market was large with about fifty vendors,” explained Faso with a touch of nostalgia. “My uncle was one of the most successful vendors in the *Marabagaw Yoro* – he made and sold many different medicines for all sorts of problems,” reminisced Faso. According to Faso, Suba (his uncle) was well known for being able to cure sexual problems (fertility and impotence), ‘spot-sickness’ (measles and chicken pox), apply a variety of curses to select individuals, as well as remove curses (for the right fee). “I apprenticed for my uncle for seven years, learning his medicines and making my own,” continued Faso. When Suba died (sometime in the 1970s), Faso took over his operation and was equally successful. However, Faso noted that over the years there was a growing conflict in the market:

many new vendors who set up shop in the market were not specialized practitioners (i.e., *numuw*, *garankew*, *jeliw*, *somaw*, or *karamogow*). Rather, the newcomers were merchants who saw the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a place to sell ingredients for *fura* (i.e., they did not make medicine, but specialized in selling the requisite parts to create medicine). According to Faso, by 1980, there were more merchants selling ingredients to medicine (about 30-40), than there were specialized practitioners who made and sold medicine (about 10-20).

By 1990, Faso retired from the *Marabagaw Yoro*, noting that most of the specialized practitioners had stopped working in the market and modified their practices. Specifically, specialized practitioners, like Faso moved out of the public space of the *Marabagaw Yoro* and set up their own “offices,” often hidden from public view, though known to many through informal channels. Kara was the last Karamogo to leave the market and set up his own office in 2003. However, unlike Faso who avoids contact with the *Marabagaw Yoro* (using his own supplies), Kara and many other specialized practitioners (n= 42) still have strong ties to the market and the new generation of merchant vendors who sell ingredients to traditional medicine (rather than make it). In fact they work in a symbiotic relationship, with specialized practitioners sending clients to specific vendors in the *Marabagaw Yoro* to purchase ingredients. In return, *Marabagaw* vendors help direct potential clients to specialized practitioners.

These historical and contemporary descriptions of the *Marabagaw Yoro* are significant as they highlight the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a site of articulation, or place (see Biersack 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Dirlik 2001), where actors engage other people from different places. In the case of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, people come from near and far in

search of the items it sells, and key practitioners associated with the market. In turn vendors underscore their agency (Ortner 1984,1994) in their interaction with a wide range of individuals including wildlife suppliers, local and foreign consumers, as well as state agents.

Market Composition

Today, the *Marabagaw Yoro* is situated amidst the parking lot that serves the *Grande Mosquée* (Great Mosque), *Artisana* (state sponsored handicraft market) and the *Assemblée Nationale* (Malian National Assembly – located across the street). Given its location, the *Marabagaw Yoro* and surrounding area is a site of great activity, with people coming and going throughout the day. As a result, more than just *Marabagaw* vendors (i.e., those who sell wildlife as ingredients to medicine) fill the market. Given the variety of merchants working in the place known as the *Marabagaw Yoro*, a certain amount of categorization is required to differentiate vendor types. Those who sell wildlife as ingredients to *fura* (traditional medicine) are referred to as Animal Parts Vendors (APV/APVs), and are the primary focus of my research in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

In general, 32 APV stalls are found within the parking lot and along its periphery. Amongst the 32 APV stalls, I make a distinction between large- and small-scale varieties. Small-scale APV stalls are typically owned and operated by a single individual (with a few exceptions). In comparison, large-scale APV stalls are comprised of an owner and at least one apprentice or assistant (often times more than one). Additionally, most large-scale APV stalls offer a greater variety of animal parts than do small-scale APVs. Of the 32 APV stalls found within the market, 19 are considered small-scale, while 13 are noted

as large-scale. In terms of stalls that participated; 10 small-scale, and 13 large-scale APV stalls took part in my study (see Table 23: Summary data on participating APV stalls).

Table 23: Summary data on participating APV stalls.

APV Stall Types	Total APV Stalls	Participating APV Stalls
Small-Scale APV	19	10
Large-Scale APV	13	13

In addition, several other types of vendors, or *tigiw* (literally translated as “masters,” or “proprietors”) are found scattered throughout the parking lot. There are several small boutiques that sell general sundries like tea, bread, and sugar. Also present are a host of fruit vendors selling *manguru* (mangos), *namasa* (bananas), *lenburuba* (oranges), and *pomu* (apples). Over a dozen *wòro* (Kola nut) and *sigareti* (cigarette) *tigiw* keep their clients well supplied with caffeine and nicotine. Similarly, a few coffee and tea vendors pour hot beverages for 50 CFA (about 10 cents) per serving.

Other merchants found in the *Marabagaw Yoro* include a handful of hot food vendors. These vendors prepare large quantities of rice and a few different sauces that are sold for breakfast and lunch. Depending on what you order you can pay as little as 100 CFA for a half-bowl of rice with onion sauce, or as much as 500 CFA for a full-bowl of rice with meat sauce – the actual meat costs extra: 50-100 CFA per piece. These food vendors primarily serve other business people working in or around the parking lot such as the men who staff the taxi stand, and the parking lot vendors themselves (they rent parking spaces for cars, motorcycles, mopeds, and bicycles). Other merchants found in the area include clothes and shoe vendors (much of what they sell is donated by the

west), and a few “sex shops” (stalls that specialize in selling traditional and modern sexual aids for both men and women).

In addition, two other types of merchants, including *yiritigiw* and *garankew* are situated throughout the market and are in regular attendance. These two types of vendors are closely associated with traditional medicine, and to a certain extent, APVs. Roughly 13 *yiritigiw*, or botanical vendors (literally translated as “tree masters”), sell bundles of medicinal leaves, branches, pieces of bark, and other vegetal matter as medicine. Many of the botanicals they sell are used in combination with wildlife ingredients (from APVs) to make traditional medicine, or *fura*.

Garankew, as described in Chapter III, are leatherworkers. However, unlike the leatherworkers of the *Artisana* who specialize in making luxury goods from wildlife, the *garankew* of the *Marabagaw Yoro* fit another niche. In particular, 16 *garankew* located in and around the *Marabagaw Yoro* perform two basic services. First and foremost, the *garankew* work as repairmen, mending a variety of items and materials including loose soles on shoes, replacing and/or fixing zippers, patching holes in luggage or bags, and of course, repairing virtually any damaged leather object – leather, after all, is what *garankew* know best. In addition to serving as general repairmen, the *garankew* of the *Marabagaw Yoro* specialize in “finishing” or “wrapping” certain types of traditional medicine (i.e., amulets such as *gris-gris*, and *seben*) with an outer covering (frequently involving wildlife). Moreover, several APVs (and local practitioners) have arrangements to direct clients to specific *Marabagaw Yoro garankew* (i.e., those with whom they have an established business relationship).

In the sections that follow, I further describe the *Marabagaw Yoro* by explaining my role within it as a researcher-apprentice. Following this, I provide a brief description of how research consultants were selected and an overview of those who participated. In addition, I elaborate on the variety of wildlife sold by APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and the forms in which it is sold.

Consultants and Wildlife Parts

To identify APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro* I used a combination of targeted and snowball sampling strategies. Targeted sampling was used to identify vendors who sold animal parts (i.e., APVs). This worked in two ways. First, because of my previous experience in the market I already knew several APVs (small- and large-scale), who sold a variety of animal parts to the public as ingredients to local medicine. Second, to identify other APVs, a comprehensive survey of market stalls was conducted. The purpose of the survey was to determine which stalls met the basic criteria to participate. In other words, which stalls sold animal parts, besides the ones I already knew? A visual scan of a vendor's stall was adequate to determine if animal parts were present. If a stall was observed with animal parts, the vendor was approached to participate in the study.

With regard to snowball sampling, all identified APVs (i.e., previously known and those identified in the course of survey) were asked if they knew other individuals who might be interested in participating in the study. These other individuals could be anyone who worked with wildlife and/or had some connection to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Through this technique I was able to access not just other vendors in the market, but also clientele, a host of wildlife suppliers, local practitioners, state agents, and international

actors – all organized around the commodification of animal parts (primarily wildlife) as ingredients to medicine.

Within the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I was able to work with a total of twenty-three APV stalls: ten small-scale and thirteen large-scale. However, the actual number of APVs who participated (i.e., the combined total of owner-operators and assistant-apprentices) is significantly greater (n=51). As required by Human Subjects compliance, all potential consultants were individually approached, presented a synopsis of my research agenda, and asked if they wished to participate. By using local languages (Bamana, Maninka, and French) and demonstrating my respect for local practices and values, I was welcomed as an apprentice APV in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Though I lack the skill to ever become a successful APV, the practical lessons taught to me by Wara and other APVs, as well as local practitioners like Kara, offered incredible insight into wildlife use in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. For instance, as Kara's apprentice, I assisted in conducting divinations, purchased ingredients from the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and prepared *fura* for clients. Similarly, by working as an apprentice to Wara, I gained unprecedented access to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and those associated with the market (i.e., APVs, suppliers, practitioners, clients, and state agents).

By working closely with twenty-three APVs, I was able to gather data on specific species of wildlife, which parts are sold, and for what. In addition, I was able to record sales activity and wildlife inventories for participating APVs. To gain insight into the demands that promote the consumption of wildlife as medicine, and the spheres through which such wildlife moves I informally interviewed two hundred and thirty-three APV clients. The vast majority of APV clients were Malian (n=198), while only a few were

foreigners (n=35). Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would ask clients questions about their purchases. In particular, I interviewed clients about why they made a purchase (i.e., were they sent by a local practitioner, or did they come based on their own knowledge), what the items purchased were to be used for (i.e., what type of medicine were they making and for what ends), and cost of their purchase(s).

Similar to how APVs granted me access to clients and their demands as consumers, they also allowed me to gain insight into market dynamics. For example, by watching APVs interactions with each other, clear patterns were evident, highlighting social and political conflict within the *Marabagaw Yoro* (i.e., a power struggle between the leaders of two groups of APVs). Equally so, by working closely with APVs, I was introduced to a multitude of wildlife suppliers and middlemen that distributed approximately five hundred species (n=493) of vertebrate fauna, in part and whole (i.e., animal parts), to serve a wide range of demand.

Based on data collected in 2002 and again in 2007-2008, there are a total of 493 species of wildlife for sale in the *Marabagaw Yoro*ⁱ. The data reveals that species are divided between four classes of vertebrates: birds (n=310), mammals (n=124), reptiles (n=55), and fish (n=4). Depending on which class of vertebrate, certain patterns are found (see Supplemental File). For example, birds are sold in three basic states: alive, as a whole dead animal, or by specific part (i.e., head, foot, beak, wing, internal organ, etc.). In general, small birds such as finches, starlings, weavers, and others are sold as whole dead animals; with the occasional live specimen being offered for sale. Larger birds, such as raptors, hornbills, and plantain eaters follow a similar pattern, however they are most frequently sold by specific part, with heads being the most sought after.

Wild mammals in the *Marabagaw Yoro* are also sold in three basic states: alive, as a whole dead animal, or by specific part (i.e., head, foot, tail, hide, bone, antlers/horns, internal organs, etc.). Much like the pattern seen in birds, small mammals like mice, rats, and insect-eating bats, are frequently sold as whole dead animals. An exception to this pattern is the live hedgehogs that are commonly found for sale in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Larger mammals like mongoose, badgers, aardvarks, ungulates, canids, wild cats, and primates are rarely sold as whole dead animals, rather they are most often sold by specific part: heads, hides, and internal organs (as well as horns and antlers in the case of some ungulates). An exception to this general pattern is seen in primates that are occasionally sold as live specimens. Additionally, West African Manatee stands apart from all other species sold in the market as the fat from the animal is rendered into an oil, known as *mah tulu* (manatee oil), and is sold in bottles by APVs to treat eye and ear infections. This is unique because the fat (in the category of internal organ) of other mammals like lion, leopard, baboon, hyena, and badger are regularly for sale, but it is never processed into oil.

Similar to the previous patterns for vertebrates, reptiles are sold as live specimens, as whole dead animals, and/or by specific part. However, unlike other classes of vertebrates, many species like pythons, juvenile savannah and Nile monitors, chameleons, and tortoises are sold as living specimens. Frequently an APV will purchase a live reptile and keep it (with minimal investment) for a short period of time. APVs do this because certain species are worth more alive than dead. If investing in maintaining a live specimen becomes too great, the animal is dispatched (or dies of neglect) and is sold by the part. This same rule applies to the live birds and mammals that are sold in the

Marabagaw Yoro. A general exception to this rule is seen when “dangerous” reptiles are brought into the market. As explained to me by APVs, dangerous reptiles are those that have “poison.” Note that this does not correlate with western understandings of venomous reptiles as some species like *Uromastyx* are considered to be “extremely dangerous because they have poison in their mouth and on the spikes of their tail,” explained Wara. Other APVs held similar views, always identifying the mouth and tail of the *Uromastyx* lizard as containing poison. From a western scientific perspective, *Uromastyx* are not venomous and are commonly sold in pet shops in the United States.

Other dangerous reptiles do correlate with western understandings. Species like cobra, green mamba, puff adder, Gabon viper, and host of other snakes are considered extremely dangerous and are frequently killed on sight. On one occasion a young man brought a bucket of newly hatched saw-scale vipers into the market to sell to an APV. Upon seeing the snakes alive, a threat to public safety, a heavy rock was thrown in the bucket, and with the lid closed tight, the young man was made to shake the bucket until the rock had crushed and killed the highly toxic vipers.

Given these concerns for public safety, live “dangerous” reptiles are rarely seen for sale in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. However, it is important to note that many APVs serve as middlemen for clients who desire live animals and they can readily acquire any “dangerous” species a client wants. To avoid potential harm to the public the transaction is conducted outside of the *Marabagaw Yoro* (usually in a bar, or someone’s home).

Lastly, there are four species of fish that are sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. APVs sell only the hides of *dodo* (globefish, a type of fresh water puffer), and *tigin* (an electric

catfish), while *wondo* (African lungfish) is always sold as a whole dead animal. In comparison, a shark jaw (lower mandible of unidentified species) is sold per tooth.

These patterns of wildlife and their parts are not arbitrary. Rather, they are reflective of the body of knowledge that surrounds traditional medicine in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and Mali in general. It is built on oral tradition and can trace its roots to the origins of Bamako. But this should not suggest a static image because traditional medicine in Mali is fluid by definition. Local vendors and practitioners have come to possess a wealth of knowledge regarding the tastes and preferences of their clientele (Steiner 1994). More to the point, it is a body of knowledge built upon the experiences of individual actors and their engagement with others. As such, the patterns of wildlife commoditization outlined above may be interpreted as social drama (Walley 2004), replete with a host of actors who come and go across a stage that is the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Some hold leading roles like Wara, the MVP of APVs, and Kara an authority among local practitioners, others are found in the periphery like those who harvest and supply wildlife.

Notes

ⁱ Additional species were encountered including several domestic species like dog, cat, cow, and horse, as well as many invertebrates, such as scorpions, assassin bugs, centipedes, wasps, and spiders among others. None of these domestic or invertebrate species are included in wildlife inventories or data sets.

CHAPTER X

WILDLIFE ACTORS OF THE *MARABAGAW YORO*

As previously described, conducting research in a market place can be quite difficult without an understanding of the different actors and roles they play in relation to one another. On the surface the *Marabagaw Yoro* may appear chaotic, with people constantly coming and going, buying and selling animal parts, amidst an ever-changing parking lot of cars, but there are clear patterns to be found. Unlike the *Artisana*, which caters mostly to tourists and elite Malians, the *Marabagaw Yoro* is open to any and everyone. As such, the *Marabagaw Yoro* is the epitome of a public market and reflects a diverse population, adding to its apparent state of disorganization. However, as noted by Christopher Steiner in his research on the West African art trade, “the market place is in fact a scrupulously structured social space in which every object has its rightful owner and in which every person has a specific status and a recognized set of social and economic roles,” (1994:18). Such a perspective allows one to see past the turbulent surface, into calmer waters where patterns become more evident.

Application of Steiner’s perspective allows distinctions to be made amongst and between the different social and economic roles found surrounding wildlife in *Marabagaw Yoro*. By combining Walley’s notion of “social drama” with Steiner’s conceptualization of the market place, social and economic roles are filled by what I refer to as players or actors, the individuals who make up the cast for this wildlife drama.

Summary data on the various roles and types of actors found in the *Marabagaw Yoro* are presented in Table 24: Overview of the roles and actors encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. In general, five key roles were identified including wildlife suppliers

(hunters, middlemen, and general opportunists), APVs (large- and small-scale), clientele (Malian and foreign), local practitioners (diviner-healers, Marabouts, herbalists, and others), and state agents (law enforcement).

Table 24: Overview of roles and actors encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Role	Type of Actor	Participating Actors	Total
Wildlife Supplier	Hunter	27	80
	Middleman	19	
	General Opportunist	34	
APV	Small-scale APV	13	51
	Large-scale APV	38	
Clientele	Malian	198	233
	Foreigner	35	
Local Practitioner	Diviner-healer	12	43
	Marabou	9	
	Herbalist	7	
	Other	15	
State Agent	Law Enforcement	5	5

Wildlife suppliers are responsible for harvesting, transporting and distributing 493 species of vertebrate fauna to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. While most of the species found in the *Marabagaw Yoro* are not sold elsewhere, 25 species are used in the *Artisana*. Unlike the *Artisana*, which has four types of suppliers associated with it, the *Marabagaw Yoro* only has three: hunters, middlemen, and general opportunists¹.

In the sections that follow, I outline the roles and specific types of actors encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. After describing each role, ethnographic examples of actors are provided to help illustrate values present as well as how different actors interact in the negotiation of wild species in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Hunters

Hunters, or *donsow* are responsible for harvesting wildlife and provide an essential service for their communities in doing so – they supply family and friends with protein (i.e., the meat and other edible parts from their harvests). At the same time that *donsow* provide key resources for their community, the hunters also set aside any valuable parts (i.e., heads, hides, horns, feet, and various internal organs among others) from their harvests for personal use, or to sell for profit. If a hunter chooses to sell his wildlife parts for profit he can do so in one of two ways: indirectly, or directly. “Indirectly” suggests that the hunter negotiates with a middleman, like Touré a professional middleman (described in Chapter II) who regularly visits rural villages to purchase surplus wildlife parts from hunters and then resells them to market vendors in urban centers, specifically the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro* of Bamako. “Directly” suggests that the hunter opts to travel to Bamako to sell his wildlife parts to an established market vendor in either the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro* (in essence cutting out the middleman).

For example, when visiting the rural village of Djonfakulu, in the Kayes region of Western Mali, I was able to speak with several hunters about their practices and supporting values. Over the course of a week that I was in Djonfakulu I spoke with eighteen hunters and came to understand that many species are specifically sought after for various reasons, but that hunting itself is an uncertain business. In terms of seeking out specific species of wildlife, hunters from Djonfakulu informed me that high quality hides (i.e., intact and without blemishes) from animals like *waranikalan* (leopard), *monoko* (caracal), *n’golo kadi* (serval), *bama* (crocodile), *kana* (Nile monitor), *koro* (Savannah monitor), *muso sa* (ball python) and *minea* (rock python) demand a high price

because they are used in making “*tubabuw fenw*” (Western things, a reference to what I call “tourist goods”) in the *Artisana*. Poor quality hides (i.e., incomplete or with blemishes) and other wildlife parts (i.e., heads, paws, organs, bones, etc.) were not used in making “*tubabu fenw*,” but were of value as ingredients to “*fura*,” or medicine, sold from the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Over the course of conducting fieldwork in the *Marabagaw Yoro* a total of twenty-seven hunters were found to directly supply wildlife parts to APVs (see Table 25: Hunters by region who directly supply APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*). Though twenty-seven hunters were encountered directly supplying APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, accurate data on hunters who indirectly supply wildlife parts is unknown. Based on first-hand field experience, as well as conversations with a wide range of wildlife suppliers, vendors, state agents, and other Malians, it is estimated that several thousand rural hunters indirectly supply wildlife parts to a host of markets (including the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*) through their normal hunting activities and dealings with middlemen.

Table 25: Hunters by region who directly supply APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Hunters by Region						
	Kayes	Koulikoro	Mopti	Segou	Sikasso	Total
Number of Hunters (%)	11 (40.7%)	5 (18.5%)	3 (11.2%)	4 (14.8%)	4 (14.8%)	27 (100%)
Supplying Large-Scale APVs (%)	11 (100%)	5 (100%)	3 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	27 (100%)
Supplying Small-Scale APVs (%)	9 (81.9%)	5 (100%)	3 (100%)	2 (50%)	3 (75%)	22 (81.5%)

Table 25 highlights the relative distribution of hunters by region, who directly supply wildlife to APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Using the logic (supported by field

observations and interviews with a wide range of wildlife suppliers) that hunters tend to harvest wildlife in and around their home of record, patterns of wildlife trafficking become apparent. Hunters directly supplying the *Marabagaw Yoro* came from five regions including Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, and Sikasso. All the hunters that participated in supplying the *Marabagaw Yoro* had done so before (i.e., none of the hunters I encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro* were unfamiliar with the market or its practices). In fact, eleven of the hunters I encountered directly supplying the *Marabagaw Yoro*, were also found to directly supply the *Artisana*, highlighting a common system of supply for both markets. In addition, the majority of hunters (40.7%) that directly supplied wildlife to the *Marabagaw Yoro* came from the Kayes region of western Mali, underscoring the area as containing significant biodiversity (a pattern similar to that seen in hunters directly supplying the *Artisana*).

Interestingly, while all hunters directly supplied large-scale APVs, 81.5% also supplied small-scale APVs. This is most likely due to the different “types” of hunters that do business in the *Marabagaw Yoro*; some have a relationship with an established APV (n=4), some are “free agents” (n=9), while others use a combination of strategies (n=14). For example, Goussou, a hunter from the Kayes region, has a longstanding relationship with Wara, a large-scale APV of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Two to three times a year, Goussou travels to Bamako to sell his harvest of wildlife parts to Wara. According to Goussou, “I only deal with Wara, he is my brother.” Though not related by blood or marriage, Goussou’s reference to Wara as his “brother” underscores the type of relationship he has with him – Wara is like family to Goussou. For Wara, Goussou is one of many hunters with whom he has developed exclusive rights. Wara explains, “he

[Goussou] brings me bushbuck, roan antelope, and lots of serval, caracal, jackal, and badgers,” highlighting some of the specific species Goussou supplies him. For Goussou, Wara provides a secure means of making money to help support his family (i.e., Wara must purchase all the wildlife goods that Goussou brings him – the price is always negotiated at the time of the transaction).

In contrast to hunters like Goussou, who only sells to a single large-scale APV (Wara), are hunters like Satou, who are “free agents” and sell to whomever they can to receive the best return on their investment (i.e., the time to harvest wildlife parts, prepare, and transport them to Bamako). Hailing from the Koulikoro region, Satou lives relatively close to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and frequently visits to sell his surplus wildlife parts (mostly snakes and lizards, along with a few mongoose, and civet). Over the course of nine months, I encountered Satou selling wildlife parts on four different occasions to multiple APVs (large- and small-scale). On one occasion he sold all his stock to a single large-scale APV. His following visit, Satou sold some of his parts to another large-scale APV, as well as two small-scale vendors. On his third trip to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, Satou sold all his stock to two different large-scale APVs. The last time I saw Satou, most of his stock was purchased by a single large-scale APV (a different individual than any of the previous large-scale APVs he had dealt with), and the rest was sold to three different small-scale APVs. Such practices highlight that “free agent” hunters do not have exclusive dealings with specific vendors; rather they are free to pick and choose among APVs in an effort to sell their wildlife parts.

In addition, some hunters use a combination of tactics by having established business relationships with at least one APV, while remaining alert to new opportunities

(i.e., expand his network and/or his profit margin by engaging a new vendor). For instance, Almoud, a hunter from the Mopti region, visits the *Marabagaw Yoro* once or twice a year and deals predominately in birds (as well as the occasional snake and lizard) he harvests from the inland Niger delta. In speaking with me, Almoud explained that many of the birds he harvests are only found in the inland Niger delta and demand a high price. Given his unique access to hard to come by birds, Almoud is regularly solicited by APVs – they desire exclusive rights to his harvests and are willing to pay for the privilege. However, Almoud is a shrewd businessman and is not about to be limited to dealing with a single APV. Rather, Almoud opts to maximize his return by creating his own hierarchy of who he will sell to. “Wara always pays well, and so does Ba Guindon...then there is Kante, he always wants my birds...Togola usually buys one or two,” outlined Almoud. Yet the picture is incomplete without understanding that Wara and Ba Guindon are the two most successful large-scale APVs, while Kante and Togola are small-scale vendors trying to expand their respective operations (i.e., they want to become large-scale APVs like Wara and Ba Guindon who make sizable profits through selling wildlife parts) in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Middlemen

Commonly referred to as “*coxeur*” (French for “a person that coaxes,” or “broker”), middlemen are also known as “*julaw*,” “*jagokelaw*” (Bamana for “merchants”), and “*sannikelaw*” (Bamana for “buyers”). The job of a middleman is to purchase wildlife parts from rurally based hunters, then transport and resell the parts to a vendor for a profit. This is exemplified by Touré (see Chapter II), who routinely visits hunters in the

Kayes Region of western Mali to purchase their surplus wildlife parts and resell them to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* (as well as to leather shops and wholesale distributors in the *Artisana*). All other middlemen described similar practices, where they purchase wildlife parts from hunters found in and around their area of residence. Table 26 provides summary data on middlemen by region who directly supply APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Table 26: Middlemen by region who directly supply APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Middlemen by Region						
	Kayes	Koulikoro	Mopti	Segou	Sikasso	Total
Number of Middlemen (%)	7 (36.8%)	4 (21.1%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (21.1%)	19 (100%)
Supplying Large-Scale APVs (%)	7 (100%)	4 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	4 (100%)	19 (100%)
Supplying Small-Scale APVs (%)	5 (71.5%)	4 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	4 (100%)	17 (89.5%)

A total of 19 middlemen participated in this study and directly supplied wildlife parts to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Similar to the regional distribution seen among hunters, middlemen encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro* came from five different regions – the same regions represented by hunters (see Table 25). Moreover, the majority of middlemen came from the Kayes region (36.8%), mirroring the pattern for hunters (40.7% identified the Kayes region as their home of record). In addition, while all middlemen engaged large-scale APVs, only two middlemen refrained from dealing with small-scale APVsⁱⁱ. In other words, 89.5% of middlemen did business with both large- and small-scale APVs highlighting their dynamic ability to traffic wildlife parts to both types of APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. This pattern is also seen among hunters, where

81.5% engage both large- and small-scale APVs. Accordingly, it is understandable that all middlemen who participated in this study and sold wildlife parts to APVs identified that they had done so before (i.e., all middlemen were familiar with the *Marabagaw Yoro*, its vendors and associated practices). Furthermore, 73.68% of middlemen found supplying APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro* simultaneously conducted business with vendors in the *Artisana*. All of these middlemen noted that they set aside high quality hides (i.e., no blemishes) of select species (i.e., those considered desirable by the *Artisana*) to sell either to leather shop vendors, and/or a wholesaler. All other wildlife parts (i.e., hides with defects, heads, horns, appendages, and internal organs) are set aside to sell to APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Such practices underscore the agency of middlemen in their trafficking of wildlife parts.

Though I have witnessed many transactions between middlemen and vendors (of all sorts), the case of Touré offers a unique glimpse into the world of middlemen and helps to illustrate their practices and supporting values. Up-ending two rice sacks filled with wildlife parts, their contents spilled out onto the ground at our feet. As soon as the parts were out, Touré began arranging them into like-piles. After Touré sorted the animal parts the vendor hand selected items from the various piles and set them aside; these were the items that he was interested in purchasing (see Table 27: Sale made by Touré to large-scale APV).

Once the vendor had made his selection Touré stuffed the remaining animal parts back into the rice sacks and waited for the vendor to commence bartering. What followed next was a two-hour haggling session between the two men. The vendor started with low-end merchandise, such as the Egyptian cobra, and worked his way upward to

high-end items like the hyena head. As negotiations progressed, the vendor and Touré would attempt to alter previously set prices. For instance, “I’ll pay 7,000 CFA each,” stated the vendor with regard to the badger hides with heads and paws. “7,500 CFA each” countered Touré, “and I’ll take 500 CFA off the cobra.” In the end, Touré made a nice profit for the items he sold: 74,000 CFA.

Table 27: Sale made by Touré to large-scale APV.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Middleman Price	Vendor Price
2	Olive Baboon heads	<i>Papio cynocephalus</i>	<i>N’Gon</i>	4,000 CFA	5,000 CFA
2	Vervet Monkey heads	<i>Cercopithecus pygerythrus</i>	<i>Gobani</i>	3,000 CFA	4,000 CFA
1	Large Warthog head	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Lai</i>	7,000 CFA	10,000 CFA
6 pr	Bushbuck horns	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	4,000 CFA	7,000 CFA
3 pr	Roan Antelope horns	<i>Hippotragus equines</i>	<i>Daje</i>	5,000 CFA	15,000 CFA
6 pr	Hartebeest horns	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>	<i>Tanko</i>	6,000 CFA	14,000 CFA
2	Badger hides with heads and paws	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	5,000 CFA	7,500 CFA
1	Badger penis	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	2,500 CFA	15,000 CFA
1	Badger vagina	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	2,500 CFA	20,000 CFA
1	Striped Hyena head	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	<i>Surukou</i>	35,000 CFA	45,000 CFA
1	Egyptian Cobra (whole)	<i>Naja haje</i>	<i>Goronko Fi Ma</i>	2,000 CFA	7,500 CFA
Total				76,000 CFA	150,000 CFA
Profit Made				74,000 CFA	

In addition, the large-scale APV renewed his membership in what I refer to as a “middleman club;” by paying Touré an additional 35,000 CFA the APV receives “first pick rights” the next time Touré came to town. This is why Touré visited this particular APV first – to fulfill his contract with him. That afternoon Touré sold most of his remaining stock to three other APVs; two large-scale and one small-scale. Both large-

scale APVs are considered members of Touré's club, while the small-scale APV is not. This is because the two large-scale APVs renewed their membership in "Touré's club," by paying 25,000 CFA and 20,000 CFA respectively. By paying these sums these APVs ensure that they have second and third choice of Touré's wildlife stock. The small-scale APV that Touré sold stock to just happened to be lucky enough to be in the right place, at the right time, to buy a few wildlife parts.

However, Touré still had one last item to sell: a large, high quality rock python hide. Given the quality of the snakeskin Touré opted to sell it to the *Artisana* to maximize the return on his investment. Unlike the *Marabagaw Yoro*, the *Artisana* will pay top dollar for animal hides that have a high aesthetic value. Rock Python is one of 25 species that the *Artisana* finds desirable and manufactures all manner of fashion accoutrements from it (i.e., belts, wallets, shoes, folders, attaché cases, and purses among others). With this in mind Touré was able to sell the rock python hide to a wholesaler at the *Artisana* for a total of 15,000 CFA.

Only two other middlemen had organized clubs where APVs paid for the privilege of having first, second, and third choices of wildlife parts. For the sixteen other middlemen that directly supplied APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, they tended to have established relationships with at least one large-scale APV (i.e., an APV with whom they do repeat business), but also sold their goods to other vendors in an effort to expand their network of buyers and increase their profit margins. Though Touré stands out with regard to his club of APVs, his valuation of wildlife is common to all middlemen – it is a means to economic security. To understand this, one must look at what Touré did with the money he earned from selling wildlife parts.

Over the next couple of days Touré purchased two large bags of rice (25 kilos each), ten cases of red wine, twenty liters of medicinal grade alcohol, three boxes of twelve-gauge shotgun shells, sweets for his children, and cloth for his wife. One bag of rice was earmarked for his Touré's family, while the other he planned to sell on the side. The alcohol was purchased with the intent of reselling it to members of his community for a profit. The shotgun shells he purchased to give to rural hunters that participate in his network and in so doing help to engender a sense of obligation between rural hunters and Touré. The money Touré earns from reselling urban goods to his neighbors is in turn used to purchase wildlife parts from his network of rural hunters. In this light, Touré and other middlemen can be seen as key agents in exchanging rural goods for urban commodities.

General Opportunists

Similar to middlemen is the role of general opportunists, the key difference being that middlemen regularly supply wildlife (i.e., make a living at supplying wildlife), while general opportunists are frequently conducting business in the *Marabagaw Yoro* for the first time and under a unique set of circumstances. Given their inexperience with the market and its practices, general opportunists are often referred to with generic terms like “*mogo*” (person), or “*ce*” (a man). For example, one APV described how “a man came and sold me a snake he found,” while another explained that he bought some fruit bats from “a person.” In comparison, middlemen have very specific names (as do hunters) that reflect their role in relation to the *Marabagaw Yoro* – they are “*coxeur*” (French for “a person that coaxes,” or “broker”) – not some nondescript man or person.

Though APVs might not recognize all the “men” and “persons” who occasionally sell wildlife as a unique category of wildlife supplier, I do. This is because all of these individuals have two things in common. Firstly, general opportunists have some knowledge that wildlife can be sold to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Secondly, general opportunists work in a variety of professions that put them in close proximity to places where wildlife is found, facilitating their harvesting of wildlife resources. Unlike general opportunists associated with the *Artisana* who tended to sell their stock only when their primary profession required them to travel to Bamako, those associated with the *Marabagaw Yoro* frequently traveled to the market as soon as they had enough wildlife parts to warrant the trip.

Four subcategories of general opportunists have been distilled from the thirty-four who participated in this study. These subcategories loosely correlate with the primary professions of general opportunists, including “truck drivers,” “herdsmen,” “farmers,” and “others.” Table 28 provides summary data on general opportunists, their primary professions, as well as a breakdown of their interactions with different types of APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Table 28: General opportunists by profession who directly supply APVs.

	Primary Profession				Total
	Truck Driver	Herdsman	Farmer	Other	
General Opportunists (%)	6 (17.6%)	11 (32.4%)	10 (29.4%)	7 (20.6%)	34 (100%)
Supplying Large-Scale APVs (%)	5 (83.3%)	8 (72.8%)	9 (90%)	4 (57.1%)	26 (76.5%)
Supplying Small-Scale APVs (%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (27.2%)	1 (10%)	3 (42.9%)	8 (23.5%)

With a total of 34 general opportunists participating in this study, they represent the largest category of wildlife supplier encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. To compare, hunters represented 33.75%, and middlemen 23.75%, while general opportunists comprise 42.5% of all wildlife suppliers. Since most wildlife suppliers are general opportunists, one gets the impression that just about any male can sell wildlife to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, underscoring the adaptive qualities of the market and the system of supply that serves it. In short the market is durable, while the actors come and go.

Comparing the five subcategories reveals that 6 out of 34 general opportunists were truck drivers, while 11 were herdsmen, 10 were farmers, and 7 were others (four adolescent boys and three unemployed men). Though I use the term “truck driver” as a general descriptor, it is important to understand that this refers to any individual who drives a truck, bus, semi, or any other large transport vehicle. In Mali, such individuals are frequently identified as, “*chamointigi*” (truck driver), or “*mobolitigi*” (vehicle driver). Half of the truck drivers operated within Mali, while the other half traveled outside of Mali. Those that worked within Mali had established routes from Bamako to Kayes, Mopti, and Sikasso (respectively) and back. Truck drivers who traveled internationally had routes that took them to Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire; Conakry, Guinea; and Dakar, Senegal, eventually returning them to Bamako, Mali.

Of particular significance is the fact that all truck drivers (n=6) reported that they were familiar with the *Marabagaw Yoro* and had sold wildlife parts there before. Moreover, all truck drivers identified that harvesting wildlife was an efficient means of supplementing their income. Truck drivers, whether traveling domestically, or internationally, pass through rural regions where they are able to access wildlife. Mouri,

an international truck driver who runs commerce between Dakar, Senegal and Bamako, Mali, notes that his route passes through several forests in Western Mali, and Eastern Senegal. Now in his late thirties, Mouri harvests wildlife that he encounters along his route as well as purchases animal parts from hunters in rural villages that he passes through – practices learned when he apprenticed for a truck driver as a teenager. When I met Mouri he was selling parts of a bushbuck that he harvested with his truck outside of Tambacounda, Senegalⁱⁱⁱ. According to Mouri, “I hit the bishe [bushbuck] and broke its leg.” Mouri then stopped his truck, and with the help of his apprentice (a 12 year old boy), slit the antelope’s throat. After the antelope was dead, Mouri butchered it out, saving valuable pieces including several kilograms of good meat (traded and sold to rural villagers), as well as the head and hide (items destined for the *Marabagaw Yoro* of Bamako). In addition to the bushbuck parts, Mouri acquired a live ball python in exchange for some bushbuck meat in one of the villages on his route^{iv}.

Having learned to harvest and sell wildlife parts when he apprenticed for a truck driver, Mouri is familiar with many APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. However, Mouri informed me that he primarily sells his stock to a single large-scale APV – Ba Guindon – because he tends to pay top-dollar. In the words of Mouri, “*Ba Guindon ye waritigiba*,” or “Ba Guindon is a big money man.” For the bushbuck parts (head with horns and hide) Mouri received 20,000 CFA; the live ball python sold for an additional 15,000 CFA. With 35,000 CFA in his pocket, I asked Mouri what he planned to do with it. “I want to get married,” explained Mouri. For several years Mouri has been courting a young woman in Dakar and has been saving money to meet the bride price set by her parents.

In addition to harvesting wildlife on the side, Mouri transports contraband to meet his financial obligation to her family.

In another example, a bus driver I met was known for his harvesting of a particular type of wildlife – snakes. Locally referred to as “Snake-Killer-Man,” the bus driver never hesitates to run over a snake that tries to cross the road between Bamako and Sikasso (or anywhere else for that matter). According to Snake-Killer-Man, “snakes are dangerous, but not as much as me and my bus!” The snakes that he kills are frequently in bad shape and do not fetch a premium among APVs. However the bus driver’s strategy to run over any and all snakes does pay off as he frequently has many snakes to sell. When I met snake-killer-man he had just sold fourteen snakes including five rock pythons and two black cobras (the other specimens were too damaged to properly identify^v) to a large-scale APV for a total of 12,000 CFA. The money he used to buy foodstuffs like rice and cooking oil for his family in Sikasso. According to Snake-Killer-Man, rice and oil prices are cheaper in Bamako, than in Sikasso.

Herdsmen are another type of general opportunist that supplies wildlife to the APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Representing 32.4% of all general opportunists (the largest supplier for this category), herdsmen are similar to truck drivers as they frequently work in or near the bush. This is significant as being in close proximity to the bush enhances one’s chance of encountering and harvesting wildlife.

Out of eleven herdsmen who sold wildlife to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, four were from the Koulikoro region, three from the Kayes region, two from the Segou region, and another two from the Sikasso region. All herdsmen were familiar with the *Marabagaw Yoro* and had previously sold wildlife there. However, unlike previous types of general

opportunists who tended to highlight the economic value of wildlife as their primary reason for harvesting it, many herdsmen (n=7) described their harvesting of wildlife as necessary to protect their herd. At the same time, all herdsmen identified the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a convenient place to sell the animals they killed, supplementing their income.

For example, Namory is the son of a wealthy herdsman from the Koulikoro region, who was directed by his father to sell two goats at the Bamako livestock market. After doing so, he traveled to the *Marabagaw Yoro* to sell a live ball python, a rock python, three puff adders, and a boomslang (decapitated, gutted and dried in the sun). The rock python, puff adders and boomslang snakes Namory encountered and dispatched over a couple of months of grazing his family's goat herd in the bush. All of these snakes had their heads removed, were gutted and dried with the forethought of selling them in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. The live ball python was pure happen chance – Namory found it on his way to the livestock market the very day I met him. All of the snakes and parts were sold to a single large-scale APV for 20,000 CFA (10,000 CFA was for the live ball python).

In contrast to the case of Namory is the example of Geriba, a herder from the Kayes region. Unlike other herdsmen who primarily harvested snakes (animals that posed a threat to their livestock and people), Geriba had acquired a young male Patas monkey. Live primates are a rarity in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and demand a high price. After selling the Patas monkey to Wara for 35,000 CFA (negotiations started at 50,000 CFA), I was able to speak with Geriba and learn a little of his story.

Geriba is a jack-of-all-trades. He was born in the town of Kati and moved to Bamako when he went to secondary school. After school Geriba worked many different

jobs including construction (masonry was his forte), moped mechanic, street vendor (he used to sell cigarettes and lighters curbside), guide for hire (to relieve tourists of their excess funds), and taxi driver. Currently, Geriba works as a livestock trader who buys chickens, guinea fowl, goats, sheep, cattle, and even the occasional horse from rural villages where prices are low, and resells them in urban centers where the price is high. As a result, Geriba is constantly moving livestock between western Mali (Kayes and Koulikoro regions) and Bamako. Geriba explains:

Chickens and guinea fowl are easy. You take three or four and tie their legs together. I can get twenty on my moped. When I have a lot, I borrow my brother's truck to take them to market.

In comparison, goat, sheep, cows and horses are walked overland via a network of paths and roads that link villages to each other and eventually large urban centers like Bamako. Being an entrepreneur, Geriba has been harvesting and selling wildlife he encounters on his overland treks for sometime to supplement his income. However, Geriba is not very adept at harvesting wildlife, save for the occasional snake he beats with a stick. Rather, he prefers to barter wildlife from rural villagers in the fashion of a middleman. In fact, his practices as a wildlife supplier mirror his practices as a livestock trader, where one buys low (in a rural village) and sells high (in an urban center like Bamako). The only reason Geriba is not considered a professional middleman is because his primary occupation is selling livestock, not wildlife. Wildlife for Geriba is “extra money” that he finds while trading livestock.

Case in point, the Patas monkey that Geriba sold to Wara the large-scale APV, was purchased by Geriba in a village in the Kayes region. According to Geriba he paid a boy 2,500 CFA for the Patas monkey as he was driving a herd of sheep to Bamako. After

selling the sheep in the livestock market on the outskirts of the city, Geriba brought the monkey to Wara, a vendor who he has done business with in the past. Satisfied with 35,000 CFA for the Patas monkey, Geriba planed to invest the funds in his next livestock endeavor.

In summary, herdsmen are the largest group of general opportunist wildlife suppliers to furnish the *Marabagaw Yoro* with animal parts. However, this should not suggest that herdsmen trade more wildlife than other suppliers (i.e., hunters and middlemen). Rather, this pattern suggests that herdsmen, are not strictly herdsmen, but are key elements in a commodity exchange system that radiates out from the *Marabagaw Yoro* and intersects with other occupations and professions. Specifically, herdsmen are recognized by APVs (large- and small-scale) for their ability to harvest snakeheads. The reason herdsmen do this is two-fold: it is necessary to protect one's herd from a common threat – venomous snakes; and underlying financial need.

Second to herdsmen are general opportunist suppliers who identify themselves as “*senekelaw*,” or farmers (i.e., agriculturalists). Ten farmers were encountered supplying animal parts to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* over a period of nine months. Seven of the farmers came from the Koulikoro region (adjacent to the district of Bamako), while two came from Kayes, and one from Sikasso.

Just as is the case with other general opportunists like truck drivers and herdsmen, rural agriculturalists often operate on the periphery of the bush preparing and tending their crops and gardens, granting them access to a wide range of wildlife. Furthermore, farmers are very similar to herdsmen in that they identify two key values in their harvesting and selling of wildlife. While herdsmen tended to note the need to protect

their livestock from dangerous animals like snakes, farmers must protect their fields from a host of wildlife that would damage what they have worked so hard to cultivate. This highlights that agriculture is the primary resource base for farmers – the wildlife that they harvest while tending to their crops is considered a secondary resource.

Eight out of ten farmers identified the need to protect their crops, gardens and fields, from intrusive wildlife, while all ten farmers highlighted the wildlife they harvested as having caloric and/or economic value. For example, Sede, a farmer in his forties, from the Koulikoro region, has a couple of hectares of land on which he cultivates millet and corn. In addition to two large fields, Sede also has an extensive vegetable garden in which his two wives grow foodstuffs to sell at market and to help feed their six children.

“Deer [antelopes] are bad,” stated Sede, “they come early in the morning and eat my food [Sede’s crops].” Sede then described other animals that threaten his family’s wellbeing including, a wide variety of birds (those that eat grain), rodents (mice, common rats, and cane rats), and snakes. While antelope, birds, and rodents seek to eat what Sede and his family have worked so hard to produce in adverse circumstances (i.e., climate and soil quality), snakes pose a direct threat to personal health as many are venomous. However, there is a general stigma against snakes in Mali, resulting in venomous and non-venomous snakes being killed indiscriminately.

To deal with the constant onslaught of wildlife encroaching on the life that Sede and his family have eked out for themselves, Sede wages war. “I set snares for deer [antelope] on the edge of my fields to stop them,” explained Sede. Two of Sede’s children, young boys (about 5-10 years old), are armed with slingshots and patrol the area

for birds and rodents – the older of the two is deadly accurate, felling a weaver bird out of a tree at twenty meters. Meanwhile, chemical warfare is waged in the garden as Sede’s wives sprinkle a hodgepodge of pesticides to protect the vegetables from the insect world.

Many of the animals that Sede and his two boys kill in protecting their livelihood are welcomed additions to the dinner pot. Yet, just as with hunters, only certain parts of an animal are considered edible, while other parts are valued for other reasons. For example, Sede sold the head, horns, and hide of a common duiker that he snared, as well as a tattered rice sack containing five whole cane rats, three hornbill heads, and a small rock python head. All of these animal parts were purchased by a single large-scale APV with whom Sede has an established relationship (i.e., repeat buyer) for 27,000 CFA. According to the APV Sede sells to, Sede visits the *Marabagaw Yoro* three to four times a year with comparable stock.

While Sede’s practices are similar to most other general opportunist farmers encountered, two unique cases stand out and further describe values agriculturalists associate with wildlife. Wotoro was born a peanut farmer in the Kayes region of western Mali. Now in his mid- to late-forties, Wotoro has farmed peanuts his entire life and can tell you everything you need to know to cultivate them. With his lifetime of experience, Wotoro is keenly aware of local fauna that like his peanuts: specifically warthogs, Vervet and Patas monkeys. “They [warthogs and monkeys] come and dig up my peanuts before I can,” explained an exasperated Wotoro. “I can not use poison because I do not want to poison the peanuts.” To defend his peanut field, Wotoro bought a shotgun from a fellow villager and prepared snares. What sets Wotoro apart from other general opportunist

farmers who supply wildlife is his use of a firearm; such instruments are normally associated with hunters.

In short, Wotoro has stepped up his defensive measures against species that want to eat his peanuts through the use of a shotgun. No other farmer reported using a firearm to harvest wildlife. As a result, Wotoro now travels one or twice a year to the *Marabagaw Yoro* with a moderate supply of warthog and assorted primate parts to sell for profit. On the occasion that I met Wotoro he sold, seven warthog heads, six Vervet, and three Patas monkey heads to two neighboring large-scale APVs for 50,000 CFA (the two vendors purchased the stock jointly, pooling their funds).

In comparison to farmers like Sede and Wotoro is the case of Papsan, a young farmer in his thirties from the Sikasso region. What sets, Papsan apart is that he does not supply wildlife parts per se, but rather whole live animals. For example, when I met Papsan he was selling a box of 23 veiled chameleons, three owlets (barn variety), and a juvenile tree pangolin. All of these animals Papsan either caught by hand, or used his slingshot to acquire. For instance, the chameleons Papsan plucked from bushes and trees, while the owlets and pangolin were stunned with his slingshot, dropping them to the ground for easy retrieval. In addition, unlike other farmers who tended to highlight their need to protect their crops as their reason for harvesting and selling wildlife, the species Papsan captured posed no threat to his crop of sorghum.

When asked why he caught and sold live animals to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, Papsan offered a different perspective than other farmers, one framed strictly as financial opportunity. “Everyone is afraid of chameleons,” explained Papsan, “but they are worth a lot of money here [the *Marabagaw Yoro*]. “It is easy money when they are

everywhere,” concluded Papsan. I then watched as he sold his entire stock of live animals to Wara the large-scale APV for 85,000 CFA – the single largest sale made by a general opportunist to an APV. Wara was more than willing to pay a premium to acquire species that are highly valued in traditional medicine. According to Papsan, all the money he earns is reinvested in his agricultural enterprise. Specifically, Papsan desires additional land to cultivate. To secure additional farmland, Papsan offers gifts of money to local authorities, like the *dugutigi*, or traditional village headman responsible for allocating land to community members. Papsan has already acquired over a hectare of land through this process.

In summary, agriculturalists like Sede and Wotoro value wildlife that is actually a threat to their livelihood and/or person. Though paradoxical on the surface, it makes sense to convert something that is potentially detrimental, to something of value. Farmers like Wotoro and Sede harvest nuisance species and eat them (i.e., caloric value), or remove specific parts to be sold to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* to supplement their income (i.e., economic value). However not all general opportunist farmers are the same - some like Papsan have developed unique strategies that are not associated with nuisance species. Rather, Papsan recognizes that many animals found in and around his residence are “easy money,” all he has to do is pick them up and sell them to supplement his income as a farmer.

In addition to general opportunist truck drivers, herdsmen, and farmers, I encountered seven individuals selling wildlife to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* that did not readily fit in any particular category. These “other” seven opportunist suppliers include four adolescent boys and three unemployed men. Though a heterogeneous group,

these “others” do share a common perception with regard to wildlife – it is a relatively easy resource to acquire and sell. Moreover, all of these individuals were aware that the *Marabagaw Yoro* was the primary market to sell the wildlife they harvested. In fact, all of these other general opportunists had previously sold wildlife there. Furthermore, all other general opportunists came from the district of Bamako and identified that their practice of harvesting and selling wildlife was a result of economic necessity.

For example, I met Woloke, an unemployed laborer, selling fruit bats (flying fox variety) to a large-scale APV. After selling his twelve fruit bats, or “*tonso*” to the APV, I was able to speak with Woloke and learned some of his story. In 2005 Woloke was working as a general laborer on urban construction projects. However, in 2006, Woloke lost his job leaving him in a bad situation. His wife and children left the city to live with relatives, while Woloke stayed behind to try and find work. Not finding any construction work, Woloke decided to do what he saw others doing – harvesting and selling wildlife to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Using the ubiquitous slingshot, readily made from scavenged materials (a tree branch with a fork in it and a piece of rubber cut from an old bicycle inner tube), Woloke harvests all manner of “urban wildlife.” Such species include a wide variety of snakes, lizards, birds, rodents, and bats. His latest harvest of fruit bats Woloke shot out some mango trees over the course of a day. For the twelve fruit bats, Woloke received 12,000 CFA (1000 CFA each). Though not a landslide of money, 12,000 CFA is more than many earn in a day in Mali. Because Woloke regularly supplies wildlife to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, he earns enough money to rent a small room and eat (some of his meals are supplemented with the wildlife he harvests – he is particularly fond of cane

rat), as well as send money to his family in the bush. Though this economic strategy helps to maintain himself and his family, it is not what Woloke desires to do. “I can make money selling this [wildlife], but I want to make more [money] building houses,” said Woloke.

In addition to unemployed men like Woloke are four adolescent boys (ranging from twelve to eighteen years old), who harvest and sell wildlife to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Two of these boys are orphans who literally live on the street, while the other two come from poor families. The orphans are fixtures of the *Marabagaw Yoro* and are regularly seen socializing with various vendors in the market. Many give the orphans gifts of money (a few coins), or food (a mango, bowl of rice, and the occasional piece of meat). In short, some of the APVs (and other vendors in the area) act as wards and guardians of the orphans. To help reciprocate, the orphaned brothers put their slingshots to good use and supply APVs with a wide variety of small animals to sell including birds, lizards and rodents.

In addition to the orphans who are virtual wards of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, are two boys who come from two different families. From a western perspective, these two boys are one step from living on the street themselves. To aid their financially strapped families, the boys harvest all manner of urban wildlife for the dinner pot and to sell in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Though they typically bring in the occasional snake, lizard, bird, or rodent for 500-1,500 CFA, the boys have made some sizable sales. Once, one of the boys brought in a live ball python, which he sold to a large-scale APV for 7,000 CFA. The other boy once sold a pair of live fledgling raptors (believed to be common kestrels) to Ba Guindon (a large-scale APV) for 10,000 CFA (5,000 CFA each).

Though these “other” general opportunists may appear dissimilar, it is superficial as all of these individuals uphold wildlife as a life-sustaining and economic resource. However, unlike other general opportunists like truck drivers, herdsman, and farmers, these “other” individuals do not have a primary occupation with which they supplement with harvesting and selling wildlife. Rather, the value “others” place on wildlife is directly related to their financial situation. As such, “others” have little choice but to turn to urban wildlife in an effort to simply survive.

The practices, themes, and supporting wildlife values expressed by wildlife suppliers of the *Marabagaw Yoro* are not happenstance. They reflect varied responses, by a wide range of people, to basic human needs and desires. In so doing, the ethnographic examples given help to highlight that wildlife use is frequently a requirement to survive. In the article, “*The Obvious Aspects of Ecological Underprivilege in Ankarana, Northern Madagascar*,” Andrew Walsh (2005) discusses the disparities created between “people who can do what they want because they can afford to,” and “people who do what they do because they cannot afford not to,” (p. 662-663). To contextualize, Walsh is speaking about the different ways in which people make choices, based on their relative perspectives. For many Westerners the practice of harvesting and selling wildlife is considered immoral or unethical according to intrinsic values found in western environmental discourse (Blakie and Jeanrenaud 1997; Kottak 1999; Shiva 2000). Such individuals can afford to feel this way because of their privileged position. Yet, for many Malians (i.e., hunters, middlemen, and general opportunists), wildlife either provides much needed protein, and/or has monetary value that cannot be overlooked in the face of adversity.

Notes

ⁱ Apparently the role of wholesale distributor is not needed in the dynamic environment of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. This is most likely due to the fact that APVs readily resell items to other APVs. In short, all APVs can serve as wholesale distributors, negating the need for a specific type of actor to perform such services.

ⁱⁱ The two middlemen who did not engage large-scale vendors had essentially found their own niche in serving small-scale APVs.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mouri also described that he occasionally set snares when he had to overnight in the bush.

^{iv} This is particularly interesting because pythons are readily consumed in rural villages. So, why would someone exchange a readily available source of protein, for another? My best guess is that the finder of the ball python knew it was potentially more valuable alive than dead. You can kill and eat the snake anytime, so why not wait a bit and see if you can convert it into something “better” (i.e., money, or a more valued source of protein – bushbuck).

^v I suspect that Snake-Killer-Man even collects already dead snakes, as all those that were unidentifiable appeared to have been run-over multiple times by different vehicles.

CHAPTER XI

ANIMAL PARTS VENDORS

In the *Marabagaw Yoro* of Bamako are nineteen small-scale and thirteen large-scale APVs that sell wildlife parts as ingredients to medicine. As such, small- and large-scale APVs are general terms used to describe two different types of stalls that sell wildlife in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Though these terms help to distinguish my primary research groups from other types of vendors present in the market, it also masks much. Specifically, the different actors or roles found in association with small- and large-scale APV stalls.

In surveying participating APVs (n=87), four key roles, or actor positions were identified including stall owners, co-owners, apprentices, and extra members (see Table 29: Summary data on actors and roles within APV stalls of the *Marabagaw Yoro*). Given that large-scale APVs offer a greater variety of stock, are located in high traffic areas, and involve more positions than do small-scale operations, they became my principle focal group that I worked with in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. However, this should not suggest that small-scale APVs are less important or numerous than large-scale APVs. Rather, there were just fewer small-scale APVs willing to participate in this study than large-scale; ten out of nineteen small-scale APVs participated, while all thirteen large-scale stalls also participated. As a result, a total of fifty-nine actors (roughly 68%) were encountered in association with large-scale stalls, while twenty-eight (32%) were involved with small-scale stalls.

Table 29: Summary data on actors and roles within APV stalls of the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

	Stall Actors	Stall Owner	Co-owner	Apprentice	Extra Members	Total Actors
Large-Scale APV	38	13	-	25	21	59
Small-Scale APV	13	10	3	-	15	28
Total per category of actor	51	23	3	25	36	87

In the sections that follow I outline and describe each of these roles. In so doing, I highlight key themes associated with each type of actor and provide ethnographic examples to help illustrate their relative positions with regard to wildlife. Subsequent to this I analyze and provide insight into significant value patterns presented by small- and large-scale APVs. Specifically, I interrogate how different types of APVs situate their wildlife values, and the extensive bodies of consumer knowledge they have acquired through their experience in the *Marabagaw Yoro* – knowledge APVs put to good use in meeting a wide range of demand.

Stall Owners and Co-Owners

At the top of an APV stall’s hierarchy are owners and co-owners. Known as “*patron*” (boss), “*chef*” (chief), and “*marabagawtigi*” (a vendor of traditional medicine), a total of twenty-six participated in this study. Specifically, twenty-three stall owners and three co-owners were informally interviewed over the course of nine months. Large-scale APV stalls were owned by thirteen different men who employed apprentices (n=25), while three out of ten small-scale stalls had co-owners and no apprentices. This highlights a key difference between large- and small-scale APVs stalls based on economic potential: only owners of large-scale stalls can afford apprentices. As a result, large-scale APVs

have a more extensive internal hierarchy than do small-scale stalls – simply because there are more people involved in a large-scale APV operation. Given this difference, I will first describe small-scale owners and co-owners, and then detail owners of large-scale operations, highlighting key themes for each in turn.

The difference between a small-scale owner and co-owner is relative to whom I first met at their stall. For example, when initially surveying the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I met a man named Tamba and he identified himself as the owner of the stall I was inspecting. A few days later, I noticed a different man attending what I believed to be Tamba's stall. Speaking with the new vendor I learned his name was Zere and he was Tamba's business partner: a co-owner of the stall. As such, whom ever I first identified running a small-scale stall is identified as an "owner," while subsequent vendors running the same stall are described as "co-owners."

Over the course of nine months I spoke at length and informally interviewed 10 small-stall owners and three co-owners. Common to all owners and co-owners was the constant concern to "*ka wari soro*," or "find money." Specifically, owners and co-owners were concerned about finding money because they must spend significant sums of money to maintain their stalls (i.e., pay rent and purchase stock) as well as themselves, all while trying to make a profit by selling wildlife.

To rent space, owners and/or co-owners of small-scale stalls negotiate a deal with the municipal police, who are tasked with maintaining peace in the area. Specifically, the *chef du poste* takes on the additional responsibility of serving as a rental agent to supplement his salary as well as those who work under him (i.e., the squad of police assigned to the *chef du poste*). Rent is relative to the size of space requested and its

location in the market. Given that small-scale owners and co-owners lack the funds to rent the best spaces in the market (i.e., areas with high foot traffic), they are relegated to secondary spaces, typically tucked between a set of parked cars deep in the interior or on the extreme periphery of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. The typical small-scale owner with an out of the way location might pay 5,000 to 10,000 CFA a month, while another with a better location might pay 15,000 to 20,000 CFA.

For example, Watara and Soumaila have co-owned and operated a small-scale APV stall in the *Marabagaw Yoro* since 2004. Having previously worked together as street vendors for years, the two men are close friends and work as a team. Located on the eastern periphery of the parking lot that serves as the home of the market, the two men, in their mid-twenties, consider themselves entrepreneurs and desire to expand their operation to make more money. Paying only 5,000 CFA a month to rent space for their stall, an overturned box, Watara and Soumaila, work as equal partners in buying stock and selling it to the public. They arrive early in the morning and set their stall up quickly, hoping to catch early shoppers.

Frequently one of the two men will leave the stall to solicit clients from areas with high foot traffic, while the other vendor will sit in attendance at the stall waiting for any customers to arrive. At the end of a day Watara and Soumaila divide the profits evenly between themselves. When new stock is needed, both Watara and Soumaila jointly reinvest a significant amount of their earnings to purchase items. Yet, given their limited earnings as small-scale APVs, Watara and Soumaila are constantly caught in a paradoxical choice: stock wildlife parts that sell frequently but at relatively cheap prices

(a reliable approach), or invest in high-end merchandise that sell for large amounts of money (a risky approach).

For instance, I once observed Watara and Soumaila argue over if they should purchase ten electric catfish skins (known as *tigin n'golo*) for 7,500 CFA, or a live ball python for 10,000 CFA. Though a small difference in price, *tigin n'golo* is a staple item found amongst most APV stalls, while live ball pythons are not common and demand a high price (30-50,000 CFA is average). After several minutes of arguing over the merits of both, Soumaila convinced Watara that the electric catfish skin was the better choice because it was more frequently purchased than live ball pythons. Referring to the python, Soumaila reminded Watara that unless it was purchased soon, it would die and would lose value as dead pythons sell for substantially less than live ones. Specifically, a ball python head sells for between 500-1,500 CFA, while the hide can fetch 2-3,000 CFA, which would result in a net loss of between 7,500 and 5,500 CFA on their investment, if they had purchased the python.

While the examples of Zere, Tamba, Watara, and Soumaila highlight APV operations that are jointly run by two men (i.e., owners and co-owners), they are not the norm for small-scale stalls as most are run by a single individual. Much more common is the case of Arama, a small-scale APV barely getting by.

To the untrained eye Arama might appear to be nothing more than a beggar attempting to sell stray objects. His stall is nothing more than a rice bag spread on the asphalt. On it is a dozen scraps of animal hide (the largest was a 30cm x 30cm piece of cow hide), a few *fali kolo* (donkey long-bones), a handful of cowry shells, and a fragment of *koro kara* (a piece of plastron from a *Sulcata* tortoise). Along with animal parts,

Arama had about a half-kilo of *bara kante* (an incense), and a small pile of old coins (used to symbolically represent wealth in preparing medicine).

Since 2006, Arama has been working as a small-scale APV in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Prior to selling wildlife as an APV, Arama was a mechanics apprentice (a profession that never panned out for him), brick maker, and failed gardener. In speaking with Arama, he noted that he decided to work as an APV because he thought it would be an easy way to make money; he knew that it was a business enterprise that could produce significant profits as he had seen other vendors with large rolls of money.

With little start up money, Arama scavenged items he thought he could sell (based on his observations of other vendors goods), and purchased a few items to sell from a general opportunist wildlife supplier. In addition, Arama scraped together 5,000 CFA to rent a space on the eastern periphery of the market. Though he was able to set-up a small-scale APV stall, Arama has difficulty selling enough to pay his rent. As a result he has accumulated 20,000 CFA of debt with the *chef du poste*.

In comparison to Arama and other small-scale owners and co-owners, consider what is required of large-scale APVs (n=13) in running their stalls. Just like small-scale operators, large-scale owners must rent a space, stock their stall, and sell wildlife, all in an effort to further their business and make a profit. However, unlike small-scale APVs, owners of large-scale stalls have the additional responsibility of managing and caring for their apprentices (n=25): young men and boys who work under the direction of a stall owner. As a result, large-scale operations express complex internal hierarchies, while small-scale APVs do not. Taking all of these elements together (i.e., paying rent,

purchasing stock, and caring for their apprentices), dictates that large-scale owners must constantly “*ka wari soro*,” or “find money.”

The first step a large-scale owner must take in finding money is to rent a space from which they can sell their wildlife parts. Given their high volume of stock and desire to sell as much of it as quickly as possible, large-scale owners opt to rent spaces in the *Marabagaw Yoro* that are next to areas with high flows of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. However, such spaces do not come cheap. In speaking with the *chef du poste*, the informal rental manager for the market, he describes large-scale APVs as “having a lot of money for the best places.” This is significant as it suggests that large-scale owners are the only individuals in the market who can afford premium spaces. In short, if a kola nut vendor had the funds, they too could rent a premium space. Given that premium spaces rent for 50,000 CFA a month, the fact that large-scale owners can afford them is a testament to their economic potential as wildlife retailers.

For example, Wara and Ba Guindon are the two most successful large-scale stall owners in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. To help achieve this status, Wara and Ba Guindon rent what are considered the two “best” spaces in the market. Specifically, Wara pays 50,000 CFA a month to the *chef du poste* to secure a location adjacent to the northwestern entrance, while Ba Guindon pays the same for a place next to the southern entrance to the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Both locations receive high flows of traffic on a daily basis granting Wara and Ba Guindon regular access to potential clients, while at the same time being highly visible to attract other customers (and suppliers).

Since 2004, when they started in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, Wara and Ba Guindon have been building extensive networks of wildlife suppliers including hunters,

middlemen, and general opportunists, to stock their respective stalls. In speaking with Wara, he noted that to be a successful APV, “you must buy as much [wildlife] as you can.” Similarly, Ba Guindon explained, “to find money, you must buy a lot [of wildlife].” To do so, Wara and Ba Guindon frequently carry significant amounts of cash on their person to be ready to purchase highly valued wildlife parts as they arrive in the market. For instance, as previously described (see Wildlife Suppliers), some wildlife suppliers have established relationships with stall owners. Perhaps the most unique relationship is seen in the phenomenon of “middleman clubs,” where stall owners pay for the privilege of having first, second and third picks of a middleman’s goods (recall Touré selling his stock to APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*). More common were hunters, middlemen, and general opportunists who sold directly to stall owners, without any additional fees.

After large-scale owners have purchased stock, they must sell it in order to “find money,” or make a profit. To do so, owners employ a variety of tactics to maximize their return on their investment. Similar to practices seen in the *Artisana*, APVs regularly purchase and sell mimics of valued species in an attempt to deceive clients. Such practices are referred to as *nanbara*: to take advantage of another person, con them if you will. However, this should not suggest that large-scale owners only stock and sell species that are mimics to valued species. Rather, owners purchase both valued species and their mimics and sell them differently (see, *Nanbara* and the Art of Finding Money in the *Marabagaw Yoro*).

For example, hyena, leopard, and lion are in high demand by the public as they are used in preparing medicines associated with luck, health, prosperity and strength:

assets any Malian might desire. Yet, given the popularity of these species, it is far more cost effective for large-scale owners (typically the only type of vendor who can afford such species) to purchase and sell mimics of these animals. Specifically civet, gennet, domestic dog, and jackal are dismembered and sold as “hyena,” while serval is frequently sold as “leopard.” Similarly, domestic cow and the hides of various wild ungulates are regularly stocked and sold as “lion.” Even though large-scale owners routinely stock mimics, they also purchase bona fide hyena, leopard, and lion. While owners attempt to sell mimics for as much as they can, they are much more willing to drop the price, than they are for real hyena, leopard, and lion. As such, most clients think they are receiving a “good deal” when they purchase a highly valued species for less than they expected. This in turn encourages the client to return to the same vendor in the future, while at the same time earning the vendor more than he would than if he sold the specimen for what it was actually worth.

In addition to stocking and selling wildlife as ingredients to local medicine, some large-scale owners, like Wara and Ba Guindon, have expanded their operations to include taking custom orders for unique and difficult to acquire wildlife (in part and whole). For example, an intermediary for a client approached Wara about purchasing a live juvenile hyena for a local elite. Though the elite buyer was never known, his intermediary arranged the purchase through Wara. To do so, Wara employed his cell phone and put his extensive network of wildlife suppliers to work. Calling three different middlemen, Wara arranged the sale of the hyena, for which he received 35,000 CFA for his role as facilitator. The middleman who found the hyena received 15,000 CFA for his part, and the professional hunter who trapped the animal received 100,000 CFA. Such examples

are significant as they show how multiparty transactions are paid (i.e., the relative value each role plays in a given situation), and an expansion of the role large-scale owners play. Typically, owners await wildlife suppliers to come to them, purchase stock, and resell it to the general public. However, due to the fact that large-scale vendors tend to have extensive networks of supply, they can also serve as liaisons between elite clients and rurally based wildlife suppliers. Furthermore, by serving as liaisons, large-scale owners demonstrate their ability to “find money” simply by using their cell phones. As Wara explained it, “all I have to do is call someone [one of his wildlife suppliers], and I can get what the client wants.”

In addition to renting space, stocking wildlife, and selling it (both directly and indirectly) large-scale owners hire apprentices to assist in running their stalls. Though apprentices perform a variety of tasks in the employment of large-scale owners, those will be discussed in the section titled: Apprentices. For the moment, what is of importance is understanding the internal hierarchy large-scale owners must manage as a result of using apprentices. Given that all but one of the thirteen large-scale owners employed two apprentices, stall dynamics can be quite complicated.

Depending on the stall owner, they make different arrangements with their apprentices. Some owners simply give their apprentice a daily stipend to purchase food (500 – 1,500 CFA a day). Others board their apprentices and pay them a small salary (5,000 CFA a week). Others still draw on young family members to be apprentices. Such apprentices are not paid directly, but receive benefits from selling wildlife because they are related to the owner (i.e., the owner is responsible for the apprentice in and outside of the *Marabagaw Yoro*).

For instance, Ba Guindon, a large-scale APV with two apprentices provides insight into stall hierarchies. Soon after he started working in the *Marabagaw Yoro* in 2004, Ba Guindon hired Bembe, a fourteen-year-old boy from Bamako (shared no relation to Ba Guindon) to be his apprentice, paying him 1,500 CFA a day plus money for breakfast and lunch. In 2006, Ba Guindon took on another apprentice, Kas, another young man from Bamako, paying him the same as Bembe. However, because Bembe was older and more experienced than Kas at operating an APV stall, he was elevated to being Ba Guindon's right hand man. Essentially, Bembe became what *Artisana* leather vendors identify as a manager, or lieutenant: a second in command. As such, Ba Guindon took more time off and left Bembe in charge of the stall, with Kas serving as his aid. According to Bembe, "Ba Guindon used to spend all day in the market selling." "After he hired Kas, he [Ba Guindon] made me 'boss'," continued Bembe. "Now, he [Ba Guindon] comes to work in the afternoon," explained Bembe.

Though Bembe is second in command of the stall, Ba Guindon is still responsible for paying rent. In terms of purchasing stock, Ba Guindon has given some authority to Bembe to buy small items. If something of significant value happens to arrive in the market, Bembe is to use his cell phone to call Ba Guindon if he is not present, to clear the purchase.

Between renting space, purchasing stock, selling wildlife, and managing apprentices, it is little wonder that owners of large-scale operations are constantly trying to find money. However, unlike small-scale APVs, most of which are owned and operated by a single individual, large-scale owners must rely on the efforts of their apprentices to aid in finding money.

Apprentices

Known as “*apprentike*” (apprentice), and “*baraden*” (working-child), apprentices are the backbone of large-scale APV operations. This is because twenty-five apprentices are employed by thirteen large-scale owners to sell animal parts to the general public, as well as purchase stock, all in order to find money. In surveying large-scale APV stalls I found four owners who employed a single apprentice each, six that paid for two apprentices, and three owners that paid three apprentices each (see Table 30: Summary data for apprentices working for large-scale owners).

Table 30: Summary data for apprentices working for large-scale owners.

Number of Apprentices	Number of Large-Scale Stalls	Total
1	4	4
2	6	12
3	3	9
-	13	25

Though one might suspect that apprentices in the *Marabagaw Yoro* learn about traditional medicine similar to how apprentices in the *Artisana* learn to become leatherworkers, they do not. Unlike apprenticing in the leather shops of the *Artisana* where newcomers learn a trade skill (i.e., leatherwork), apprenticing in the *Marabagaw Yoro* is essentially an extended internship where one hones their skills as a salesman. The end goal is to learn enough about being a vendor to eventually start their own enterprise selling wildlife, or some other commodity. As explained to me by Ali, a single apprentice working for an owner, “if I had my own place to sell from, then I could find more money.” This statement is significant because it reflects Ali’s desire to take what he has learned and apply it toward his own goals. Namely, finding money for himself by starting his own operation, rather than working for someone else.

Under Ali's current arrangement, he works from sunrise to sunset selling wildlife for a man named Che. For his efforts, Che pays Ali 1,500 CFA a day, gives him money for lunch, and occasionally pays a bonus for a large sale. In 2007 when I met Ali, he had been working for Che for three years. Over this time, Ali feels that he has mastered the art of selling wildlife and could earn substantially more by striking out on his own. "He [Che] has a lot of money but does not give me any," said Ali. Though an exaggeration, Ali, like many other apprentices, sees himself as being exploited for the stall owner's gain. When I asked him why he did not leave and start up his own business, Ali explained that Che did not pay him enough.

However, not all apprentices are equal in their ability to sell. As previously noted (see Large-scale Owners), apprentices are arranged in hierarchical fashion within a given APV stall based on age and skill. Those owners who employ a single apprentice, play a much more active role in operating the stall (i.e., they are present and engage the public to sell wildlife) in comparison to owners who have multiple apprentices. Owners with multiple apprentices tended to play a less active role in daily stall operations, leaving most of the work to a head apprentice. In such situations, owners used cell phones to inquire about sales and to direct stall affairs from afar.

In the sections that follow, I outline the different roles and responsibilities for multiple apprentices working for large-scale owners. In relating each, I provide ethnographic examples that highlight the relative positions for each apprentice in a given stall's hierarchical organization.

In total, six large-scale owners employed two apprentices each, like Bembe and Kas who work for Ba Guindon. As previously described, Bembe started as Ba

Guindon's apprentice in 2004, and Kas began work in 2006. Given that Bembe is older and more experienced, Ba Guindon increased his responsibility to that of a "manager," or head apprentice. Though Bembe may complain about how little Ba Guindon pays him, he is quite pleased about his position as second in command.

As a head apprentice Bembe has many responsibilities including those to the stall's owner (Ba Guindon), his underling (Kas), clients, as well as the market in general. While Ba Guindon is not present, Bembe has complete authority over the stall and the items it offers. This is reflected in the fact that Bembe sits behind the stall, reclined in a chair, in the shade of a scratch built awning awaiting clients and potential sellers. In sharp contrast, Kas is frenzy of activity. He started his morning by setting up the wildlife part stall, and then spent sometime searching for "free things," a reference to items that can be found and sold for a profit. For instance, one day I observed Kas removing the head from a partially decomposed domestic cat he found in the sewer. The head when removed can be sold as the head of another more valuable animal: a form of *nanbara*, or taking advantage of another person. In this case, the cat's head was defleshed and advertised as a "head of a leopard cub."

In addition to finding "free things" and practical lessons on how to *nanbara* clients by converting common items into rare and valuable commodities, Kas is also expected to find potential clients, serve as a "runner," as well as keep an eye open for potential threats. Occasionally, when the flow of clients decreases in the area adjacent to Ba Guindon's stall, Bembe sends Kas out to try and solicit customers. To do so, Kas wanders the market and surrounding area looking for individuals who appear to be in need of help (a euphemism for a "mark" to *nanbara*). "They look lost, or are not well,"

explained Kas, signs that an individual is in need of *fura*, or medicine. Though not always successful in finding someone in need of help, when he does, Kas is usually able to convince the person to accompany him back to the stall, where Bembe waits. Once at the stall, Kas introduces the potential client to Bembe along with any key details that might aid in a sale. For instance, Kas once returned from soliciting clients with an elderly man with “trembles” (uncontrolled shaking of hands). Using his ailment as a primary cue, Bembe suggested to the man that he knew of some medicines that could help, if not cure his condition. Bembe even went so far as to contrive stories of how he was taught by a powerful *karamogo* (master teacher, healer, diviner). Taking the bait, the elderly man accepted Bembe as an authority on traditional medicine and paid 12,000 CFA for some dubious powders that Bembe prepared on site with various items from his stall.

In addition to finding and soliciting clients to *nanbara*, Kas is also responsible for serving as a “runner” or “go-for” due to his position in Ba Guindon’s stall hierarchy. A “runner” or “go-for” refers to an individual who is sent to get something at the direction of another. Most commonly Kas is sent by Bembe to purchase his cigarettes, meals, and tea and sugar. Less common, but more important in terms of stall relations, Kas is also sent to fetch items from other vendors to sell by proxy. Typically a client approaches the stall and inquires about a specific wildlife part. If the stall does not own it, low ranked apprentices like Kas will be sent out to find the item and negotiate a price with its owner. Once a price is set, Kas returns with the item and inconspicuously informs Bembe of the owner’s price (usually hand signs or a text message sent via cell phone). Once informed, Bembe must sell the item above the owner’s price to receive any profit out of the sale.

Such practices, when successful, can help develop strong relations between stalls and vendors. In short, stalls that frequently sell by proxy through one another typically develop alliances where each helps the other in times of need.

Though “free things,” soliciting clients, and serving as a means by which proxy sales take place, Kas is also tasked with keeping his senses alert to threats. Specifically Kas and other low ranked apprentices are always on the lookout for threats to their individual operations, as well as the market as a whole. For example, once when Bembe was busy with a client, and Kas was stocking some new purchases, a man tried to steal some items from the stall. Kas saw the act and immediately reacted by yelling “Zon!” (Thief!) at the top of his lungs. Everyone in earshot stopped what they were doing and focused their attention on Kas who was pointing to a man quickly trying to get away. Those closest to the thief grabbed him (a couple of other vendors from the market) and returned him to Ba Guindon’s stall where Bembe and Kas were waiting with an officer of the municipal police. Once the thief returned the items he took, and after the officer was paid a “fine,” was he set free with instructions never to return to the market.

While Kas needs to be alert to thieves at all times, occasionally Kas is sent by Ba Guindon or Bembe to stand sentry along with other low ranked apprentices from other vendors at key positions around the *Marabagaw Yoro*. The effect is that young apprentices encircle the market, focusing on key points of approach, and wait to sound an alarm of impending danger. Over all the years that I have worked in the *Marabagaw Yoro* there is only one reason for low ranked apprentices to be deployed in such a fashion: the state police are expected to raid the market.

Given that municipal police act as property managers, parceling and renting space in their jurisdiction to vendors of all types. Those municipal police officers assigned to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and surrounding area know that they are in a prime location and attempt to maximize their good fortune by renting as much space as possible. To complicate matters, vendors themselves occasionally sublet all or part of their space. The result is that the *Marabagaw Yoro* and surrounding area becomes so overcrowded with vendors that the State police are sent in to break up vendors stalls; an attempt to discourage future overcrowding. However, vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* possess insight and recognize the pattern of police raids in response to market growth. In general, the market becomes overcrowded every three months.

To give stall owners and head apprentices a chance to escape with their stock before the State police arrive, low ranking apprentices stand sentry and sound an alarm when the platoon of navy blue jumpsuits marches into view carrying batons, sledgehammers, and axes. Once the alarm is sounded all business stops and those attending stalls attempt to run with as many of their goods as they can. As one might expect, some State police are also involved in the informal arrangements of renting space in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and surrounding area. Several well off vendors like Wara and Ba Guindon pay an extra fee to State police officers (funneled through local municipal officers) to protect their stall from being destroyed.

In comparison to the roles and responsibilities of stalls with two apprentices, those with three apprentices showed little difference, save for the presence of an additional staff member. For example, Yacouba owns a large-scale stall and employs three apprentices: Balla, Django, and Amadou (in order of rank from highest to lowest).

Much like Ba Guindon, Yacouba spends little time working in the market, using his cell phone as his primary means of directing stall operations. Given his age and experience in the market Balla serves as Yacouba's head apprentice and directs Django and Amadou in much the same way that Bembe had authority over Kas. However, unlike Bembe who only manages Kas, Balla has more responsibility supervising two underlings. This results, in theory, in greater productivity for the stall as a whole. In short, while Balla sends Django to solicit clients, Amadou can be out trying to find "free things," or serve as a runner to facilitate proxy sales with other vendors.

From these ethnographic examples of apprentices and the hierarchies in which they are arranged, it should be clear that apprentices are primarily concerned about finding money. This is seen particularly well in the fact that certain apprentices are tasked with obtaining "free things" that can be converted into commodities to be sold for profit. Similarly, the practice of *nanbara* is a constant subtheme among apprentices (and the market in general) as it is the primary means by which a client can be deceived into paying more than the actual value of an item, group of items, or even a contrived medicine packet. Lastly, apprentices are routinely reminded of the need to find money through owners supervising stall operations via cell phone, as well as directly complaining about the lack of sales. In sum these themes comprise experiences central to learning how to become a successful vendor. After about five years of learning how to find money in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, apprentices are usually ready to go their own way, even though they may not financially be able to do so.

Extra Members

In addition to managing apprentices, stall owners are also responsible for caring for any extra members who happen to visit them. With the *Marabagaw Yoro* located adjacent to several public transportation stops, family and friends regularly drop by APV stalls to wait for a bus. Others visit APVs to pass the time, or help sell a vendor’s stock.

In total, thirty-six extra members were observed at participating vendors stalls and spent any significant time there (i.e., more than a greeting). More specifically, twenty-one extra members were noted at large-scale stalls, while only fifteen were seen at small-scale stalls. This makes sense given that there are more stall actors associated with large-scale APVs than small-scale APVs. However, when comparing the gendered totals of extra members between large- and small-scale stalls it is found that 61.11% were male, and 38.88% were female (see Table 31: Summary data on extra members of APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*).

Table 31: Summary data on extra members of APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Type APV	Extra Male	Extra Female	Total
Large-Scale	12	9	21
Small-Scale	10	5	15
Total	22	14	36

While there are some differences among extra members found in association with APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, they all share one thing in common: they are guests of someone who works at a given stall. Given that stall owners are vetting young and inexperienced apprentices, they typically do not receive guests as it might negatively impact their position within the market. “I never bring my friends here [the *Marabagaw Yoro*],” explained one young apprentice, “my boss would not like it.” Such sentiments

were common among new apprentices and reflect concern over their employment. However, older and more experienced apprentices (i.e., head apprentices) who managed an owner's stall in his absence had no such concerns. Doumbia, a head apprentice explained to me, "he [the stall owner] is never here, he only calls, so I do what I want." In Doumbia's case, this included having his "brother" (no relation) take his place at the stall for a couple of hours, while Doumbia went elsewhere.

Unlike Doumbia, it was more common for head apprentices to "show off" to friends. For example, Datugun arranged for his village friend to spend an afternoon sitting by his side at a *Marabagaw Yoro* stall. While visiting, Datugun showed his friend the basics of selling wildlife for profit and even allowed him to make a sale. From an outsider's perspective it was clear the Datugun's friend was unfamiliar with city life, let alone a market dedicated to selling traditional medicine. Moreover, Datugun himself seemed to be putting on a show for his friend by demonstrating his authority over an underling apprentice (Datugun sent him to go buy cigarettes, tea, and sugar), as well as sharing APV strategies on selling wildlife (i.e., how to *nanbara* customers).

While some extra members are specifically invited to the market, as seen with Doumbia, and Datugun, others are just passing through. Those extra members who pass through the market typically seek out someone they know in the market (owner or apprentice) because they have to wait for a bus. Since these extra members come of their own volition (i.e., they were not invited by an owner or apprentice) they are extended a great amount of hospitality. In short, if you are an uninvited guest who happens to know someone in the market, you will always be treated warmly. This is based on the logic that ignorance of violating market custom requires market actors to treat those who pass

through as if they were not in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Thus individuals who seek out someone they know in the market are given the best seat in which to rest and are frequently purchased food and drink. Such practices are commonplace outside of the market. In fact, they are fundamental to life in Mali. Moreover, it would stand to reason that such practices would be helpful in maintaining and/or expanding social networks that serve as an individual's primary support system in Mali. In this light, treating uninvited guests with hospitality is the best possible recourse as it allows vendors to maintain social networks that extend beyond the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

In summary, extra APV stall members are a diverse group of individuals. They range from individuals who are clandestinely invited by stall actors who take advantage of their position, to family and friends who are uninvited, but welcome, guests. However, while extra stall members lend insight into stall dynamics and social structures, they do not offer much with regard to my primary research interest, wildlife use and the values that support it in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

CHAPTER XII

WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE *MARABAGAW YORO*

Given that the *Marabagaw Yoro* stocks four hundred and ninety-three species of vertebrate fauna, this market offers the greatest variety of wildlife (and their parts) in Mali. As such, APV stall actors (i.e., owners, apprentices, and extra members to a certain degree) possess an incredible amount of knowledge concerning the species they sell. Over the course of nine months I conducted open-ended and informal interviews with eighty-seven different stall actors and have distilled key themes associated with the *Marabagaw Yoro* and the wildlife that it sells. Perhaps the most fundamental theme associated with APV stall actors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* is that they are first and foremost businessmen; they sell wildlife for a profit as ingredients to traditional medicine. As such, wildlife is a resource that is valued by all regular stall actors (i.e., not extra members) primarily for its economic potential. Specifically, 100% of stall owners (including co-owners) and apprentices identified wildlife as a fundamental economic resource, while extra members were divided between associating economic or medicinal values to wildlife.

To better understand how wildlife is valued as an economic resource in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, consider how different stall actors portray it. Jimou, the owner-operator of a small-scale APV stall was very succinct when he pointed to his wildlife parts and told me, “it is money.” Modibo, a large-scale stall owner was much more in-depth with his valuation of wildlife. Picking up a patas monkey head, Modibo explained that it was a key ingredient to many different medicines and as a result was worth 4,000 CFA. Moving on, Modibo pulled a box from beneath his stall and showed me some of

his most prized items (kept hidden given their value). There was a piece of zebra hide (roughly 30cm by 30cm) which Modibo appraised at 50,000 CFA, a juvenile lion skull he would sell for another 50,000 CFA, as well as the right front foot of a hippopotamus.

The hippo foot was particularly interesting as Modibo described how each part of the foot had a different value. In particular, a 5cm by 5cm piece of hippo skin sells for 2,000 CFA, while a piece of toenail (1cm by 1cm) can fetch 5,000 CFA. Similarly, a metatarsal bone from the hippo foot sells for roughly 20,000 CFA, while a small piece of desiccated muscle tissue (about 10cm by 5cm) can bring as much as 10,000 CFA. Adding up the different values of the various parts of the hippo foot, Modibo estimates its value at over 200,000 CFA.

Similar to Modibo, Salikou, the owner of a large-scale APV stall, identified specific species and their economic values. However, unlike Modibo who highlighted expensive wildlife goods, Salikou described more common items. For example, a single quill from a West African crested porcupine sells for 25 CFA, while a tooth from a Nile crocodile is valued at 250 CFA. Other common items sold by Salikou included dried hedgehogs and chameleons for 500 CFA each, Savannah monitor heads for 1000 CFA, as well as cobra and viper heads for 1,500 CFA.

Apprentices, both experienced and inexperienced, echoed the voice of their employers, that wildlife was an economic resource to profit from. Mayga, the lowest ranked apprentice working for a large-scale APV stall explained to me, “everyone needs these things [wildlife parts] to make medicine, so they come here [the *Marabagaw Yoro*] and buy it.” Such a statement highlights that Mayga perceives wildlife parts as economic commodities to be exchanged for money. Fousseni, an apprentice to a large-scale APV,

follows suit by noting that, “[y]ou can buy anything here [the *Marabagaw Yoro*], if you have enough money.” Though Fousseni was not serious by suggesting I could purchase anything (i.e., a jet plane), he was making a statement on the primary resource exchanged for financial gain in the market: wildlife parts.

Siriman, the head apprentice working under Djouf, a large-scale APV, identified that while all wildlife parts, and some non-wildlife parts (i.e., domestic species, as well as contrived items) are worth money, not all are equal in value. As demonstration Siriman pulled two pieces of mammal hide from his stall, presented them to me and asked which was hyena. Being familiar with this game, I knew what to look for and correctly identified the hyena hide (the other hide was jackal). A bit shocked at my accuracy, Siriman asked how I knew and I recited the common features associated with hyena hide (coarseness of fur, stripped and or spotted markings, and a very distinctive odor). After hearing my explanation, Siriman confided in me that I would make a great vendor because I knew the difference between valuable and not so valuable wildlife.

In a similar example, Sanogo, the sole apprentice to a large-scale APV, explained to me the relative valuation of two species: leopard and serval. Though leopard is at face value worth more than serval, to a customer who does not know the difference, they can easily pay more for the serval. Such instances are usually the result of vendors like Sanogo offering serval in place of leopard in an attempt to maximize their profit in a given sale (a common form of *nanbara*).

Though Siriman and Sanogo highlight different species, for different reasons, both examples reflect wildlife being valued as an economic resource. Moreover, both apprentices (and APV actors in general) rely on selling wildlife to sustain them selves in

a country where 68.4% of the population is defined as being in severe poverty (HDR 2011).

While all regular stall actors (owners and apprentices) uniformly upheld wildlife as an economic resource to be exploited for personal gain by catering to the demands set forth by the population at large, the same cannot be said for extra members of APV stalls. Out of thirty-six extra stall members, 30.55% (n=11) primarily recognized wildlife as an economic resource, whereas 69.45% (n=25) focused on the medicinal values.

Extra stall members who underscored wildlife primarily as a medicinal resource tended to include individuals with limited experience in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, such as uninvited guests. For example, a man I met waiting for a bus at his friend's APV stall described how he was once cured of "stomach sickness" with traditional medicine. The key ingredient to the medicine he used was the stomach (complete with contents) of a West African crested porcupine. In another case, a woman I met under similar circumstances related how she and all her children had medicinal amulets, all made with various species of wildlife. Moreover, chances are that the wildlife used actually came from the *Marabagaw Yoro* as the traditional practitioner who made the amulets regularly sends his apprentice to purchase ingredients from select vendors in the market.

Situated Values

While stall owners (including co-owners) and apprentices stress wildlife as an economic resource on which they rely, each group contextualizes their values differently. For older, more experienced actors, like stall owners and head apprentices, there was a tendency to highlight the historic linkages of their profession as well as the medicinal use

of wildlife. Specifically, out of twenty-six stall owners, 73% (n=19) contextualized their valuation of wildlife through historic associations and medicinal properties, while 27% (n=7) strictly presented their understandings vis-à-vis medicinal use of wildlife parts. Similarly, 61.5% (n=8) of head apprentices voiced their conceptualization of wildlife as an economic resource simultaneously through historic and medicinal linkages, whereas only 38.5% (n=5) offered medicinal constructions. In comparison, younger, less experienced actors, like underling apprentices, tended to contextualize their valuation of wildlife via its medicinal use. In particular, 83% (n=10) of underling apprentices identified their valuation of wildlife strictly through medicinal associations, while only 17% (n=2) noted historic and medicinal underpinnings.

Old Koné, the oldest APV stall owner in the market at 62 years of age, offers his unique insight. Unlike other stall actors, Old Koné has worked with wildlife most of his life. Raised in the Bafing territory of the Kayes Region of Western Mali, Old Koné used to be a successful hunter who harvested wildlife to feed his family, saving valuable parts to use or trade. In the late 1990s, Old Koné gave up hunting and relocated to Bamako to sell wildlife parts in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Given his background as a traditional hunter, it is not surprising that Old Koné has an expanded understanding of wildlife and contextualizes his values through it.

In relating his story, Old Koné highlighted that as hunter he learned many traditional medicines that involved wildlife. For example, “my grandfather taught me how to remove the rock from a crocodile’s stomach and use it in making powerful medicine,” said Old Koné. He then went on to show me two rocks that had been harvested from the stomachs of crocodiles. According to what his grandfather taught

him, crocodiles swallow a rock each year they are alive; they must or they would not be able to sink to the bottom and wait for food to come to them. As such, Old Koné directly connects wildlife sold at his stall (i.e., the rocks from the stomachs of crocodiles) to his personal history, and that of his grandfather to highlight a body of knowledge that supports specific wildlife parts being used as medicine. After describing several medicines made with wildlife that he learned through the tutelage of his grandfather (and others), Old Koné concluded that: “[n]one of this [wildlife parts sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*] would be if we [Malians] did not know that animals are medicine.” This underscores that aside from his personal experience and knowledge, a more public body of knowledge exists with regard to the medicinal uses of wildlife, which creates a basis for the *Marabagaw Yoro* to exist. In short, Old Koné suggests that without a history, or tradition of using wildlife for medicine, there would be no demand for the *Marabagaw Yoro* and the items it sells.

Other stall owners with extensive experience in the market, or with wildlife outside the market, similarly utilized their personal understandings to contextualize their wildlife values through history and medicinal use. For instance, Modibo, a previously mentioned large-scale stall owner, highlights his childhood experience in a village not far outside of Bamako. “When I was little, I used to watch the *kuntigi* [supernaturally trained village protector] make things,” explained Modibo. Point in fact, the hippo foot that Modibo keeps hidden in a box under his stall is a prime example of how he connects his personal history, wildlife use, and village traditions. Specifically, Modibo recalls how when his village was under attack from a malevolent spirit called a *subaga* (plural: *subagaw*), the *kuntigi* called upon local hunters to get him the right front foot of a hippo;

it contains the concentrated power of the animal. Once the foot was harvested, it was used to prepare a medicinal package designed to protect the village from the soul sucking *subaga*.

Based on his personal experience of witnessing a hippo foot combat a malevolent spirit, Modibo has expanded its uses to suit the market environment in which he works. Thus, Modibo attributes different economic and medicinal values to the different parts he sells from the hippo foot. In this light it makes sense that he gives a metatarsal bone an economic value of 20,000 CFA because it is associated with the area of the foot the contains the most power.

In addition to stall owners highlighting personal histories and experiences that lend themselves to how individuals contextualize their wildlife values, so to do head apprentices. Case in point, Siriman, a previously mentioned head apprentice for a large-scale APV, once tested my ability to identify a valuable animal hide (hyena) from a non-valuable animal hide (jackal). In this example, Siriman supports hyena as the valuable animal hide because he had personal experience with it. Specifically, Siriman's father gave him an amulet made with hyena that was to improve his son's ability to find money. According to Siriman, the amulet had originally been made for his father and served him well. When Siriman's father retired, he gave it to his son, which required specialized rituals to transfer title. Based on his father's experience with the hyena amulet, and then his own, Siriman is able to affirm that hyena is a valuable species of wildlife. As a result, Siriman readily recommends to clients that hyena is a species of wildlife that can aid in solving their financial difficulties.

In comparison to most (73%) stall owners like Old Koné and Modibo, as well as head apprentices like Siriman who simultaneously contextualize their wildlife values through personal histories and related medicinal understandings, a few (27%) emphasized strictly medicinal contexts. A good example of this is seen in the case of Ba Guindon, a clothes merchant turned APV. Though Ba Guindon owns one of the most profitable stalls in the market, he possesses little experience with wildlife outside that which he has accumulated in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. As such it is understandable that he does not draw on past experiences to contextualize his wildlife values. Rather, Ba Guindon has accumulated a significant amount of knowledge on the medicinal needs of his clientele. It is from this body of knowledge that Ba Guindon draws on to contextualize his wildlife values. For instance, “everyday clients buy leopard, hyena, and bushbuck because they are used in lots of medicines,” explained Ba Guindon. When I asked which parts of the species were used to make medicines, Ba Guindon gave a cursory response: “they [clients] use the skin and organs.” Given Ba Guindon’s limited experience with wildlife, medicine, and the market, it is not surprising that he cannot provide detailed information, in comparison to other actors in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

The same may be said for other stall actors who are similarly inexperienced, like underling apprentices (apprentices under the direction of head apprentice). Much like stall owners who have limited experience in the market, so do underling apprentices. Most have only worked in the market a short time (a few months to a couple of years) and have not had the experiences of older stall actors. For example, Amadou, the least experienced apprentice working for Yacouba (the owner of a large-scale stall), knows “people come and buy animals for medicine.” Yet when asked for an example, Amadou

could only provide basic information like, “hyena is for luck and monkeys are for cleverness.” Though these might appear to be fairly specific associations, in comparison to other stall actors, such information is considered common knowledge.

In summary, two dominant patterns are seen when it comes to how stall actors situate their wildlife values. First, those stall actors like owners and head apprentices who have extensive personal experience with wildlife tend to contextualize their value of wildlife through specific histories. By doing so, such actors are underscoring previous events that directly lend themselves to formulating a medicinal understanding of wildlife. Second, stall actors with limited experience with wildlife tend to contextualize their wildlife values in relation to generally known medicinal uses.

However, this should not suggest that inexperienced stall actors lack insight into wildlife. To the contrary, many owners like Ba Guindon, who lacked personal experiences with wildlife, often were keenly aware of the buying habits of their customers. Such insight speaks volumes with regard to what is necessary to be a successful wildlife parts vendor in a highly competitive market environment. To put it simply, though different stall actors may contextualize their wildlife values in different ways, the most important element to selling wildlife for medicine, is understanding the demands set forth by customers. “You have to know what they want,” explained Wara, a principle consultant, mentor, and the recognized top vendor in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Knowing the Consumer

In the following sections I provide an overview and ethnographic examples of the knowledge various APV stall actors possess regarding their wildlife part consumers. In

the *Marabagaw Yoro*, wildlife part consumers are divided into two major categories: Malians and Foreigners. In reviewing each category of wildlife part consumer, further divisions are made to distinguish male and female consumers. I start with describing tastes, preferences, and purchasing trends that stall vendors associate with Malian men and women. I then illustrate key patterns vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* associate with foreign men and women. However, it is important to keep in mind that a significant number of extra stall members do not play any role in operating an animal parts stall. Given that most extra members do not participate in stall activities, they are not included in this overview and analysis of stall actor's knowledge of consumers.

Based on informal interviews with twenty-six stall owners (including co-owners), and twenty-five apprentices, over the course of nine months, Malian men and women are the primary consumers of wildlife parts sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Out of fifty-one regular stall actors (i.e., not including extra stall members), 100% identified tastes, preferences, and or buying trends associated with Malian men and women. Yet, at the same time, roughly 86% (n=44) of owners and apprentices highlighted values associated with foreigners. This suggests that foreigners play a much more significant role in the *Marabagaw Yoro* than one might expect. Specifically, over the course of nine months a total of two hundred and thirty-three sales were recorded, of which 85% (n=198) were to Malians, while only 15% (n=35) of sales were to foreigners. As such, it is clear that while foreigners may not purchase many wildlife parts in comparison to Malians, they do provide alternative demands that vendors readily serve to increase their chances of finding money.

Returning to the tastes and preferences of wildlife part consumers, it is important to understand that many stall actors use general terms like “person” (*mogo*), “woman” (*muso*), and man (*che*) when referring to Malian consumers. When describing foreigners, very specific terms like westerner (*tubabu*), western woman (*tubabumusos*), western man (*tubabuce*), and strangers/foreigners (*dunan*). By understanding the different ways in which stall actors identify wildlife part consumers it is possible to distinguish between when a stall actor is referring to trends associated with Malians or foreigners, as well as distinctions between men and women for each category.

A prime example of stall actors using general descriptors to identify Malian wildlife part consumers and items they desire is highlighted in the words of Salikou, a large-scale owner with two apprentices. “People come everyday to buy hyena, leopard, lion, and cobra,” explained Salikou, a sentiment supported by all APVs in the market. When I asked Salikou which people buy which type of wildlife parts, he offered that both Malian men and women purchase hyena, leopard, lion and cobra, but for different reasons. For a Malian man, “hyena is used to find money, because it is ‘luck,’” said Salikou. Similarly, because hyena is “luck” incarnate, Malian women use it “to find a man and have many children,” according to Salikou.

In terms of leopard, Salikou explained that for men, “it is used for secrecy.” This is because leopards are masters of stalking prey. According to Salikou, other vendors, and traditional hunters, “leopards are never found unless they want to be found,” a statement to their ability to disappear on a whim. As such, Malian men often incorporate leopard into medicines that require an element of secrecy or stealth, the most extreme example being a power object that reportedly allows the owner to become invisible. For

Malian women, leopard is also used for secrecy, but according to Salikou, “they [Malian women] use it [leopard] to keep secrets [from others].

Similar to how vendors identify differences between male and female use of leopard, they do the same for lion. According to Salikou, Malian men, “want lion eyes to scare others.” This is based on lion eyes being the primary ingredient to a medicine that intimidates others. Old Koné, another vendor, described the medicine as allowing an individual to have “fierce eyes like a lion.” In comparison to Malian men, Old Koné stressed that Malian women buy the grease of a lion to rub on their children “to make them strong.”

Similar to hyena, leopard, and lion, which are associated differently between Malian men and women, are the understandings vendors have of consumers of cobra. Moreover, cobra presents a unique example as it is strictly associated with male sexual issues, but is purchased by both men and women. According to Salikou and other vendors in the market, cobra can treat male impotence, sterility, sexually transmitted diseases, and in general, increase male sexual prowess. When I asked Salikou why women purchased cobra if it was only used by men, he explained “women buy it for their men and hide it in their food; they like sex too.” In short, though Malian women do not consume cobra themselves, they do use it indirectly buy secretly putting it in the food of men with whom they wish to have sex.

In addition to hyena, leopard, lion and cobra, APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, also identify other specific tastes, preferences, and purchasing trends in association with Malian men and women. Balo, a large-scale stall owner with a single apprentice, notes: “men want things [medicine, wildlife parts] they can get money with.” As a result, Balo

and his apprentice stock wildlife parts they understand to be linked to financial gain. A prime example of this is seen in the case of the left front paw of an armadillo, one of the most powerful medicinal ingredients associated with economic prosperity. As explained to me by Balo and other consultants, armadillos are very special creatures. According to oral tradition, armadillos have the ability to manipulate the weather. As the story goes, long before there were people, an armadillo was walking across the savannah in search of termites (its favorite food), when it began to rain. Not liking the rain, the armadillo raised its left front foot above his head and stopped it from raining on him; everywhere else was wet from rain.

As a medicinal ingredient, the left front paw of an armadillo permits control of certain environmental circumstances. In particular, Malian men believe the left front paw of an armadillo allows them to manipulate economic climates, like the legendary armadillo stopped the rain from getting him wet; a vital asset in conducting business transactions. Thus Balo and his apprentice purchase every piece of armadillo they can find. “Every man wants more money, and I have what can give it to them,” concluded Balo. In saying such, Balo underscores his understanding of a specific species of wildlife (armadillo) with a specific demographic of clientele: Malian men.

While APVs associate specific wildlife parts with Malian men, so too do they for Malian women. Perhaps the best example of this is seen in the case of *tigin n’golo*, or the skin of an electric catfish. Used as a topical analgesic applied to the bellies of pregnant women, electric catfish skin tends to only be purchased by women. Djouf, a large-scale stall owner with three apprentices, explained to me that: “midwives, mothers, sisters, and female friends” come to his stall to buy skins of electric catfish. Other vendors held

similar associations. In general it is widely accepted that the “electric power” of the catfish can be used to treat birthing pains, a symptom strictly associated with women. However, when I probed a little deeper, I learned that Malian men do buy electric catfish, just not the skin. Four different stall owners described that men use the head of the electric catfish as an ingredient in certain curses. One in particular stands out as it draws on the “electric power” of the fish to supernaturally “stun” another person, sending them into a catatonic-like state for several hours to days (depending on the skill of the practitioner).

While not exhaustive, as there is 493 species of vertebrate fauna traded in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, the above examples highlight general trends, tastes, and preferences, which stall owners associate with male and female Malian wildlife part consumers. Not surprisingly, head apprentices echoed similar understandings. Moreover, some head apprentices seemed to possess more insight than their employers.

For example, Balla a previously mentioned head apprentice has more in depth understandings of the preferences between Malian men and women, than his employer, Yacouba. Given that Yacouba spends very little time in the market, Balla manages the stall and two underling apprentices. After a few days of low sales, Yacouba will call Balla and complain about the lack of profit. After such conversations, Balla adjusts his sales strategy to appease his employer.

After being yelled at for low sales, Balla applied his knowledge of Malian wildlife part consumers and had both underling apprentices go out and spread the word that he just acquired a river otter hide, which is used in treating several waterborne diseases like malaria and schistosomiasis. Given the commonness of these illnesses in Mali, it was not

long before clients started arriving and inquiring about purchasing river otter hide. Just like a good salesman who has run out of a particular item, Balla offered that he had just sold the last piece, but had other things that worked as well, if not better. This act of *nanbara* usually only works for a short period of time (a few hours) as other vendors catch on to the tactic and start announcing to clients that approach Balla's stall that he is a "liar;" if they want the real item, they had better not go to Balla. In short, Balla has such insight into the medicinal wants of Malians, that he can (at least temporarily) create a situation where clients believe him to be better equipped to suit their needs than other APVs in the market. However, other vendors never fail to defuse the situation and level the playing field.

Another example of consumer insight head apprentices possess is seen in the case of Siriman. Siriman is the head apprentice for Djouf, a large-scale stall owner. Much like Yacouba, Djouf does not spend much time at his stall and leaves Siriman to run it. In speaking with Siriman about the wildlife preferences of Malians, he explained that chameleons (dead and dried, or alive) are one of the most sought after items in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. While many other vendors (n=31) also identified chameleons as a key species in the market, only Siriman provided significant context as to why chameleons were purchased regularly by men and women. "Everyone is afraid of *nonsiw* [chameleons], but that is also why they buy them," said Siriman. When I asked for clarification, Siriman related that chameleons couldn't be trusted because they "change [color], have a poison tongue, and walk differently than other animals." As a result, chameleons are commonly used in medicines that deceive and/or cause unseen harm to others. "Men and women use it [chameleon] to make medicine to fight their enemies,"

explained Siriman. Such knowledge highlights Siriman's unique understanding of a species and the relative demand that exists for it. Moreover, given his knowledge about chameleons, Siriman maintains a constant supply and can directly advise clients on its use.

Though each of the above ethnographic examples is unique, in combination they highlight a spectrum of knowledge into the desires of Malian wildlife parts consumers. More to the point, vendors actively use their knowledge of consumer tastes, preferences and purchasing trends to serve demands created by Malian men and women. Similarly, APVs have learned a great deal about their secondary clientele, foreigners, and readily adapt to new opportunities to find money. In particular, out of two hundred and thirty-three sales, only 15% (n=35) were to foreigners, suggesting that APVs should have little insight into their desires, because they represent a small fraction of their clientele. However, in surveying wildlife part vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, roughly 86% (n=44) provided some degree of understanding foreign wants. Moreover, 100% of vendors who identified foreign demands noted that most do not come to buy wildlife parts. Rather, most foreigners visit the market for other reasons. Given that all vendors associate foreigners (particularly those from western nations) as "rich," APVs cater to their wants in an effort to find money.

In the sections that follow I outline and provide ethnographic examples of the trends APVs associate with foreign wildlife part consumers. In doing so, I distinguish different types of foreigners and patterns associated with them, underscoring the insights and knowledge vendors possess toward each. Following this I describe other reasons foreigners visit the market and how vendors accommodate their unique wants.

To start, foreigners are divided into two major categories: tourists and expatriates, with subdivisions for men and women. As explained in the section on clientele of *The Artisana*, tourists are non-Malians who are spending a short period of time (a few days to a couple of months) in the country. Expatriates on the other hand, are foreigners who spend an extended period of time (a couple of months to several years) in Mali. Out of a total of thirty-five foreigners who purchased wildlife from APVs over the course of nine months, roughly 17% (n=6) were tourists, while approximately 83% (n=29) were expatriate consumers. Direct observation and a brief conversation (or attempt at one) with foreign wildlife part consumers provided the means to differentiate between those who were tourists, versus those who were expatriates. For example, one foreigner was clearly identified as a tourist based on his attire (American clothes) and the equipment he carried with him (a mountain bike with saddle bags). A conversation confirmed that he was from the Pacific Northwest of the United States and was touring his bike across West Africa. In comparison, I was only able to identify another foreigner as an expatriate after asking where he was from; I had assumed him to be Malian, but he was Senegalese and had lived in worked in Mali for five years for a major cell phone service provider.

However, it is essential to keep in mind that, from the perspective of a Malian wildlife part vendor, it matters little if a foreigner is an expatriate or a tourist, because they have little interest in such things. What they do care a great deal about is making a profit where a profit can be made. As such, the categories of tourist and expatriate are devices I use to distinguish between types of foreigners to better understand market dynamics and associated wildlife values.

When it comes to foreign wildlife part consumers, APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* identify general and specific trends. Generally speaking, stall owners and apprentices highlight that foreigners desire wildlife parts. In the words of Wara, “some [westerners] come to buy medicine, others come to buy something they like.” Such a statement highlights that some foreigners consume wildlife parts as medicine, while others purchase wildlife parts they are attracted to. Both of these practices can be seen in the example of an American tourist attempting to make his own medicine.

In his late twenties, the American tourist was observed making a purchase from an APV. Moving closer I listened as the American asked the vendor in broken French, for lion. After introducing myself, I learned that the American (who was happy to use my translation skills in conversing with the APV), wanted an “amulet of protection” and was trying to buy some lion (in any form) to do so. I was shocked! Here was an American, like myself, who was taking it upon himself to create his own amulet, something typically reserved for a traditional practitioner. Not wanting to influence the transaction, I stayed as neutral as possible, only acting as an interpreter. After explaining the tourist’s desire for lion to the vendor, he handed the American tourist a piece of cowhide, presenting it as “lion hide” (an example of *nanbara*). Not knowing the difference, and wanting to make a special keepsake, the American tourist purchased the fake lion hide for 5,000 CFA. This is significant because without knowing wildlife values, the tourist blindly assumed lion to be the best species to use. This is most likely a result of his own valuation of lion, which is relative to his own experience. As such the tourist bought wildlife as medicine, but resorted to selecting a species (i.e., lion) that he was attracted to.

In another case, a female French tourist was observed purchasing several wildlife parts from a vendor in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Unlike the previous example, the French tourist was working with a traditional practitioner who sent her to a specific vendor with a list of items to purchase. As such, the French tourist was not operating in the dark, selecting items based on their appearance, but was following local practice. However, in speaking with the woman it became clear that though she bought wildlife parts as medicine, she did so as part of a larger cultural experience. I say this because, when I spoke to the French tourist, she stressed her interaction with the traditional practitioner as fulfilling a life goal, while giving little attention to the wildlife she purchased. “I always wanted to have my fortune read by a voodoo doctor,” she explained. When I asked the French tourist why she had purchased wildlife, she said: “the doctor told me I needed it,” and then laughed. Such statements and behavior suggest to me that the French tourist was not interested in wildlife, or medicine for that matter. Rather, she was much more interested in her interactions with the traditional practitioner; purchasing wildlife was just part of the experience for her.

In comparison to general understandings vendors have of foreigners, exemplified in the cases of two tourists who purchased wildlife for different reasons, were more specific associations. In particular, of the 86% (n=44) of vendors who identified foreign preferences, roughly 66% (n=29) highlighted specific trends. “Foreigners want the same things [wildlife parts] as Malians,” explained Cissé, an apprentice for a large-scale stall owner. By saying such, Cissé is drawing attention to the purchasing trends of foreigners as being similar to those of Malians. In particular, Cissé identified lion, leopard, crocodile, and hyena as items foreign men tended to purchase from his stall. When I

asked him what foreign women bought, Cissé allowed that he had never sold any wildlife parts to a foreign woman. This is not surprising as only a total of five foreign women were recorded making purchases from APVs over a nine-month period of time (see Chapter XIII – Animal Parts Consumers).

Other vendors (stall owners and apprentices) identified similar purchasing trends for foreign men. Expanding on Cissé’s observation, other APVs noted foreigners as desiring lion, leopard, hyena, snakes (particularly cobra), as well as a few birds (raptors) and some primates (patas, vervet, colobus, and chimpanzee). In doing so, vendors underscore certain understandings of foreign wildlife part consumers. For instance, Djouf, a large-scale stall owner, shared with me that: “they [foreigners] are rich and buy the ‘best’ things.” To contextualize, Djouf uses the term “best” to reference wildlife parts that are recognized by APVs as particularly powerful, like a hippo foot, hyena head, or left-front paw of an armadillo (previously described examples). Given their “power,” such items are expensive and are only affordable to “rich” foreigners (and wealthy Malians). In line with this logic, Djouf explained that he once sold a leopard head, a powerful medicinal ingredient, to a Nigerian man for 100,000 CFA.

In a parallel example, Mady, a large-scale stall owner, describes “Arab” men as being particularly attracted to leopard and hyena parts. Mady went on to explain that “Arab” men use the hides of hyenas and leopards as prayer mats, while the heads of the animals are used in “Muslim magic.” Old Koné, a previously mentioned vendor, voices similar understandings, noting that one of his biggest sales was to an “Arab” man. According to Old Koné, he sold the head and hide of a hyena to an “Arab” man for 125,000 CFA.

In addition to drawing general and specific associations between foreigners and their wildlife preferences, APVs emphasized that most foreigners visit the market for other reasons. In particular, of the 86% (n=44) of APVs who identified foreign wildlife purchasing trends, all highlighted foreigners as seeking more than wildlife. This stands to reason, as only 15% (n=35) of APV sales (over a nine month period of time) were to foreigners. So, what do foreigners want with the *Marabagaw Yoro*, if not wildlife? According to APVs, foreigners frequently come to “see” the market, the items it sells, and to take pictures in the process. As such, many foreigners visit the *Marabagaw Yoro* as they would a “tourist attraction;” to experience a unique place under special circumstances.

Jimou, the owner of a large-scale stall, explained foreigners “come to see things [traditional medicine market, animal parts as medicine] they do not have in their own countries.” In other words, foreigners are attracted to the market to “see” things that are fundamentally different from those with which they are familiar. Furthermore, Adam, an apprentice for a large-scale vendor noted, rather dramatically, that foreigners “eyes’ stick out,” or gawk in reaction to seeing the market. Bembe, head apprentice for Ba Guindon, described similar observations: “they [foreigners] come and point at this and that.” Miming the scenario, Bembe pretended to be a tourist and pointed wildly at his neighbors stall. As such, Adam and Bembe are suggesting that foreigners see the market in a different light than Malians (i.e., Malians do not gape in reaction to the market, nor point wildly at unfamiliar things).

According to those APVs (n=44) who identified foreigners visiting the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a tourist attraction, roughly 88% (n=39) want to take pictures of

what they see. This presents a unique and often complicated situation for APVs attempting to serve local clients, as vendors also recognize foreigners as being financially well endowed. With their primary directive of “finding money,” APVs adapt to the demands of foreigners who visit the market as a tourist attraction in order to increase their profit margins. Given that most foreigners visit the market with a camera wanting to create mementos of their experience, vendors have taken to charging foreigners for the opportunity. In doing so, APVs cater to the unique wants of foreigners in an effort to supplement what they earn selling wildlife.

However, as several vendors note (n=18), serving the wants of foreigners can directly detract from selling wildlife to local clients (i.e., Malians). As described by one vendor, “when they come [foreigners], others [Malians] stay away.” Another APV detailed how Malian customers avoided his stall when a foreigner decided to monopolize his time by asking what each item was used for. “He [the foreigner] just kept asking questions and would not buy anything,” explained a frustrated APV.

To further complicate matters, many foreigners who visit the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a tourist attraction do not ask permission to take photographs of APVs or the items they sell. To deal with this problem, and turn it in to a benefit at the same time, many vendors will announce in French (and sometimes English): “No Picture,” to inform foreigners they are violating market rules by photographing anything they desire. This is significant because it demonstrates that vendors recognize that most foreigners do not buy wildlife parts, but desire pictures of the market. As such, photographs of the market become a tradable commodity with a relatively standardized price.

Once foreigners are informed of the general rule of thumb (i.e., photographs are not allowed), vendors offer them an opportunity to pay for the privilege. For example, a lone foreign man with a camera around his neck approached Sali, a head apprentice running a large-scale stall, camera at the ready. Seizing the opportunity, Sali informed the man, in French, that if he wanted to take a picture it would cost 1,000 CFA. Dropping his camera, the foreigner handed Sali a 1,000 CFA note. Taking the money, Sali sat back in his chair and spread his arms before him, inviting the foreigner with the camera to photograph whatever he wanted.

Though most foreign visitors who visit the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a tourist attraction readily accept the conditions vendors place on photography, some do not play by the rules. For example, a man and woman visiting the market from France approached Baba, the owner of a large-scale stall to take pictures of him and his goods. Due to an error in communication, the French tourists believed that 1,000 CFA was sufficient payment for both to take pictures, while Baba was under the assumption that any person with a camera pays 1,000 CFA. When both tourists started taking pictures, Baba became upset and demanded more money. From his perspective only one of the French tourists had paid to take pictures. Since the both tourists used their cameras, Baba felt cheated. To get his due, Baba threatened to get the police to settle the matter (a common tactic employed by vendors, and another example of *nanbara*). Not wanting any further trouble, the French woman paid Baba 2,000 CFA (1,000 CFA more than he demanded).

In summary, vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* have developed certain understandings about Malian and foreign demands. Based largely on vendor experience and personal observation of purchasing trends, APVs have amassed bodies of knowledge,

which they use in turn to serve the various demands of their clientele. For Malian consumers, APVs understand that they are their primary customers who purchase a wide range of species (n=493) for different uses. In particular, all vendors (n=51) underscored hyena, leopard, lion, and cobra as key species sought by both Malian men and women. In addition to these four species, roughly 60% of APVs (n=31) included chameleon as desirable to Malian men and women. At the same time, individual vendors highlight other species like river otter, electric catfish, and aardvark as popular among Malian consumers.

In terms of foreigners, APVs emphasized that some purchased wildlife, while most visited the market for other reasons. Specifically, of the 86% (n=44) of vendors who identified foreign preferences, roughly 88% (n=39) highlighted their photographic desires, while 100% drew attention to how foreigners desired to “see” the market and its goods. Such figures reveal the *Marabagaw Yoro* to be predominantly a tourist attraction to foreigners, allowing vendors to increase their profit margins by selling images of themselves and the items they sell. While most foreigners visit the market as a tourist attraction, the few who purchase wildlife are recognized as desiring species similar to those consumed by Malians.

Given the different bodies of knowledge APVs possess with regard to their clientele, vendors put it to good use in serving their own ends: “finding money.” To do so, vendors rely on 493 species of vertebrate fauna, and selectively apply their insight of consumer demands to maximize their profit margins. In general, most wildlife consumers, Malian and Foreign, are unfamiliar with species identification, allowing vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* to draw on the cultural practice of *nanbara*. In the

sections that follow, I outline and describe the complex ways in which vendors use *nanbara* as a fundamental means to “find money.” Given the intricacies involved, the cultural practice of *nanbara* is akin to an art form; one in which APVs are highly proficient.

Nanbara and the Art of Finding Money

As previously described, at its most basic, *nanbara* is a noun meaning “dishonesty” or “injustice” (Bamana Lexicon 2010). However it is also utilized as a verb, as in “*nanbara ke*,” meaning “to be dishonest,” or “to cheat.” As one particularly eloquent Malian explained to me, “*nanbara* means getting the advantage” in a given situation. This might be strictly social, as seen in young men attempting to secure favors with women (and vice versa). Or, more commonly, an economic strategy oriented toward increasing ones financial standing at the expense of another. As such, *nanbara* is more than being dishonest, or being a cheat, it is a complex situation of wanting something and figuring out a way to get it. Moreover, the practice of *nanbara* underscores the agency of APVs in their engagement with a wide range of consumers.

In the *Marabagaw Yoro*, vendors employ *nanbara* in many forms in an effort to “find money.” Perhaps the most common form of *nanbara* encountered in the *Marabagaw Yoro* is seen in the practice of selling mimics of valued species. Direct observation and informal interviews with vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* revealed that all (100%) of participating vendors sold mimics of valued species. Given that lion, leopard, hyena, and cobra are some of the most desirable species of wildlife used in traditional medicines, they are also species vendors sell mimics of. However, this should

not suggest that vendors do not stock authentic and valued species; they do, but to varying degrees, based on availability and price. As Wara my primary consultant explained, “it is best to have both [valued species and mimics of them], that way you have more ways to find money.” By saying such, Wara is underscoring that by stocking both authentic species and their mimics, a vendor increases his ability to make a profit.

In instructing me on the various ways to sell mimics of lion parts, Wara shared that for the hide, he uses cow, common duiker, hartebeest, domestic cat, and caracal. Pulling a small piece of lion hide from his stall, Wara compared it to the mimics, highlighting differences between them and stressing the inability of clients to tell them apart. Not surprisingly, Wara’s primary competitor in the market, Ba Guindon, uses the same species to mimic lion hide and sells them to unknowing customers. Though other vendors did not stock the same variety of lion hide mimics (i.e., cow, common duiker, hartebeest, domestic cat, and caracal), all stocked at least one, the most frequent being cowhide. This is most likely due to the fact that cowhide is readily available, inexpensive, and resembles lion hide to the untrained eye. However, Wara and four other large-scale stall owners noted that the “best” mimic for lion hide is that of caracal. According to these vendors, caracal is the best because it is nearly identical to lion, unlike cow, which generally resembles lion hide.

In addition to selling mimics of lion hide, vendors stock and sell imitation leopard hide. The most common hides used to mimic leopard include serval, spotted palm civet, and genet. For instance, serval is considered the “best” mimic to sell in place of leopard. According to Siriman, a head apprentice, “no one can tell the difference” between serval and leopard. Though not being literal, Siriman is emphasizing that serval fur is a near

perfect match to that of leopard. Specifically, the color, texture, and pattern of serval hide is strikingly similar to that of leopard. In fact serval is such a good mimic of leopard that several vendors (n=6) believed the serval pelts they stocked to be leopard.

While serval is recognized as the best mimic to leopard, other species are also used with varying success. Mady, a large-scale stall owner detailed how he was successful at selling civet and genet as leopard. Other vendors shared similar perspectives on the use of spotted palm civet and genet as mimics to leopard. “If it has spots, they [clients] think it is leopard,” shared Wara. Given that civet and genet are readily available and share certain similarities with leopard (they all have spots and cat-like fur), vendors stock them with the insight that clients will assume them to be leopard. As long as the vendor maintains the deception, clients are none the wiser and purchase civet and genet as leopard.

In a unique twist, while civet is sold as leopard, it also serves as a principal mimic for hyena. Based on conversations with vendors, civets are excellent mimics for hyena because the pattern of its fur can have stripes, spots, or a combination of the two. This is significant as three different varieties of hyena are recognized by Malians (hunters, middlemen, vendors, traditional practitioners, and clients), and correlate to the three types of civet hides that are sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. According to local consultants, there are striped, spotted, and black hyenas. As such, civet hides that are striped are sold as “striped hyena,” those with spots as “spotted hyena,” and those with a combination of stripes and spots (resulting in an overall darker color to the fur) are presented as “black hyena.”

While civet is perceived as the “best” mimic for hyena, it is not the only species used. According to vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, domestic dog and jackal are routinely sold as hyena. Direct observation of vendor stall’s support that domestic dog and jackal are sold as hyena by APVs to unknowing clients. On several occasions I have witnessed clients approach a vendor and ask for hyena (most do not specify a type unless needed), rather than offer civet, APVs present portions of domestic dog and jackal hide as hyena. Similarly, I have observed clients ask for the “nose of a hyena” and were sold the nose of a domestic dog, jackal, or, on occasion fennec. In short, anything that resembles hyena, or a specific part of it (i.e., hyena nose) can and will be sold in its place. Perhaps due to the high demand for “luck” (the primary medicinal association for hyena), and a general understanding that hyenas come in variety of colors and patterns, clients are able to accept domestic dog and jackal parts as bona fide hyena.

In a similar light, it makes sense that much of the “cobras” sold by APVs are other species. With cobra in high demand to treat male sexual issues (impotence, sterility, and libido), vendors stock a wide variety of mimics to sell to unknowing customers. Given that most Malians are fearful of snakes (only a handful of Malians described snakes in positive ways), it is reasonable to assume they do not know more than cursory information concerning cobras. For example, one Malian described cobras as “poisonous snakes that kill.” Another noted their venom as well as their ability to spread their heads, however, he allowed that not all cobras spread their heads, only the “big ones.” Other Malians detailed the different “types” of cobra distinguishing between, white, black, and red varieties. Thus, vendors selectively stock species of snake that meet the average Malians perception of a cobra. However, unlike the previous examples of

mimicked species (i.e., lion, leopard, and hyena), cobras are plentiful, relatively inexpensive, and are regularly stocked by APVs. This may be a reflection of the local demand for cobra; to meet it, vendors sell both authentic cobras and their mimics.

In addition to selling mimics, the cultural practice of *nanbara* is the basis for which market actors convert a species to serve the place of a valued species. The end effect is to create a valued wildlife part from a non-valued species. A good example of this is seen in the previously described case of Kas, an underling apprentice who converted a domestic cathead into the “head of a leopard cub.” He did so by de-fleshing the head – creating an anonymous cat skull, which Kas gave a new identity: “head of a leopard cub.”

Another example of convertible species is seen in how a variety of birds are altered to become raptors; species associated with enhanced sight and increased awareness of one’s surroundings (i.e., the ability to hit a target). For example, the eyes of a lappet vulture are used as key ingredients in medicines that allow the owner to “see opportunities.” Similarly, the talons of an osprey, golden eagle, and fish eagle are used in medicines that have specific targets. For instance, Kara, a traditional practitioner, used each of these species in preparing curses to place on people in far away places (in Europe).

To create these valued parts, vendors draw on hundreds of species of birds that they dismember and modify to meet client expectations for raptor parts. One common practice is for stall actors to remove the head of a crow or magpie, plucking the heads clean of feathers. The end product, to the untrained eye, resembles what a vulture head

should look like; “a bald thing with a sharp beak.” In the same vein, the talons of crows are often sold as raptor talons by vendors seeking to extend their profit margins.

In addition to converting non-valued species into valued wildlife parts, vendors employ *nanbara* to invent medicines. In particular, eleven APVs were observed creating medicines to treat the ailments of clients; a role reserved for traditional practitioners. In one case, a woman in her mid-to-late forties approached a vendor and asked if he had any ball python grease, a common treatment for joint pain. Seeing an opportunity to enhance his profit margin, the vendor made small talk with the woman, while he searched through his goods to find ball python grease. Learning that the grease was for her husband who suffered from arthritis, the vendor informed the client that while ball python grease helped treat sore joints, he had knowledge of a medicine that could cure her husband, once and for all.

To help convince the woman, the vendor created a story to back up his expertise in dealing with joint pain. In brief, the vendor explained how his own father had suffered for many years with arthritis, but was eventually cured by a traditional practitioner. In particular, the practitioner gave the vendor (who accompanied his father to seek treatment) a list of ingredients and specific instructions on their preparation and application. It is worthwhile to note that while the vendor’s story of support was fictitious, it did follow cultural norms (i.e., the practitioner giving a list of ingredients and instructions to the vendor), lending credibility to the APV.

Accepting the vendor as having personal experience and great insight into treating joint pain, the woman asked if she could buy the cure for her husband. Agreeing that she could purchase the cure, the two negotiated price. While the vendor initially quoted the

woman 30,000 CFA for the cure, he settled for 18,000 CFA (it was all the client had on her). Taking the money, the vendor began to pick through his stall, finding the ingredients to the cure for joint pain. From my location I could see the vendor select a small piece of Nile crocodile hide, the tail of a cane rat, the paw of a patas monkey, the stomach of a porcupine, and the tail of a savannah monitor, among other things. After gathering all the wildlife parts and placing them in a black plastic bag, the vendor explained to the woman how the ingredients were to be prepared (ground into a fine powder) and applied (in her husband's food and bathing water).

Once the woman left with the invented cure, I spoke with the vendor about the transaction. "She wanted medicine, so I made her some," laughed the vendor. With no small measure of pride, the vendor detailed how he contrived the entire story about his father (his father never had arthritis). "Imagination is important if you want to make money," explained the vendor. Continuing, the vendor suggested that he would make a "good actor," based on his ability to "*nanbara* clients." While this may, or may not, be true, the vendor is highlighting that "acting," a socially accepted form of deception, is an essential element to the practice of *nanbara* and finding money in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Expanding beyond common forms of *nanbara* practiced by APVs (i.e., selling mimics, converting species, as well as inventing objects and medicines), additional strategies were employed by vendors. These strategies include what I call "fake sales." However, it is important to keep in mind that the actors involved do not distinguish special names for these strategies; rather they are just other ways to *nanbara* unsuspecting customers and enhance profits in the process.

Not to be confused with selling mimics or converting wildlife, the “fake sale” is premised on slight of hand. More specifically, “fake sales” differ from selling mimics in that clients are presented an authentic species then sold another. Similarly, this sales tactic differs from that of converting species, as the client is actually shown the item they seek, not a converted species that is presented as another.

For example, while sitting with Bembe, head apprentice for Ba Guindon, a Malian man asked if we had any “badger.” Showing the client a badger pelt, a price was negotiated (1,000 CFA for 5cm x 5cm of hide). Receiving the money, Bembe handed the hide to Kas, an underling apprentice, and told him to “go cut it.” To help distract the client from what Kas was up to, Bembe made small talk with the client, inquiring about his family and how they were faring with the recent increase in bread prices (a common topic at the time). While Bembe spoke with the client, Kas was quickly cutting a 5cm x 5cm piece of hide behind the stall and out of view of the client, but it was not badger. Rather it was a piece of black cow hide. Slipping the cowhide into a plastic bag, Kas handed it to Bembe who in turn handed it to the client. Never looking in the bag, the Malian man walked off content that he just purchased a piece of badger hide.

Perhaps the most complex example of a “fake sale” associated with actors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* is seen in the case of a live hyena that was paid for, but never delivered. While sitting with Wara and Drago, a Malian man asked if we knew where to get a live hyena. Acting as the agent for a never seen, wealthy businessman (assumed to be Malian based on his use of Bamana) the man was clearly out of his element in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Speaking to the man confirmed that he had never visited the market

before, though he knew of it. According to the man, his “patron,” or boss, had tasked him with procuring a live hyena.

Seeing an opportunity to make a profit, Wara informed the man that he knew many hunters who could capture a live hyena. In fact, according to Wara, he had arranged for the capture of several hyenas and leopards and could do so again for a price. In short, Wara was selling the man access to his wildlife supply network, the cost of the actual animal had yet to be discussed. Assuring the man that he had never failed in getting an animal a client requested Wara convinced him to pay 15,000 CFA to let his suppliers know that he was in need of a live hyena. Taking the money, Wara started calling his contacts on his cell phone. After a few dead-ends, Wara got a hold of Touré the middleman, one of his primary wildlife suppliers. Hearing that Wara had a client who desired a live hyena for a “big patron,” was all Touré needed to know that he had the opportunity to make a lot of money.

Handing the phone to the agent-client, I heard negotiations begin on how much it would cost to procure the live hyena. “That [the price] is too much, make it [the price] better,” said the client to Touré on the phone. He repeated this several more times until I heard an agreement that “150,000 CFA would be given to Wara” to give to Touré to pay for the hyena. This sum of money apparently was an advancement of half of the price of the hyena (300,000 CFA). As Wara explained it to me, “we get half first to help pay for things.” By “things” Wara is specifically referencing the practice of giving gifts of money to officials so that informal transactions, like capturing a live hyena (or any species that draws international attention) for a client, can take place. After all, “Everyone needs money,” quipped Wara.

Handing the phone back to Wara, he and Touré spoke for a few minutes arranging how they would meet. Based on what I heard on Wara's side of the conversation, he was to travel to Kita the following day and meet Touré at their favorite bar (located behind the train station). Once off the phone with Touré, the client dug under his shirt to some hidden pocket and extracted a large roll of notes and handed 150,000 CFA to Wara. In turn, Wara asked the client's name and phone number, writing them down in a list of contacts he keeps in his wallet. With arrangements set, the client thanked Wara for his help and exited the market.

Come the next day, Wara departs for Kita, leaving Drago and I to mind the stall while he is away. When he arrives in Kita, Wara calls me on my cell phone. He is drunk and laughing at his fortune. I can hear Touré in the background equally inebriated and singing a Malinké hunting song. Recognizing how silly he was being on the phone with his tubab apprentice, Wara tried to sober up and told me he would be back the next day.

When he returned, Wara was smiling ear to ear. He and Touré were going to *nanbara* the client for all 300,000 CFA. To do so, Wara waited two more days before he called the client and informed him that a hyena had been captured. However, the forest service had arrested Touré and confiscated the animal (all a deception). In reality, Wara and Touré concocted a situation where the client would be forced to pay more money. This is because Wara played on the fears of the client by telling him that if he did not give another 150,000 CFA, Touré would inform the forest service of the client's identity (Wara had provided it to him). Moreover, given that the client was serving as an agent for a wealthy businessman, he had no other recourse but to agree to Wara's terms. A few

hours later, the man returned to the market and paid Wara an additional 150,000 CFA to extricate himself from what he perceived to be a potentially criminal situation.

As illustrated in the above examples, APVs employ a wide range of strategies in their endless task of “finding money.” Moreover, APV strategies for “finding money” are primarily cached within the cultural practice of *nanbara* and clearly demonstrate the agency of actors in negotiating wildlife to serve multiple demands. In the sections that follow, I outline, describe and analyze the practices of APV clientele (i.e., animal parts consumers) as well as their supporting wildlife values.

CHAPTER XIII

ANIMAL PARTS CONSUMERS

Those who purchase wildlife parts from vendors of the *Marabagaw Yoro* are a diverse group of people. Men and women, young and old alike visit the market on a daily basis to buy ingredients to local medicines. To enter this world of wildlife trafficking I worked as an apprentice for Wara, a large-scale APV, granting me invaluable insight into the internal workings of a wildlife parts stall. In addition, I developed close relationships with ten small-scale and twelve other large-scale operations. The occupants of these twenty-three animal part stalls permitted me to observe their practices, participate in daily activities (in varying degrees), and informally interview the clients that purchased wildlife from them. Given my association with Kara, a well-respected local practitioner with close-ties to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I am intimately familiar with some of the clients as I helped in prescribing and preparing their medicines. Whenever the chance presented itself, whether in the market or working with local practitioners, I informally interviewed clients about their wildlife purchases. Specifically, I focused my questions around which species they bought (i.e., what they identified an item to be), as well as the significance to the consumer (i.e., what did it mean to them and why) in order to distil key values for wildlife part consumers.

Generally speaking, APV clientele can be divided into two main types: Malians and foreigners (see Table 32: Summary data on APV clientele). Of two hundred and thirty-three (233) APV clients, one hundred and ninety-eight (198) were Malian, whereas thirty-five (35) were foreigners. In other words, 84.98% of wildlife part consumers of the *Marabagaw Yoro* were Malian, while 15.02% were foreign. Though distinguishing

between local (i.e., Malian) and non-local (i.e., foreigner) is helpful as it reveals that Malians are the primary clientele APVs cater towards, such divisions obscure finer details. For example, the category of “Malian” includes both men and women, who primarily come from Bamako and the surrounding area and reflect a wide spectrum of professions and associated socio-economic statuses. Similarly, “foreigners” (French: *étranger* and *touriste*; Bamana: *dunan* and *tubabuw*) includes individuals on vacation (i.e., tourists) as well as non-locals who live and work in Mali (i.e., expatriates). As one might imagine, foreigners are as varied as Malians, highlighting differences in profession and financial means.

Table 32: Summary data on APV clientele.

	Malians	Foreigners	Total Clientele
Large-Scale APV	147	32	179
Small-Scale APV	51	3	54
Total per category	198	35	233

In the sections that follow I continue to delineate differences among APV clientele. In particular, I elaborate distinctions between categories of APV clientele with ethnographic examples to provide context for their choices and supporting wildlife values. Commencing with Malian consumers, further details are given to gain insight into their wildlife values as illustrated in their interactions with APVs (and other associated individuals). After discussing Malian clients and their value sets, foreign consumers are explored to distill subcategories (i.e., tourists and expatriates), correlate wildlife values, and highlight notable patterns in their engagement with APVs (and others).

Malian Clientele

To put it simply, Malian clientele are customers of the *Marabagaw Yoro* that come from Mali. Moreover, Malians (n=198) represent the largest group of wildlife part consumers in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. To determine if a client were Malian, I would ask where they were from. Based on observations and direct questioning, Malian clients ranged in age from eighteen to fifty-eight years old. More specifically, 91% (n=180) of all clients identified Bamako as their residence (or areas immediately adjacent to the capital), whereas 9% (n=18) were passing through (i.e., were traveling to another place and stopped by the market). Given that the *Marabagaw Yoro* is the largest wildlife parts market in the country, it stands to reason that all manner of Malians can be found purchasing items from its vendors, however clear patterns are apparent.

Of the one hundred and ninety-eight (198) Malian clients observed purchasing wildlife parts from APVs over a nine-month period of time, 73.74% (n=146) were male, while 26.26% (n=52) were female (see Table 33: Summary data for Malian clientele). Such figures demonstrate that Malian men are the most common consumers of wildlife from the market. More specifically, Malian consumers showed a strong preference for large-scale APVs. This is highlighted by the fact that 74.24% (n=147) of sales were from large-scale APVs, and 25.76% (n=51) were from small-scale APVs. In line with this, over half of all recorded sales, 54.04% (n=107), were between Malian men and large-scale APVs. Given that the vast majority of documented transactions were between clients and large-scale APVs, I focus on them to provide examples and to highlight values associated with key species.

Table 33: Summary data for Malian clientele.

	Malian Clientele		Total
	Male	Female	
Large-Scale APV	107	40	147
Small-Scale APV	39	12	51
Total	146	52	198

In addition, 14.65% (n=29) of Malian consumers were previously acquainted with vendors. This suggests that some clients are return customers and have developed an extended relationship with at least one vendor. This relationship may be born out of previous experience with an APV, or may reflect that the client and vendor are related by blood or marriage. For example, one female client purchased the teeth of a savannah hare from her brother in-law, a small-scale APV. Similarly, a male client bought some black cobra and dried chameleon from his “elder brother.” In this case, the “elder brother” was related to the client in that both shared the same father, but had different mothers (first and second wives of the husband respectively). Likewise, another male client described that he had been purchasing ingredients from a specific large-scale APV for several years. According to the client, “he [the APV] always gives me good prices – why should I go elsewhere?” His point is clear; why should the client disturb a relationship that provides him with benefits (i.e., “good prices”) - especially a relationship that apparently took years to develop.

While 14.65 % of Malian clients were familiar with at least one vendor, 85.35% (n=169) were first-time customers and had not established a connection in the market. As one might expect, such clients are not familiar with the ins and outs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, allowing APVs to apply the cultural practice of *nanbara* and take advantage of the situation. As such, APVs stock wildlife parts that appear to meet

common perceptions of specific species that are valued as *fura*. This correlation is significant as it allows an observer to understand the breadth of species (n=493) sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro* (see Supplemental file). In other words, though there are 493 species sold in the market, there are not necessarily specific demands for each of them. Rather, APVs actively negotiate multiple species to serve customer demand, which is rooted in the values consumers place on select species.

In sorting through the spectrum of wildlife parts sold to Malian clients, some patterns are discernable. Based on sales, some species are sold more than others. In particular, fifteen species (n=15) are traded more frequently than others (see Table 34: Key species sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*).

Table 34: Key species sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Rank	Common Name	Latin Name	Bamana Name	Male Purchases	Female Purchases	Total Purchases
1	Senegalese Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo senegalensis</i>	<i>Nonsi</i>	28	18	46
2	Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi'ma</i>	21	11	32
3	African Civet	<i>Civettictis civetta</i>	<i>Ba Gurun Guri</i>	20	8	28
4	Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	14	10	24
5	Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	<i>N'golo Kadi</i>	12	11	23
6	Honey Badger	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	<i>Dame</i>	10	12	22
7	Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	13	6	19
8	Olive Baboon	<i>Papio anubis</i>	<i>N'gon</i>	15	3	18
9	Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	<i>Bama</i>	12	5	17
10	Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	<i>Dangalan</i>	14	2	16
11	Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	<i>Wara B'le</i>	9	6	15
12	Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocota crocuta</i>	<i>Surukou</i>	8	6	14
13	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	<i>Wara Ni Kalan</i>	8	5	13
14	Vervet / Green Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>	<i>Gobani</i>	6	5	11
15	Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	<i>Wara Ba</i>	7	2	9
Totals				197	110	307

In reviewing Table 34, purchasing trends for Malian men and women are made apparent. However it is important to keep in mind that the data set used for Table 34 is based on incidents of wildlife species traded. For example, during my time in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I observed and recorded a total of sixteen (n=16) transactions between APVs and Malians involving puff adder (#10, Table 34); fourteen to Malian men, and two to Malian women. Similarly, Table 34 does not reflect the number of individual species sold (i.e., whole animals). This is because clients purchase select parts of any given species. For example, many species have their heads removed from their bodies, as well as select organs and other bodily material. Using a Nile Monitor to demonstrate, a vendor decapitated it, skinned it, collected the animals fat, and deftly excised the sexual organs of the lizard. Once the valued parts (head, fat, and sexual organs) were removed, they were dried in the sun onto of the vendor's stall.

Returning to Table 34, it reveals the varying degrees to which Malian men and women purchase select species of wildlife. Yet, at first glance, Table 34 does not seem to represent the wildlife values APVs identified for their Malian clientele. For instance, chameleon was noted by 60% of APVs as a species sought by Malians, yet Table 34 shows that chameleon was the most traded species. Similarly, since APVs highlighted hyena, leopard, and lion as valued species, one would expect them to be sold more frequently. The only trend identified by APVs in regard to Malian wildlife values that is reflected in Table 34 is the clear demand for black cobra. Though there appears to be great disjuncture and inconsistency between APV perceptions and what their Malian clientele actually purchase, in the sections that follow I detail Malian wildlife values and show them to be congruent with APV opinion.

Chameleons are highly stigmatized animals in Mali. On one hand they are clearly valued (as seen in Table 34), while on the other, Malians describe chameleons as “dangerous animals.” Others claim to speak of chameleons is to invite calamity. Thus, chameleons reveal a combination of values that are intimately related. As previously described by Siriman, a head apprentice for a large-scale vendor, chameleons “change [color], have a poison tongue, and walk differently than other animals.” As a result, chameleons are commonly used in curses, medicines that deceive and/or cause unseen harm to others.

To provide further insight into chameleons and their associated values, consider what happened when a local practitioner (Kara) prescribed a client chameleon. While working with Kara, a client was prescribed chameleon as an ingredient to his *fura* (medicine). Upon hearing that he needed to purchase chameleon, the client became anxious and uncomfortable (i.e., fear). Noticing his discomfort, the Kara instructed me to go and purchase the ingredients. Once the client was served, I asked Kara about the man’s reaction: “No one likes chameleons – they can kill you!” Continuing, Kara explained that chameleons are associated with “darkness,” or “*dibi*,” a supernatural realm that overlaps our own. “They are used as messengers between the *dibi* and here – if you find one in your house it means something bad will happen,” concluded Kara. Such ethnographic context from a well-respected local practitioner helps to explain why some vendors (60%) note chameleons to be highly desirable, while others refrain from mentioning them.

In another case, I spoke with a male client who purchased a live chameleon from a large-scale APV. According to the client, his marabou (an Islamic practitioner) had

directed him to purchase and sacrifice a chameleon (along with other specific items) to lift a curse that had been placed upon him by his brother. The fear on the client's face was evident when the APV handed him a plastic bag, wriggling with a live chameleon. Climbing onto his moped, the client held the bag out at arms length, trying to maximize the distance between his body and the less than calm chameleon.

Unlike chameleons, which conjure fear and derive their value from the “darkness” that surrounds them, black cobras are strictly associated with sex. Specifically, black cobra is valued for their ability to increase male sexual prowess, stamina, as well as cure impotence, sterility, and sexually transmitted diseases. Yet, while cobra is associated with male sexual issues, both men and women purchase it. In speaking with various clients who purchased black cobra, they reflected APV and local practitioner understandings.

For example, while observing sales in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I witnessed an elderly Malian man purchase the head of a black cobra. As luck would have it, he was more than just a client; he was also a Dogon *karamogo* (a master diviner of the Dogon ethnic group). In speaking with the elderly man, he explained to me that the head was the most potent part of the cobra and therefore the best part to use in treating “man problems.” However, potency comes at a premium as the elderly man paid 2000 CFA for the cobra head. In comparison, a young man purchased a 10cm length of black cobra for 1000 CFA from a large-scale APV. According to the young man, he purchased the cobra for his “older brother.” When I asked what it was to be used for, he explained, “when you eat it, its like a drug and makes you strong!” He went on to detail how his “older

brother” had many “*sunguruw*” (girlfriends) and that he needed black cobra to have sex with all of them.

Similarly, a Malian man in his forties bought a portion of black cobra from Wara. He shared with me that he was trying to get his new wife pregnant and had consulted a local practitioner on a course of action. While the wife was given instructions to bathe herself with specific medicines, the man was prescribed black cobra along with other ingredients to make a special medicine for himself. According to the man, “he [local practitioner] told me it [the medicine] never failed!” Being an educated government bureaucrat, the man explained that the medicine he was to make, “cured all man problems.” Asking for clarification, the man detailed that his medicine, “cured impotence, sterility, and removed any curses” that may inhibit his ability to have sex and produce offspring.

On the flip side, women also purchase black cobra on a regular basis, but based on their reports, it is not for them, but their mates. For example, Bintu is a Malian woman in her late-twenties and is the third wife to a wealthy merchant (a devote follower of Islam). Given her husband’s religious convictions, he abhors non-Islamic practices and would not be pleased to know that he has been eating black cobra purchased from the *Marabagaw Yoro* for several months. “He thinks he is so strong [sexually potent] because he makes so much money,” giggled Bintu. “But he does not know that I have been putting cobra in his food.” When I asked why, Bintu explained that her mother had taught her it was a good way to secure a man (i.e., maintain and/or monopolize his sexual interest). Given that Bintu is the third wife in a polygynous marriage, her practice of secretly feeding black cobra to her shared mate may have some unforeseen consequences.

Namely, what happens when the other wives catch on to Bintu's activities? Also, one must wonder if Bintu is secretly feeding black cobra to her husband, might not his other wives be doing the same? Though I do not have the answers to these questions, they help to illuminate the complexities that surround female use of cobra.

To further elucidate the female use of black cobra, consider the case of Miriam, the sole wife of a Malian man working abroad in Spain. Through consulting a local practitioner (Kara), Miriam learned that her husband was having two separate affairs: one with a young Spanish woman (unmarried); and another with an older, wealthy married Spanish woman. Upon learning of her husband's antics, Miriam asked Kara what she could do about it. Kara proposed that a curse be prepared for each of the parties involved (to stop their misbehavior), and that Miriam prepare a special "*che fura*" (man medicine) for her husband the next time he visited. Focusing on the *che fura*, Kara explained to Miriam that she needed to purchase a freshly killed black cobra along with other ingredients and prepare them in a specific manner. The end result was distilled essence of black cobra, which was to be mixed into Miriam's husband's food and bathing water. According to Kara, the effect of this particular *che fura* would cause her husband to be so aroused at Miriam that sex with other women would not be satisfactory. In short, because Miriam had access to *che fura* and her husband's mistresses in Spain did not, Miriam would effectively tip the "sexual table" in her favor.

Two months after learning of her husband's affairs, Miriam's husband returned to Bamako for a visit. While her husband was in town, Kara and I saw little of Miriam, but once her husband left, she came to tell Kara how successful the curses and *che fura* had been. "Those other women stopped sleeping with him," laughed Miriam. "One got sick

and the other found another man,” she exclaimed with dark mirth! “When he got home I put the *che fura* in his food and he did not let me sleep that night, or the next – it has been weeks since I slept,” proclaimed Miriam! To show her appreciation for Kara’s work, she gifted him 10,000 CFA and told him that she would tell all her friends to come and see him.

This example, much like the previous, expands our understanding of how black cobra is valued by Malian women. Though black cobra (and cobras in general) is strictly associated with male sexual issues, the previous examples highlight that such issues may be directly related to female desires. Specifically, Malian women who use black cobra on men out of a desire to secure, or protect sexual relationships with them. In the case of Bintu, she desired to secure her relationship with her husband that she shared with two other women. As for Miriam, she too sought to secure her relationship with her husband who had proven to be unfaithful.

Moving on to African civets, they appear to be valued by Malian men and women based on their similarity to hyena. In other words, Malians value civet because it is a mimic to hyena – a species closely associated with “luck.” As previously discussed, APVs stock many species that resemble other valued species, and sell them in their place; a prime example of *nanbara* and negotiating one species to serve the place of another. Given that Malian clients are for the most part unaware that the “hyena” they purchase from an APV is actually civet (or another mimic like jackal), the comments they offer speak to the valued species, not the mimic. For example, a male client who purchased civet explained to me that he was preparing an amulet (under the direction of a local practitioner) to give him good fortune, or “*guardike*,” a characteristic associated with

hyenas. In fact, within local divination circles, hyena is synonymous with *guardike* (luck). Other clients, male and female alike presented similar values for civet, believing it to be hyena (see the section on hyenas for more details).

Unlike civets, whose value is derived from their resemblance to hyenas, savannah monitors are purchased for their specific attributes. While working with Kara, a Malian woman came to show us her new baby. Based on our position as local practitioners, it was proper etiquette to provide the child with *fura*. In this case Kara and I prepared a medicine to be worn around the waist of the child and protect it from malevolent spirits (*subagaw*). Key in the preparation of this medicine was the teeth, tongue, and fat of a savannah monitor (along with other ingredients). According to Kara, savannah monitors are immune to attacks from spirits, because they are creature associated with the “*dibi*,” or darkness. In other words, spirits cannot hurt a savannah monitor because they come from the same place – it would be like attacking your neighbor, not the best course of action for good community relations. Moreover, because savannah monitors are associated with the *dibi*, they are prepared to deal with any spirit that violates supernatural protocols. Thus, “savannah monitor teeth can bite them [spirits] and their tongue lets them speak to any spirit,” explained Kara. The fat was to be rubbed into the child’s skin to encapsulate its body in a protective coating. The end result is, “a spirit thinks it [the child] is a savannah monitor and will not bother it,” concluded Kara.

Other values associated with savannah monitor can be gleaned from Malian men who purchased it from the *Marabagaw Yoro*. In one case, a man in his late forties purchased a live savannah monitor from Ba Guindon. Asking the client his intentions, he explained that his Marabou had directed him to sacrifice one as part of a curse he wanted

to put on his uncle who stole his inheritance when his father died. When I asked why a savannah monitor, the client explained to me that it has a forked tongue and could instruct spirits as a result. In another example, a man bought a recently harvested savannah monitor for its eyes. According to the client, a diviner had directed him to purchase the eyes to help in making a medicine that would give the client the ability to see spirits. Like the previous example, specific parts of a savannah monitor are used for their qualities to breach the supernatural realm.

Perhaps it is because savannah monitors are so commonly used that APVs did not note them as being a species in high demand. Another possible explanation for the discrepancy is that savannah monitor parts are not that expensive, save when you buy a whole or live animal. As a result, other more expensive species might overshadow the mundane savannah monitor.

Paralleling the case of civet, serval is the primary mimic sold in place of leopard. As such, APVs draw upon local understandings of leopard to serve demand. The result is clients describe the serval they purchased as if it were leopard. For instance, a Malian man purchased serval hide, believing it to be leopard, as an ingredient to a medicine he was preparing. Asking him about the “leopard” he bought, the man explained that, “leopards are good at not being seen.” Based on this, the client was preparing a medicine that required a certain level of stealth and secrecy (see the section on leopard for more details on their associated values).

Like black cobra, honey badger is a species closely associated with sex. However, unlike cobra, Malian men and women employ honey badger. Moreover, unlike cobra, honey badger is used to create “love” or “seduction” medicines, not treat a given

physical or medical issue (i.e., impotence, sterility, sexually transmitted diseases). As one Malian explained, “badgers are always having sex, it is all they do!” Another Malian detailed how, “you cannot separate them when they are together [having sex].” Similarly, “badgers smell like sex because that is what they do,” laughed *Karamogo Sy*, a local practitioner.

Perhaps my favorite description of a badger comes in the form of an anecdote, shared by Kara. According to Kara, when he was a boy, a villager was returning from the fields when he heard a horrible noise in the bush. The sound was so startling that the hunter dropped his hoe and ran the rest of the way home without looking back. When he arrived at the village he announced what had happened and took a group out to hear the noise for them selves. Villagers speculated it was a hurt lion, or maybe a hyena that had gone insane, others said it was a *djinn* (spirit) trying to trap them. Daring each other to get close enough to see the origin of the commotion, the villagers were surprised to find no lion, hyena, or *djinn*, but rather a pair of badgers copulating.

While a story of Kara’s childhood, the badger tale helps to highlight that these animals are so consumed with sex; they do little else, save for scaring rural villagers. It is from the local perception that badgers are preoccupied with sex, that they are valued as key ingredients to “love,” or “seduction” medicines. Specifically, the sexual organs of a male and female honey badger are requisite ingredients as they contain “*l’essence sexual*” (sexual essence) of the species. As described to me by a male client in his late-twenties, “*jeneya fura*” (love, seduction, or sex medicine) is used to “make someone only want to have sex with you.” Another client explained, “you use it [love medicine] to capture a person to have sex with.” Based on these statements, love medicine is used by one party

to create a “sex slave” (*esclave sexual*) out of another person. As such, seduction medicine is prepared by both men and women in an effort to ensnare unsuspecting lovers.

For example, a male client purchased badger parts to prepare a love medicine. In speaking with the man he shared that once the medicine was made and applied to the woman he sought, “she will not want any other man.” Similarly, a female client bought badger parts and detailed that she planned to make a medicine to “capture” a wealthy man.

Interestingly, honey badger is one of the few species sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro* where more Malian women (n=12) were documented purchasing it than Malian men (n=10). This in itself may be a reason why APVs did not underscore honey badger as a highly valued species. In other words, since the market is male oriented, as exemplified in Table 33, APVs may be more focused on wildlife associated with men, than women. However, this is not always the case as seen in the case of savannah monitor – it may not be recognized as a highly valued species because it is relatively common and inexpensive. This pattern appears to hold true for other species, like rock python.

Rock python is a species valued by both Malian men and women. In conversations with clients who purchased rock python parts, several uses and supporting values were identified. However, no clear divisions can be made between male and female use as both sexes draw on rock python for similar, yet different reasons. For example, while working with a large-scale APV, an elderly man approached the stall and inquired if we had the “backbone” of a rock python. Never having seen the vertebrae of a rock python for sale in the market, I asked the elderly client why he needed the backbone. “I am old and my back hurts,” he explained. He went on to describe that rock pythons

are “the king of snakes” and never have back problems. Confused, I asked if rock pythons did not have back problems because they were “the king of snakes.” Getting slightly annoyed at my questioning, the elderly man clarified: “they [rock pythons] are the king of snakes – they are the biggest snake!” Continuing, “they [rock pythons] don’t have back problems because they can bend this way and that.” The elderly client then twisted his hands together and separated them demonstrating that rock pythons can knot and unknot their bodies at will. Such flexibility appears to create a basic value for python to be used to treat back problems.

In a similar example, a Malian woman purchased the fat of a rock python as an ingredient to an arthritis treatment for her elderly mother. Just as in the previous example, the female client highlighted the flexibility of the rock pythons as key to their use in treating joint pain. “I mix the [rock python] fat with black powder [gun powder], shea butter, and ground ‘sacred red seed,’ then rub it into her [the client’s mother] skin,” elucidated the client. She went on to describe that within minutes of applying the medicine, her mother is able to move freely without pain.

Other Malian descriptions of rock python underscored different uses and supporting values. One Malian man I encountered purchasing rock python hide (along with other species of snake), described how he was preparing an “anti-snake” amulet. Under the direction of a local practitioner, the client purchased pieces of “all the snakes” in the area to protect him while in the bush. By carrying aspects of each of the snakes in the area, the client demonstrates a symbolic authority over such species. Moreover, since the amulet is covered with the skin of a rock python, the client broadcasts to snakes in the

area that he controls the “king of snakes” – a powerful statement if one lives in the realm of serpents.

Olive baboon is another species that APVs did not highlight as significantly valued, but is always in stock and is purchased by both Malian men and women. Based on conversations with Malians who purchased olive baboon, a range of uses and associated values can be distilled. For example, while working with local practitioners, two different women were prescribed olive baboon heads (along with other ingredients) to provide their unborn children with special skills that would serve them well in the harsh world of Mali. In particular, these two cases underscored that olive baboons are intelligent and able to adapt to a wide range of environments. Such attributes are apparently transmitted to the child in utero, as the mother mixes the medicine into her own food and drink.

In stark contrast to the previous example, most local practitioners do not recommend olive baboon for pregnant women to prepare their children. Rather, local practitioners warn that consuming olive baboon while pregnant may cause the child to become a thief and violate social norms by acting like a wild animal. In fact, several local practitioners related that they had advised clients to secretly feed pregnant women baboon as a form of retribution. As such, negative associations can still be valued and effectively harnessed to meet individual needs.

A good example of this is seen in the case of making a medicine to protect against thievery. While working with Ba Guindon, a Malian man purchased the hand of an olive baboon as an ingredient to a medicine to protect him from thieves. “Baboons will steal anything, that is why you need to use them in the medicine - they are the biggest thieves,”

explained the client. Since the client worked as an informal exchanger of foreign currency, he frequently carried large amounts of cash on his person and desired the supernatural qualities of an olive baboon to prevent thieves from accessing it.

Based on the primarily negative associations Malians ascribe baboons, it is not surprising that vendors might avoid mentioning them as a valued species. In contrast to olive baboon, Nile crocodile appears to be another common species purchased by both Malian men and women. As a result, it may be eclipsed by other species that garner higher profits. After all, APVs are geared toward finding money, and the more of it the better.

With regard to Nile crocodiles, a wide range of values is found. Similar to the use of savannah monitor, juvenile Nile crocodile heads were purchased by two different women who planned on using the teeth in making “*nin bo fura*,” or dentition medicine to protect their children from *subagaw*. Other key values distilled from clients include the use of crocodile in preparing curses as well as treating physical ailments.

For example, while inventorying the stock of a large-scale vendor, a Malian man in his forties purchased a moderately sized Nile crocodile head (about 40cm long). When asked what his intentions were for the head, the client explained that he was using it to make a medicine to protect him as he fished the river – prime crocodile territory. Moreover, the fisherman was making a medicine to protect against crocodiles because he had lost his previous one.

Another example of Nile crocodile being valued for its protective attributes is seen in the case of hunter who contracted a local practitioner (Kara) to create a medicine to make his “skin like a crocodile” – tough, hard, and nearly impenetrable. Such

characteristics are beneficial when traveling through the bush in search of game. Both Kara and the hunter described crocodiles (Niles among them) as being able to walk through thorny acacia thickets – their thick scaly hides protecting them. In the same vein, flies and mosquitoes cannot bite through their tough hides, protecting them from swarms of annoying insects.

In contrast to Nile crocodile being valued for its protective qualities, other clients highlighted its significance as closely associated with certain curses. In one case, a young Malian man used the “stone from a crocodile’s stomach” to curse his employer and inherit his position. Working with a local practitioner, the client described how “crocodiles swallow a stone every year.” “They do this because they need the stones to weigh them down as they get bigger,” said the client. It was in his search for the “stone from a crocodile’s stomach,” that I encountered the client and was able to speak with him. According to the client, the stone was the key ingredient in the curse he was preparing. Based on what he explained, the stone helped to “weigh” the curse upon the victim in such a way as to prevent other practitioners from being able to lift it.

While the previous examples have illustrated Nile crocodile as valued for its protective attributes and use in curses, it also purchased to treat physical ailments. For instance, a Malian man in his late-thirties, bought some crocodile skin to make a balm for his skin condition. Lifting his pant leg to show the vendor and I, the client revealed festering sores and significant swelling from his knee down. He explained that Nile crocodile hide was good to use in treating his sores because they do not get sick. Based on his reasoning, by using crocodile skin in preparing a salve, it would help heal the client’s sores, as crocodiles are immune to such.

Unlike Nile crocodile that reveals a range of uses and supporting values, puff adders are strictly associated with preparing curses designed to inflict harm and death. Given their negative associations, it is little wonder vendors rarely speak of them. To do so would draw attention to the fact that they deal in items used to supernaturally assault and murder others. Point in fact; a colleague of Kara's was arrested for publicly claiming he killed another person via supernatural means.

While vendors do not highlight puff adders as a highly valued species, incidents of its sale suggest otherwise. Moreover, all large-scale vendors regularly stocked puff adder, belying its frequent use. In speaking with Malian clients who purchased puff adder, both men and women described the species (specifically its head) as closely associated with causing pain and/or death. For example, a Malian woman bought the dried head of a puff adder as a key ingredient in preparing a curse to place on her husband who she believed was unfaithful. According to the client, once the curse was prepared and applied to her husband, "if he sleeps with another woman his penis will burn!" In this case, the client underscores the value of puff adder in its ability to "burn" her husband (in a very sensitive place) if he strays from the path of fidelity.

Similarly, a young Malian man purchased a dried puff adder head as an element in a curse he was preparing for his rival. Being a member of a gang called "*Cite Boyz*" (pronounced: City Boys), the client had been humiliated by a rival gang member. Apparently, the client was publicly insulted to such a degree he felt obligated to seek out a local practitioner to extract revenge in the form of a curse. From what the client explained, the curse would essentially transfer the pain of a puff adder bite to the tongue of his rival. Interestingly, the client explained that the pain of the curse would dissipate

over a couple of days, suggesting he meant no permanent affliction, but rather a temporary condition as a form of retribution.

While the previous examples highlight puff adder as being valued for its pain inducing attributes, it is also used in curses designed to take another's life. Case in point, while working with local practitioners, I encountered a man who was in an ongoing supernatural feud with another man. According to the client I spoke with, he claimed the other man had killed his son through the use of a local practitioner. To extract his revenge the client consulted with his own practitioner who prescribed a curse to take the life of his antagonist's son. Key to the preparation of the curse was the head of a freshly harvested puff adder (purchased from a large-scale APV).

While puff adders are closely associated with causing pain and in extreme cases death, patas monkeys are valued for their ability to cause the divorce or separation of one individual from another. However, patas monkeys are not alone, as vervet monkeys were described in similar ways. Furthermore, based on interviews with clients and local practitioners, both species of primate are strongly associated with their interaction with another animal: a "wild dog" (i.e., a feral dog). Specifically, Malians describe that when either a patas or vervet monkey encounter a "wild dog" they will try and exterminate it. Likewise, a "wild dog" is driven to kill patas and vervet monkeys. As Kara, a local practitioner explained: "When you put one with the other [patas and/or vervet with feral dog], only one will survive."

To further elucidate, consider the case of Safiatu, a Malian woman in her mid-twenties who contracted Kara to separate two people. Specifically, Safiatu expressed love for a man who was already married to another woman. Not wanting to share him,

Kara prepared two different medicines: one to cause the unknowing couple to divorce, and another to seduce the divorced man and cause him to marry Safiatu. Assured of Kara's abilities, Safiatu advanced 25,000 CFA to purchase ingredients for the two medicines¹.

Instructing me on which species and parts to buy from the *Marabagaw Yoro*, I gained insight into the preparation of “divorce medicine” and the associated values for the key species involved. In particular, the head of either a patas or vervet monkey is ritually prepared – in doing so it is wrapped in cotton sheeting inscribed with detailed instructions. These instructions are also spoken to the head as it is wrapped. In this case, the head of patas monkey was directed represent the man Safiatu loved. Likewise, the head of a feral dog was prepared and directed to represent the wife of the man Safiatu loved. However, the medicine is incomplete until both primate and dog packets are combined and wrapped with a third sheet, with written and spoken instructions, that forces the species, now representing a couple, to fight each other. Once prepared the large medicine packet is secretly buried, or hidden in the vicinity of the couple it is to separate.

While patas and vervet monkey are closely associated with “wild dogs” and derive value based on mutually exclusive attributes (i.e., neither species of primate can coexist with a feral dog), other species like spotted hyena, leopard, and lion are in a league of their own. Namely, vendors and clients consider hyena (spotted), leopard, and lion the most desirable species for the unique qualities they bring their consumers. Yet this is not supported by the incidents in which they were sold (see Table 34: Key species sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*). However, when one considers that APVs stock and sell

mimics of hyena, leopard, and lion one can begin to understand the disjuncture between what APVs and clients note as valued, and which species were actually sold. Support for this is seen in the fact that the principal mimics sold for hyena and leopard were civet and serval, the third and fifth most trafficked species, respectively. When combined with incidents of actual hyena and leopard being sold, a more complete image is presented, one where the value for these two species is underscored. In short, since clients are sold civet as “hyena,” and serval as “leopard,” they value them as such. As a result, when mimics for hyena and leopard are not treated as separate species, “hyena” becomes the second most traded species (n=42), while “leopard” gets ranked as third (n=36).

Lion follows suit, but is more difficult to rank as there are more mimics sold as “lion” than any other observed in the course of fieldwork. Some of the more common mimics sold as “lion” include cowhide, caracal, duiker, hartebeest, and domestic cat. Given the spectrum of species sold in place of lion, it suggests that lion is a highly valued species. Unfortunately, species like caracal, duiker, and hartebeest are specifically used as ingredients in preparing medicines, amulets, and curses based on their own associated values (i.e., not those of lions). Combine with this that not all clients are willing or able to share their intentions (i.e., I was only able to record a transaction, but was unable to interview the client, or they declined to speak with me) I am unable to provide a more accurate ranking for lion than what is presented in Table 34.

While the adjusted rank for lion may not be known, values associated with it, as well as with hyena and leopard, were readily offered by Malian men and women. For example, spotted hyena is valued as the species imbued with “*guardike*,” (luck, or good fortune). As described by several Malians, including hunters, middlemen, local

practitioners, and clients, there is no other animal like the hyena. In particular, hyena is recognized as being intelligent, able to travel great distances, and able to eat anything. Such attributes help to ensure that hyena is able to eat everyday, a statement to its good fortune. As noted by Wara, a large-scale vendor, “hyena is luck because they never go hungry.” For instance, a male client purchased some hyena hide from Wara to complete an amulet to enhance an individual’s ability to “find money.” Another male client bought a foreleg of a hyena to prepare a medicine to bring him good fortune in his business travels. Similarly, a Malian woman I met through a local practitioner, purchased hyena (its fat), as an ingredient to a medicine designed to would attract a “good man,” ostensibly for marriage. Another woman purchased hyena to help prepare a medicine to increase her fecundity. Perhaps the greatest statement to the value of hyena is that many vendors (and their apprentices) carry a hyena-based amulet to enhance their chances at “finding money.”

With regard to leopard, clients noted that the species was highly secretive and able to disappear. Based on these characteristics, male and female clients described uses and supporting values for leopard. For example, a member of an all male secret society closely associated with the practice of hunting, purchased leopard hide as an ingredient to an amulet to provide him increased stealth. Another male client related that he bought the head of a leopard as an ingredient to a power object that would allow him to become invisible. Other clients who purchased leopard noted it helped maintain secrets. For example, a Malian woman bought leopard hide as an ingredient to a medicine to keep others from identifying her as the originator of a curse placed on another woman. In short, the client drew on the leopard’s ability to make her past actions “invisible” to

others. Similarly, another woman I met through a local practitioner, purchased leopard hide from an APV to make a medicine to help conceal her relationship with a married man.

In contrast to hyena and leopard, lion is closely associated with domination and control over others. For example, a male Malian politician in his late-forties contracted a local practitioner to prepare him a “fierce eyes” medicine. Key to this medicine is the use of lion eyes. According to the practitioner, lions have the ability to stare their prey down. “They [lions] look at a deer [a colloquial term for any form of antelope], and it stands frozen – then the lion eats it,” explained the local practitioner. As such, the eyes of a lion are considered “fierce;” able to stop an animal in its tracks. Speaking with the politician, he described that he needed the medicine to help secure his position in the National Assembly (located adjacent to the *Marabagaw Yoro* where the ingredients to the client’s medicine were purchased). Apparently, other National Assembly members were displeased with the client’s activities in government and wanted him removed. “When I have the medicine, I will look at them [other Assembly members] and they will not be able to do anything but what I want,” related the client. Based on these associations, the client (and local practitioner) value lion for its ability to control others via “fierce eyes.”

In a similar example, a *Jeli* (traditional bard, village caller, keeper of tradition – see *Nyamakalaw*) purchased the esophagus of a lion to increase the power of his voice. In speaking with the *Jeli*, he explained that he used the “throat of a lion” like a funnel. Demonstrating he tilted his head back, held the esophagus to his lips, and mimed pouring liquid through, which he pretended to swallow. After his quick demonstration he described that he prepared a “tea” to pour through the lion throat. By pouring the “tea”

through the esophagus, the *Jeli* acquired the power of a lion's voice – a clear asset for an individual whose profession depends on their voice and ability to draw attention to their words.

While Malian men value lion for its ability to control and dominate others, so too do Malian women. Consider the case of *Madame Youma*, one of four women married to a single Malian man. Meeting *Madame Youma* while working with Kara, a local practitioner, I was closely involved in purchasing ingredients (from APVs) and preparing a medicine packet to secure her position as the primary wife. According to *Madame Youma*, she was the first to marry her husband, but when he married another woman, she needed “*fura*” and came to Kara. Each time her husband married another woman, *Madame Youma* returned to Kara to have more medicine made. Based on their accounts, Kara draws on lion parts (as well as other ingredients) in making medicines to help *Madame Youma* dominate her co-wives. “This medicine is very powerful,” explained Kara, “it makes others scared and they must do what you say.” Agreeing with Kara, *Madame Youma* shared, “the other wives are scared of me and do whatever I tell them.” Asking for an example, *Madame Youma* detailed how she told one of her co-wives to stop putting too much *foronto* (a type of Dutch-bonnet chili pepper) in the sauce when she cooked, even though their husband liked his food spicy. Once informed, *Madame Youma* claims her co-wife stopped including *foronto* whenever she cooked. As a result, the husband complained.

In another example, *Madame Youma* described how her medicine allowed her to dictate the “sleeping schedule,” or plan of sexual intercourse between husband and multiple wives. “I told them [the other wives] that I was the first wife, so I get to sleep

with him first each week.” Normally, from what other Malian women in polygynous relationships shared with me, new wives tend to dominate a husband’s attention. As a result first wives are often marginalized in the sleeping schedule; some to the point that they complain about not having sex for months. Given this tendency, *Madame Youma* underscores her value of lion in its ability to instill fear in her co-wives, thus dominating the relationship. Given these associations, *Madame Youma*’s medicine is reminiscent of the previous example of a politician’s “fierce eyes;” both highlight control over others through the unique attributes of lions, but to varying degrees.

In reviewing the multitude of uses and associated values for the fifteen key species sold in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, Malians highlight some significant themes. In particular, both Malian men and women purchase these key species to make medicines (often at the direction of a local practitioner) to address physical, social, economic, political, and supernatural issues. From treating joint pain and a variety of sexual problems to rectifying social injustice and maintaining status; from financial gain and attracting luck in all forms to executing political agendas; from directing and manipulating supernatural forces to guarding against them; the species sold by APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro* are used to address real-world problems in a culturally acceptable manner.

Foreign Clientele

In contrast to Malian clientele who represent roughly 85% (n=198) of wildlife consumers in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, foreigners are a rarity representing 15% (n=35) of observed transactions. While not the primary clientele of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, foreigners are a

diverse group of consumers comprised of two subcategories: tourists, and expatriates. Moreover, as one would expect, these subcategories are comprised of women and men from around the world (see Table 35: Summary data for foreign clientele, and Table 36: Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region).

Table 35: Summary data for foreign clientele.

	Tourists		Expatriates		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Large-scale APV	3	2	24	3	32
Small-scale APV	1	-	2	-	3
Total per Category	4	2	26	3	35
Combined Total	6		29		

Table 36: Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region.

Geographic Region	Country of Origin	Expatriate		Tourist		Stall Type		Actors per Region
		M	F	M	F	L	S	
Africa	Burkina Faso	1	-	-	-	1	-	12
	Cameroon	1	-	-	-	1	-	
	Côte d'Ivoire	1	-	-	-	1	-	
	Liberia	2	-	-	-	-	2	
	Mauritania	1	-	-	-	1	-	
	Morocco	2	1	-	-	3	-	
	Senegal	3	-	-	-	3	-	
Asia	China	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Europe	France	-	-	-	2	2	-	3
	Spain	-	-	1	-	-	1	
North America	United States of America	4	2	3	-	9	-	9
Oceania	Australia	4	-	-	-	4	-	4
Unknown	Anonymous "Arab men"	6	-	-	-	6	-	6
Total per Category	12+	26	3	4	2	32	3	35
Combined Total	-	29		6		35		-
Key:								
M = Male			L = Large-scale APV Stall					
F = Female			S = Small-scale APV Stall					

In the sections that follow I outline and describe the subcategories of tourists and expatriates. I first address expatriates and their associated patterns, then those related to tourists. In doing so, I provide ethnographic examples to help contextualize their wildlife consumption and supporting values.

Expatriates are the largest subcategory of foreigners to purchase wildlife parts from APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Unlike Malians, expatriates are individuals who come from another country (see Table 36: Detailed data for foreign clientele by geographic region) and spend an extended period of time in Mali (i.e., more than a couple of months). Specifically, 82.86% (n=29) of foreign clientele were identified as expatriates. However, this figure masks the fact that 89.66% (n=26) of expatriates were men, while only 10.44% (n=3) were women. Such a statistic highlights that male expatriates are the principal foreign consumers of wildlife in the market. Moreover, the category of expatriate shows a clear preference for purchasing wildlife parts from large-scale APVs (n=27), rather than small-scale APVs (n=2).

In reviewing Table 36, it is seen that expatriate clients of the *Marabagaw Yoro* come from at least twelve different countries, from four regions of the world. In particular, 41.38% (n=12) of expatriates came from African countries, 20.69% (n=6) were from North America, 13.79% (n=4) were from Oceania, and 3.45% (n=1) came from Asia. Interestingly, another 20.69% of expatriates were unknown, but APVs referred to them as “Arab men,” a Malian colloquialism for any male that appears to be “Arab.” Such local descriptions are supported in that “Arab men” typically speak a form of Arabic. For example, clients that I interviewed from Mauritania and Morocco were described as “Arab men” by the vendors that served them – it was only by speaking with

such men that I was able to discern their countries of origin. Thus, those described as “Arab men,” I was able to observe, but not interview.

Expatriates from African countries including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, and Senegal highlighted wildlife uses and supporting values for several species. In particular, expatriate clients highlighted that they desired hyena (all types), leopard, lion, snakes, raptors, and a variety of primates. Furthermore, African expatriates presented uses and values similar to those shared by Malian clients of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. However, given the tendency of vendors to sell mimics of valued species to unknowing clients, expatriates are prime candidates to *nanbara* (take advantage of). As a result, some expatriates purchased the item(s) they sought, while others paid for facsimiles.

For example, a man from Cameroon purchased the head of a stripped hyena from a large-scale APV for 40,000 CFA. At the same time he purchased the foot of a leopard for 22,000 CFA. In speaking with the man, he related that both the hyena head and leopard foot were to be used to make a “powerful medicine” to bring him luck in his business ventures as well as hide them from unwelcome eyes. Being a player in the informal economy, the client traded in a variety of illicit commodities like drugs, counterfeit currency, and copying CDs to sell. According to the client, he consulted with a local practitioner who advised a special medicine to help conceal his activities as well as bring him good fortune in his endeavors. Given that the Cameroonian client worked through a local practitioner, he highlights wildlife values akin to what Malians note. Specifically, leopard is associated with stealth and concealment, while hyena is linked to good fortune.

In contrast to the Cameroonian expatriate, a Senegalese expatriate purchased the nose of a jackal as “hyena nose,” serval hide as “leopard,” and caracal hide as “lion.” Adding other items, the client paid for a piece of rock python hide, a dried chameleon, as well as piece of river otter hide. Speaking with the client, I learned that he was preparing a medicine to protect him from *djinn* (bush devils, spirits) through the direction of a local marabou. “It [the medicine] will protect me from *djinn*,” said the client. From what I gathered, as long as the medicine was kept buried in a secret location, it would attract any *djinn* that wished harm to the client, much like how metal is drawn to a magnet. Similar medicines were noted in interviews with local practitioners and other Malians, highlighting comparable species and supporting values.

Other African expatriates who purchased hyena, leopard, lion, and/or their mimics include men from Mauritania, and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as a woman from Morocco. However, some present new values, not seen among other clients. The expatriate from Mauritania is an excellent example because he highlights live hyenas as highly valued, much like Malians (see Nanbara and the Art of Finding Money in the *Marabagaw Yoro*). Yet, at the same time, the valuation is unique to the Mauritanian. Sitting with a large-scale APV, the Mauritanian approached and inquired about purchasing a live hyena. Using an extensive network of suppliers, the APV located a live hyena being held by a Malian. Paying 250,000 CFA for the animal (a spotted hyena), the Mauritanian explained in heavily accented French, “it will scare anyone who comes to my house.” Unlike Malians, who value hyena as “luck,” the Mauritanian seemed to place his value in the fear hyenas instill in others.

Another case of alternate values for African expatriate clients is seen in the case of a Moroccan woman who purchased the pelt of a serval, to make a “leopard rug.” Coming from the *Artisana*, the Moroccan woman explained to me in French that she wanted a leopard hide to make a rug to decorate her villa, but those for sale in the *Artisana* were far too expensive. Apparently her husband worked for a construction company doing work in Mali and they had relocated to Bamako for six months. Catching on to her situation, the APV I was with presented the Moroccan woman a large serval hide, telling her it was “the best leopard hide” he had. Accepting the serval pelt as leopard, the Moroccan woman paid the APV 50,000 CFA, and advised she would be back to buy more. Based on this, the Moroccan expatriate placed her value in the decorative qualities of “leopard” (i.e., serval), not its supernatural attributes. Such valuation is similar to that which was seen in the *Artisana* with regard to trophy species.

The next most frequent type of expatriate to purchase wildlife parts from APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro* are those from North America, specifically the United States of America. Two key themes are evident in the interactions between American expatriates and APVs: some purchase items as gifts, while others are in search of a cultural experience. For example, while sitting with Wara a group of Peace Corps volunteers (PCVs) approached. After giving them a quick tour and describing common associations for species like leopard, one of the volunteers asked to purchase a baboon paw. When I asked why, the PCV allowed that a relative back in the States would like it as a gift. “He [the volunteer’s relative] likes these sorts of things – he has a display case of crazy shit from around the world,” elucidated the natural resource management volunteer. Not

wanting to hinder an APV in their search for money, I helped fleece the unsuspecting American for 10,000 CFA (typically, a baboon paw sells for 2-3,000 CFA).

In contrast to American expatriates that purchased wildlife from APVs as gifts, others highlighted the cultural experience associated with the *Marabagaw Yoro*, and/or local practitioners as being of primary value. As such, the wildlife involved was valued as part of a larger experience. For instance, I met an American working for a development agency when he came across me in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. Quickly identifying each other as fellow countrymen, the expatriate asked about my research and was excited to learn that I worked with a local practitioner. Asking for a consultation with Kara, I introduced the two and let events take their course. After his consultation, Kara advised that the American make a sacrifice to help address some of the problems identified as well as have an amulet made to ensure he continues on the “good road.” Turning to me, the American development worker expressed how accurate Kara was in identifying his “problems.” “This is insane – how can he know that,” exclaimed the client.

After conducting the sacrifice and receiving his amulet, the American paid Kara 25,000 CFA for his services. He then thanked me profusely for allowing him to “experience the real Mali.” Such a statement underscores that the species involved in preparing the client’s amulet mattered little to him. Rather, wildlife was just one aspect of what the expatriate expected to encounter on his cultural experience. In fact, the American client seemed more enthralled with Kara’s divination skills than anything else.

Similar to American consumers, Australian expatriates highlighted values that support wildlife as a gift as well as a cultural experience. For example, while working

with a large-scale APV in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, two men entered the market and started taking pictures of vendors and their stalls. Paying each vendor a 1,000 CFA, the two men arrived at the stall I was working at and were happy to learn that I spoke English and Bamana. According to the two men, they were Australian engineers employed by a large gold mine in Mali. Hearing of the “Fetish Market,” the two men had decided to visit and see it for themselves. “You only hear about places like this,” explained one of the men, highlighting the “otherness” of the *Marabagaw Yoro* from the perspective of outsiders. The other noted, “it’s [the *Marabagaw Yoro*] like a voodoo pharmacy.” Fueled with myths and assumptions, the two men began quizzing me about the uses of species. After I described local uses for black cobra, the Australians began to laugh and make jokes about how the other was in need of it. Things progressed to the point that one asked how much for the “snake Viagra” and started pulling money out of his wallet. Seeing money to be made, the vendor told me to sell the Australians as much as I could. In the end, I sold each Australian the two cobra heads for 5,000 CFA apiece, earning the vendor a nice profit. Bagging their snakeheads, the Australian engineers discussed how they each planned to keep a cobra head as a memento of their experience in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. The other cobra heads would serve as “good gag” (joke gift) for their “mates back at the mine.” As a result, this example helps to illustrate that expatriate Australians place multiple values on wildlife. In particular, these Australians purchase wildlife as a keepsake of their time in the market as well as to give as gifts to co-workers.

Unlike previous examples of Australian and American expatriates, wildlife consumers from Asia highlight syncretism. For example, while working with a large-scale APV an Asian man approached and greeted us in broken French. While I was very

curious about this individual's presence in the market, the vendor gave no indication that it was unusual. After introducing myself and research to the unique client, he shared that he was from China and owned and operated a "traditional pharmacy" in downtown Bamako. Having seen a few Chinese "traditional pharmacies" in Bamako, it was clear that Malians valued their services in providing alternative treatments to local "problems."

In speaking with the client I learned that he depleted his supply of hyena and came to the *Marabagaw Yoro* to restock. Based on what the Chinese pharmacist shared he had previously purchased "birds, snakes, lions, leopards, and deer" from the *Marabagaw Yoro* to use in preparing medicines. While I desired to learn more from the Chinese client, he was guarded and declined to be more specific. As a result, I was able to document his purchase of a large stripped hyena head for 50,000 CFA, but gained no insight into the Chinese expatriate's specific uses of valued species. While limited, this example does highlight a degree of syncretism between "traditional Chinese medicine" and the *Marabagaw Yoro*. This is similar to how various Islamic practitioners purchase wildlife from the market to serve their individual ends.

In addition to expatriates that I was able to speak with and identify their country of origin, were those I could not. Labeled as "unknown," these six men were all described by the APVs who served them as "Arab" men. Furthermore, based on APV descriptions, "Arab" men were not tourists as they lived and worked at the "*Grand Mosque*" or the "Islamic cultural center." Moreover, APVs uniformly identified "Arab" men as members of Islamic secret societies.

In observing these six men, they purchased a wide variety of wildlife parts. Four examples stand out for the breadth of species they reveal. For instance, two "Arab" men

approached a large-scale APV stall and purchased a lion skull, an Egyptian vulture (whole), as well as three rock python heads. Another “Arab” man was recorded buying a large piece of leopard hide (about 30cm by 30cm), hyena scat, scales from a tree pangolin, as well as the horns of roan antelope. A third “Arab” man bought the head of a jackal (possibly a case of selling a mimic of hyena), a live hingeback tortoise, the head of a kingfisher, along with the skin of a puff adder. A fourth “Arab” man bought the broadest selection of wildlife for the category, including dried fresh water puffer fish, the talons of a large raptor (possibly an eagle or vulture), a whole black cobra, a handful of porcupine quills, a dried chameleon, the upper canine teeth from a hyena skull (type unknown), along with head of flying fox bat.

Unfortunately, I do not have any insight into the individual valuation of the species “Arab” men purchased do to my inability to communicate with these men. However, this does not mean that these examples are insignificant. Rather, the previous examples highlight some of the species that “anonymous Arab men” value. This is based on the assumption that none of these individuals would pay for something they did not value.

Interestingly, European expatriates were not observed purchasing wildlife from APVs of the *Marabagaw Yoro*. This stands out because several European friends of mine, which work for various NGOs and development agencies in Mali, have described their interactions in the market as well as with local practitioners who have prescribed them medicine (ostensibly to be bought from the *Marabagaw Yoro*). As such, I would have expected to encounter European expatriates purchasing wildlife from the market,

but did not. Rather, Europeans account for half (n=3) of all tourists who bought wildlife from the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Specifically, a total of six tourists purchased wildlife from APVs in the market, three of them were from Europe (two French women and one man from Spain). All other tourists (n=3) encountered buying wildlife were men from the United States. Moreover, all but one of these tourists highlighted wildlife as part of their cultural experience they had with a local practitioner. The only tourist who did not have an interaction with a local practitioner was an American observed purchasing cowhide as “lion hide” in an effort to make his own “amulet of protection.” In contrast to this unique case, most tourists approached APVs who then directed them to local-practitioners with whom the vendor had an established relationship.

For example Lucile, a French woman touring West Africa (Senegal, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire), sought out the *Marabagaw Yoro* based on what she read in her copy of “lonely Planet” (a guide book) and personal interest in “traditional medicine.” When she arrived and started asking questions, she was directed to a local practitioner named Sy. When Sy took Lucile to the *Marabagaw Yoro* to purchase ingredients for an amulet she paid him to make, I was able to speak with her. Being well acquainted with Sy, he introduced his client to me and I ended up selling her pieces of leopard, lion, and hyena hide. As explained by Lucile, “I really wanted some authentic African medicine.” As such she purchased the wildlife as part of her experience with Sy in an effort to fulfill personal goals.

Similarly, a Spanish man touring Mali used his guidebook to direct him to the *Marabagaw Yoro* in search of a cultural experience. Much like the previous example, an

APV (Wara) directed the Spaniard to a local practitioner. In this case it was Kara and I was working with him when Wara escorted the tourist to our “office.” After having a consultation in which Kara identified significant problems to be addressed, he prescribed medicine and directed me to take the Spaniard to the *Marabagaw Yoro* to purchase the necessary ingredients. Going to Wara because of his unique relationship with Kara, I aided the tourist in purchasing pieces of leopard, stripped hyena, and rock python hide, along with a dried Senegalese Coucal (a type of bird). Other ingredients came from Kara’s personal stock. Once all the ingredients were acquired, the tourist inquired if he could photograph his medicine being made. Agreeing that the tourist could take as many pictures as he wanted, as the medicine was for him, the Spaniard started snapping frame after frame. After several hours of preparation and pictures, the medicine was complete. According to Kara the medicine would protect the Spaniard from people who wished to do him harm (a key problem identified in the consultation) as well as bring him good fortune in his endeavors as a dentist in training. Before departing, the Spaniard expressed his “most sincere respect” providing him an experience he would “never forget.”

In summary, wildlife consumers of the *Marabagaw Yoro* express a wide range of values when it comes to the species they purchase. In fact the valuation of wildlife is relative to the consumer involved, their knowledge of animal parts, experience in the market, and specific intentions. This helps to explain the plethora of species sold by vendors. As Wara was fond of reminding me, “we need to find money.” To help achieve this goal APVs draw on an incredible variety of species (n=493) – some are what clients desire, while others are mimics. Based on conversations with Malian consumers, fifteen species were traded more regularly than others (see Table 34: Key species sold in the

Marabagaw Yoro). In addition to Malian clientele, foreign wildlife consumers highlighted a broad spectrum of wildlife values. Interestingly, many of the species purchased by expatriates were similar to those consumed by Malians, however, their uses varied. While some expatriates worked through local practitioners, underscoring their value for Malian practices and “traditional medicine,” others had their own ideas on how wildlife was to be used: from floor coverings, to gag gifts, to mementos. In contrast, most tourists who purchased wildlife from the *Marabagaw Yoro* did so as part of a cultural experience with a local practitioner.

Notes

ⁱ Note that I only discuss the first medicine as it exemplifies the valued interactions between patas or vervet monkey and feral dog.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STATE AND THE *MARABAGAW YORO*

As outlined in Chapter I, Mali has a National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) that restricts and/or prohibits the harvesting of various species. Similarly, Mali is a signatory to two international wildlife conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – largely informed by the World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) “Red List of threatened species.” As such, at the state level, Mali appears to be a nation invested in conserving their wild resources (see Supplemental File, it provides the legal status for each species traded). Yet, the fact that the *Marabagaw Yoro* operates across the street from the National Assembly and does not draw legal interest for the protected species it sells, suggests that the State values the market and the wildlife it traffics. Moreover, municipal police serve as rental agents for APVs and others working in the area.

As local-level representatives of the State, one would expect the municipal police to take action against those who sell or purchase protected species, as mandated by national legislation. Rather, municipal police, as previously outlined, help to maintain the peace in the market, while increasing their income by charging vendors a monthly fee to occupy a space to sell their wares from. Furthermore, all municipal police associated with the *Marabagaw Yoro* (n=5) carried medicine (*gris-gris*) that involved wildlife. Thus, local-level state agents help facilitate the market by renting space to APVs as well as value wildlife as ingredients to medicine.

While it is not surprising that municipal police officers reflect wildlife values similar to their kinsmen (i.e., Malian wildlife consumers), their practice of renting spaces in and around the parking lot that is the home of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, leads to a situation where upper-level state agents must respond. In short, municipal police do not limit the amount of spaces they rent, resulting in overcrowding. In response to the market and surrounding area becoming over-crowded (not to trade in protected species), the State takes action; they destroy vendor stalls. Roughly every three months when the market reaches critical mass, state police from the *Assemblée Nationale* raid the *Marabagaw Yoro* and surrounding area. During such raids, officers wear riot gear, complete with helmets, shields, and batons. They also carry with them axes and sledgehammers.

Starting around 7:00 am, an initial wave of state police sweeps through the market. The job of these officers is to inform the market that a raid will soon follow. It is an indicator for vendors to stop setting up, pack up their goods and leave. Those who do not will suffer the consequences. Vendors immediately start packing and leaving in droves. The sense of panic is palpable; people scramble to get out of the way of the coming carnage.

About 30 minutes after the initial announcement, the first “breakers” can be seen closing in. I call them “breakers” in description of their job; to destroy the stalls vendors have scrapped together. The breakers move slowly, smashing everything in their path and leave a trail of rubble in their wake. Vendors who have not vacated are in dire straits if caught by the oncoming troops. Officers might simply confiscate a vendor’s goods. To get them back the vendor must pay a “tax.” For example, a state police officer caught

a small-scale APV packing his goods and confiscated them. According to the vendor, “I had to pay 2,000 CFA to get it [his stock] back.”

Other times, officers arrest the vendor to extort money from them or their family. I know one vendor who was arrested and detained until his family could pay 10,000 CFA for his release. Other vendors readily hand over whatever money they have to save their livelihood. On rare occasion officers physically abuse vendors. From what I have gathered this is usually based on historic relationships between ethnic groups or a result of on-going conflicts between individuals.

Raids are particularly significant because they exemplify the power and authority of the State over the *Marabagaw Yoro*; a place with few restrictions, as seen in the business practices of those who work there (vendors and police alike). In another light, raids can be understood as a reaction to local police and vendors undermining state interests. In short, vendors do not pay taxes to the state for operating a business nor do they pay taxes on the profits they make. Similarly, municipal police who collect rent and facilitate the expansion of the market are not paying the state its due.

To address overcrowding and loss of funds from the informal arrangements between local police and vendors, the state cracks down by issuing a raid on the market and surrounding area. This action is normally directed from the *Assemblée Nationale*, a state institution located directly across the street from the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

The *Assemblée Nationale* is a large structure within a walled compound complete with an armed squad of elite police. These police are not like those that reside in the *Marabagaw Yoro*, who are municipal in jurisdiction and are responsible to the Mayor of Bamako. The officers assigned to the *Assemblée Nationale* are state police, a paramilitary

agency and enforcing arm of the State. In other words, the power and authority of the state police supersedes that of municipal police. In comparison to the state police, the municipal police of the *Marabagaw Yoro* should be understood as localized actors with limited powers. As such, local police have no authority to intervene when the state raids the market.

Because of their proximity to each other, the *Assemblée Nationale* serves as the eyes of the state, witness to the expansion of the market on a daily basis. When vendors become overcrowded, the *Assemblée Nationale* is uniquely positioned to respond and sends forth its elite state police to resolve the situation. However, other practices associated with the *Assemblée Nationale* (i.e., the State) reinforce the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

One day while sitting and chatting with an APV, a convoy of vehicles arrived at the *Assemblée Nationale*. On this occasion however, the dignitaries did not enter the *Assemblée Nationale*. They got out of their shiny, air-conditioned SUVs, and crossed the street to take a closer look at the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

In advance of the foreign men came the elite state police to ensure the security of the high profile visitors. Seeing the state police, the vendor I was with began packing to make a run for it; he undoubtedly thought the police were about to raid the market, as did I. Seeing us packing up, an officer shook his head at us. My colleague and I were very confused; were we about to be shaken down?! When he got closer, the officer advised us to stay where we were. When I asked why, he curtly explained that the Austrian prime minister (and entourage) were about to take a tour of the market.

I was blown away. Foreigners regularly visited the *Marabagaw Yoro* as tourists seeking traditional and authentic culture, but never had I heard or seen a foreign

politician requesting a tour of the market. Moreover, I was about to watch it all unfold before my very eyes!

Having established that a raid was not imminent, vendors and passersby became quite intrigued by the commotion and gathered around the Austrian prime minister. He and his entourage wandered from stall to stall looking at the various goods for sale; the police focused their efforts at keeping inquisitive Malians at bay. Each time the prime minister stopped to look at something he would ask what it was. This was then translated by an interpreter and directed to the vendor at hand.

To my horror, the congregation of people moved closer and closer to where I was sitting with my colleague. Though I was fascinated and excited by the events unfolding around me, I was not particularly interested in becoming mixed up in them. However, my feelings were of little consequence, and the next thing I knew I was the center of attention. Seeing me, an oddity in the market, the Austrian prime minister asked his interpreter to find out who and what I was doing in the market. After explaining that I was an American anthropologist conducting research on Malian wildlife use, the prime minister asked, “What is that,” pointing to a large bone in my colleague’s inventory. I explained that it was a femur of a hippo, known as *mali kolo*. Next he wanted to know what a large hide was and I explained that it was roan antelope, or *daje n’golo*. We went back and forth like this for several minutes, until the prime minister asked me “what is it all for?” Though I knew my answer was overly simplistic, I responded, “To make medicine.” “Does it work,” he wanted to know. The only thing I could say was, “for many it does.” Satisfied with my answers the prime minister left the market, and crossed the street back to the *Assemblée Nationale*, entourage and security in tow. After he left,

my associate jokingly asked me why I had not sold the prime minister any of the items he has asked about.

The example of the Austrian prime minister taking an impromptu tour of the *Marabagaw Yoro* highlights how the state will readily use the market to further its own ends; it is the job of the state to court other nations to assist in Mali's development. The result was that the prime minister was interested in the *Marabagaw Yoro* and the state had to acquiesce. This is in direct opposition to the state practice of raiding the market. Also in contrast to such practices is the fact that many who work in the *Assemblée Nationale* (state police, politicians, administrative staff, etc.) are regular customers and clients of local practitioners and APVs. The fact that so many public servants make use of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, directly or indirectly, is perhaps the greatest validation of the market and its associated practices.

Consider the case of Sako Dembele, the mayor of Fadalabougou, a moderately sized village located adjacent to the Guinea boarder in the Kayes region of western Mali. Sako came to Bamako to find Kara; he is a regular client of Kara's and has known him for over ten years. With an upcoming election, Sako was faced with the possibility of losing his political position, something he had worked hard to obtain, as well as hired Kara to help ensure. To secure his re-election, Sako went to Kara, who in turn made several medicines and performed multiple sacrifices to power objects to aid him. Kara's efforts were apparently successful as Sako was re-elected and gave a gift of 150,000 CFA in thanks.

Many local politicians retain local practitioners to assist in their political endeavors. However, practitioners do not work in a vacuum, they are intimately

connected to the *Marabagaw Yoro* and the goods they sell; without the market practitioners they would not be able to function. As such, public servants who use local practitioners are directly supporting the practices of the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

Other state representatives (i.e., police, administrative staff, other politicians) are found hidden amongst the general public who visit the *Marabagaw Yoro* in search of ingredients to medicine. Point in fact, I know two state police officers stationed at the *Assemblée Nationale*, who regularly purchase goods from Wara. Wara in turn knows an easy mark when he sees one and *nanbara*'s each when they come looking for medicine. Similarly, the secretary of a national judge is a repeat shopper at Wara's, dropping by every week to buy rock salt, and other small items. According to the secretary, "he [the judge] sends me to buy things ordered by his marabou."

These examples are significant as they help to outline how state agents value wildlife, not for their contribution to biodiversity as national law suggests, but as ingredients to medicine. Furthermore, the medicines used by public servants are directly associated with protection, achieving a higher social status, and/or maintaining the position they currently occupy. Sako explained to me how the medicines Kara prepared for him were instrumental to his success in the past: "I would never have won [a previous election] without his [Kara's] medicine."

Similarly, McIntyre, the *chef du poste*, or commanding officer, of the municipal police squad stationed on the periphery of the *Marabagaw Yoro*, relies on a dozen amulets (*gris-gris*) that help protect him from harm as well as advance his career. According to McIntyre, "this one [*gris-gris*] stops knives and bullets from hurting me." Another amulet McIntyre claims granted him the rank of lieutenant, "this one [*gris-gris*]

is to bring me luck in my work; more money, better rank, and it did,” exclaimed McIntyre. “Two weeks after I got it, I was promoted to lieutenant and made *chef du poste*,” said McIntyre. Moreover, even though McIntyre paid for these medicines when they were made, he continued to show his appreciation for them by making small gifts of gratitude to Kara, the local practitioner who prepared them. Such gifts included items McIntyre had confiscated from people in the market, like a pair of shoes, a belt, and cassette tapes.

The cases of Sako and McIntyre are prime examples of how the State, or agents of the State, are consumers of wildlife and value the *Marabagaw Yoro* for the ingredients it provides, as well as the services of local practitioners. At the same time, the State values the *Marabagaw Yoro* as a cultural attraction, allowing foreign dignitaries to tour it. Such practices highlight that the State is intimately involved in wildlife use, counter to national policy and international conservation efforts. These points are further discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation (Chapter XV – Where the Wild-Things Go).

CHAPTER XV

WHERE THE WILD-THINGS GO

The research presented in this dissertation expands scholarly understandings of globalization. By questioning the assumption that globalization occurs in a top-down, or core-to-periphery manner, with the West as the “Globalizer,” and the Rest as the “Globalized” (Wallerstein 2004), this research reveals local-global interactions as complex and intricate engagements between people and places. Specifically, I use wildlife use as a “lens” onto the diverse practices and values surrounding wildlife in two markets: the *Artisana*, and *Marabagaw Yoro*. While the *Artisana* is a state sponsored handicraft market that produces and sells wildlife goods, the *Marabagaw Yoro* is an informal “traditional medicine” market.

While many unidirectional and hierarchical models of globalization have been critiqued for their lack of complexity, international conservation is routinely presented as an exemplar of top-down interactions on a global scale (Brosius and Russell 2003; Brosius et al. 1998; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Neumann 2004). International conservation conventions like the CBD, CITES, and global organizations like the World Conservation Union (IUCN) often inform state conservation efforts and in so doing privilege species over people. Brosius describes this phenomenon as “global environmental governance,” (GEG) (1999). Kottak and Costa (1993) highlight the conflict that comes from privileging species over people in their exploration of conservation in Madagascar:

Many Malagasy intellectuals and officials are bemused and irritated that international groups seem more concerned about lemurs and other endangered species than about Madagascar’s people.... ‘The next time you come to

Madagascar, there'll be no more Malagasy. All the people will have starved to death, and a lemur will have to meet you at the airport,' (337).

Kottak and Costa's point is clear, local communities are marginalized (sometimes to the extreme) in favor of protecting species recognized as valuable by the West.

Turning to my research, I present a counter narrative to GEG and hierarchical models of globalization, where local actors negotiate a wide range of species to meet a wide range of demand. On the surface, Mali appears to fit the general model of GEG. Mali is a signatory to the CBD, CITES, and member of the World Conservation Union. As such, one would expect Mali to uphold a western conservation ethic by strictly controlling wildlife use. However, when it comes to Mali's actual wildlife practices, another side of Mali is seen: one where wildlife serves vital economic and medicinal needs for a wide range of people including Malians and foreigners. Specifically, the *Artisana* produces and sells wildlife goods made from 25 species (see Image 4: Leatherworker making a Nile crocodile handbag in the *Artisana*), whereas the *Marabagaw Yoro* brokers 493 species (part and whole) as ingredients to traditional medicine (see Image 5: Large-scale APV stocking his stall in the *Marabagaw Yoro*).



Image 4: Leatherworker making a Nile Crocodile handbag in the *Artisana*.



Image 5: Large-scale APV stocking his stall in the *Marabagaw Yoro*.

While these markets appear dissimilar and unrelated on the surface, they share more in common than not. To see this I have developed what I refer to as the Place, Peoples, and Values (PPV) framework. First and foremost, one must conceive of the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* as more than markets; they are sites of articulation. Drawing on place theory as outlined by Biersack (2003, 2006a, 2006b) and Dirlik (2001), as well as the work of Steiner (1994), markets are loci that facilitate the interaction of different people from disparate places. In addition, a healthy appreciation for human agency (Bourdieu 1990; Giddens 1976; Sahlins 1985; Ortner 1984, 1994) provides a means of perceiving and contextualizing relationships between different individuals. Thus, places (i.e., markets) are connected via people, who are arranged in social networks that circulate wildlife via rural, urban, national, and international flows of wildlife values. In so doing, market actors broker (i.e., negotiate) species to meet demands set forth by both Malian and foreign consumers in each market.

More specifically, market actors are arranged in social networks that span rural-urban as well as national and international spheres of influence – they engage each other and negotiable flows of knowledge that highlight wildlife as a resource to be used. Combining Appadurai’s notions of the commodity flows and the social aspects such items acquire through human practices (1986, 1996, 2001, 2002), with Tsing’s concept of “friction” (2000), highlights how wildlife ends up being used in the various ways it is in Mali. In Mali, wildlife is often perceived as a nuisance, or direct threat to well being. This is easily understood by the fact that crocodiles and hippos harass riverside communities, while cobras constantly seek out the cane rats that are undermining rural granaries. In response, Malians turn to what they know about the animal; it may be a

species valued in traditional medicine, or a species that is valued by foreigners for aesthetic reasons. When one lives on less than two dollars a day (HDR 2011), it is a very simple decision to harvest and sell readily available resources (i.e., wildlife) to improve ones financial situation. This is based on the argument that market actors are responding to demands created by local, national, and global spheres, as all consume wildlife to some degree.

Once the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* are conceived as sites of articulation, through the PPV framework, which reveals interactions between Malians and Others, further points in common are seen. In particular, both markets are supplied via they same system, the APT, and in so doing underscore rural-urban linkages. Similarly, both markets transform wildlife into a commodity based on individual and group knowledge and sell it to a wide range of consumers, highlighting local-global linkages. To do so, key actors in each market broker, or negotiate, wildlife to serve multiple demands simultaneously. As such, Malians are demonstrating their agency with regard to wildlife, despite national policy and international concern.

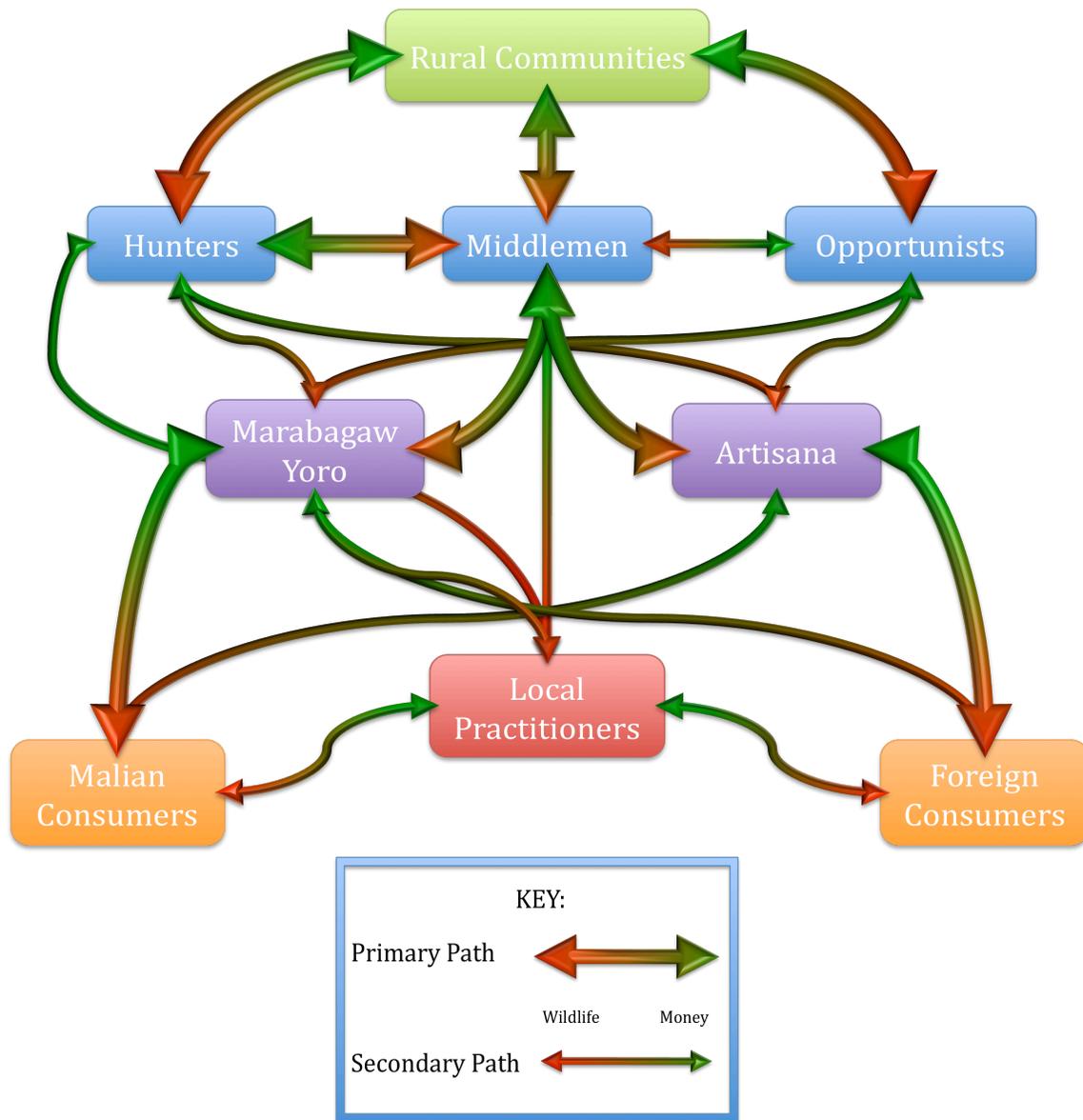
To elaborate, let me briefly summarize the APT. After doing so, I will provide a more complex model, complete with ethnographic narratives that highlight the roles of key actors, their interactions with others, and their supporting wildlife values. I then use my case study to illustrate wildlife flowing from the rural to urban environment and beyond – circulating through local, national, and global spheres in return for money. Lastly, I discuss some of the fundamental issues raised by my research that problematizes the concept of GEG and questions the efficacy of international conservation.

The APT is an informal, yet highly efficient system of supplying wildlife to the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* (see Figure 1: Key actors and places of the APT). Wildlife suppliers (blue), typically located in the rural environment, harvest, transport and sell wildlife to vendors in each market (purple). As a general rule of thumb, suppliers sell high quality hides and skins (i.e., those lacking blemishes) of 25 species recognized as desirable by vendors in the *Artisana*, and sell them for a premium. Poor quality hides; skins, and other parts of 493 species (including the same 25 species valued by the *Artisana*) are sold to vendors in the *Marabagaw Yoro* as ingredients to *fura*, or traditional medicine. Market vendors broker wildlife to meet the unique demands placed on the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro* by their diverse clientele. Drawing on the cultural practice of *nanbara*, or taking advantage of another person, vendors in either market readily sell mimics of valued species. Common examples include serval sold as “leopard,” and civet traded as “hyena.” Such practices are significant as they underscore market vendors as key actors who are in the position to acquire insight into the wants of their customers, and apply such knowledge in a way that allows them to replace a valued species with another; thus demonstrating their agency. Wildlife consumers (orange) include both Malians and foreigners for each market and emphasize vendors serving a wide range of demand, as well as exemplify local-global linkages.

While Figure 1 provides some insight into the basic relationships between actors and places associated with the APT, it is a simple model and does not reflect the complexity of the interactions involved. Similarly, Figure 1 fails to highlight the agency that certain individuals possess in their engagement with both Malian and foreign wildlife consumers. To address these issues I have developed a complex model of the APT that

illustrates primary and secondary paths by which wildlife is negotiated between actors and places (see Figure 2: A complex model of the APT).

Figure 2: A complex model of the APT.



Starting with hunters, while they do the vast majority of wildlife harvesting, they rarely sell directly to vendors in the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro*. Rather, suppliers (blue) like Fial, a professional middleman, are responsible for purchasing wildlife from rurally based hunters and transporting them to Bamako where they sell them to vendors in either the *Artisana* or *Marabagaw Yoro* based on where they will receive the greatest return on their investment (i.e., wildlife suppliers general rule of thumb). Based on Fial's practices it is clear that he primarily conceives of wildlife as an economic resource that needs to be converted into monetary form. Once converted, middlemen tend to reinvest their profits to further their own ends.

For example, Fial supplies the *Artisana* and *Marabagaw Yoro*. As luck would have it, I was able to accompany Fial as he sold his stock of wildlife parts comprised of 17 species that he purchased from rural hunters for 118,500 CFA (see Table 37: Fial's stock). Over the course of an afternoon, Fial sold most of his stock to three different large-scale APVs in the *Marabagaw Yoro* for a total of 152,750 CFA (see Table 38: Fial's sales to APVs). However, like Touré, Fial opted to sell certain parts to vendors in the *Artisana* (see Table 39: Fial's sales to *Artisana* vendors) given their quality and ability to fetch a premium. In particular, Fial sold three Black Cobra skins, two hippo tusks, five Rock Python skins, four Savannah Monitor hides, and three serval hides to three different vendors in the *Artisana* for a total of 68,500 CFA. Calculating the figures, Fial sold all his stock for 221,250 CFA, netting him a profit of 102,750 CFA. Regarding his proceeds, Fial explained that he planned to reinvest a portion in purchasing wildlife (to resell at a profit) and buy stock for his small boutique that serves his rural community.

Table 37: Fial's stock.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Part	#	Price Paid (CFA)
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	<i>Timba</i>	Paw	4	8,000
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	<i>Timba</i>	Head	1	5,000
Abbasinian Roller	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>	<i>Fangan Kujan</i>	Whole	1	2,000
Bell's Hingback Tortoise	<i>Kinixys belliana</i>	<i>Jukuru</i>	Live	1	2,000
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi Ma</i>	Head	3	1,500
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi Ma</i>	Skin	3	3,000
Black-Casqued Hornbill	<i>Ceratogymna atrata</i>	<i>Dibon</i>	Head	1	2,500
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	Hide	2	10,000
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	Horn	4	2,000
Civet	<i>civettictis civetta</i>	<i>Ba Gurun Guri</i>	Head	6	9,000
Civet	<i>civettictis civetta</i>	<i>Ba Gurun Guri</i>	Hide	6	15,000
Double-Spurred Francolin	<i>Francolinus bicalcaratus</i>	<i>Woloni</i>	Whole	1	1,000
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	<i>Mali</i>	Tusk	2	4,000
Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	<i>Wara B'le</i>	Head	2	3,000
Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	<i>Wara Blew</i>	Paw	4	2,000
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	<i>Dangalan</i>	Head	1	1,000
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	<i>Dangalan</i>	Skin	1	1,500
River Otter	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	<i>Ji Ulu</i>	Hide	1	5,000
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	Head	5	7,500
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	Skin	5	10,000
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	Head	4	2,000
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	Hide	4	8,000
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	<i>N'golo Kadi</i>	Hide	3	7,500
Violet Turaco	<i>Musophaga rossae</i>	<i>N'Kacho</i>	Head	2	2,000
Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Lay</i>	Head	2	4,000
Total					118,500

Table 38: Fial's sales to APVs.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Part	#	Sale Price (CFA)
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	<i>Timba</i>	Paw	4	14,000
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	<i>Timba</i>	Head	1	7,500
Abbasinian Roller	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>	<i>Fangan Kujan</i>	Whole	1	3,500
Bell's Hingeback Tortoise	<i>Kinixys belliana</i>	<i>Jukuru</i>	Live	1	4,000
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi Ma</i>	Head	3	2,250
Black-Casqued Hornbill	<i>Ceratogymna atrata</i>	<i>Dibon</i>	Head	1	4,000
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	Hide	2	20,000
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	<i>Mina</i>	Horn	4	3,000
Civet	<i>civettictis civetta</i>	<i>Ba Gurun Guri</i>	Head	6	15,000
Civet	<i>civettictis civetta</i>	<i>Ba Gurun Guri</i>	Hide	6	25,000
Double-Spurred Francolin	<i>Francolinus bicalcaratus</i>	<i>Woloni</i>	Whole	1	1,500
Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	<i>Wara B'le</i>	Head	2	6,000
Patas Monkey	<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>	<i>Wara B'le</i>	Paw	4	4,000
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	<i>Dangalan</i>	Head	1	1,500
Puff Adder	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	<i>Dangalan</i>	Skin	1	2,500
River Otter	<i>Aonyx capensis</i>	<i>Ji Ulu</i>	Hide	1	12,000
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	Head	5	10,000
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	Head	4	4,000
Violet Turaco	<i>Musophaga rossae</i>	<i>N'Kacho</i>	Head	2	5,000
Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	<i>Lay</i>	Head	2	8,000
Total					152,750

Table 39: Fial's sales to *Artisana* vendors.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bamana Name	Part	#	Price Paid (CFA)
Black Cobra	<i>Naja melanoleuca</i>	<i>Gorongu Fi Ma</i>	Skin	3	6,000
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	<i>Mali</i>	Tusk	2	10,000
Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	<i>Minea</i>	Skin	5	22,500
Savannah Monitor	<i>Varanus exanthematicus</i>	<i>Koro</i>	Hide	4	15,000
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	<i>N'golo Kadi</i>	Hide	3	15,000
Total					68,500

While middlemen like Fial specialize in supplying wildlife, market vendors (purple) specialize in selling wildlife (in part and whole) to a wide range of consumers (orange). For example, Wara and Diawarra are vendors who purchased stock from Fial, but work in different markets: Wara is a large-scale APV in the *Marabagaw Yoro* who purchased civet, whereas Diawarra is a leatherworker in the *Artisana* who bought serval. Tracing specific species that were sold to each vendor illustrates the roles and values of such actors as well as provides insight into how species are brokered to different types of consumers.

In the case of Wara who purchased the heads and hides of six civets, he did so based on his knowledge that they are mimics of a highly valued species: hyena. Associated with luck in the traditional pharmacopeia of Mali, hyena is one of the most sought after species in the *Marabagaw Yoro*. As such, Wara applies this insight in combination with the cultural practice of *nanbara* (to take advantage of another person). By doing so, Wara is able to sell civet as hyena to unknowing consumers. Key to successfully selling civet as hyena is the limited knowledge consumers possess regarding the species (i.e., they are not able to tell them apart in dismembered form) and the

authority the vendor demonstrates over his merchandise. In short, when Wara presents civet as hyena to a potential customer, he does so stressing that it is “the best hyena,” or “powerful hyena.” By presenting this initial information to the consumer, they are lulled into believing that civet is hyena and buy it as such.

Similarly, Diawarra purchased three serval hides knowing that he could sell them as leopard. To do so, Diawarra drew on his knowledge of consumers (i.e., their limited ability to identify similar looking species) and applied the concept of *nanbara* to successfully replace a highly valued species (leopard) with a non-valued species (serval). Just as Wara sells civet in dismembered form (i.e., heads are sold separate from hides), Diawarra follows suit, by transforming serval hide into wildlife goods, like a handbag, or one of six standardized wildlife commodities produced by the *Artisana*. One might argue that transforming a hide into a commodity further obscures the ability to identify the species used, as well as reinforces stereotypes. For example, when serval is converted into a handbag, it no longer resembles its natural state. Moreover, consumers of wildlife goods do not mention a desire for serval handbags, but rather leopard handbags. Given this discourse, a handbag that appears to be made of leopard, is made of leopard to the consumer because they do not conceive of a handbag being made of serval. Lastly, when Diawarra describes the serval handbag, as being made from “the highest quality leopard,” there is no doubt left in the consumer’s mind – it is a leopard handbag.

Based on their position as vendors, Wara and Diawarra are physically and socially situated to compile great insight into their clientele and mediate such knowledge to broker goods to meet consumer’s expectations. Christopher Steiner (1994) describes this process in detail in his exploration of the art trade in Cote d’Ivoire. In my case, the same

applies, but with a focus on wildlife. Specifically, I use the concept of wildlife brokerage to describe this reiterative process, which defines (and redefines) what type of goods are sold and to whom. Such practices are significant as they demonstrate the agency of market vendors in their engagement with Malian and foreign consumers, stressing the key role they play in local-global interaction.

While market vendors like Wara and Diawarra broker species to meet a wide range of demand, Malian and foreign consumers (orange) visit either market to fulfill different needs. With regard to the *Marabagaw Yoro*, some Malians and foreigners visit the market to purchase ingredients to medicine based on their own knowledge. Others consult a local practitioner (red) who then prescribes wildlife to be used in making medicine to address the client's issue(s). For example, a Malian man purchased a small piece of civet hide as hyena from Wara. In speaking with the man, he described how he was preparing a “*guardike*,” or luck, amulet based on his family's traditions. Similarly, a Senegalese expatriate living and working in Mali, consulted a local practitioner and was prescribed Stripped hyena hide along with other ingredients to make a medicine to increase his financial opportunities. When he visited the *Marabagaw Yoro*, the Senegalese man purchased some civet hide as “Stripped hyena” from Wara. These examples are significant as they underscore that some African expatriates share similar wildlife values as Malians, drawing on the *Marabagaw Yoro* to satisfy their traditional medicinal needs.

At the same time, the *Marabagaw Yoro* serves more than traditional medicinal needs for other foreigners. While the following examples do not involve civet, they do illustrate the unique demands western expatriates and tourists place on the *Marabagaw*

Yoro and how vendors and other associated individuals (i.e., local practitioners) readily serve them. In particular, western tourists and expatriates emphasize a desire for cultural experiences, gifts, and mementos. For example, an American PCV purchased a baboon paw as a gift for one of his relatives who collected unusual objects. In another case, an American development worker described his appreciation for experiencing “the real Mali,” after having a consultation with a local practitioner and purchasing wildlife from the *Marabagaw Yoro*. In addition to selling foreigners wildlife parts for various reasons, *Marabagaw Yoro* vendors also sell images of themselves, their stalls, and wares.

Turning to the *Artisana* and the example of serval, Malians and foreigners often purchase goods made from it under the guise that it is leopard. For Malians, particularly women, their interest in leopard (and its mimics) stems from the fact that it is a socio-economic indicator and thus displays their status. For example, in Chapter VII, the wife of a national administrator purchased a pair of serval heels trimmed with caracal fur as “leopard heels trimmed with lion.” Moreover, the customer individually selected the various materials (i.e., species) with which they were made. According to the customer, she felt “leopard” (serval) and “lion” (caracal) were the most “exotic” species and she paid a premium for them. Such opportunities are not available to all Malians, only those who have the financial means.

The same is true for Malian men with other species that have been converted into wildlife goods. A great example of this is seen in Malian businessmen who purchase bags, wallets, and shoes out of Nile crocodile and rock python, proudly displaying them as symbols of their social rank. For instance, a Malian businessman custom ordered a combination laptop-briefcase made of Nile crocodile, after a fellow businessman had

mocked him for his old briefcase. In selecting what species he desired, the businessman opted for Nile crocodile because it cost more than Rock python, stressing the object as a socio-economic marker.

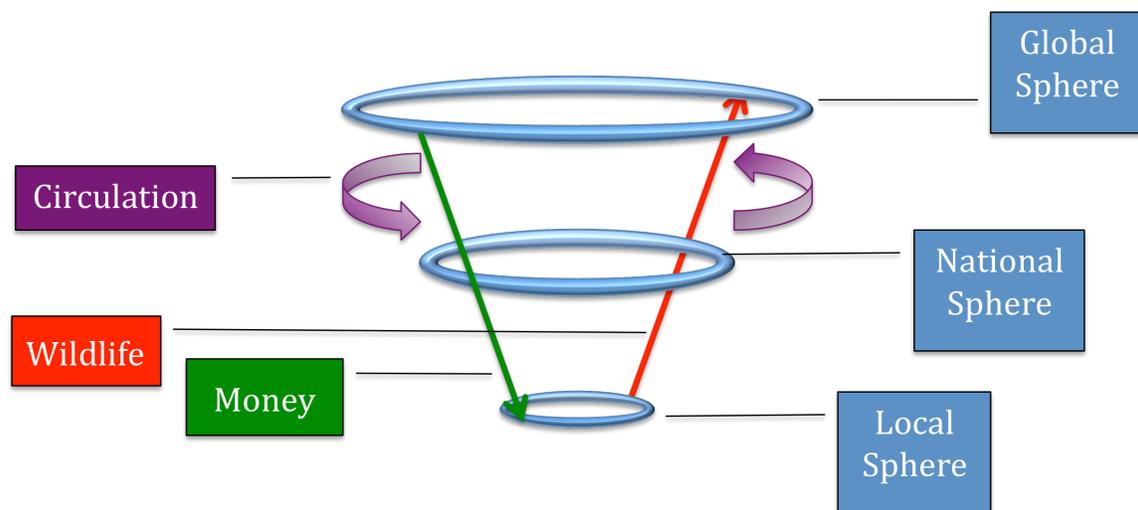
Foreigners who purchase wildlife goods from the *Artisana* tend to do so as gifts, mementos, and/or items symbolic of traditional Malian crafts. For example, a young couple from the United Kingdom touring Mali purchased several wildlife commodities, highlighting them as “traditional” crafts. According to the husband, the Rock python wallet he bought was made the same way by Malians “hundreds of years ago.” While attracted to their purchases based on the perception they were “traditional,” the couple described their purchases as mementos of their time in Mali, as well as gifts for family and friends. Similarly, a French tourist purchased a serval-trimmed purse (sold as leopard) as a gift for his wife, emphasizing the object as “a real leopard bag from Africa.”

From these examples, the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* are highlighted as key sites that facilitate the engagement of different people from different places. In short, the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* show “where the wild-things go” through their reflection of rural-urban and local-global linkages. Furthermore, these examples demonstrate the agency of Malian actors and reveal how wildlife circulates out of Mali in return for money (see Figure 3: Wildlife in circulation). In the local sphere, middlemen like Fial know the demand that exists for wildlife and supply it to vendors in both markets to make a living. He does this by traversing between rural areas and urban centers, each with their own general set of wildlife values.

In turn, vendors like Wara and Diawarra, located at key sites of friction (Tsing 2000) – the *Marabagaw Yoro* and *Artisana* – resell the wildlife to a wide range of

consumers stressing connections between the National and Global spheres. Specifically, affluent Malians as well as some associated with state agencies draw on wildlife goods as socio-economic indicators and circulate in the National sphere. At the same time, foreigners who purchase wildlife from either market circulate beyond Mali in the global sphere (see Figure 3: Wildlife in Circulation).

Figure 3: Wildlife in circulation.



Counter to the hierarchical model of GEG, Figure 3 reveals multidirectional and complex relationships between a myriad of people. Key among the themes encountered is that the various actors involved, bestow a social life to the wild-things they trade. Specifically, shared values define the social channels through which wildlife and money flow in a reciprocal action. New wildlife uses and supporting values happen through the creative process of “friction,” where differences allow for innovation. This is best exemplified in the practices (i.e., *nanbara*) of market vendors who are physically and

socially positioned to gain insight into consumer wants, and apply it toward their own ends.

Given the relationships that surround wildlife use in Mali, this case study not only critiques top-down models of globalization, like GEG, but also problematizes the notion of international conservation in general. To put it in a nutshell, how can wildlife be protected and/or conserved while it serves as a basic economic and medicinal resource for millions of people? Imposing policy is clearly ineffective. As this case study shows, wildlife use is ingrained in the social, economic, and political fabric of Mali. Moreover, it is hard to ignore that westerners are key consumers of wildlife, particularly within the *Artisana*. Their consumption of wildlife goods highlights a disjuncture between Western ideals (i.e., wildlife conservation) and reality. In the words of an *Artisana* vendor, “if you [westerners] do not want them [wildlife goods], you will not buy them.” By saying so, the vendor stresses the inherent hypocrisy of the west; if the west wants to protect species, it will not create a demand for them at the same time.

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