The Destruction of Mali's Cultural Heritage:
Unveiling 'Shadow Powers' in the Analysis of Looting During Modern Warfare

Fionndwyfar Colton
University of Victoria

Abstract

In Mali, and throughout West Africa, ongoing illicit trafficking movements and violent conflicts have necessitated a call for new protective measures and policies to protect cultural heritage. Traditional strategies of customs regulation and restriction on the antiquities market have been previously based on economic and legal issues enmeshed in trafficking networks and transnational crime processes. However, these do not reflect the realities of Malian daily life, nor do they go beyond the one-dimensional stance framing the actions of looters and traffickers as a facet of these processes. What is ignored are the underlying motivations for looting and illicit antiquities trafficking and how these motivations are affected by, and enacted through, the ever shifting socio-political climate that has been Mali's system of government since its independence from the French Sudan in 1960. This paper explores the realities of looting throughout Mali, ongoing debates concerning the representation of Malian antiquities in the transnational art trade, and the ways in which both national and international bodies have attempted to thwart ongoing heritage destruction.

Introduction

In the mid 1980s, a group of archaeologists published a series of articles concerning the illegal excavation of Terra Cotta statuettes from the Dogon area of Djenné in Southern Mali (Kouroupas 1995). For many, this was the first time they had been made aware of the problem of archaeological looting within Mali, despite the popularization and ever increasing presence of imported African art pieces to Western auction houses. With new forms of globalization taking hold, this issue was sensationalized in both academic and social spheres as part of pre-existing international crime networks, only made more plausible because of Mali's tenuous political circumstances. Roughly thirty years later, it is now widely recognized that the illicit trafficking of African antiquities is a major issue – one so disturbing that it has come to be termed as a type of 'cultural genocide' (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001; Panella 2014). Not only does the removal of these artifacts from their context have negative ramifications for the archaeological record, but also the active annihilation of these cultural relics equates to the eradication of unifying historical narratives that govern post-colonial social identities (Campbell 2013).

The role of globalization on the illicit antiquities trade seems to always be framed in terms of organized criminal networks, despite the fact that any connections between international criminal matrixes and illicit looting have never been substantiated (Campbell 2013; Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011; Alderman 2012). Meanwhile, those undertaking research into Malian culture and political movements place the destruction of archaeological sites and the looting of the antiquities therein as a natural

result of the conflicts which have been occurring throughout the Sub-Saharan region (Solomon 2013; MacGinty 2004). This duality of assumptions is so embedded in legal and political conversations that alternatives often remain unacknowledged by both academics and the media.

While there are attempts to delve deeper into the relationship between trafficking of antiquities and internal conflict regimes through investigations of border de-stabilization and structural crises (Cristiani and Fabiani 2013; Gearon 2013), these attempts do not fully explicate the complex and subtle intricacies of the different socio-cultural realities that occur in conflict regions. In fact, despite a proliferation of work on the subject of Mali, whether of its politics, archaeological heritage, or involvement in trade networks, there is a distinct lack of synthesis between the many individual factors that contribute to the problems of illicit looting within the area. What occurs instead is the production of two separate analyses – the systematic looting of artifacts for the art trade (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001), and the so-called 'inevitable' destruction of archaeological heritage during conflict – as if the two are both bounded and discrete situations.

Escalations in the looting and trafficking of Malian antiquities in recent years exemplifies the ineffectiveness of current legislation and protective measures, as well as the confinements that have historically structured research within this field – renewing the impetus for a more thorough examination of this contentious issue. Before there is any hope of a solution, there must be a greater understanding of the factors that are contributing to the problem. While economists, art historians, and political scientists often dominate debates over antiquities trafficking, these studies also ignore cultural, historical and contextual elements that produce the very complexities that impede their progress (Campbell 2013). These complexities, or 'shadow powers,' not only affect the efficacy of current legislative policies, but also the way in which acts of illicit looting and antiquities are framed in larger political discourses. Just as there is no single history to unravel, there can be no single objective understanding of this situation (Pollock 2008). Instead, what must be encouraged is a plurality of viewpoints and interpretations, even if they challenge traditional ontologies and epistemologies of archaeological fieldwork and theory.

Through the use of an interdisciplinary approach, the latent tensions that encompass this controversial issue can be brought to light, and several unresolved questions can be addressed. Namely, the types of socio-economic and cultural factors that are neglected in traditional schemas of antiquities trafficking, the applicability of current legislation in the face of these factors, and how new strategies for the protection of cultural heritage can better reflect the realities of looting in the Malian context. Furthermore, by applying an ethnographic approach to this highly controversial issue, I can move beyond a simple catalogue of archaeological materials or legislative repercussions – leading to a greater understanding of not only local realities of Malian looting and the networks implicated and employed in these systems of trafficking, but also the effects that economic and political shifts have on the trading, looting, and destruction of art and artifacts within a larger context. This article addresses these issues through a detailed analysis of the current looting problems within Mali and their socio-economic implications, followed by an exploration of proposed national and international cultural heritage protection strategies.

The Extent of the Problem

Archaeological surveys undertaken in 1991 found that out of 830 recognized *in situ* [1] archaeology sites, 45% had been illegally excavated (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001). [2] These sites, the majority of which are part of the Inner Niger Delta and Djenné/Dogon regions, epitomize the cultural heritage and legacy of ancient trans-Saharan trade, origins of several world religions, and unique 15th century Sudanic architecture (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001). Djenné in particular is comprised of literally hundreds of individual archaeological sites and thus the extent of its corresponding artifacts, whether excavated or *in situ,* is quite prolific. Having the second highest concentration of antiquities in all of Africa,[3] this region is home to countless irreplaceable artifacts from medieval terracotta statues, funerary jars, and scoria containing various precious metals. Unfortunately, these regions have also been sites for the bulk of looting historically – the demand for terra cottas and other antiquities being higher than ever in both European and American art markets.

Since the colonial and imperialist beginnings of globalization, foreign antiquities, particularly those coming out of the African 'motherland', have been coveted by Western collectors due to their exotic and eye-catching features. While many of these colonial tendencies have diminished, tendencies towards the demand for unconventional antiquities have remained and continue to be sustained through the acts of art dealers and smugglers who actively cultivate this desire (Hollowell 2006). This is only made easier by the focus on African art in museums, archaeological studies, and media outlets (Hollowell 2006). It is widely acknowledged that out of the hundreds of examples of terracotta figurines found in museums and private collections around the world, only 30 have been demonstrated to have come from documented archaeological excavations – establishing just how common and normalized these looting practices are (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000). In fact, demand for these artifacts was so high that throughout the 1960s and 1970s it is estimated that thousands of terracotta statues may have been removed from Djenné before archaeological excavation even began (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000).

In some ways, however, the decades of pillaging that has occurred in areas such as Djenné/Dogon, and the Inner Niger Delta region, is less of an issue than the smaller-scale looting which is taking place currently as part of cultural and religious appropriation. While these complex issues can certainly not

---

1 These in situ sites can refer to both partially excavated sites documented in the archaeological record or those sites whose corresponding artifacts are preserved in their original surroundings and context. This practice, while imperative for future research, makes these sites more susceptible to looting practices because of the high probability that valuable artifacts will still be present within them (Martens 2012).

2 It is important to note that these statistics may not reflect the extent of the current problem. The inherent clandestine nature of illicit trade makes it enormously difficult to quantify the degree of damage carried out at these sites, particularly because of the distance intermediaries maintain between themselves and the excavation process to obscure the illicit nature of their positions (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000).

3 Mali's rich archaeological history is only rivaled by the famous Valley of the Kings in Egypt – also the setting for rampant looting and plundering by both locals and imperial forces. Centuries of this practice have robbed the area of its history; forever destroyed contextual knowledge of ancient Egyptian practices, and filled the coffers of European museums and galleries (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000).

be fully withdrawn from the equation in the analysis of previous looting motivations, they were much further removed from the immediate discourse than they are now. And, while complex, the illicit trafficking supply chains adhered to an underlying structure of looters, intermediaries, foreign dealers, and collectors (Campbell 2013). This is not true, however, of recent looting which has occurred in northern regions of Mali in the cities of Kidal and Timbuktu.

Kidal is located in the northern Saharan desert region of Mali, and boasts several ancient Islamic centres. Traditionally home to Tuareg populations, recent uprisings have transformed this once thriving city to a liminal space constantly under contested claims by various troop movements in the area. As such, residents of the town have been uprooted from their homes, either to find temporary shelter elsewhere, or to subsist in a nomadic lifestyle. Opportunistic digging of portable antiquities carried out by residents before their relocation left the city a husk of what it once was (Hollowell 2006). Yet still, the religious centres, Sudanic clay architecture, collections of scriptures and teachings, and even petroglyphs that remain have been the target of intentional destruction by various groups in the claiming and reclaiming of the historical landscape. Furthermore, the organized expulsion of citizens or troops from the city not only prioritizes the past over the present, creating a situation in which Malian locals are further hostile to their government, but also emphasizes the value of artifacts that might possibly be within these areas (Bauer 2007-2008). While many citizens protested the destruction of religious architecture in both Kidal and Timbuktu, this was met with violent counteraction, ensuring that such actions were not repeated (Solomon 2013).

Conducting Illicit Excavation in a Fragile and Dynamic Socio-Economic Landscape

The looting of these sites cannot be understood in simple terms of art, economy, or conflict. And, while this growing issue requires research within a variety of fields, including law, cultural heritage management, archaeology, political science and economics, these fields are all largely based on statistical data. Thus, examinations of the patterns and networks of looting and illicit trafficking are made through the use of traditional economic and structural models in hopes of ascertaining the extent of the trade's financial impacts. What is ignored by this approach are the underlying motivations for looting by persons actually on the ground, who are often utterly removed from the art trade – and how they see their actions in the context of both global and local circumstances (Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011). As Campbell writes, "the exodus of cultural heritage from conflict areas and impoverished countries to wealthy countries is as much a cultural consideration as a financial or criminal one" (2013, 115). Despite emphasis on financial networks, art trade, and cultural terrorism, almost all looted archaeological sites at present are not the result of clandestine plundering, but rather excavated as part of local Malian subsistence strategies.

Hollowell defines subsistence digging as the undocumented excavation of materials for profit in order to support a subsistence lifestyle (2006). A small percentage of these finds are due to accidental discovery during shifting farming patterns in times of drought, and simply taken advantage of by those who come across them as a supplement to their agriculturally based income. More often,

however, this is a purposeful excavation to counter widespread economic insecurity, hunger, and disease (Alderman 2012). While the effects of such action are much the same as illegal looting, the nuances and complexities that come into play in the analysis of such actions affects its framing as licit vs. illicit, and has larger implications for how it is dealt with. Its very definition complicates ethical positions for those tasked with the protection of artifacts, and negates the negative connotations normally associated with acts of illicit trafficking of cultural materials, invoking a "discourse of self-determination and economic justice" (Hollowell 2006, 72).

Mali has an extremely high poverty rate, ranging from 64% as an average, to 92% in the town of Kidal (Solomon 2013). In light of these circumstances, as well as the increasingly violent conflicts that are affecting many Malian regions, citizens have taken up subsistence digging as a last resort. A lack of alternative economic opportunities coupled with the unstable nature of the nation at present does not afford Malian citizens legitimate avenues in which to conduct business. In fact, many see their looting as perfectly acceptable and legitimate due to the government's inability to provide them with social and political security (Hollowell 2006). In reaction, small percentages of the proceeds from looting are often funneled into community projects, glorifying the actions of individual looters and community leaders, and making their actions not only permissible, but fully licit by many local officials who themselves benefit from these projects (Bauer 2007-2008).

However, the disparities between source and market nations in this case are too great. The same economic disparities that motivate locals to excavate archaeological resources also allows for the trade in illicit cultural materials to flourish. Collectors of antiquities from market nations are often affluent members of society, allowing them to pay high premiums for looted artifacts – typically 100 times more than what the actual looter would have received (Alderman 2012). These profits are instead given to smugglers or intermediaries whose job is made increasingly easy due to Mali's ongoing conflict and lack of border control (Campbell 2013). Many of these disparities tend to be highlighted in economic analyses, placing what is in this case the Malian citizen into a position where they are simply thought of as a "victim of the global market" – exploited by larger markets, and devoid of any inherent agency they may have to influence these markets in their own way (Hollowell 2006, 78). This also shifts any blame to those on the market side of the system, in accordance with ethical and moral stances toward third and fourth world poverty struggles.

As artifacts are trafficked out of Mali, they are reconceptualized as either licit or illicit. This shift can be attributed to anything from shifting borders to evolving perspectives on economic justice (Layton and Wallace 2006; Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011). The idea of border control in Africa is almost impossible. Compared to other nations surrounding it, Mali's unstable government is actually an example of effective democracy – and there are no uniform policies or guidelines that govern movement between these nations. There is also nothing to suggest that stricter border regulations would help. Smugglers can simply claim artifacts as reproductions, and tourists bringing illicit antiquities back from vacation are often told by dealers to simply undervalue the merchandise. A general lack of education of the part of border police means that they often cannot tell a fake from the real thing, and a combination of corruption and lack of attentiveness means that while they may be perfectly aware of the rampant looting problem, they may not even open a crate of antiquities to

check what's inside, even if it is in clear sight (Passas and Bowman Proulx 2011; Campbell 2013). It is highly probable that smugglers, traffickers, and dealers are fully aware of the corruption of many border officials, as they have been previously linked to narco-trafficking networks, the region of Gao being a popular axis between Venezuelan smugglers and their European buyers (Solomon 2013; Bøås and Torheim 2013).

Whether licit or illicit, formally excavated or looted, fake or authentic, the way in which these objects are framed is equally as contentious as their provenance– the treatment of antiquities as cultural property results in a far different discourse than when they are framed as cultural commodities (Layton and Wallace 2006). The commodification of these materials is a familiar factor in their trade, determined by global markets and competition (Bauer 2007-2008). Once an artifact has been placed in a gallery, museum, or collector's shelf, it is no longer representative of its cultural associations, and no longer reflects the illegal process through which it was obtained, but rather is displayed as cultural capital (Campbell 2013). As an object of cultural capital these artifacts can continue to circulate in the art market for centuries, accumulating exchange value with each transaction – that never yields any further profit for Malian locals. Not only has their cultural heritage been eternally affected, but also the colonial and economic disparities that forced them into these situations are only increased (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000).

Looting Practices during Internecine Conflict: Global Impacts on Localized Discourses

The looting and trafficking in cultural materials is typically covered under an assortment of international legislations. As such, since the revelation that illicit antiquities trafficking was and would continue to be an ongoing problem in Mali, arguments have turned to traditional legislative strategies to narrow the field for the moment of illicit African art. Through either customs regulations monitoring the importation of illicit goods into new countries, or by placing heavier restrictions and penalties on the looting of cultural heritage sites (Bedaux and Rowlands 2001; Kila 2013). This section details the multi-variate approach towards cultural heritage protection within international and national communities, and the pitfalls that impede their implementation.

Some of the most recognizable legislative policies are those set out by international bodies such as the United Nations. These include the 1970 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and the 1954 Convention of the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, or Hague Convention. [4] Addressing similar concerns, these international decrees protect cultural heritage, especially during times of conflict, and provides for the "protection of monuments, cultural institutions and repositories…forbidding the export of

---

4 The Hague convention is often negated during internecine conflict. Originally created followed the historical war looting of colonial movements and World Wars, particularly the mass looting and art confiscation carried out by Hitler's Nazi Party, the articles throughout the convention do not fully extend to the different types of looting which occur when the problem is an internal one (Passas and Bowman Proulx 2011)

cultural material from occupied territories" (Brodie, Doole, Watson 2000, 56). Reflecting these initiatives, the majority of research consistently produced in terms of the antiquities market is concerned with the economic and legal issues that are enmeshed in their illicit art trade.

In recent years Mali has enacted its own national policies in light of increased archaeological destruction, including cultural missions in several historic cities such as Djenné, work on local museums, import and export restrictions on cultural materials, and cultural change programs (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000). For the most part, these policies started out as very successful – by focusing on locals and cultivating connections between the Malian populace and their history, archaeological sites gained new respect. Despite their best efforts, however, these methods of protection are completely ill equipped to deal with the problem at hand, and are often disregarded altogether as a consequence of political and social unrest, and a disengagement with global phenomenon. Several long-standing tensions, including Tuareg nationalism, the rise of Islamic practices, and post-colonial identities have coalesced in the past several years as an eruption of conflict and hostility (Solomon 2013; Cristiani and Fabiani 2013). Internecine conflicts, such as those that are occurring in Mali, also act as catalysts for social disintegration and the amplification of economic instabilities (Hollowell 2006; Bøås and Torheim 2013).

For a nation that only gained independence from the French Sudan in 1960, the inequalities and prejudice that often accompany colonial rule are still affecting collective attitudes – accentuated by recent occupations of French forces in an attempt to resolve the current internecine strife (Bøås and Torheim 2013). Starzmann, Pollock and Bernbeck address similar issues in their analysis of conflict looting, arguing that these situations are entrenched in a "nexus of archaeology, war, politics, and imperialism," following that:

> *Past experiences teach us that these problems are embedded in structures that outlast specific historical conflicts. Recent political developments result in a proliferation of antagonisms on a global scale, so that both specific examples and general reflections maybe of value as reminders of ethical-political struggles in present and potential future conflicts. (Starzmann, Pollock, and Bernbeck 2008, 354)*

It is clear here that neo-colonial tendencies of archaeologists and cultural heritage groups may exacerbate ongoing conflict in non-western territories (Pollock 2008). For instance, while the United States remains stalwart in the fight against illicit trafficking, histories of colonial thought continue to circulate within US/Malian relations and trade policy. These pitfalls reflect a disconnect between country-level governance and the realities of internal national systems and international cooperation— effectively paralyzing US policy, and indirectly contributing to continued structural violence in the area (Biel 2003; Pollock 2008; Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011)

Assumptions about the abilities of African and Near-East Asian populations to protect and conserve their own cultural heritage have been long debated, particularly when there is conflict occurring, or

may occur in the future. And, while unfounded, these assumptions are legitimized by each new act of looting which occurs during social or political upheaval. Ignoring the Anglo-European roots of war plundering, and the use of usurped treasures for colonial era commodity chains, scholars focus their attention upon the role of Malian politics and power dynamics in the context of cultural heritage destruction (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000). In doing so, long-running hostilities within Mali, largely based along ethnic and religious divides, can be cited as proof of an inability to properly govern and track their own cultural heritage. And, even after decades, internal conflict continues to plague Mali's landscape, and has dramatically escalated since 2012.[5] In the context of such violence, the burden of cultural heritage protection no longer falls solely on those enacting or enforcing legislation, but on the various groups involved in the conflict, and their ability to reconcile – both with each other and their histories (Pollock 2008; Solomon 2013).

The Right to History: But for Whom?

One important issue to raise is how socio-political and cultural factors impact the ethics of looting, and subsequently how these acts are framed as licit and not subject to international policy. As long as there is a desire for these artifacts, those selling them have no incentive to interrupt their business, regardless of whether it is licit/illicit/ or even legal (Bauer 2007-2008). The formal designation of many of these artifacts as 'world heritage' makes no difference once they are removed from their context and enter the grey market (Alderman 2012; Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011). As such, debates over ownership of the past, or the contextual artifacts that reflect that past, has been the topic of debate for centuries. In the past, the removal of these artifacts was a common practice, particularly during times of war, and as such looters gained a certain semblance of power over source nations. By removing ethnographic objects from their sites and original context, they were vulnerable to manipulation and misinterpretation by those unfamiliar with the culture (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000). This is one of the many reasons why archaeologists now will preserve archaeological relics *in situ*, despite the increased chance of vandalism to the site itself. More importantly, this possibility of misconception, and the inability for these source nations to materially trace their own traditions, accomplishments and cultural identity, has resulted in a universal understanding that the possession and inheritance of these artifacts is a fundamental human right (Brodie, Doole, Watson 2000; Bauer 2007-2008).

Such is the way that the problem of looting is typically argued in the archaeological sphere. This perspective has untold ramifications for the way that looting of these materials is termed as a licit activity. As discussed previously, the classification of an activity as licit or illicit is entirely dependent on spatial and temporal factors. It is also dependent on who is responsible, and the motivations behind their actions. The active destruction of archaeological sites for instance is thought of as exceedingly immoral, while the trafficking of materials from those same sites by either foreigners or locals is seen

---

5 On March 2012 the Malian military staged a political coup, and Touré was forced from office. Since then, internal conflict between the armed forces and Islamist Tuareg rebels has heightened, resulting in increased ethnic exclusion, poverty, and the elimination of central government control (Bøås and Torheim 2013; Cristiani and Fabiani 2013). Despite French occupation in 2013, fighting continues, and new acts of archaeological destruction and looting are undertaken every day.

as either illicit or licit based on situational conditions of each act (Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011). If the ownership of cultural heritage is a right, and not a privilege, is it then possible for subsistence looters, often excavating artifacts symbolizing their *own* cultural heritage, to argue for the legality of this practice? And who has the power to decide for or against these appropriations of culture?

In the past, this has fallen to the archaeologist. The privileged positions achieved during colonialism return in the way that Western powers seem above reproach, acting as some sort of 'world police'.[6] And, through the mandates of several archaeological bodies, notably the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the roles of archaeologists as caretakers and preservers of the archaeological record has been legitimized (Pollock 2008; Bauer 2007-2008). Following in this vein, arguments of the 'common good' are consistently coopted by those in the art world to sanction illegal acquisitions. Collectors aren't taking advantage of local populations or desecrating another culture's material record, they're rescuing these objects from a situation that would certainly lead to their destruction (Bauer 2007-2008). They are not exploiting individual looters, only providing them valuable income that they would have been denied by their unsupportive national governments (Bauer 2007-2008; Cristiani and Fabiani 2013).

If Western powers can argue that it is their right and responsibility to determine the legality of antiquities looting on the basis of world heritage management, can the same argument not be made by those taking part in subsistence digging strategies – it is their right to sell pieces of their own material culture as a means of livelihood (Hollowell 2006). This is an example of the 'economic justice argument' put forth by many activist archaeologists when confronted with debates over the licitness of subsistence digging. They argue that the ethic of economic justice "allows that under certain conditions of poverty or lack of other means of livelihood, people are justified in using archaeological goods as an economic resource," and that no artefacts or archaeological site should "come before concern for human life" (Hollowell 2006, 74)

Conclusion

The disparities and inequities present between source and market nations is a critical issue in the understanding of how looting is seen in local perspectives. In terms of economics, the percentage of profit gained by the actual looters is irrelevant in comparison to the multi-billion industry of illicit art trade that they are then bound up in (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000). Where economists and anthropologists seem to agree is that any possible solution will have to address the financial benefits of looting for Malian locals, and somehow propose alternative subsistence opportunities that are persuasive enough to convince locals to discontinue these illicit practices. What form these solutions might take is yet unknown, however the looting of these antiquities will inevitably come to a halt, if only because of the finite nature of cultural heritage as a resource (Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000; Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011).

---

6 While reflexivity and self-critique are main tenets of modern anthropological disciplines, the identification of ambiguous positioning in terms of archaeological research and the analyses of illicit antiquities is not easily expressed in policy mandates or ethical excavation procedures (Starzmann, Pollock, and Bernbeck 2008).

While traditional perspectives of looting and illicit trafficking have been based on dual assumptions of crime networks and cultural terrorism, there is little in the way of evidence that supports these views. Often this has been done through the use of network paradigms which track the movements of illicit antiquities in terms of the larger transnational crime processes that they may become involved in (Felhab-Brown and Forest 2012; Campbell 2013). However, any instances of these connections are due to globalization processes and new integrated market systems, rather than the nature of the illicit trade itself – again, not fully proven beyond circumstantial and anecdotal data (Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011). What is more palpable are the underlying socio-economic and political factors that motivate Malian locals to loot their own cultural heritage sites, from economic disparities, to internecine conflict, and post-colonial discourses.

In reality, the only networks that are implicated in the looting of Malian artifacts are the movements of Tuareg [7] fighters that underpinned the recent dispute. International spotlight and the movement of Tuareg rebels across borders have framed the current conflict as global, making allusions to the 'global jihad' (Bøås and Torheim 2013). Not only have the Tuareg minority long been supported by Gaddafi, the recently ousted Libyan leader but many Tuareg citizens worked within the Libyan government or as a part of Qadhafi's military guard (Solomon 2013). For these men, the fall of Gaddafi during the Arab spring movement propelled the return to traditional Taureg initiatives and partnership with the Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) (Cristiani and Fabiani 2013). Not only did this result in an almost instantaneous toppling of the Malian government, and violent annihilation of a large percentage of the presidential military, but in financial backing for the continuation of these atrocities (Solomon 2013). When Tuareg rebels returned to Mali, they brought with them large amounts of ammunition, and the profits from looted Libyan sites – enough that they could finance their previously impossible coup (Bøås and Torheim 2013).

It is clear that any possible solution to the archaeological destruction that is occurring must fully take into account both the socio-economic realities of Mali, as well as the current internecine conflict. Economic alternatives for Malian locals must be persuasive enough that they will cease subsistence digging altogether, and must be flexible enough to function during increased violent outbreaks and population movements. And, while not much can be done about the disparities occurring between Mali and a source nation and the Western art world, the one-way trade of both artifacts and monetary flow must be addressed.

Non-economically based solutions, such as the culture change models previously discussed, are at the mercy of these same socio-economic and political drawbacks, and thus must be amended in many of the same ways as government legislations. These policies, as well as any others put forth by Mali in the future may still be difficult to uphold in the context of a fragile social structure, leaving not much hope for a speedy improvement (Cristiani and Fabiani 2013). Attempts toward reconciliation

---

7 French colonialism diminished the Tuareg population almost entirely – at present, they make up just over 3% of the Malian population, entirely overshadowed by the other religious groups within Mali who were once their subjects (Bøås and Torheim 2013). With Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré in control of an increasingly autocratic government, Tuareg nationalists argued for the creation of the independent state Asawad, which, while being confined within Mali's national borders, would be governed by Tuareg militia leaders (Cristiani and Fabiani 2013:78; Solomon 2013).

must be made between both the different factions throughout Mali, and their history, so that these culture change models can make ground. While it may be easier, it should not be ignored that Tuareg rebels, despite their recent violent dealings, are a part of the Malian populace and have their own stake in its recovery (Bøås and Torheim 2013). What is most important at this point is that the Malian government and world leaders not attempt to solve this problem overnight, but rather address the underlying causes of the problem through realistic and legitimate goals that will improve local discourses on the issue (Passas and Bowman-Proulx 2011; Felhab-Brown and Forest 2012).

References

Alderman, K. "Honor Amongst Thieves: Organized Crime and the Illicit Antiquities Trade." *Indiana Law Review* 45.3 (2013): 602-627.

Bauer, A. "New Ways of Thinking About Cultural Property: A Critical Appraisal of the Antiquities Trade Debates." *Fordham International Law Journal* 31.1 (2007-2008): 690-724.

Bedaux, R. M. A., and Rowlands, M. "The Future of Mali's Past." *Antiquity* 75.1 (2001): 872-876.

Biel, R. "Imperialism and International Governance: the Case of US Policy Towards Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 30.95 (2003): 77-88.

Bøås, M, and Torheim, L.E. "The Trouble in Mali: Corruption, Collusion, Resistance." *Third World Quarterly* 34.7 (2013): 1279-1292.

Brodie, N., Doole, J. and P. Watson. *Stealing History: The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material*. Cambridge: The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2000.

Campbell, P. B. "The Illicit Antiquities Trade as a Transnational Criminal Network: Characterizing and Anticipating Trafficking of Cultural Heritage." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20.1 (2013): 113-153.

Cristiani, D. and Fabiani, R. "The Malian Crisis and its Actors." *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affair*s 48.3 (2013): 78-97.

Felhab-Brown, V. and Forest, J. J. F. "Political Violence and the Illicit Economies of West Africa." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24.5 (2012): 787-806.

Gearon, E. "Mali and the Middle East. Viable Solutions." *Middle East Policy* 20.3 (2013): 134-144.

Hollowell, J. "Moral Arguments on Subsistence Digging." *The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice*. Ed. Scarre, C. and Scarre, G. 69-96. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Kila, J. D, "Military Involvement in Cultural Property Protection as Part of Preventative Conservation." *Cultural Heritage in the Crosshairs: Protecting Cultural Property During Conflict*. Ed. Kila, J. and Zeidler, J. 9-50. Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013.

Kouroupas, M. P. "U.S. Efforts to Protect Cultural Property: Implementation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention." *Special Issue, "Protecting Mali's Cultural Heritage," African Arts* 28.1 (1995): 32-41.

Layton, R. and Wallace, G. "Is Culture a Commodity?" *The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice*. Ed. by Chris Scarre and Geoffrey Scarre. 46-68. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

MacGinty, R. "Looting in the Context of Violent Conflict: A Conceptualization and Typology." *Third World Quarterly* 25.5 (2004): 857-870.

Martens, V. V. "Guidelines for *In Situ* Preserved Archaeological Sites and Areas." *The European Archaeologist* 38.1 (2012): 61-62.

Panella, C. "Looters or Heroes? Production of Illegality and Memories of 'Looting' in Mali." *European Journal on Criminal Policy & Research* 20.1 (2014): 487-502.

Passas, N. and Bowman Proulx, B. "Overview of Crimes and Antiquities." *Crime in the Art and Antiquities World: Illegal Trafficking in Cultural Property*. Ed. Manacorda, S. and Chappell, D. 51-67. New York, NY: Springer Publishing, 2011.

Pollock, S. "Archaeology as a Means for Peace or a Source of Violence? An Introduction." *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 4.3 (2008): 356-366.

Solomon, H. "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan." *The RUSI Journal* 158.1 (2013): 12-19.

Starzmann, M. T., Pollock, S. and R. Bernbeck. "Imperial Inspections: Archaeology, War and Violence." *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 4.3 (2008): 353-355.