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Hunting for autochthony. A case study of privatization in wildlife conservation on the periphery of the "W" national park, Burkina Faso.

1. Privatizing the wildlife conservation in Burkina Faso

This paper scrutinizes the outcomes of privatization processes in wildlife conservation, outlined for the benefits of local development, as lived by the residents around the hunting concession of Tapoa Jerma in the Burkinabe periphery of park W. In contrast to the Integrated Conservation and Development Programs (ICDPs) of Southern Africa, the wildlife conservation programs in Burkina Faso seldom market wildlife through the breeding of game for bush meat sale. Rather, they promote trophy hunting tourism in concessions as a solid poverty reduction strategy for the benefits of the state, the local communities and private, Burkinabe entrepreneurs.

In the first part of this paper, I analyze the major shifts in the national wildlife policy of Burkina Faso since 1996, as well as its underlying, national and international driving forces. On the basis of a media- and legislation analysis, I highlight both the different actors involved in the contemporary wildlife management, and the pillars of contemporary nature conservation in Burkina Faso and many other developing countries.

Secondly, I present the principal discourses and practices of residents in the privatized, community-based nature conservation arena, through a case-study of the Tapoa Jerma hunting zone. This hunting zone neighbors the transnational and internationally reputed "W" park, where I have conducted an 18-month during anthropological fieldwork between January 2007 and December 2008. The W park is named "W" after the double bend of the Niger river which meanders through this park. The W park stretches over three countries, namely Burkina Faso, Niger and Benin, with a total surface of 1 030 200

ha. Between 2001 and 2008, the management of the W park was supported by the ECOPAS-program, *Programme Ecosystèmes Protégés en Afrique Soudano-Sahélienne*[1], "a project funded by the European Commission with more than 27 million Euros" in order to govern the park on a "regional" or transnational level (Kayorgo 2008). Currently, the ECOPAS-program is followed up by another big-scale, transnational project of the European Union, namely PAPE, *Programme d'Appui aux Parcs de l'Entente*[2], which intends to govern the whole WAP[3]-ecological complex. These significant international investments in the management of the W park are not surprising, since the park is recognized as a World Heritage Site; firstly as a Ramsar Wetland and secondly as a Biosphere Reserve (UNEP-WCMC 2008).

In a last part, I conclude on the effects of privatization in wildlife conservation regarding the complex interrelations between various groups of residents. For the privatization of wildlife management in Burkina Faso, and (inter)national conservation processes in general, have installed and reinforced exclusion on the basis of strangerhood in the periphery of park W.

1.1 The major wildlife policy reform of 1996

Since the major wildlife policy reform of 1996, aiming at the decentralization of environmental governance in Burkina Faso, the Burkinabe government has been forwarding a tripartite conservation system in which government officials (foresters), local communities (mainly rangers and CVGF-members) and private operators (concessionaries) jointly manage the country's wildlife. Therefore, the government has been adopting a range of new hunting regulations, determining obligatory taxes and exploitation licenses as well as guidelines for concessionaries and hunter guides, since 1996 (MECV 2005:9-10)[4]. Furthermore, in 1997, a new forestry code was adopted, on

[1] ECOPAS stands for Protected Ecosystems in Soudano-Sahelian Africa.
[2] *Programma d'Appui aux Parcs de l'Entente* may be translated as "Support Program for the Parks of Unity".
[3] WAP stands for the combination of the W park, the Arly park and the Pendjari park.
[4] Decree n° 96-061/PRES/PM/MEE/MATD/MEPF/MICA/MTT of 11 March 1996 stating the regulation of wildlife exploitation in Burkina Faso.
The Joint Decree n° 96-022/MEE/MICA/MEE of 23 December 1996 stating the determination of taxes, fees and rights of wildlife exploitation in Burkina Faso.
Decree n° 96-002/PRES/PM/MEE of 11 January 1996 on the creation of wildlife conservation units in Burkina Faso.

which the state forestry service currently bases its daily natural resource management and, as such, its wildlife management.

One of the decrees of 1996 divided the Burkinabe territory into 12 Wildlife Conservation Units (UCF: *Unités de Conservation de la Faune*), of which the "W" is one. The wildlife conservation unit of the W region comprises the W national park, the partial faunal reserve Kourtiagou, the hunting concession of Tapoa Jerma and all the village hunting zones in that area[5]. All wildlife conservation units are administered by a "management cell", which is responsible for "the management of nature reserves, the surveillance deterring poachers and other nature destroyers, the collection of ecological data for surveys, the control of slaughter quota for hunting tourism, the environmental education and training of actors, the support of actors in their quest for financial support, and the coordination of the management activities of partners"[6]. Because the management cells are not only responsible for the management of wildlife, the wildlife conservation units are currently called *Unités de Protection et de Conservation* (UPCs). Furthermore, each of the UPCs are attached to the *Direction National de Corps Paramilitaire des Eaux et Forêts (DNCPEF,* National Direction of the Paramilitary Corps of Waters and Forests) which functions under the ministry of environment. In situ, this means that the wildlife in the Burkinabe nature reserves is managed by paramilitary foresters.

1.1.1 Hunting concessions

The principal shift in the wildlife policy in 1996 was the recognition and creation of numerous hunting concessions in Burkina Faso. Territories which were already attracting hunter tourists got officially classified as wildlife hunting zones, while additional farming

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Decree n° 98-305/PRES/PM/MEE/MEF/MTT of 15 July 1998 on the regulation of wildlife management concessions and the activities of concessionaires and guides.
Decree n°2001-041/MEE/CAB of 27 October 2001 on the modification, attributions and operations of wildlife conservation units (UCF) in Burkina Faso.
Decree n°2001-051/MEE/SG/DGEF/DFC of 23 November 2001 on the composition of application forms for hunter's guide licenses and concessionary titles.
Decision n° 2004-08/MECV/SG/DGEF/DPRFC of 27 April 2004 on the deliverance of concession exploitation licenses for the hunting season 2003-2004.
Decree n° 2004-017/MECV of 7 July 2004 on the modalities of organization of the hunter's guide exam.
Decree n° 2004-018/MECV of 7 July 2004 on the conditions of the use of fire arms for hunting activities in Burkina Faso.

[5] See article 3, Arrêté n°2001-041/MEE/CAB.

[6] Article 6 in Arrêté n°2001-041/MEE/CAB.

and grazing land got degazetted as game reserves which could be dedicated to hunting tourism. All hunting concessions are envisioned as state-territory void from human inhabitation, in line with the policy for nature reserves in general in Burkina Faso (except for the silvi-pastoral reserve of the Sahel in Northern Burkina Faso). This led to resettlements of residents living in wildlife-rich territories to give way to the hunting concessions.

The hunting concessions are attributed through an *appel d'offre*s ("call for offers") by the weekly council of ministers. The council attributes these concessions to private owners of Burkinabe nationality (read: Burkinabe elite) for a period of five to ten years. However, the paramilitary foresters of the UPC stay in charge of the hunting concession and its management. They have to supervise the concessionary's wildlife management by means of a *cahier des charges* (script of charges), which determines the obligations of the concessionary. It specifies the minimal infrastructures he has to realize in his concession, and defines the governing principles of the relationships between the concessionary and the involved population. According to the forestry code of 1997[7], "the private operator shall (1.) invest financially in the valorization of his reserve through the construction of infrastructures for tourism, (2.) manage the fauna exploitation in his zone in cooperation with the local forestry administration office and (3.) contribute to local development through the payment of taxes and donation of bush meat to the local community". In brief, the concessionary is granted usufructuary rights to the state owned hunting zones in terms of wildlife exploitation, in exchange for a just repartition of the revenues among the concessionary, the state and the local communities.

1.1.2 Community participation in the Burkinabe wildlife management

Due to a lack of means, foresters in Burkina Faso have been relying on local auxiliaries for the implementation of the environmental legislations, since the creation of the forestry service during the late colonial period. The foresters' auxiliaries are locally called *pisteurs* (rangers) or (*gardes*) *forêts* (forest guards). They are the right hands of foresters, helping them with their daily job activities, although they are not on the payroll of the state any longer. Foresters highly depend on their *pisteurs* because *pisteurs* are village

[7] Article 160, section 2, chapter 3, title 2 in the National Forestry Code, 1997.

men who are acquainted with the local setting, while they are so-called "strangers". Burkinabe foresters are frequently perceived as strangers by other residents, because they do not serve in their region of origin (certainly in the beginning of their careers) and they are rotated to another forestry office every few years. It is part of public policy for government officials in Burkina Faso to be mandated in a different place after a certain period of duty. This is done in order to prevent corruption which is seen as lurking when they get integrated into the community.

To support the management of the W park in line with the contemporary ruling community-based conservation paradigms, the ECOPAS-program has seriously invested in local auxiliaries. Therefore, ECOPAS provided monthly salaries, bikes (for patrol) and military-looking uniforms in line with the foresters' uniforms for *pisteurs* or park rangers. The ECOPAS-supported park rangers' tasks are threefold; they go on surveillance missions to the reserves on a regular basis, they report to foresters on environmental offences, and they track for hunter tourists, scientists, ECOPAS-workers and foresters in the nature reserves. In brief, their designation in French, *pisteur*, is much more convenient than the word ranger to contain their multiple tasks, since the verb *pister* means both tracking and spying.

On top of this direct support of *pisteurs*, the ECOPAS-program supported the functioning of the forestry service around park W logistically; in terms of bags of rice, tin cans of sardines and tomatoes, money for petrol and ammunition for the guns, in order to be able to execute the surveillance properly. The enumerated material and pecuniary means were mainly given to 15 park rangers per forestry office of the UPC W. As there are three forestry offices at the entrances of the W park in Burkina Faso, a total of 45 park rangers were listed and paid by ECOPAS. Before the arrival of ECOPAS, however, only a couple of rangers were occasionally assisting the foresters of the UPC W, in exchange for rewards instead of a salary. Because of the exponentially increased means and opportunities provided by the ECOPAS-program, many more village men have tried to benefit from the conservation initiatives and have started to work as park rangers voluntarily (read: for gifts) in order to make some money[8].

[8] According to the residents of Tapoa Jerma, the ranger-team of the Tapoa Jerma forestry office comprises 28 men instead of 15, which is the number recorded by ECOPAS.

Other local auxiliaries who are a result of the major wildlife policy reform are the members of the village wildlife committees, called CVGFs (C*omité Villageois de Gestion de la Faune).* Village wildlife committees are perceived as "the third link of the tripartite partnership between state, concessionaries and communities in the co-management" of wildlife territories (GRAD 2004:58). In other words, CVGFs are the official, village-based structures that represent the communities in the tripartite wildlife management. The CVGF's involvement in the contemporary wildlife management is twofold. On the one hand, the CVGFs may exploit wildlife on their own village territory in ZOVICs (*Zone Villegeoise d'Intéret Cynégetique*) or village hunting zones. On the other hand, the CVGF-members are included in the state-led natural resource management in three ways. Firstly, CVGF-members are occasionally consulted by the state administrations and development organizations. Secondly, they are occasionally employed as working forces in actual management practices, for instance for the clearing of roads in the reserves or as *indicateurs* ("indicators") who report on environmental offences of other villagers (comparable to a task of the *pisteurs*). And thirdly, they receive the community part of the revenues from hunting tourism in the concessions, both in terms of taxes and bush meat (as mentioned above). According to the environmental legislation, three-quarter of the bush meat, shot in a hunting concession, is reserved for all village wildlife committees adjacent to the concession. The other quarter is for the hunters lodge itself. Of the taxes that the concessionary needs to pay to the state for his use of state territory and state-owned wildlife resources, 50% is reserved for the "community" and 50% for the state. Within this 50% for the community, 30% is provided directly to the village wildlife committees and 20% is provided to the forestry administration as a "management fund" (*Fonds d'Intérêt Collectif*, FIC) [9].

1.2 Hunting tourism as the lever to 'sustainable, local development'

Wildlife legislation has been flourishing since 1996, firstly because the Burkinabe government as well as some international institutions imagine wildlife tourism as cardinal for the 'sustainable development' of Burkina Faso and its local populations. After all, "wildlife is Burkina Faso's pre-eminent renewable resource to be dedicated to sustainable

[9] Article 3, Chapter 2 in Decree n° 96-/MEE/MICA/MEE.

development", as Burkina Faso is a country which is otherwise relatively poor in mineral or other natural resources (Zida 2005). Therefore, the ECOPAS-program heavily invested in the building of infrastructures, such as forestry check points, watchtowers to spot animals and tracks for vehicles, to upgrade ecotourism possibilities in the W park. Generally, European scientists describe Burkina Faso as "having a high potential regarding wildlife as a renewable, exploitable resource" (e.g.: Chardonnet 1995:10). In national newspapers of Burkina Faso, one can read many statements about "*the importance of wildlife resources in the development politics of Burkina Faso*" (Ouédraogo 2010), comparable to the following two:

"*Our country is one of the leading countries regarding wildlife potential, an attractive sector for tourism, both in terms of safaris and hunting. It is a sector, which - when it is well organizes and managed by mobilizing all partners - may significantly support our economy, without endangering the preservation of our ecological potential, necessary for the survival of our future generations*." (Paramanga Ernest Yonli, former Prime Minister, speech at the opening of the hunting season in 2004, in Sy 2004).

"The hunting zones at the East: an escapade in the wild Burkina. …At Singou and Kondio as well as Tapoa Jerma, Koakrana or Pama, he [the Minister of Environment] faced a very rich range of wildlife, which demands to be revalorized in order to make Burkina Faso and the local populations able to extract maximum profit out of it…These resources demand to be valorized, because the hunting concessionaires have assured us that they may position safari and hunting tourism on the second place on the map of income for our country, after cotton. " (Traoré 2006)

In the last quote, one can read that Burkinabe residents aspire to make hunting tourism a primary national income for Burkina Faso, next to cotton production. Certainly around the nature reserves, such as the W park, both national and international institutions shift their focus from cotton production to hunting tourism because cotton production has been increasingly labeled environment-unfriendly (e.g. Toé & Dulieu 2007). This is due to the use of pesticides and to the large areas of cultivable land needed in cotton cultivation. Furthermore, the prices of cotton have been tumbling during the last years, while trophy hunting can generate huge amounts of money and exudes power and prestige. In Burkina Faso, the possession of hunting trophies is a sign of international recognition, prestige and fame, as trophies are known as a much demanded commodity among European elite. It seems as if the Burkinabe and government elite, tired of being stigmatized as poor

people trapped in a dry Sahel country, wants to radiate Burkina Faso's capacities instead of its miseries on the basis of hunting tourism.

1.2.1 Wildlife as the ideal source of capitalist development

Therefore, the Burkinabe government and media generally forward the hunting tourism activities in the Burkinabe protected areas as a solid poverty reduction strategy for Burkina Faso. After all, worldwide, it has become "received wisdom"[10] that privatizing natural resources leads to a greater productivity, exploitability and cost-effectiveness on the market of natural resources, and eventually to development and the creation of wealth. Indeed, political and corporate leaders, conservationists as well as celebrities increasingly present "capitalism as the key to our ecological sustainability", and the "facilitation of the commodification of nature as the solution to problems that threaten our common ecological future" (Igoe et al. 2010:487). Therefore, the current, dominant neoliberal paradigm within the global sustainable development debate promotes the efficient, wise, or rational use of natural resources to boost the economy of developing countries without destroying its natural resources. That is why ecotourism, such as hunting tourism, to game reserves is seen as an ideal way to achieve 'the optimal sustainable return' of these reserves in which natural resources may not be used for other purposes. According to the optimal sustainable return principle, maximum benefits may be pursued within the limits outlined by the carrying capacity of the environment.

The promise and hope of getting more revenues from hunting tourism in the future seems to be more important for the Burkinabe governments and private operators than the fact that both revenues and numbers of hunter-tourists coming to Burkina Faso were moderate until now. Most of them say that if they "valorize the wildlife resources" (read: invest in touristic infrastructures and publicity) (amongst others: Sy 2004, Traoré 2006), and if the politics of wildlife management improve or "professionalize" (amongst others: Sy 2004, Tao 2004), tourists will flood into the country and the national economy will grow. It is

[10] This is a term that I borrow from Leach & Mearns (1996:1) who use it for "widely perceived images of environmental change" on the African continent, such as desertification and nature degradation due to overpopulation or overgrazing, "that have acquired the status of conventional wisdom", but "may be deeply misleading".

thus not surprising that the hunting season of 2008-2009 opened under the banner of "*Valorisation des resources fauniques et développement local*" (Sawadogo 2008).

1.2.2 Hunting tourism for "local populations"

In the mainstream discourse about hunting tourism in Burkina Faso, the generated development is dedicated to the benefit of "impoverished local populations". By dedicating hunting tourism to local populations, the Burkinabe conservation initiatives subscribe to another received wisdom within the sustainable development orthodoxy, namely community participation[11]. Internationally, governments have been pushed to decentralize their environmental management to the local communities because of "the recognition that local participation in environmental governance is necessary for successful conservation and environmental management" (Gray 2006:277). Burkina Faso is internationally perceived as "original" in this - and therefore rewarded with environment-development projects -, because "it is one of the first and only African countries to have a legislative basis for participatory natural resource management" (Vermeulen 2004:314). This bears reference to the legislation about village wildlife committees and village hunting zones, as explained above.

To ensure 'local development' even more, the Burkinabe government stipulates that every concessionary has to be a Burkinabe citizen. In this way, the revenues generated through hunting tourism can flow to Burkinabe people instead of "the white people" (*les blancs*), who formerly exploited the existing hunting lodges in Burkina Faso. Currently, however, the former, mainly French, hunting entrepreneurs are still the hunter guides working in the shadow of the official Burkinabe private operators. Many of the hunter guides guarantee the coming of tourists, as they are the ones who collect customers on travel or specific hunting fairs in France.

1.3 Extending and zoning the protected area surface

Since the adoption of the National Action Plan for Desertification Control (PNLCD) in 1986, the succeeding Burkinabe governments have been paying a lot of attention to the

[11] On the fact that community participation is one of today's buzzwords within the sustainable development orthodoxy: e.g. Michener 1998:2105, Cornwall & Brock 2005:1043.

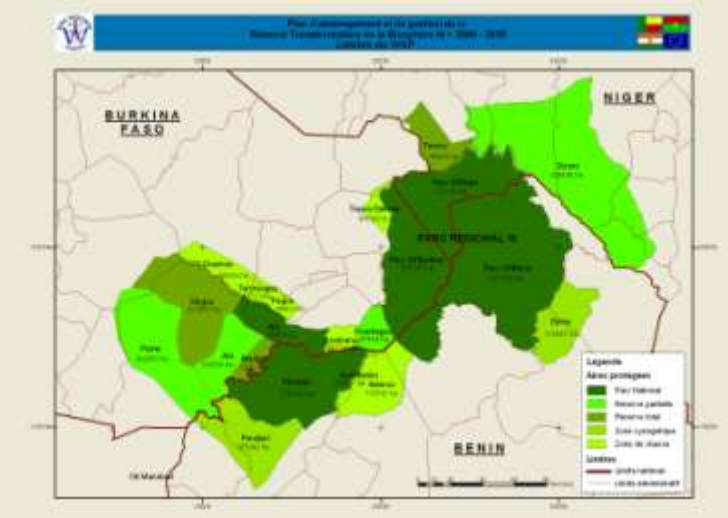
classification and protection of nature reserves as one pillar of the national nature conservation activities. In Burkina Faso, approximately 14 per cent of the national territory, equivalent to 3 816 000 hectares, is currently demarcated and protected as a wildlife reserve (partial or integral), a national park or a classified forest (Hagberg 2001:69). This is quite impressive if you compare this figure to figures of other African countries well-known for their game reserves, such as Kenya or South-Africa. According to the World Resources Institute, about 12,3 per cent of the Kenyan surface and 6,2 per cent of the South-African surface is covered with protected areas (WRI 2003, 2006).

Through the creation of hunting concessions, the Burkinabe government could classify extra land as protected area, in order to dedicate it to desertification control (and recently to the fight against climate change too). In this way, Burkina Faso meets with internationally ruling environmental concerns which are mushrooming since the 1980s.

Furthermore, the introduction of wildlife conservation units lines up with the contemporary international focus on "ecological complexes" (e.g.: GRAD 2004, Chardonnet 2006). "Ecological complexes" are called into being in order to manage the wildlife on a regional or transnational basis which tunes the management of different reserves to one another. Also the ECOPAS-program aimed at the "regional management" of the W reserve, and thus geared the state management of the three different countries in which the W is situated to one another.

Label ECOPAS-program (on brochure map of park W, manufactured by the ECOPAS-program)

In 2011, the European Union started to fund a new, big-scale project which is directed towards the whole "WAP"- or "WAPO- ecological complex". The WAP merges the W park, the Arly park, the Pendjari park, (including the Oti Menduri Park in the case of WAPO), and all of their adjacent reserves together in one big nature reserve across the borders of Niger, Benin, (Togo when Oti Menduri is taken up) and Burkina Faso.



Map 1: the WAP-ecological complex, with national parks in dark green, and all kinds of hunting zones in lighter green (source: ECOPAS, collected in 2007)

To further extend the protected area surface and line up with the regional management approach, the Burkinabe government preferably recognize(d) hunting concessions adjacent to existing reserves. In this way, the concessions may function as "*zones tampon*" (buffer zones), frequently called "perimeter" by the residents. In practice, buffer zones around a protected area need to shield the encroachment of the residents and are, therefore, an extension of the protected area. Therefore, the Burkinabe forestry code of 1997 defines a "*zone tampon*" as "a perimeter, which becomes an integral part of the protected area and is designed for the purpose of management realizations of economic, social or cultural order, compatible with the objectives of the protected area." In other words, the entries and the user rights of the residents in buffer zones are restricted, however less severe than in the core zone, alias the park, where any form of natural resource use is forbidden. According to the environmental legislation about hunting concessions, neighboring residents are granted some user rights to the concessions, such as seasonal cutting of long grasses or performing traditional ceremonies at the shrines, which are left behind in the resettlement process. As a rule, hunting concessions are thus conceptualized as "extractive reserves" (Brown 2002:14) in which small-scale extraction of forest products is envisaged, in order to sustain livelihood whilst maintaining biodiversity.

Not only the Burkinabe government is interested in the buffer zones. Buffer zones are a must according to the "three zone scheme management" (on core, buffer and transition zones), forwarded by UNESCO for the management of Biosphere Reserves. For the three zone scheme management needs "to promote solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use" (UNESCO 2010). Also ECOPAS forwarded zoning as a way to meet the formerly irreconcilable needs of different groups of people, or a solution to the problems with "co-habitation" around the protected areas (e.g. Lompo & Doussa 2003). Therefore, the ECOPAS-management tried to delineate certain zones for conservation, other zones for agriculture, and still other zones for pastoralist activities. In other words, every activity has its own peculiar place in the imaginations of development and conservationist actors, separating all land in different zones according to their recorded modes of exploitation. This zonation type of natural resource management of ECOPAS was well received by Burkinabe governmental institutions because, since the 1980s, the administrations have been basing land management on zones through the *gestion de terroir* approach themselves (Gray 2006).

2. The socio-economic impact of the Tapoa Jerma hunting concession

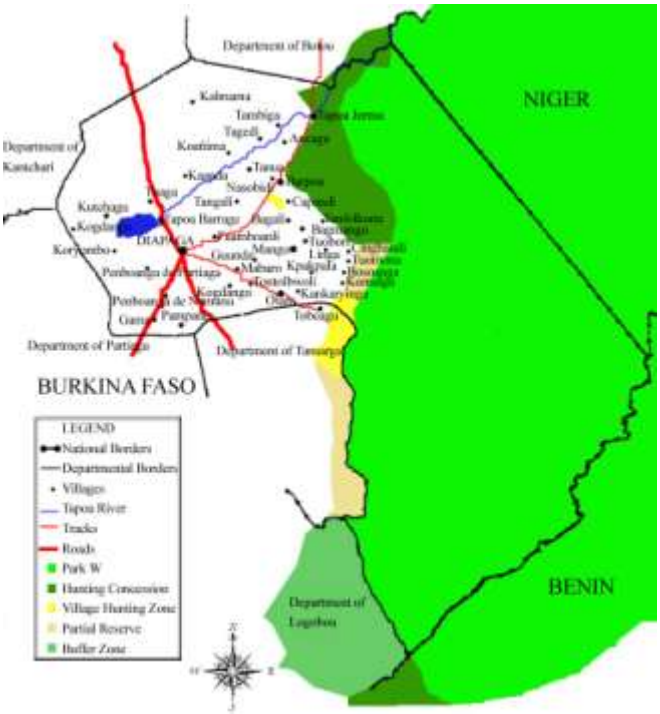
This section presents the mainstream voices of residents around a hunting concession in the Burkinabe, northern periphery of park W, namely the Tapoa Djerma Safari zone. This concession is named after the village of Tapoa Jerma[12], which refers in its turn to the Tapoa river crossing the village on the one hand, and to the Jerma[13] founder of the village at the other hand. Currently, Tapoa Jerma houses some 445 persons (Burini & Ghisalberti 2004:2) or 42 compounds (counted by myself in 2008). By majority, these residents are labeled Gulimanceba[14], the majority ethnic group of Eastern Burkina Faso. In contrast to

[12] I prefer to use terms that people employ themselves and I transcribe these according to the most common rules of their language. This clarifies why Tapoa Jerma is written differently here than in the name of the hunting concession. Moreover, for the rest of the text, this implies that I have chosen to name the people in the way they would refer to their own group or 'identity'. This does not necessarily correspond to the term that is mostly used by local government officials or in literature. The first time I use their ethnic marker, I will explicit other orthographies in a footnote, in order to link with other literature.

[13] Jerma are the same as Zerma.

[14] Gulimanceba are the people of the Gulma – which is a Hausa word for the left river (Niger) bank. In French, these people are referred to as Gourmantché. The orthography I use is the one proposed by a civil society organization, called *Tin Tua* (literally meaning "let's organize ourselves"). This association is led

the rest of the periphery of park W, where Jerma presence is very scattered (resulting in only one or two Jerma persons per village), Jerma constitute one third of the population in Tapoa Jerma. Besides Gulimanceba and Jerma, Eastern Burkina Faso is also the home of many Fulbe[15]. Fulbe are mainly labeled herders, while Jerma are mostly classified as fishermen and Gulimanceba as farmers and poachers. In practice, however, all Burkinabe residents – including state servants - live from agro-pastoralism, with differing degrees of commitment to agriculture and/or animal husbandry. Moreover, men of any ethnic origin or occupational background may hunt.



Map 2: the department of Diapaga with its villages and protected areas (in dark green above: the hunting concession of Tapoa Jerma)

In 1997-1998, 17 villages were resettled to clear the way for the Tapoa Djerma Safari concession. The only village which could remain on the right side coming from Diapaga and going to Botou on the departmental road, where the hunting zone was delimited, was Tapoa Jerma (map 2). Tapoa Jerma could remain in place because, in contrast to the other villages, the village lodged a hunters' camp was as well as a forestry office, which now serves as an official entrance to the W park.

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by a linguist, Bendi Benoît Ouoba, who has organized *Gulimancema* alphabetization since 1989 and published a dictionary "French-Gulmancéma".

[15] In French Fulbe are named Peul, and in English Fulani.

2.1 An ever-increasing policing

Tapoa Djerma Safari has been exploited since 1997 by a Burkinabé business man, named Benjamin Traoré. Traoré owns a private security and detective company in Ouagadougou and seasonally comes hunting to Tapoa Jerma and surroundings. Because Benjamin Traoré is interested in keeping his hunting concession free from cattle and poachers, he has been organizing surveillance himself since 2003, supplementary to the surveillance conducted by foresters and their auxiliaries. Traoré says that the surveillance by rangers is not sufficient and legitimates his efforts by referring to "the task of every concessionary to assure surveillance which is mandatory when a concessionary signs the *cahier des charges*". Foresters and their auxiliaries, however, complain about the fact that Traoré appropriates tasks of the forestry service, which - the argument goes - diminishes their authority. The concessionary, for instance, decides which ranger he wants to employ for tracking every time a tourist comes, although this decision should officially be taken by the forester in charge. Many more (illegal) privileges are appropriated by Traoré, who has more power than the park managers because of his elitist position, his wealth, his descent of a hunter's family[16] and his links with the capital and important people.

2.1.1 The wildlife guards

Traoré's private surveillance team in Tapoa Jerma, locally called the wildlife guards (*gardes faune*), includes two park rangers of Tapoa Jerma and one man of his hunting lodge personnel. The other wildlife guards (4 to 5 persons) are men from Ouagadougou, working seasonally in Tapoa Jerma. All wildlife guards are equipped with a uniform and a kepi, similar to the employees of Traoré's private security company in Ouagadougou.

Besides working with wildlife guards, the concessionary also grants rewards to whoever who signals poachers to him. At the closing party of the hunting season in April 2008, Traoré promised the residents to give a reward of 25 000 FCFA to the first person turning

[16] Traditional hunters, issued from a family in which hunting is transmitted from elders to sons, are perceived as powerful because of their skills to master the bush, also on a spiritual level.

in a poacher. The second *indicateur* would get 10 000 FCFA, and the succeeding ones 1000 each[17].

With all of these extra guards, certainly under the ECOPAS-program which quintupled the number of rangers and their means, the hunting zone of Tapoa Jerma (and the W park) is thus super-supervised, or as a young ranger in Tapoa Jerma expressed in 2008: "*We are mining the zone. If a Fulbe herder will set foot into the zone, the mines will explode, BOOM!"*

2.1.2 The curse of the hunting zone

Currently, uniformed foresters, rangers and wildlife guards on the periphery of the Park W weekly catch and sanction a few residents for violating the environmental regulations. Besides the pecuniary sanctioning, also physical punishments (such as beating) and psychological violence (humiliation) is used by some natural resource managers in order to prevent recidivism. The majority of the residents refer to the hunting concession as the source of the increasing surveillance and repression by contemporary natural resource managers. Residents complain about this on a daily basis in the following ways:

"*It is park biga (literally the child of the park or the small park) [the hunting zone] which has worsened the situation, which makes us suffer. We are not worried about the big park [park W]. The big park is very far away. When you want to go to the big park, you leave at dawn and you arrive there when the sun is at zenit. This means that you really have to seek for the park. It is not inside the homesteads like the small park [which is encircled by villages]. When you stand up now, and you go to the small park, you will arrive there before I have finished my sentence.* **"**
(Fulbe herder in his thirties-fourties, Liinga, 2008)

"*Since the creation of the small park [the resettlement out of the hunting zone], this place is being drained of life. Life is just finished*." (former chief of the park rangers of Tapoa Jerma, 2007)

"*Instead of advancing, we go back, since the creation of the [hunting] zone*." (woman at group focus discussion, Mangou, 2007)

"*Everything is finished today [since the creation of the hunting concession]. We do not have access anymore to the long grasses we need to roof our houses. Neither can we reach fertile grounds to make a small field and have good harvests. Moreover, the animal*

[17] 25000 FCFA is about 38 Euros, 10000 FCFA equals to approximately 25 Euros, and 1000 FCFA is about 1.5 Euros.

husbandry is bleeding to death. Before, we had a very good breeding stock, and we could let our animals stray like they wanted. Nowadays, you do not dare to let your animal walk around, because we are encircled by the park. This makes our animal husbandry so weak. It [our economy] does not grow any longer. Our grand parents were better off than we are." (man at group focus discussion, Mangou 2007)

"*We will die here, all of us will die, as we are surrounded by the park [reserves]. Our animals can not eat to finish their hunger and they are thinning out. The park [reserves] blocks us in every direction*." (farmer, Mangou, 2007)

Due to the exponentially increasing surveillance by *pisteurs*, paramilitary foresters, CVGF-members, *indicateurs* and wildlife guards, and due to the proximity of the hunting zone to the villages, residents frequently utter that "*the park is now everywhere*" or that "*the park has entered our village now*" (Fulbe chief, Diapaga, 2008). "The park" then refers to all matters and actors of repression concerning natural resource use.

2.1.3 The "owners" of the "bush"

It goes without saying that the resettlement out of the hunting concession, and the subsequent increasing policing induces a more restricted access to land and natural resources than what residents where used to before the privatization of wildlife tourism. These restrictions are closely intertwined with the degazetting of the hunting concession, because the concession is the only place where "bush" (*la brousse* in French, *li fuali* in Gulmancema, *ladde* in Fulfulde) is still present, according to the overall majority of the residents. For residents, "bush" is necessary for daily subsistence, as it is the potential farming, hunting, gathering or grazing land (cfr Joiris 1998:116 for Central Africa). However, residents utter on a daily basis that "there is no bush left any longer" (*il n'y a plus de brousse*), except for the bush in the hunting concession. This lack of bush is, according to them, due to the saturation of space with reserves, settlements, cattle and fields, which have been exponentially expanding during the last three decades.

Because of the restrictions in access to the hunting concession, the remaining bush no longer belongs to everybody. Rather, it belongs to "the State" (*o baalo* in Gulmancema) and, linked to that, to "the whites" (*les blancs*), including tourists, scientists and NGO workers. In general, all state matters, such as the necessity to have an identity card or to buy legal permits for the access to natural resources, are called *les affaires des blancs* (white people's affairs), because they are perceived as originating from Europe. The fact

that white people are increasingly coming to the W area in the name of (environmental) NGOs or as scientists for (socio-)ecological research[18] strengthens the conviction that surveillance and exclusionary measures are in many cases also *o bonpieno*, something of the white people, also commonly called something of "the strangers" (*les étrangers* in French, *caano* in Gulmancema).

When I asked residents who made them resettle, they answered either with the names of the two rangers who were involved in the resettlement, or by saying it is *o bonpieno* and "the State".

"*You have to remember that, for us, everything of the park [nature conservation in general] is a disadvantage, but for the State, it is a big advantage. After all, the park has been created by the State and is for the State."* (man at a group focus discussion in Mangou, 2007)

In the first meeting with residents of Tapoa Jerma (2007), an old man asked me "*where do you, in God's name, come from that you do not know the history of the park and our resettlement*?" In his eyes, it is obvious that all white people know what happened with them, as "*the white people are pulling the strings here*". During my first meeting with the residents of Mangou (2007), a woman remarked that "*it would not be the first time that a white person asks us questions and says she will not use it against us, but than afterwards, she will claim our land. It were the white people who made us leave* [resettle]!." A Fulbe man in Cingbandi (2007) said this to me:

"*The hunting zone is not for us, peasants, but belongs to the State, to the students [the literate people]. The zone belongs to you!"*

2.2 One man's breath is another man's death

2.2.1 "Powerholders eat, while poor peasants starve"

The categorizations of peasants versus the State, as in the last quote, are very common in daily discourse about the hunting concession. In line with this differentiation, natural resource managers are frequently portrayed by other residents as vultures, who want to feed themselves by sucking out the starving, hard working peasants.

18 Since the international acknowledgement of the global importance of park W, more and more researchers from different institutions, such as CIRAD (France), IRD (Burkina Faso), Gembloux university (Belgium), Aquila University (Italy), Lasdel Niamey (Niger), Lasdel Parakou (Benin), Mainz University (Germany), Frankfurt University (Germany), have been conducting research in or around the park.

"*Forebe [natural resource managers] are paid to arrest us. They prey on us (ils nous bouffent).*" (elderly man, Kalmama 2007).

"It is only us, peasants, who have to starve. They [the concessionary and the foresters] won't suffer. When you can not cultivate, what will you eat?" (young hunting lodge personnel, Tapoa Jerma 2008)

Generally, all residents distinguish between government officials and the concessionary, who are perceived as "town people", and village people. They do this in terms of "those on top" (*ceux en haut*) "the big people" (*les grandes personnes*), "the literates" versus the "small people" (*nous, nous sommes petits*), the "villagers" (*les villageois*[19]) or "those those who are below" (*ceux en bas*). Hostility, mutual distrust and suspicion mark the relations between these two categories of residents. While those who are not involved in nature conservation are suspicious about the ways natural resource managers earn money, government officials claim that "the villagers" are incompetent to judge and act rationally. It is in this context that the residents around Tapoa Jerma call the concessionary and the foresters "strangers" or "*les Mossis*", even when they know they are not of Moose origin[20].

Me: *Who is the concessionary here?*
Old ranger in Tapoa Jerma (2007): *"The hunter guide [concessionary] is a stranger, somebody of Ouaga! It's a Mossi, he eats (il bouffe)."*

"*Mossi are like elephants, they are invaders. They intrude our land and then destroy it.*" (CVGF-member, Arly 2007)

By calling foresters and the concessionary "Mossi", residents thus refer to their other, and powerful position and, linked to that, to their easier (and sometimes illicit) access to resources (*bouffer,* preying on somebody), which is perceived as typical for Moose. Moose are the majority ethnic group of Burkina Faso, living mainly on the Central Plateau where the capital is situated. This makes that they are strongly represented in the government and in elitist positions.

Residents complain that the recent privatization of the hunting business has deepened the gap between the powerful and the powerless, as they earn less now than before the

[19] The term "villagers" bears the negative connotation of underdeveloped, low educated. Another way of denoting people as such is by calling them "bush people" (des broussards).
[20] Mossi is a French term for Moose.

privatization. This contrasts to what is envisioned with the privatization, namely local development. According to the residents, this is due to the fact that power is corrupted by black people in contrast to the white people, who were in charge of the hunting lodge before the privatization:

"*During the time of Michel Logue [when French people were exploiting the hunting lodge of Tapoa Jerma] , everybody was happy, because everybody could still do what he wanted. … Some people left the place already before I started to remove them [before the forced resettlement], because at that time, everybody ate where he wanted [one was free to do what he liked]. But now, this has changed so much. You know, when black people are in charge, it turns out to be catastrophic. Since Benjamin has come [to run the lodge], the corner has become weak. We, the villagers do not make money anymore, in contrast to the time of Michel in which people could gain, in a normal way [the current concessionary is frequently reproached to not pay enough to his workers or to not pay in time or even to not pay at all]. Moreover, Michel hunted in a normal way [legally], but Benjamin, no, his habits are not okay. We know how he hunts, he just does everything [he shoots too many animals off record or integrally protected animals, such as female animals with young, and then sells this bush meat in Ouagadougou]. We do not like that, because it is not good for the environment*." (former hunting lodge personnel, Tapoa Jerma, 2008)

Foresters and the concessionary reply to these accusations by downplaying the other residents as people who "do not understand what happens". Furthermore, by not following the legislation strictly, fines are in many cases diminished by foresters, who need to implement the legislation in flexible way in order to make it livable for everybody.

2.2.2 Opportunities for wildlife conservation employees and their wives

The gap between those who earn money through wildlife conservation and those who are excluded from it, has actually been widening since the privatization of wildlife management. However, the division is not strictly as presented above; between "those in charge" (*ceux en haut*) and "those who are lower ranked" (*ceux en bas*). Rather, it is a gap between those who are included in nature conservation and those who are excluded from it. Both foresters and rangers, who are villagers, currently earn big amounts of money through hunting tourism, the sale of permits to access the natural resources, and especially by fining people who do not buy these permits and are thus defined as environmental offenders. For instance, Fulbe herders pay a fee of 100 000 FCFA (152

Euro) to park managers to access the reserves with their cattle, or pay enormous sums (up to more than a million FCFA or 1525 Euros) when they are caught grazing in the reserves. Furthermore, when a ranger accompanies a white hunter-tourist, he may get a reward, varying from 25 000 to 120 000 FCFA (38 to 183 Euro)[21]. Besides money, the gifts of hunter-tourists for rangers and hunting lodge personnel frequently involve popular European gadgets, such as pocket knives, hunter clothes or climbing boots. This explains why nature conservation related jobs are in vogue, and why men engage in tasks at the forestry service that are in other contexts less acceptable, such as denunciating practices or cooking (which is traditionally a woman's task). For wildlife conservation provides opportunities for making fast money and thus for sought-after access to 'modernity' and 'development', linked to power, prestige and self-esteem.

Therefore, park rangers are currently favoured marriage partners for women in the villages. Women, themselves, are not employed in nature conservation business, because hunting is traditionally seen as restricted to the male lifeworld, and because women did not enjoy a lot of education until now. Furthermore, working at the hunters' lodge is perceived as not respectful for women, because the few women working in the hunting lodge are companion ladies for the tourists. They are coming from Ouagadougou, and this is frequently repeated by the residents. Women in Tapoa Jerma mainly access the opportunities created by nature conservation by marrying somebody employed in it, or by forwarding a relative as a suitable marriage partner to a forester, ranger or hunting lodge employee.

2.3.2 Fulbe, the "dirty" source of wealth

Especially Fulbe are excluded from the nature conservation revenues. Fulbe are rarely members of CVGFs, and rangers around park W are mainly Gulmance or Zerma men. Only one Fulbe man is part of the team of 28 rangers in Tapoa Jerma. Furthermore, many of the Fulbe distance themselves from this man by saying that "*this man is a stranger. We do not even know where he is coming from*" (Fulbe herder in his forties, Nassobidi, 2008). For Fulbe, the occupation of ranger is not worthwhile and involves shame in

[21] A sum of 120 000 FCFA, which rangers can get on one day from a hunter tourist, is comparable to the monthly salary of a forester with a higher rank.

contrast to cattle-related occupations which provide honor and marriage opportunities to them.

Fulbe, however, do not always have the choice to be involved in revenue-generating nature conservation activities. They are in many cases purposefully kept away from conservation related jobs by the natural resource managers, because they are the most profitable target for them. It are the Fulbe who provide the biggest sums of money to the foresters and rangers through transactions related to the grazing of cattle in the reserves, as described in section 2.3.1. Cattle is an important source of wealth, linked to Fulbe, and Fulbe are supposed to be able to sell some cows to pay the transaction sum. Therefore, surveillance around park W is currently mainly targeting Fulbe who, the argument goes, "*are illegally grazing cattle in the reserves, or are cutting off branches of protected trees outside the reserves to feed their cattle*" (head of provincial forestry service, Diapaga, 2008). The following quote reveals what is commonly said about Fulbe in relation to nature conservation:

Me: "*Maybe there is just not enough pasture left, so Fulbe have no choice but to go into the park?*"
Forester (2008): "*If they say this, they lie! A Fulbe always lies! We can arrest a Fulbe and he will pay 2 million FCFA, but two weeks later, he will take his cows back into the park. Because when he enters the park, he knows that the cows will eat well and will be bearing young. They will reproduce easily because they eat well. That is why a Fulbe prefers to enter the park and to pay for this entry. Paying is a minimum [punishment] for them. Imagine a Fulbe with a herd of 100 heads [of cattle]. When he goes into the park with this herd and stays there for one to two weeks, at least 30 to 42 calves will be added to the herd. When you catch the herder and ask him to pay [a fine of] 500 000 or 600 000 FCFA, it is sufficient to take away to cows [and sell these in order to collect the money for the fine]. You can count how many [cows] are still in his herd. Do you see that he actually wins by going into the park and paying a fine?* "

Fulbe themselves also explain that they prefer to pay for grazing rights in the hunting concession, but mainly legitimate this by saying that they want to prevent conflicts with farmers in the village.

The targeting of Fulbe in environmental surveillance at park W is certainly fed by the historical, national[22] and international interest in channeling the pastoral activities into

[22] Raabo n°An-VI 0012/FP/AGRI-EL/MET/ME/MAT/MF of 1989 determines the cattle tracks throughout Burkina Faso.

certain zones (*zones pastorals*) and transhumance[23] corridors (*couloirs de transhumance*). Recently, this interest is flaring up because of the zonation focus, as described in section 1.3. The ECOPAS-program and its researchers, for instance, defined "transhumance" as "the principal burden for biodiversity conservation in the W park, way before poaching", or even as "plague number one for all reserves in the Sahel" (Kagoné 2004:5). According to the numerous studies conducted in the framework of the ECOPAS-program, "transhumant cattle currently occupies the W park in an uncontrolled way" (Toutain et al. 2001: 8). Therefore, the ECOPAS-employees work together with different kinds of government officials to settle down the pastoralists in order to govern them more easily.

Furthermore, residents find it quite logical to target Fulbe, as Fulbe are commonly denoted "dirty", "lazy", "stubborn", "provocative", "liars", "recidivists", "wayward", "monkeys", and "strangers". Fulbe in West-Africa face a long-standing history of being perceived as outsiders, because they are linked to a nomadic and specific lifestyle following their cattle. Although, residents stress in many occasions that *Peuls*[24] live amongst them, that they are also settled agriculturalists with whom they interact in various ways, they keep on categorizing them as strangers.

As a result of the international and national focus on transhumance, and the long-standing tradition of categorizing Fulbe as strangers, foresters and their auxiliaries easily say "*we are going to catch some Fulbe*" when they leave on a surveillance mission. In this way, they ascribe all environmental offences to this one ethnic group, although environmental offences are committed by all kinds of residents. That is why the young ranger in a quote above only talked about Fulbe when he talked about the mining of the hunting zone. The next quote is also highlighting the fact that natural resource managers react differently to Fulbe environmental offenders than to environmental offenders of any other ethnic background:

Me : "*Are there pisteurs in this village ?*"
Administrative representative of Olaro (2007): "*Yes, the pisteurs are the children of the village. But they [in contrast to foresters] will not catch you when you go to get some wood with your cart. They only catch Fulbe. And most of all, they catch the Fulbe of Niger who cut the trees to give as fodder to their cows*."

[23] In this context, transhumance refers to the seasonal migration with livestock in search of new pasture land.
[24] Residents on the periphery of park W distinguish between three categories of Fulbe; those who live amongst them are called *Peuls*, those who follow cattle or sheep are called differently.

Certainly rangers, who are "sons of the village" (Hagberg 2005:47), have more to lose in terms of social relationships when it comes to denunciating a fellow. Therefore, they prefer to denunciate or arrest a Fulbe over a Jerma or Gulmance. Moreover, the quote shows that foresters and their auxiliaries distinguish between Fulbe from Burkina Faso and Fulbe coming from other countries. As a general rule, non-Burkinabe citizens pay double in terms of their fines for environmental offences. Regarding the Fulbe environmental offender, authocthony and strangerhood is thus becoming layered; being a non-Burkinabe Fulbe makes you the ultimate stranger.

3. Conclusion and outlook: strangerhood revisited through privatized wildlife conservation

This case-study particularly proofs that exclusion practices among residents have been increasing since the privatization of the wildlife hunting business in Burkina Faso, which is backed up by both international and national interests. Monitoring, denunciating, punishing and silencing the politically less powerful occurs with an ever-increasing intensity around park W and its hunting concessions, while residents involved in natural resource management are exponentially increasing. In its turn, this has led to a booming attention paid to the drawing of borders between us and them, mainly between autochthones and strangers. In this way, already existing social cleavages seem to be reinforced while new cleavages are formed, although the privatization and decentralization of environmental governance is called into being as answer to social injustice and inequity in conservation.

Especially negative notions of strangerhood are re-strengthened as a result of the unequal distribution of conservation revenues between the natural resource managers and those who are not involved in nature conservation. Certainly when natural resource managers are higher ranked in hierarchy, such as the foresters and the concessionary, they are called strangers. Besides the difference made between stately agents and non-stately residents, white people are increasingly classified as strangers by black people, non-Burkinabe residents are defined as strangers versus Burkinabe citizens, those who denunciate are classified as strangers by those who are loyal (think about the one Fulbe ranger), and Fulbe are targeted as strangers by other ethnicities. Community-based and

privatized nature conservation thus reconstructed and boosted longstanding ideas, formulated in different contexts, about Fulbe as strangers.

The described ethnicization and autochthonization of the problems around community-based, privatized nature conservation needs to be researched more, as it is a common, but understudied problem which bears dangerous consequences both for nature conservation and society. Comparable to the increasing attention paid to autochthony and ethnicity in community-based nature conservation is the increasing attention for indigenous communities in nature conservation, as recently described by Li (2000), Igoe (2005) and Dove (2006). So-called indigenous populations are given legal rights to natural resources, while those who can not claim to be indigenous are excluded from the natural resource use.

In West-Africa, the community-based nature conservation discourse is not so much about indigenous people, but rather about *les populations riveraines* (the adjacent populations), which seems to be a broader category than indigenous populations. However, the same claims of autochthony (versus strangerhood) are made by residents as within indigeneity politics. One of the differences with claims about indigenous identity, is that the ethnicization and autochthonization process in the West-African nature conservation has not only reinforced already existing identity markers. Social order may also move, as residents constantly reconstruct what it is to be an autochthon or a stranger.

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