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A Study on The Multidimensional Effects of Animal Rights and Tourism in Bandia Reserve

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**A Study on The Multidimensional Effects of Animal Rights
and Tourism in Bandia Reserve**

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Medical Humanities

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Abstract

The guiding theme of this research was to gain an insiders perspective on animal welfare with Bandia Reserve and learn how the tourism generated by the reserve affected the community. I sought to answer these questions by living in Mbour within close proximity to the guides to view their day-to-day activities, spending time in participant observation at the reserve, conducting interviews within Bandia and in the surrounding communities. This research is important to address the guiding motivation behind Bandia Reserve. It sheds light on how tourism affects not only La Petite Cote, but all of Senegal. It illuminates the truth of animal rights and the pervasive cultural views on animal rights. This study allows further knowledge of how and why so many high income generating businesses are dominated by Europeans and what implications that has on the community.

Background

The interconnection of all living things has always been of great interest to me. As Newton so famously said, "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." I believe that everything we do has an effect on our surrounding environment, whether we are aware of that impact or not. When SIT arranged a group field trip to Bandia Reserve, I was at once taken by the immense implication of a wildlife reserve in Senegal. It immediately struck me as a very western idea to reserve land, that, for all intents and purposes, could have been used for agriculture for the surrounding community or to further develop Mbour (a nearby city) or a whole host of other seemingly beneficial, community centered uses. This was pure conjecture on my part and it prompted me to want to delve further into the question of why Bandia Reserve came about.

From 2009 to 2010 I worked as a SCUBA Instructor in Playas Del Coco, Costa Rica. We had an immense, beautiful marine reserve where fishing was strictly prohibited. This brought an enormous amount of tourism to the small fishing village of Coco. The problem, however, was just that; it was a fishing village. For millennia, they had known no other way of survival than fishing. Therefore, when these foreign investors came in, created a marine reserve, right in the midst of their richest fishing grounds, they were understandably perplexed and more than a little angry. Inevitably they continued to over fish the reserve despite harsh repercussions. Inevitably, that hurt tourism, thus diminishing the overall income of the town of Coco. I was then and still am now, interested in the highly dynamic nature of foreign investors impact on the local community.

I share this story so as to explain the origin of my interest in Bandia. I have seen and experienced first hand how foreigners best attempts at saving what they deem a valuable resource, be it a marine reserve as in Playas Del Coco, Costa Rica, or a wildlife reserve as in Mbour, Senegal, be in direct opposition of what the community feels it needs. I was aware of the thick tension present between the local fishermen of Playas Del Coco and the “westerners” who thought they were doing the right thing. I couldn’t help but wonder if I would find the same thing here, a world apart, in Senegal.

Going a bit further back, I grew up on a farm on the outskirts of a heavily touristic town, Bend, Oregon. Therefore, I have a strong background interest in animal welfare. Having grown up in Bend, Oregon where tourism is a primary component of the economic makeup, I am well aware of the effects of tourism within a community. I wondered how it may be the same or differ here in Senegal. As I stated in the opening sentence, I am drawn to researching the interconnectedness of life here on planet earth. In 2012 I conducted a research project on the effects of shark finning on the coastal ecology of Costa Rica. With no great surprise, there were enormous ramifications. All of which were negative, save one. The one and only benefit to killing

up to 90% of some species is that the people cutting off these sharks fins and hoisting them back overboard only to drown, were making more money than if they were in the drug trade. Clearly the effects of shark finning were farther flung than the marine ecosystems they disrupted.

On the other side of the world and on dry land, I wanted to learn about the intended and, more interestingly, the unintended repercussions of the presence of Bandia Reserve on the local community and, of course, the animals that reside within the park. How did the reserve effect the economy of the surrounding villages? How does it affect the traditional livelihoods and culture of said villages? How are the animals affected by the presence of the park? Why are the vast majority of the animals that occupy the park shipped all the way up from South Africa and what are the ramification of transplanting these animals into a foreign environment?

These are the question I seek to answer. I specifically chose Bandia for a variety of reasons. I have visited Langu de Barbarie in Saint Louis in northern Senegal and Niokolo Koba in Kedougou, southern Senegal. Both of which offered interesting potential research projects. Although Niokolo Koba has a broad diversity of naturally occurring animals, with chimpanzees located not far outside of the park, I was more interested in a manmade park. I am interested in how we, as human beings, affect our surroundings. After having done a tour of Bandia, I was struck by the fact that the park appeared to be geared entirely towards tourists. I wondered if that was the motivation behind shipping all of the animals up from the southern most country of the continent. Merely for tourists, such as myself, to pay loads more money than any local could or would and gawk at animals that were planted there for our enjoyment. Or, Perhaps my cynicism would be proven wrong and I would find that, contrary to my preconceived notions, the park was created with only the habituation of once prevalent animals found in Senegal pushed out by poaching and habitat pressure. Yet another question for which I sought an answer.

The interest for doing this research has stemmed from a life long interest of connection. I am endlessly fascinated by how each and everything is linked to one another in some way. Therefore, with my particular emphasis on anthropology and animal wellbeing, this study slid smoothly into my repertoire. My fascination for national parks began many years ago as a child in the United States where national parks are practically revered as holy shrines of nature. Thus, upon arrive to Senegal and learning there were indeed, national parks to be found here, I was immensely intrigued. As our group traveled south and east towards our week long stay in Kedougou we passed through Senegal's largest national park, Niokolo Koba. For weeks I had been investigating exactly what it was I wanted to study during our Independent Study Project (ISP) period. My mind jumped from one excellent possibility to another. It is a blessing and a curse to be as curious and interested in so many things as I am. After discussing my immense range of interests with Souleye Diallo, academic director of SIT, I was able to at least concentrate my project down to working in a park or reserve. I had originally intended to research chimpanzees in Niokolo Koba. Shortly after making that decision, I was told the chimpanzees had moved further south out of the range of the park, but there was an NGO involved with their protection, conveniently located near the Bedick village I was to be staying at during our homestays in the Kedougou region.

Once I arrived to my homestay in the Bedick village, I was instantly back to my normal self, which I had lost in the weeks prior living in Dakar. Something I had struggled with from day one in Dakar was being so out of touch with the natural world. I come from the mountains and am most comfortable outside, in nature, with no one around but animals and plants. In the tiny mountain village of Echwaar, that was exactly what I found. The first day I accompanied the entire village into the fields to harvest peanuts, corn, ochre and hibiscus. Due to the fact that the village survives off of agriculture, they must all work in the fields every day. Echwaar is composed of only two families, amounting to about 30 people. Therefore, each morning, the

entire village vacated their mud and thatched roof huts to the fields. About a 30 minute hike away. The only life that remained behind where the goats tied up to graze.

While working, I heard very distinct chimpanzee calls in the trees not far from the fields. The men confirmed that was indeed what I was hearing and I was thrilled! It was the first time in my life that I had ever heard, firsthand, the call of a chimpanzee. My elation was then tampered by the men's comments that it was due to the chimpanzees that they all carried guns into the fields. I asked why and was told the chimpanzees would attack their livestock (goats, sheep, chickens) thus the men had to defend their livelihood.

This brought me up short. I had come to identify with the host family I was living with in the village. I had come to love the people and their simple, yet grueling, way of life. Yet, here they were, the people whom I had so recently come to care for, standing in stark opposition to one of my very grounding principals of conservation. I have studied anthropology for 5 years and it has become ingrained into me just how fragile the great apes hold is on this earth. Humans have increasingly demolished habitat for not only chimpanzees but thousands of other creatures, to the point of mass extinctions. Not only has there been habitat pressure but blatant poaching as well. For my whole life I have been on the animal's side, thinking, knowing, that humans were in the wrong.

Now, here I stood straddling the line between conservation activist and human rights activist. I was at a loss. Who was I to tell these villagers not to kill the chimpanzees that threatened their own survival? Who was I to take the chimpanzees' side and explain the dire situation of our closest DNA kin and act in their defense? As soon as the quandary had fallen over me, I realized we do not live in a black and white world of polarities. Polarity refers to the state of having two opposite or contradictory tendencies, opinions, or aspects. We live in a dualistic world. Duality means two things can exist in co-existence with one another. Therefore, I realized I could be on both the villagers' team and the chimpanzees' team at the same time. It

was at that point that I was sure I was going to return to the tiny village of Echwaar to conduct my research on the relationship between the humans and the natural world. Or so I thought until we went to Bandia Reserve.

Introduction

Saturday November 7, 2015 the SIT group took a day trip out to Mbour. The city of Mbour lies 70 kilometers south of Dakar along the coast. Approximately 605,000 people inhabit the city. 15 kilometers north of Mbour is where Bandia Reserve can be found. The Bandia reserve is the first working enclosed breeding site for large animals in Senegal and the adjacent states, led by the Society for the Protection of the Environment and Wildlife in Senegal (Société pour la Protection de l'Environnement et de la Faune au Sénégal - SPEFS). The reserve lies on the south west border of 'Forêt classée de Bandia'. The Bandia reserve was established in 1990 on an economically exploited and markedly degraded baobab grove. In that year 460 hectares were enclosed, later this was expanded to 750 ha [and it is currently at 3,500]. The first stage of conservation [that lasted from 1990-1997] was aimed at regenerating the damaged vegetation and after that it was introducing the first animals. (Antoninova, 2009)

We drove into the reserve around 10:30 a.m. Saturday morning. None of us knew exactly what to expect but we did know there were animals to be seen and a beach to explore later on in the day. Shortly after arrival, we were ushered into the back of a Toyota pickup truck. The bed of the truck had been outfitted with three rows of seats comfortably fitting three people abreast, side rails to hold onto when the road turned bumpy and a canopy overhead to provide shade from the blazing Senegalese sun.

Our guide, Moussa Gueye, told us in broken English that the park inhabited 3,500 hectares of land within a 10,000-hectare forest. I still was not sure what the reserve was all about. Was it a glorified zoo, for tourists to poke at the animals and snap thousands of selfies: a

photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media? Was it actually a reserve dedicated to the preservation and wellbeing of its animals? Was it a soul sucking, community ruining enterprise with only dollar signs being valued? Or, was it a community enriching, job providing haven for animals and animals lovers alike? All these questions swirled in my head as we bounced along the well-worn dirt roads through the reserve. Our first stops were at an enclosure where 150-year-old turtles slowly lived out their lives. The next was a fenced off area where two huge hyenas with huge heads and powerful jaws slept in the sun, seemingly for lack of anything better to do as their territory consisted of one tree and about ½ an acre. Right off the bat, my hackles were raised and my first impression of the reserve was not a very positive one.

As we continued, I attempted to sooth my conservation activist rancor by asking questions. So often, as human beings with these great abstract thinking brains of our, so creative and so easily able to come up with unrealities, we judge. We judge hard and fast and without adequate knowledge and too much fear of the unknown. Therefore, whenever I come up against something that makes me want to judge hard and fast and be full of righteous wrath, I ask seek to learn more. As the tour continued for the better part of two hours, we saw giant Elan, rhinos, ostriches, vervet monkeys, monitor lizards, crocodiles, giraffes, Rhone antelope, gazelles and zebras among other critters. I am not terribly familiar with these animals, never having spent much time with African dwelling beasts before, therefor I was unable to deduce by their behavior if they were in robust health or not. This was yet another question I sought to answer.

The tour ended at the beautifully constructed restaurant/bar overlooking the crocodile pond where seemingly dozens of crocodiles dwelled within the confines of a roughly acre sized pond. Ice cream in hand, watching vervet monkeys scamper from one table to the next, inevitably looking for the next sucker of a tourist to feed them, dozens of questions swarming my

brain, I elected to, 24 hours before the beginning of ISP, change my project one last time. I knew the time to act was now because I had witnessed and experienced firsthand how next to nothing gets done in Senegal if not in person. I spoke with Pappis, our SIT guide for the outing, to see if he thought it a possibility to do my ISP at the reserve. He in turn, spoke with Moussa, our tour guide for the day, who, in turn, called the director of the park, Tidian.

Shortly thereafter, ice cream still in hand, I am introduced to the director of the park. I would like to note that as he walked up to the three of us, (myself, Pappis and Moussa) he deigned only shake hands with the men and scarcely made eye contact with me. Was it the ice cream? Pappis and Moussa explained my interest and Tidian told them to tell me (although, there I still stood- the root of this whole meeting, yet oddly an outsider) that it was very possible and only to submit a proposal via e-mail. That settled that and away Tidian went without a backward glance. The SIT team piled back into the van and away we went to Ndaali Hotel for lunch and an afternoon at the beach. All the while my head still swimming with the possibility of conducting research on this mysterious reserve.

Once I had settled on the idea of conducting my research at Bandia, I set about concretizing the logistics of making it happen. I collaborated with Moussa, our tour guide, on finding a suitable place to live. Once my living arrangements were secured, or so I thought, I made my way to Mbour. On the days prior to travelling to Mbour, I did as much research as I could pertaining to Bandia Reserve itself and others like it in Senegal. I sought to find similar research and what they had come up with. I spent much time during these few days collecting data via Google Scholar searches and reading subsequent articles. One such article, kindly provided to me by Dr. Mamaramé Seck, was on community collaboration in the Parc De Oiseaux De Djoudj. Since the parks conception in 1971, the community had been marginally involved in the management of the park. In 1994, Djiby Seye the chief of Diadiem 3, a surrounding village, stated that, “we must empower people in the management of their

environment. Park officials involve villagers in everything they do. Which contributes to the good conservation of the park that people now accept as their own. It would have been better that they [the park officials] really make a bit more effort to better involve people in the management so that they take greater ownership of the park," he suggested. "I found in this process that we must empower the people in the management of its environment. We appreciate the co-management policy with a set of specifications defined by the National Parks Directorate, with a Memorandum of Understanding indicating their populations leeway," he continues. «Everything is well done, but we must harmonize all in the current context because it is the internal rules dating from 1994 and 1971 that are still in force as we are now in a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve between Senegal and Mauritania" he explains. According to him, this cohabitation with the Sanctuary of the park started in 1994 (Faye, 2015).

Once the community began to get involved with the park, income for the villages was generated. They benefited from the "ecotourism" status of the park. "We have a camping village makes accommodation and catering, with a capacity of 17-20 beds. We also have canoes that carry tourists. The 8% of the revenue they generate is returned to the park to finance some repairs. We use the rest to finance social actions in the various villages," says Djiby Seye. "In the field of conservation, with limited resources, we trained our children who have become eco-guards. There are five (two girls and three boys) in each village. They cut a tremendous job and have now become tourist guides. They received a lot of training in the technical guide and especially ecological monitoring. They are also trained in bird count," he says, noting that birds are counted monthly Djoudj. "The eco-guards support the administration on anti-poaching, the straying of animals, etc. Therefore, our children are working with the park staff in these areas. And we do the development of villages and community and responsible tourism. This is a very healthy coexistence that is different from the former that can be compared to the cohabitation of a cat and a dog. Now we are working hand in hand," he said (Faye, 2015).

This was something I wanted to further explore in Bandia. Was the park incorporating the community? If so, how? If not, could they be? I decided to proceed into my research using ethnography due to the fact that I had a limited amount of time and resources therefore could not conduct a lengthy study. Ethnography was the best option to access the minds of my interviewees and further understand the micro culture of Bandia Reserve. Since I had at this point decided on the main thrust of my research, animal welfare and community involvement in tourism, I sought to establish myself within the community. I understood the importance of not only gaining trust and credibility with those who I hoped to interview but also simply getting to know them better in an informal environment. Therefore, I intended to spend as much time as possible with my candidates.

Methodology

I went about collecting my data in a variety of methods. One of my primary methods was ethnography. An ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. It is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study. An ethnography is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group. The word can thus be said to have a "double meaning," which partly depends on whether it is used as a count noun or uncountably. The resulting field study or a case report reflects the knowledge and the system of meanings in the lives of a cultural group.

Ethnography, as the presentation of empirical data on human societies and cultures, was pioneered in the biological, social, and cultural branches of anthropology, but it has also become popular in the social sciences in general—sociology, communication studies, history—wherever people study ethnic groups, formations, compositions, resettlements, social welfare

characteristics, materiality, spirituality, and a people's ethnogenesis. The typical ethnography is a holistic study and so includes a brief history, and an analysis of the terrain, the climate, and the habitat. In all cases it should be reflexive, make a substantial contribution toward the understanding of the social life of humans, have an aesthetic impact on the reader, and express a credible reality. An ethnography records all observed behavior and describes all symbol-meaning relations, using concepts that avoid causal explanations.

I chose to do an ethnographic study. One reason being it is a cultural study. That is to say, I must be able to interview and discuss with the people, who create the cultures, their point of view and gain insight to how their minds work so as to be able to further understand the culture. During my research, I sought to impose as little personal bias as possible in order to attain the most authentic representations of my informants. With my dialogic approach and holistic gathering, I was able to amass a wide breadth of information in a relatively short period of time. Due to the strong field based aspect of ethnographies, I set about spending as much time as possible in the field. What I refer to as the field is Bandia Reserve and the surrounding communities, Saly and Mbour.

Once I had established myself within the communities and micro cultures of Bandia, I began to seek out cultural informants. I had the opportunity to follow Moussa Gueye, a tour guide within Bandia Reserve who had worked there for 10 years, throughout his average day. I incorporate his day-to-day, habitual activities not because it necessarily answers my burning questions of tourism and animals rights within the realm of Bandia, but because it gives us a better perspective of the whole. I believe that being able to include my observation and participation in the daily life activities of a Bandia guide; it will lead to further understanding of how the reserve affects the lives of those who are connected to it.

Moussa's day began with his morning commute to work and ended with his evening commute back home. He lived in a small apartment with three roommates, one bathroom and

no refrigerator. The apartment sat directly off the main road through Mbour and across the Mosquée Serigne Saliou de Mbour. At 7:35 a.m., he would leave his shared apartment and walk the 500 meters to the bus station. The station was not only for buses, but one can find taxis, taxi clandos (a far cheaper and shared taxi option) sept-place (again, a shared taxi option for longer distances) and car rapides (the cheapest form of transportation, a large open aired bus).

He would walk past the bustling make shift market of young men selling their sunglasses, electronic gadgets, jeans, and toothpaste and the women selling millet cakes and donuts. Trudging through garbage, waste, plastic touba cup strewn walk ways between the humans and automobiles. It was 7:43 a.m. by the time he secured a space on a car rappede, often by congenially elbowing people out of the way to a spot near the front of the bus as he would be getting off first. Once his spot was marked, by the placement of his small black backpack, he would then repeat the series of congenial elbow blows to wrestle his way off of the car rappede in search of a 2-ounce, orange colored plastic cup of café touba for 50 CFA, the equivalent of about USD 10 cents. Once he had his café touba in hand, he would then purchase a tapalapa bread from one of three men peddling tapalapa within 15 feet of one another, vying for your patronage. Tapalapa is a particular style of baking bread in a clay oven that in my opinion is far superior to any other bread to be found in Senegal. A thin smear of chocopain would accompany the foot long tapalapa and back to the car rappede he would troop.

I accompanied him on all of these habitual and to him, entirely unremarkable, events. To me, the encounters were far from habitual and I was curious about everything. I could not help but compare his morning commute to those that I am more familiar with. The quintessential New Yorker taking the subway to work, non-fat, extra whipped cream mochachino latte from Starbucks, a sugar free blueberry muffin (how does that work, I wonder?) and the morning paper, dressed in a snappy suit. Ironic, considering my own commute in Oregon is a thermos of

green tea and a 6-mile bike ride. Similar properties (hot beverage, transport) and yet worlds apart and vastly differentiated in execution.

Once packed into the car rapide, four abreast in a seat designed for three, the conductor would crank the engine to life. The assistant who stands off the back of the car rapide and bangs the roof in a kind of Senegalese Morse code would bang the roof in his particular code signaling it was time to go and away we would trundle at approximately 8:00 a.m. Within ten minutes of people sitting in relative silence, one fellow up front and left shouts back to the assistant where he is going and how much change he needs. He then proceeds to pass his bus fare off to the fellow sitting directly behind him. This transfer happens multiple times until the fare gets into the hands of the assistant, who collects all of the bus money. Once the fellow up front and right initiated the fare transfer, multiple people shout back to the assistant where they are going and how much change they need, if any. The same process is repeated, money flowing from one hand into another, spreading trust, disease, camaraderie and colds.

Given that all of this is happening in Wolof, I cannot follow it exactly, I often ask Moussa to translate for me. He explains how everyone pays for the bus, in purportedly a semi-organized fashion in which everyone's fare is payed, or at least believed to be paid, no one pockets the money that is so easily pocketable and most receive their due change. To me it is utter chaos and I am baffled how a small community as the one that evolves and dissipates so quickly on this car rapide can entrust one another so explicitly to hand their money to not just one, but multiple complete strangers.

We negotiate our way out of the car rapide, again with a series of elbows, toe-stepping and grunts, when we arrive at the entrance of Bandia Reserve 15 kilometers north of Mbour at 8:36a.m. An 1800-meter walk down a red dirt road, lined with acacia and baobab, the sound of blue-eared Starlings and Woodland Kingfishers singing their morning aubade welcomes us into the park. Moussa leads me to the guide station. It is here where all of the guides assemble and

patiently await, and hope, for the tourists to arrive. The station is a small wooden structure, built to match the chauffeurs station, the welcome station and the toilets. They are all built in a rough circle around the parking lot, made to look rustic and “traditional”.

This morning I find nine guides casually lounging around the station. It is built on stilts because during the rainy season, the area is prone to flooding. I was hard pressed to imagine the area flooding as it was already many weeks into the dry season by the time I arrived. The guides greeted me with hospitality and were enthralled with my limited grasp of Wolof. I spent the morning sitting, chatting, eating breakfast (tapalapa and chocopain) and drinking tea and/or coffee with them. I got to know their stories, where they were from, what they were passionate about, why they worked at Bandia. The guides were on a rotating schedule on who was at the top of the list for guiding tours. Today Moussa was first and took off at a 9a.m. tour. After spending more time with the guides, I made my way to the restaurant to get to know the restaurant and bar staff. They were also very hospitable and interested in my work.

The afternoon came and went and around 4p.m. Moussa had done his tours and was ready to make the trek back to Mbour. Each day the trip home varied depending on the time and circumstances. On this particular day, we caught a ride with a few tourists staying in Saly. They were being driven to their hotel and we got dropped off at a crossroads leading to Saly. From there we hailed a car rapide and made our way back to the “garage” (bus station) of Mbour. Due to the fact that Moussa doesn’t have a refrigerator, he ate out most of the time. Therefore, once he returned to Mbour, he returned home, cleaned up and went to “lunch” at a small restaurant near his home.

The following day I chose to explore the surrounding communities and made my way by taxi clando to Saly. The taxi I got in already had an older gentleman sitting in the back with whom I struck up a conversation. As it turns out he was very knowledgeable on tourism in the area and Bandia in particular as he worked in the Artisan Village in Saly. I asked if I might

accompany him to see his work. I spent the entire morning watching him set up his shop, hearing about the history of Saly and its tumultuous relationship with tourism dominated by the French. I asked if I might formally interview him and he was thrilled to be able to share his knowledge.

Once I had one interview under my belt, I felt far more confident to approach others. I chose to focus the majority of my informants within Bandia itself, as that was the center of my research. Therefore, most of my interviews were of staff within Bandia. That being said, I did still want to incorporate the ideas of surrounding community members within my scope of research so as to gain a more holistic view of how Bandia truly impacted the ecology, environment and economy of the ambient area.

I returned to Bandia many times to further my knowledge of the park and people before I started conducting interviews. It seemed to me that the guides of Bandia were more than happy, verging on eager, to tell me their stories. My first interview with the guides was with Abasse Sy who had been working as a guide since 1997 and was the very first guide hired in the reserve. He was a wealth of knowledge. He was very forthcoming with facts about the park, but when asked about the impact on the community, he gave me a meaningful look and simply said "I cannot speak to that." This led me to conclude he didn't think highly of the reserves contributions to the surrounding communities.

Once I had his interview under my belt, the others fairly flooded in. I only had time to interview six guides; given how long each interview would last and how much time I spent informally interviewing. The environment at the guide station lent itself conveniently to group interviews. I was able to conduct a number of group interviews with groups ranging from three participants to nine. They were able to play off one another's words and brainstorm over the questions presented. In addition to the guide interviews, I also held group and individual interviews with the restaurant/bar staff. Along with the multiple interviews I did, I also had

access to an entire book compiled about the reserves history. I spent many hours poring over this very useful book. From it I extracted so much useful qualitative information, such as who the park owners were, why the park started in the first place and how many visitors it had each year.

While the majority of my research was focused on ethnography within the staff of the reserve itself, I also held interviews with a number of community members in Saly and Mbour. My findings were fascinating in that, the accounts I heard on tourism from these interviews were far more positive than the perceptions within the reserve. Finally, with all of my research compiled, I was able to examine and analyze the data collected, which I will share in the following portion.

Results

Without surprise I discovered a number of fascinating things that I could never have expected. Each person I interviewed had their own personal life history and experience dictating how they expressed their ideas and how they perceived my questions. There were a good many similarities and just as many differences. I interviewed a broad array of informants, men and women ages 33 to 72 within and outside of the reserve.

I began my interviews with relatively simple to answer question so as to ease my informants into the interview. I discovered the various components of the park. Bandia Reserve consists of a chauffeur station employing 10 drivers, a guide station employing 27 guides, four of whom are female. The maintenance crew is one sole man and there are five housekeepers. Ten guards keep the park safe from poachers and keep the animals within the confines of the reserve. 20 restaurants and bar staff see to the tourists gastronomic desires and finally, five men handle the butcher shop on the grounds.

The reserve was first bought in 1990 to reconstitute an exploited baobab and acacia grove within the *foret classée* (protected forest). For the first seven years of existence, the reserve remained dedicated to rebuilding the flora of the area. There were and remain to this day five shareholders of the reserve. Three Lebanese, two Germans and one Belgian. These five men own Bandia Reserve, which in and of itself, generate a great deal of income. I found that most of the higher income generating businesses of the area, be it the reserve, hotels or restaurants, were owned almost exclusively by Europeans. Very few locals held positions of monetary authority, even within their own community.

I learned there are several species of animals that dwell within the park. These include: white rhinoceros, zebra, giraffe, buffalo, giant eland, Cape eland, Oryx, roan antelope, waterbuck, western Buffalo's cob, greater kudu, impala, dama gazelle, red fronted gazelle, warthog, patas monkey, green vervet monkey, jackal, mongoose, crocodiles, giant tortoise, ostrich as well as over 120 species of bird (Aaniane). All except the hyenas and crocodiles are herbivores. In order to care for these animals the once employed a full time veterinarian to run tests on the animals to measure stress levels. Since 2003, they have not had a full time veterinarian and have only called in vet services if a guide sees a behavioral abnormality within the population at the reserve.

Most of the animals that currently reside in the reserve were shipped from South Africa, 7,000 kilometers away from Senegal. The reason behind this is that the owners wanted animals that would serve as tourists attractions. South Africa has a wide array of "exotic" animals from which to choose. Animals such as the kudu and impala were brought to Bandia from Niokolo Koba National Park in the southeastern region of Senegal. The animals borrowed from Niokolo Koba were to be protected and offered a safe haven at Bandia. My informants told me these very same animals were being killed for wild "bush meat" to sell to tourists in the butcher shop within the reserve. Ousman Ndoye, a Bandia guide states, "Their "hunting" animals that don't

belong to them. It's not hunting- it's poaching. They have captured these animals from Niokolo Koba under the guise that they would protect them- and here they are killing them off and selling the meat. It's fucked. The animals they are killing and selling are not theirs to do so. They belong to Niokolo Koba."

I was told the climate between South Africa and Senegal was "nearly the same" so says Abassy Sy, guide since 1997. Therefore, the animals habituate to the new environment quickly. Along the same lines, another guide informed me of the multiple birth defects being seen within the park, he thinks due to stress and interbreeding. Papa Djibrine Ndiaye, guide since 2005 states, "giraffes are having still borns, and the buffalos are giving birth to all black babies when they are meant to be light when born. I believe it is from two causes. The stress of having trucks invading their habitat multiple times a day and the fact that the gene pool is so limited, thus interbreeding occurs." Another aspect the guides have mentioned is the fact that Bandia has become rather stagnant. Their last shipment of animals were the zebras in 2008. Since then, they have not added any new animals to the park. The guides say that people will become bored if they continue to see the same animals each time they come. A few potential reasons why the reserve has not added more species is that it is difficult to ship the animals and very expensive to buy them. Also administrative problems are preventing addition of new animals.

After having spoken with a number of guides, they expressed concern as to the management of the park and the motivation behind keeping it running. "At first this was a dream job. It's now become a nightmare." Says Papa Djibrine Ndiaye as he describes the low pay, the lack of medical insurance, no paid vacation and no work contracts. Ousman Ndoeye explains, "The original intent was purely for the animals. I love nature, and I study biology. That is what drew me to work in parks. Over the years, this park has become more and more about money and less and less about the animals." Every guide I spoke with expressed some concern over how little they were getting paid. When I asked why so many of the employees had such

longevity with the reserve (indeed, the average number of years having worked at Bandia was 14.5) they responded unanimously with “it’s a job.” I came to realize how scarce jobs were in Senegal. Many of the guides were from the surrounding communities, but some commuted as far as Dakar, 70 kilometers north, twice, every single day. Although the park runs exclusively by tourism, therefore, it is an unreliable income should tourism falter, it is the best option for all of the guides I interviewed.

When I asked what my informants thought Bandia’s impact on the surrounding community was, I got differing answers. The general consensus of the guides was that Bandia offered little to nothing to the community at large and in fact, had a negative impact on the community. They were under the impression the park attempted to guard all monetary gains within the park itself, and primarily, within their own pockets. “The proprietors have built this whole reserve to make money for themselves,” says Pape Yaly. Many of the guides spoke about the fact that there are few schools and fewer medical clinics in the surrounding area. That the finances generated from the park could be invested back into the community better.

I also interviewed members of the community active in the tourism business. It was thus that my very first interview was with Talla Diouf, the 72-year-old vendor at the Artisan Village in Saly. “Bandia Reserve has been influential on Saly in that it brings many tourists to the area. The tourists stay in the hotels in Saly and come to the market here. I have been selling at the artisan market for many years. Since the 2008 crisis, tourism has dropped too much. It used to be amazing. There were so many tourists. They came mostly from France. They came to see the exotic animals at Bandia. All of the hotels were full and all of the vendors were constantly selling. Not anymore. It’s been hard. Since 2008, tourism has slowed way down. Add the 2008 crisis on top of climate change and the advancement of the oceans and the hotels are failing. Many hotels have had to close because their beaches are under water. That means less business for me. However, since the government got rid of the expensive tax and visa

requirement to come to Senegal, there has been a surge in tourism. In the last two years, it has been better. Many of the hotel owners are European. They bring us more European tourists, so we benefit.”

I quickly realized, after my interview with Talla, that the people of Saly and Mbour were inextricably connected and dependent of tourism. Talla told me that tourism was the primary income for the area, with fishing coming in behind. When I asked him what he thought about tourism, he could only answer that he wished there was more. I couldn't help wonder if that was merely a programmed response due to the nature of his business, or if he actually thought tourism was a boon to his country. Fatime Seye sold fruit and vegetables to hotels in Saly. She has been involved with this work for several years and has seen the fluctuations of tourism and felt the impact. She also stated the financial crisis of 2008 as a severely difficult time. She said that before 2008 tourism was robust, therefore, business was robust. “I would sell out of my produce by noon most days. It was very lucrative,” Fatime states. Once the crisis hit, her husband left Senegal for Italy in hopes of finding more work. She then was the sole care taker of two young children and her father's faltering health. “It was hard,” she says, describing the years after the crisis. As it stands, she currently hasn't seen her husband since their youngest child was born, four years ago. He has been attempting to secure work in Italy, with varying degrees of success.

Although life had been difficult for Fatime over the past years, she says she is grateful for Bandia. “A lot of French people like to see the animals and that brings more tourism to the hotels in Saly (where she sells her produce).” Tourism and fishing are the two contributing factors to the economy of Senegal. In the region of Thiès, tourism reigns supreme. Tourism primarily, from France. Ousman Ndoye expresses his concerns about the heavy reliance on French tourism, harkening back to colonial days, “France makes up over 80% of our tourists. With that, they control our economy. Senegal has fishing and tourism as its two primary

economic incomes. When over 80% of our tourism is directly from France, the French government can do whatever they want. They can put us, Senegal, in crisis at any moment. *Any moment!* I think tourism in itself is good for the economy. However, we need to diversify. We should have France make up 10% of tourists, Americans 15%, Belgian 7% etc... That way, if French tourists stop coming, it will not cripple the country. A few years ago, France put Senegal on the red list for ebola. Then on the black list for terrorism. It's fucked! They can do anything they want. Since they have done that, and on top of the economic crisis of 2008, tourism has drastically declined. Now the people are angry. The Senegalese government see's that the only way to sustain the country is to promote tourism."

Analysis

From these formal and informal interviews, I was able to amass a substantive contribution to my work. The information gained from this research has provided a number of major themes throughout my work. I have outlined the major themes below.

Animal Rights

"They're 'hunting' animals that don't belong to them. It's not hunting- it's poaching. They've captured these animals from Niokolo Koba under the guise that they would protect them- and here they are killing them off and selling the meat. The animals they are killing and selling are not theirs to do so. They belong to Niokolo Koba." Oussman Ndoeye explains the subpar situation for the animals at Bandia Reserve. His words mirror the concerns of many of the guides I spoke with at the reserve. They are felt the animals would be better off in their natural environment back in South Africa or in Niokolo Koba, even with the threat of poaching in those areas. A few of the guides expressed concerns about the stress levels of the animals due to the heavy tourism traffic through the reserve. The fact that the same animals have been in the park for many breeding season leads the animals to interbreed thus causing birth defects

and an overall weakened gene pool. While the reserve doesn't practice object abuse, it seems to cause enough consternation to the guides that are most intimately familiar with the animals for them to be outraged about the treatment of the animals. This being said, it was only at my prompting questions in direct relation to the animals that I received this feedback from many of my informants. At the merest mention of tourism and they had significantly more to say. This led me to believe that animals do not hold very much import in this culture. It is a phenomenon I have witnessed time and time again in Senegal, that I personally, have a very difficult time understanding. I recognize that as a source of bias within my own work and have attempted to the best of my ability to remain neutral while conducting interviews.

Tourism as a Positive

While none of the guides I spoke with stated they thought the tourism that Bandia brought to the area was a positive, the staff at the restaurant/bar and the vendors in the community thought otherwise. The restaurant staff unanimously agreed that, "Bandia Reserve creates jobs for local people in the communities here," states Mor Fall, the bar manager. They were under the impression that all tourism is good tourism, regardless of where it comes from and whether or not it is diverse. . "Bandia Reserve has been influential on Saly in that it brings many tourists to the area. The tourists stay in the hotels in Saly and come to the market here," states Talla Diof. The vendors I spoke with within the community state that Bandia brings them business. That the reserve is yet another tourist attraction to bring money into Saly and Mbour. The proximity to Saly increases tourism, there are 20 hotels within Saly geared towards tourism. La Petite Cote is "the heart of tourism" of Senegal. The reserve's proximity to the tourist hub is an advantage. As Bandia is the only animal reserve in the area and has a number of "exotic" animals not native to Senegal, thus increasing interest.

Tourism as a Negative

The guards within the park see how many people come through Bandia, they know how much it costs to do a safari, hire a guide and driver. They are well aware of how much the reserve is making annually. For these reasons, they are angry with how little Bandia is contributing to the community. “There are no schools around Bandia. There are no medical centers. It’s abnormal. For this much money to be flowing into the reserve, where does it all go? Certainly not to the staff. Certainly not back into enriching the community. Kids are starving out there. It’s abnormal,” laments Pape Yaly. In a culture where social ties are of the utmost importance and people rely heavily on one another to get by, it seems outrageous to these men and women who work for Bandia that the owners should be so callous, so greedy as to pocket all of the money themselves. While I cannot attest to the veracity of this sentiment, it seems to be the pervading thought process among the guides.

Conclusion

What started as an interest in simply learning more about how a reserve functioned in a country other than my own and how it impacted its community, turned into a far more varied, profound and connected study than I was anticipating. I initiated this research hoping to hone in on the cultural paradigms surrounding the well-being of animals in Senegal as my primary goal with the effects of tourism, inextricably linked as it is to the reserve, filling out my project. Within the first interview I came to realize just how important tourism is to the people of Saly, Mbour and the staff at Bandia. I also came to realize that animal welfare came low on the list of priorities, even for many of the guides at Bandia. I found the answers to each of my original question. I now know why the park came to be, why the shipped animals across the continent, the welfare of said animals. I learned the enormous impact tourism has upon the community and country.

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