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Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille 1 -
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MAKING A LIVING IN KASSUMBA, GUINEA-BISSAU,

GAGNER SA VIE À KASSUMBA, GUINÉE-BISSAU.

Thèse de Doctorat de l'Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille 1
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Brandon D. Lundy

Buffalo, New York

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Abstract

Development initiatives in Africa have proven largely ineffective. Neoliberal policies promoted by international aid agencies have done little to improve the livelihoods of civil society. For example, a push for cashew nut production and the opening of fishing grounds to foreigners have left Guinea-Bissau's citizenry with fewer fish, neglected rice fields, and little capital. In addition, the colonial legacy exacerbates underdevelopment in a hierarchical world-system. Therefore, development, as it is understood today, is inherently flawed and in need of serious alternatives.

This study examines the socio-economic milieu of a rural community and investigates unfolding negotiations between everyday activities, conceptions of cultural identity, globalization, and national politics. Through the use of ethnographic methods including household surveys, interviews, local histories and participant observation, the researcher describes and analyses the southern village of Kassumba divided between Islamic Nalú landowners and the majority, spiritist Balanta immigrants. This work demonstrates how the local inhabitants understand their historical realities and political economy, meet their subsistence needs, and modify their household livelihood strategies in order to adapt to poorly understood economic deprivations. This study finds that socio-economic cooperation and flexibility play important roles in adjusting to rapidly changing circumstances.

Traditional field methods are once again proving effective in response to new and pressing needs for fresh research on the changes today's peripheral economies are being forced to make. This thesis is intended to be a policy paper, local history, and ethnography.

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GUINEA-BISSAU
SENEGAL
GUINEA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
OIO
BAFATA
GABÚ
CACHEU
QUINARA
TOMBALI
BIOMBO
BISSAU
BOLAMA
Arquipélago dos Bijagós
Bissau
Bafatá
Gabú
Buba
Bolama
Catió
Tombali
Cacheu
Farim
Mansoa
Bambadinca
Galomaro
Dulombi
Boé
Bissorã
Bigene
Olossato
Mansaba
Gamamudo
Gãba
Contuboel
Sonaco
Pitche
Burunturma
Camajabá
Canquelifá
Bajocunda
Pirada
Pavunca
Canjufa
Sare Bácar
Koumbakara
Wassadou
Kandika
Koumkané
Saliquénié
Cumbija
Jumbembem
Canhámina
Dungal
Tanaf
Diattakounda
Sédhiou
Bignona
Zguinchor
Mpak
São Domingos
Ingoré
Barro
Jolmete
Cachéu
Susana
Varela
Cabrousse
Ousouye
Calequisse
Canchungo
Bula
Binar
Enchelá
Nhacra
Safim
Quinhámel
Prábis
Ilhas de Pecixe
Ilhjante
Caió
Ilha de Jata
Caravela
Ilha de Caravela
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Abu
Ilha de Bubaque
Bubaque
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Ilha de Formosa
Ilha de Bubaque
Ilha de Canogo
Ilha de Uno
Ilha de Meio
Ilha de Acha
Ilha de Changuzinho
Ilha de Cocoa
Ilha de Meio
Ilha de Cocos
Ilha de Tristão
Madina do Baixo
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Quebo
Tite
Fulacunda
Xitole
Enxudé
Porto Gole
Kime
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Mansaba
Cuntá
Mansôa
Bissorã
Olossato
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Bedanda
Cacine
Sangonha
Sangonhá
Sansalé
Kandiafara
Dabalaré
Kambéra
Fétiné
Vendu Ledi
Béli
Che Che
Boé
Koumbia
Fouta Mori
Gabuca
Uacaba
Bafatá
Gabú
Pitche
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Burunturma
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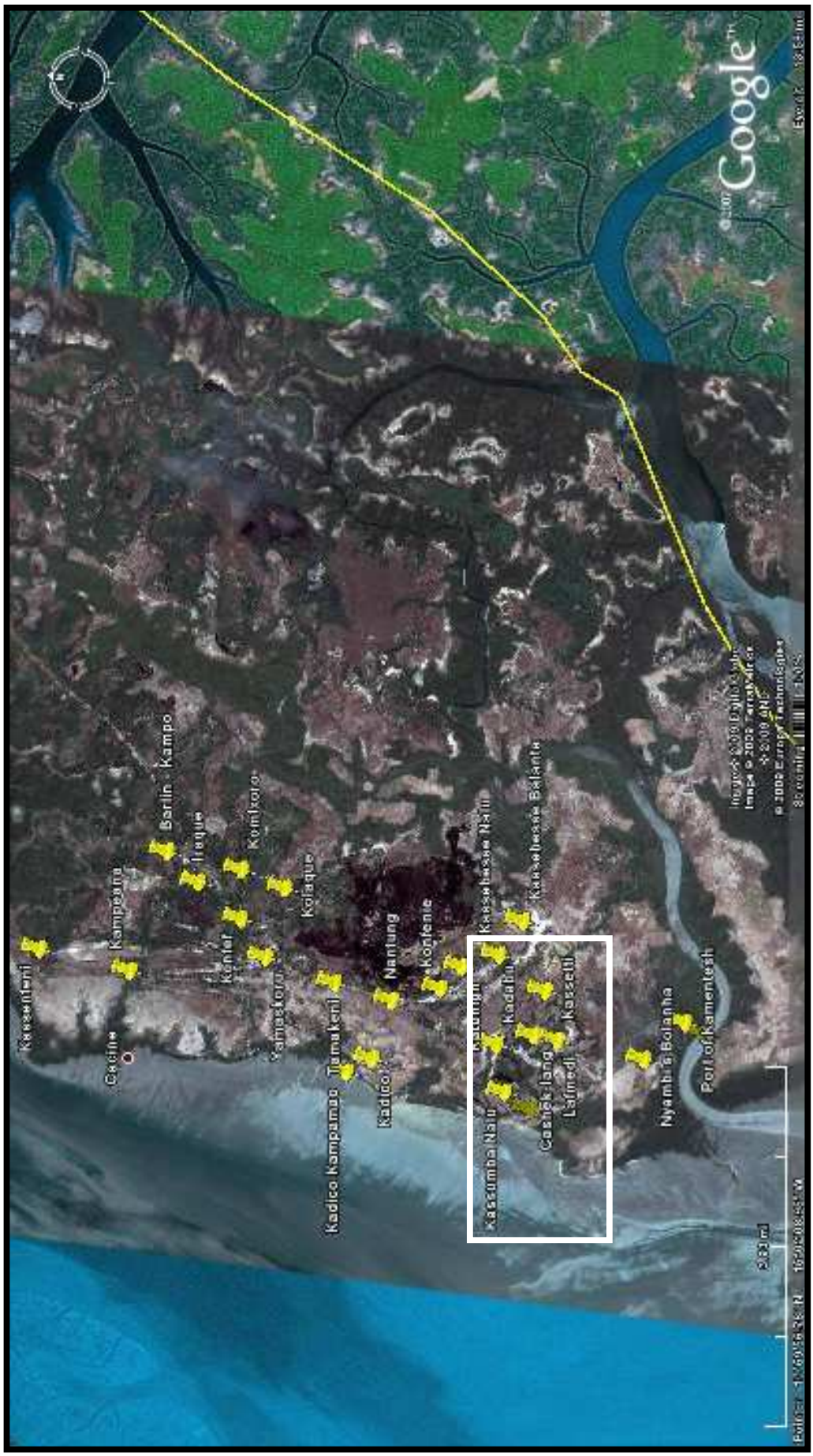

Figure 2. Map of Fieldwork Area

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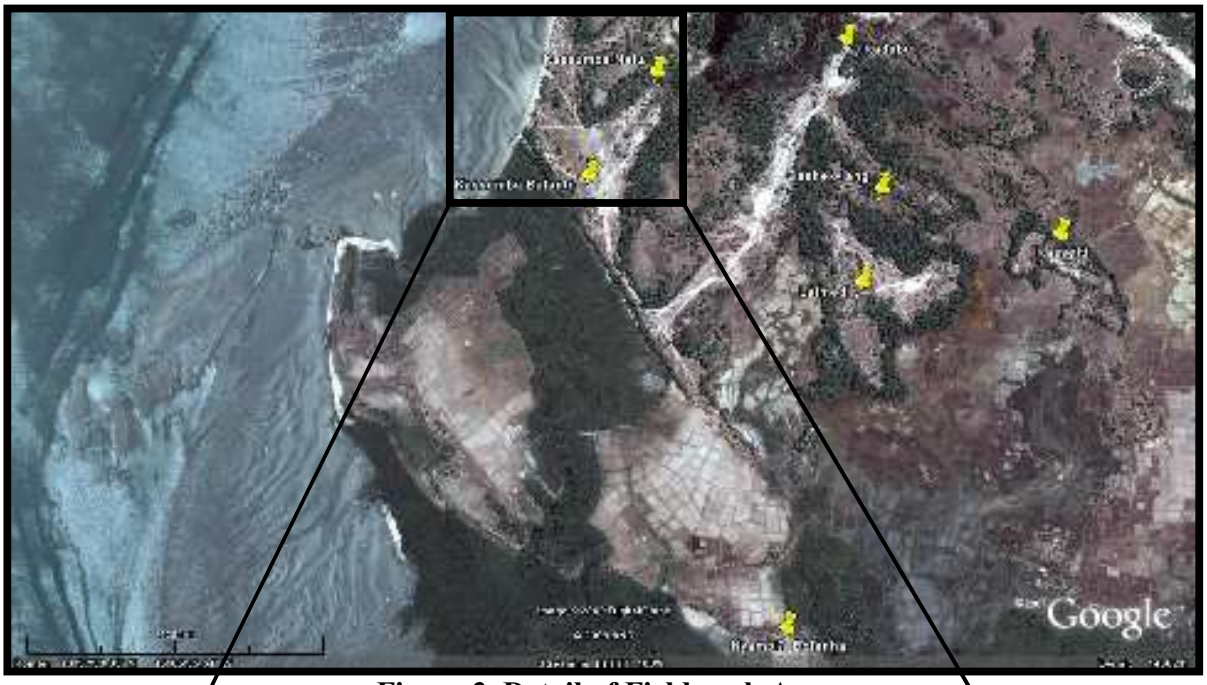

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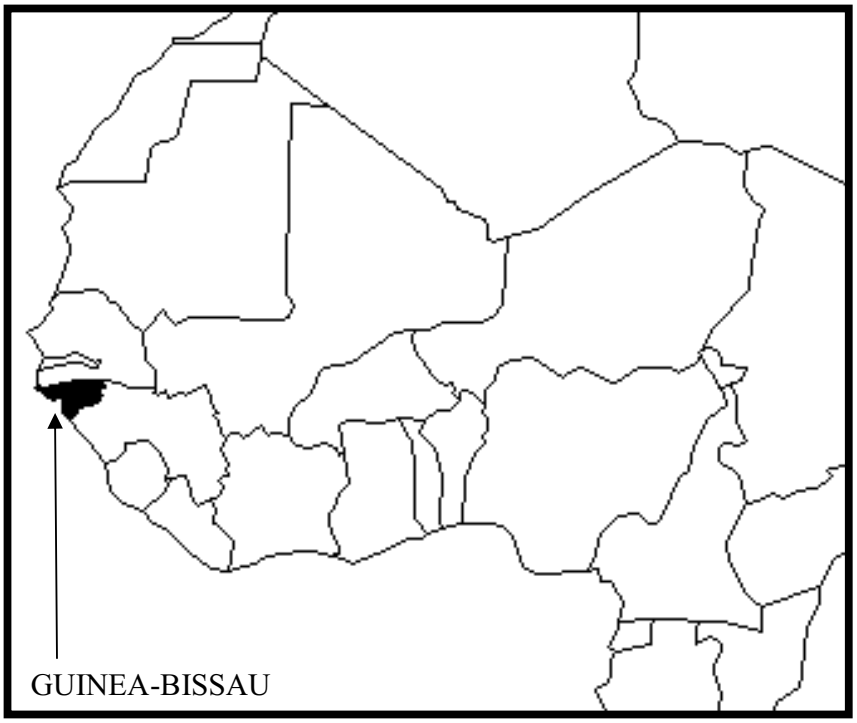
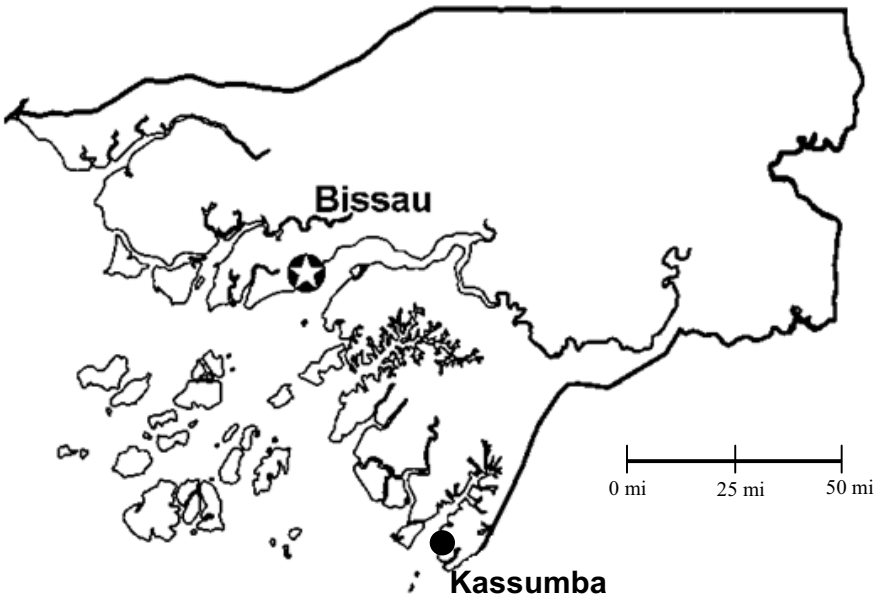


WEST AFRICA

Figure 5. Guinea-Bissau



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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Two things occurred on March 2, 2009 that confirmed the relevance and timeliness of my ethnographic study. First, a commentary published in the March 2009 *Anthropology News* by Priscilla Magrath emphasized the processual nature of "development approaches" (2009: 3), including most recently, what she calls "rights-based development" (See also, Welch & Meltzer 1984). Magrath emphasized how these approaches to development were converging in new ways. My multi-focused ethnographic community survey is intended to be used as a model for hybrid "development" aimed at improving the lives of the poor rural majority through the examination of economic encounters between those at the ground level and external pressures. As she and many others point out, anthropology has a lot to contribute to international development through ethnography and the appraisal of the policies and practices of those engaged in, and by, these national and foreign agencies (Edelman & Haugerud 2005; Hilhorst 2003; Li 2007; Mosse 2005; Sridhar 2008; Tsing 2005).

The second event taking place on March 2nd was the assassination of President João Bernardo Vieira of Guinea-Bissau (IRIN 2009a, 2009b). Unfortunately, political instability is nothing new for this country. Vieira usurped power in 1980 after a military coup, and in 2005, he was elected president under a campaign of economic development and national reconciliation.

Additionally, since the release of two reports by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2007 and 2008, Guinea-Bissau has been identified as an important transit point for illegal cocaine from the Andean Region (e.g., Columbia) of Latin America into Europe (See also, Ellis 2009). The country's numerous coastal islands and inlets along with defunct

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airstrips leftover from the independence movement against the Portuguese in the 1960s and 1970s makes Guinea-Bissau uniquely and strategically useful to drug smugglers. The weak, unstable national government also leaves the coast unguarded. The UNODC estimates that as much as 800 kilograms per day pass through this new narco-State, which is a significant proportion of the more than 300 tons making their way into Portugal and Spain each year.[1] In 2006 and 2007 alone, more than 1,309 kilograms of cocaine were seized off Guinea-Bissau's coast (UNODC 2008: 5).[2] Organized, armed, and with some special protections, members of the military are becoming involved in drug trafficking since the payment track record for civil servants is poor and threats and bribes are effective, which makes the business of drug running low-risk with high returns (UNODC 2008; International Crisis Group 2009: 13).

The rural populace of Guinea-Bissau continues to make a living in spite of these volatile political and economic developments. This research addresses household livelihood strategies or how people make a living in the low-lying, coastal mangroves of southwestern Guinea-Bissau, West Africa (see Figure 1 & Figure 5). The study proceeds from the premise that household economics are not only static, enduring, and predictable, based on previously successful endeavors, but also changing and flexible in reaction to pressures including political unrest, environmental changes, and globalization. Livelihoods, then, are best considered from the ground level as a multifaceted process unfolding over time and as a structural feature of local,

[1] "Based on an analysis of seizures in Europe where the origin was known, it is estimated that some 27 per cent (or some 40 tons) of the cocaine consumed annually in Europe is presently transiting West Africa. This amount is worth about US$ 1.8 billion at the wholesale level; more at street level" (UNODC 2008: 5).

[2] Also referencing the UNODC reports, Merrill Singer noted, "One of the largest cocaine seizures in Guinea-Bissau occurred on Spetember 26, 2006, when police in the capital arrested two men with Venezuelan passports who were in possession of 675 kilograms of cocaine. The local value of the seized cocaine can seen [*sic.*] by noting that an average year's income in the country is equivalent to the monetary value of just six grams of cocaine, while the total annual budget of the government of Guinea-Bissau is about equal to the wholesale value of 2,200 kilograms of cocaine in Europe. The confiscated drugs were locked in a safe in the national treasury but soon disappeared. They were taken by men in army uniforms who reported they had to weigh the drugs" (2008: 48).

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regional, and global economies. Periods of economic stability and change should be observable both historically and ethnographically.

My study has four primary aims. First, I wish to ground the development dialogue at the local level, which is best accomplished through ethnography. It has recently been suggested that anthropologists should move away from ethnography rooted in socio-historical particulars opting instead to understand "how that place-in-the-world functions in a wider categorical system and what this means for the way we understand an increasingly transnational political, economic, and social 'global order'" (Ferguson 2006: 5). I would like to suggest that this work accomplishes both – demonstrating how localized communities and social realities must be considered as discrete while at the same time, indicating how ground-level encounters can inform "interrogations of globalization, modernity, worldwide inequality, and social justice" (Ferguson 2006).

Second, this research is proposed as a model showing how communities can promote economic advances through a focus on their particular advantages in comparison with the rest of the world. I describe this niche-based approach as re-agrarianization in which returning to those economic activities with a proven track-record may spark a "revolution" in which communities begin to fulfill their own needs and economic growth potential. Once the patterns of global oppression are slowed in developing nations, their natural advantages will surface. For example, in Guinea-Bissau, national and global pressures such as overfishing and the bottoming out of cashew prices in 2006 and 2007 have forced the rural civil society to look to each other and to rely less on outwardly-oriented market economic endeavors to make a living. These changes to their economic structure, whether purposefully modified or not, may eventually prove advantageous when dealing with similar processes in the future. Economic flexibility at both the

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community and household level is helping them to meet subsistence needs first and then engage in other more capitalistic activities on their own terms.

Third, although not the original intent, this thesis has become a policy paper in which I advance recommendations for possible economic improvements in the community under study. Through ethnographic methodologies, I have been privy to local needs and potential ways of meeting them. As a result, I have concluded that small, cost-effective, and incremental changes in several key economic spheres should prove to have a greater positive impact on the lives of community members when compared with traditional development approaches. Possible economic initiatives were determined in collaboration with the community through an ethnoeconomic approach considering the individual, the wider social and political perspective, and history (i.e., how did these particular conditions and resources come to be at hand). "Fully appreciating the power of each of these perspectives (agentive, structural, and historical) within a single account is the necessary but elusive goal of any proper social theory" (Frake 1998: 41).

I wish to make an important note here. I was not funded by, nor did I work with, any government or international agencies. I was not asked for any recommendations or ideas about potential development programs by officials; nonetheless, I was asked by community members to collaborate on a number of palm oil, fishing (See Appendix I), and rice projects since I was recognized as a potential resource with outside contacts. Throughout this thesis, I take the liberty of advancing recommendations based on my conversations, observations, and readings. I do not wish to look pretentious and would like to acknowledge those Guinea-Bissauans and other experts who have developed successful initiatives for the country and its civil society. I feel, however, that one of the strengths of anthropology is its applicability to ground level needs

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assessment (Peace Corps 1996; Pitt 1976; Schwimmer & Warren 1993).[3] Therefore, this thesis, and a Portuguese summary of it, will be made available to both the National Research Institute in Bissau (INEP) and the residents of Kassumba. If anyone is interested in looking more closely at any of the proposals herein, I will do everything in my power to help in whatever capacity we see fit. My proposed recommendations are based solely on my own understanding of the dynamics of "both the microsystem and the macrosystem" (Stevens 1978a: 3; See also, Stevens 1978c). I have limited technical expertise.

The fourth aim of this research project is to advance the transdisciplinary understanding of the relationship between the archives, contemporary record, and the field, an endeavor already shown to be a valid and useful approach to social research (Axel 2002; Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Wolf 1997). Through the use of historical and contemporary sources, I am better equipped to advance the first three aims. To illustrate my point, in Chapter Seven I describe how the residends of Kassumba are returning to growing rice for both domestic consumption and export. However, it is only through a search of the historical records that I found evidence that Guinea-Bissauans were exporting rice to the drought-ridden Cape Verdean Islands hundreds of years ago under Portuguese impetus. Although my ethnographic data provides an accurate account of the community under study, it is limited both spatially and temporally. Through the use of histories – local, ethnic, religious, and national – structural trends are more easily discerned and accounted for in the research. My own ethnographic data is then added to those coming before in order to provide a more detailed description of patterns and processes taking place in Guinea-Bissau.

The above aims are accomplished in this work. The ethnographic material is derived almost exclusively from my own fieldwork. In addition, I draw heavily upon the literature of

[3] Phillips Stevens Jr. points out, "From our training in social and cultural systems we think we are uniquely equipped to assess the social impact and implications of projects which seem likely to precipitate rapid social change" (1978a: 1; See also, Stevens 1978c).

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Guinea-Bissau to support my arguments, ground my observations, and illuminate junctures of economic stability, change, and flexibility where possible. I also note relevant differences between my own explanatory paradigm and those theoretical premises of other Guinea-Bissauanist scholars.

In light of recent events in Guinea-Bissau, it is considerably more important to understand how rural civil society is making a living and realizing their place in the world by integrating their livelihoods and cultural identities. I chose this research problem to better understand human resilience and initiative in the face of adversity; there is no place on earch suffering from greater hardships than the continent of Africa and nowhere that has more people demonstrating economic resourcefulness. My research illustrates economic expertise in Africa by focusing on a particular community.

FIELDWORK

I believe that there is no better microcosm for African social research than that of Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. I could fill several volumes with arguments attesting to its applicability to, and similarities with, the rest of the African continent, and then fill several more volumes with descriptions of its unique histories and contemporary social practices. This task, however, has already been undertaken by numerous exceptional historians, political scientists, ethnographers, and other social scientists, of which the spirit of arguably the two most famous, Amílcar Cabral and Walter Rodney, help inform the theoretical premises of this thesis.

The editor of the most comprehensive and informative work about the origins of the peoples of the Guinea Coast, Gérald Gaillard, was recently contacted by the book's publisher.

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They expressed their delight that since its publication in 2000, this edited volume has consistently increased in sales every year suggesting that Guinea-Bissau has been recognized by social theorists as an interesting and applicable case for a variety of research initiatives.

My fascination with Guinea-Bissau grew out of my U.S. Peace Corps[4] experience as a community development volunteer teaching computers from 1999 to 2001 on the West African island nation of Cape Verde. These two countries' histories are inexorably linked beginning with Portuguese encounters in the fifteenth century. Portuguese slaving and trade routes connected the Cape Verde island base with the mainland. Eventually, however, Portuguese influence and territory in West Africa diminished until Luso-African colonialists held only a small slice of the Upper Guinea Coast. Additionally, these two countries' close relationship was demonstrated through their joint armed struggle against their Portuguese imperialists. This fifteen year conflict in which full independence was achieved by 1975 was followed a few years later by a coup d'état. A military dictator assumed control over Guinea-Bissau for the next eighteen years, abruptly severing the long-standing relations between the two countries. The dictator was eventually overthrown in 1999, but by 2006, he reassumed control of Guinea-Bissau through democratic elections.[5]

Economically, very little infrastructure is observable beyond the capital city of Bissau, which itself is in a state of deterioration and frantic commerce. Rural communities are largely left to their own devices. Civil society is an amalgam of ethnic groups, religious sects, refugees, and passers-by. Interestingly, however, even on the margins of this piecemeal country, the

[4] For a discussion of the influence of the U.S. Peace Corps on the careers (Stevens 1993) and discipline of Anthropology, See Schwimmer & Warren (1993).

[5] For a discussion of the military's role in African politics, See Welch (1970, 1987). According to Claude E. Welch, Jr., "Political choice has been circumscribed by the heritage of struggle, the interests of the armed forces, and ethnic and regional factors . . . the aspirations far outstrip the accomplishments" (Welch 1995: 5).

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population shares a national identity that works its way into political discourse and economic exchanges. As a result, a cooperative economic strategy is now observable among Guinea-Bissau's rural civil society, especially when changes to household livelihood strategies are underway as a result of the fluid political-economic milieu. I chose to conduct fieldwork on household livelihood strategies and development alternatives in Guinea-Bissau when I was confronted with these unique circumstances.

In April 2006, I organized and hosted a symposium in Buffalo, NY. I invited a number of Guinea-Bissauanists for a one day conference to learn about the most up-to-date social research taking place in the country as well as to discuss the feasibility of my own project on cultural identity and economics. The success of the symposium led me to spend a month in France at USTL before traveling to Guinea-Bissau. During my stay in Lille, and with the help of my co-advisor, I reconsidered my field site and ethnographic problem. I eventually settled on the topic of household livelihood strategies in an isolated village in the southwestern part of the country sharing a border with Guinea Conakry. My co-advisor was familiar with this sight; he suggested that Kassumba would make an exceptional study and that little had been previously written about the area or the people who inhabited it. This border village allowed me to consider regional economic processes from a localized perspective. In other words, what role did Kassumba residents play in the perpetuation of personal, small-scale, economies outside the purview of state controls? And, how did these exchange activities affect production and consumption at the ground level?

After gaining permission to conduct social research from the director of the National Research Institute (INEP) in the capital city of Bissau in February 2007, I traveled south to the

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village of Kassumba where I set up residency with a local family in the neighborhood of Kassumba Nalú. I spent the next eight months carrying out my fieldwork.

FIELD SITE

My field site was primarily the village of Kassumba, which was made up of 689 people divided between six neighborhoods in the southernmost Quitáfine (i.e., Cacine) Sector of the southwestern Tombali Region of Guinea-Bissau (See Figure 1). I also conducted research within an approximately twelve to fifteen mile radius including the villages of Kassebesse, Kadico, Katunigh, Iraque, and many others (See Figure 2). The Tombali Region has seven percent of Guinea-Bissau's total population (INEC 2007). The ethnic make-up of the village of Kassumba is a majority immigrant spiritist Balanta who live in four homogenous neighborhoods. The smaller Islamic Nalú population resides in the other two neighborhoods making up the village along with one Fula family and a few other ethnically diverse traders-in-residence.

The geography of Kassumba is characterized by low-lying alluvial mud deposits neatly divided into rice paddies; mangrove swamps; and arid, sandy expanses with intermittent palm groves and cashew and fruit trees. The village is situated next to the Cacine River with several meandering inlets and flood plains. The landscape supports lightly populated small- to medium-sized villages.

A dirt road makes its way from the capital of Bissau to the village of Iraque. From there, the approximately fifteen kilometers to Kassumba can be traversed by vehicle, however, deep sand, narrow paths, and standing water make it difficult during much of the year. The primary means of transportation for those entering the village of Kassumba are by bicycle, foot, or canoe.

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My main source of transportation was a bicycle purchased in Bissau, although I walked to most research locations.

I chose this area primarily because of its remoteness and lack of large-scale development, development projects, and aid initiatives. Due to its location along a major river, nearness to Guinea Conakry, influx of immigrants, and spiritual centeredness for the Nalú ethnic group, I felt Kassumba was a unique community. As a traditional spiritual center for the Nalú as well as the location of the second largest beach in the country, Kassumba intermittently serves as a focal point for the dissemination of information and outside influences making their way into the area. At the same time, Kassumba residents can be seen as representative of Guinea-Bissau's rural civil society since they share many characteristics with the rest of the populace including a reliance on agricultural production, similar environment, common language, and national history.

Kassumba residents frequently traveled to the larger market villages and towns of Iraque, Kassaka, and Cacine to socialize, go to mosque, attend school, and shop for and trade locally produced and imported goods. Travelers bound for Guinea Conakry occasionally passed through Kassumba while waiting for a pirogue at one of the local ports as well. The First of May celebration brought revelers from throughout the region into this tiny hamlet. Otherwise, the difficulties and daily grind of an agricultural rural village permeated this locale. Finally, infrastructurally, the village of Kassumba contained several wells, a community school, mosque, dance hall, health center, and was in the process of building guest residences in 2007.

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Linguistic Note

Eight languages can be overheard in the village of Kassumba. There are two primary languages of communication: Krioulu of Guinea-Bissau and Susu, an assimilated ethnic language crossing over the border from Guinea Conakry. Krioulu originated as a trade language and is a Portuguese-based Creole. There are more than 600,000 first- or second-language users of Krioulu worldwide and if you factor in Cape Verdean Creole, which is at least fifty-nine percent lexically similar, this number is closer to two million speakers. This language is also known as Kiryol, Kriulo, Guinea-Bissau Creole, and Caboverdiano. Guinea-Bissauan dialects include Bissau-Bolama Creole, Bafatá Creole, and Cacheu-Ziguinchor Creole (Gordon 2005). I conducted almost all of my research using Krioulu without the need of a translator. I originally learned Krioulu while living on the island of Santiago in Cape Verde from June 1999 through September 2001.

Throughout this work, italicized foreign words are in Krioulu unless otherwise specified. The spelling for these words come from Luigi Scantamburlo's *Dicionário do Guineense: Dicionário Guineense-Português (Disionariu Guinensi-Purtuguis)*, Volume 2 (2003). Scnatamburlo has compiled and published the most comprehensive work on the Krioulu language of Guinea-Bissau to date. Volume One, *Dicionário do Guineense: Introdução e Notas Gramaticais* (1999), is a complete history and grammar of the language, while Volume Two houses a thorough lexicon.

Susu, primarily a language of Guinea Conakry, has more than one million speakers worldwide. It is also known as Soso, Susoo, Soussou, and Sose. This language has almost entirely replaced the Nalú ethnic language. Nalú or Nalou is a language supposedly spoken by

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approximately 10,000 people in Guinea-Bissau and slightly more than 25,000 worldwide. In fact, due to intermarriage, proximity to other ethnic groups, and Islamization, today the language is mainly used by elders, particularly during their traditional religious ceremonies and rituals. Use of this ethnic language has all but disappeared among the Nalú youth of Kassumba. When I discussed the disappearance of their language, they articulated a lack of concern due to its poor accessibility by outsiders and its complexity. I was told that if I recorded Nalú, and then returned to show it to future generations, they would not even recognize it.

Portuguese is the official language of Guinea-Bissau. Primary and even secondary schools, however, teach in Krioulu, albeit a more Portuguese-influenced variety. The Balanta ethnic language is also spoken in Kassumba. More than 400,000 people speak this language and are almost exclusively located in Guinea-Bissau. This language has a number of variants, dialects, and alternate names. French, Fula (i.e., Pular), and Arabic are also spoken in the village of Kassumba along with the sporadic appearance of a number of others.

My research relied on self disclosure. Code switching between languages was common in Kassumba. If respondents and interviewees did not wish to share certain information with me, they simply spoke in a language that I was unfamiliar, particularly Susu. Since my time in Kassumba was relatively short, I learned only greetings and some simple vocabulary in Susu, Nalú, and Balanta. I augmented this shared discourse with observations and interactions of my own.

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Cultural Consultants

My research was enhanced by the assistance of a number of cultural consultants. I conducted household surveys with the help of both a Balanta and a Nalú assistant who acted as cultural and linguistic translators when necessary. They also aided me in gaining access, building rapport, and reaching difficult to find households and communities.

My Balanta consultant was in his late twenties and was originally from the Catió Sector where his family had been resettled by the government after returning to Guinea-Bissau from Senegal at the conclusion of the armed struggle for independence. He arrived in Kassumba Nalú in March 2007 where he took up residence with a local family and served as the community's D.J. at their local dance hall when his small generator was functioning. He had grown up in a similar community divided between Balanta and Nalú in a separate part of the country and had valuable insight into the ethnic dynamic of Kassumba as well as providing unique knowledge as both a cultural insider and community outsider.

My Nalú assistant was an eighteen year old youth who had gone to school with, lived among, and worked beside, both the Nalú and the Balanta of Kassumba. He was born and raised in Kassumba while his mother's family owned land and an extensive orchard in neighboring Katunigh. He taught me about palm and cashew harvesting and was the first to show me the lay of the land.

I also worked long hours with several market women from a Nalú household of Kassumba. I labored in the rice fields of the local Kassumba schoolteacher along with his two eldest sons. This entire household, of which these women and the schoolteacher belonged, took me into their home as a guest and acted as key cultural consultants for my research project. I

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relied on this family to talk through my daily observations and to get further clarification. I also spent countless hours interviewing Nalú, Balanta, and Fula elders, community leaders, and heads of households.

METHODS

This research focuses on a small village of less than one thousand inhabitants. My methodology included both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques in order to gather as much information as possible in a fairly short period of time. For example, households were surveyed based on compound conglomerates made up of between one and eight houses. Due to the village's size, I was able to survey one-hundred percent of the households. My sample population for the remainder of my methods was defined in collaboration between myself and the study participants. Purposeful or judgment sampling (Bernard 1995: 95-96; Maxwell 1996: 70) was used to find "people who are uniquely able to be informative because they are expert in an area or were privileged witnesses to an event" (Weiss 1994: 17). I built my pool of consultants from trial and error in the ethnographic setting, eventually identifying individuals and families who were best suited for particular lines of inquiry such as elders, shopkeepers, local producers, and traders.

As household economic strategies emerged, I sought out individuals and households involved in those activities for observation and interviews. I identified spheres of activity in relation to the participants involved in order to both describe and participate in the cultural practices. This helped me discern peoples' positions within society based upon their economic endeavors, cultural identities, and the relationships between the two.

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This research documents what was previously referred to as "informal" or "shadow" economies, which generally means unregistered or unsanctioned economic activities occurring outside of state control or similarly authorized collection and redistribution agencies (e.g., illegal drugs). Guinea-Bissau, often described in the literature as a weak state (Forrest 2003), has been shown to have similar political and economic arrangements beyond the purview of the state (Ferguson 2006). In disagreement with this idea, my research demonstrates that rural civil society has specific local rules and understood regulations that are simply not documented nor regulated by the national government. The challenge, then, becomes tracing these local money matters.

More accurately, the types of economic transactions taking place in Guinea-Bissau can be described as what the philosopher Alain Badiou calls "the ethics of economic necessity (consumer politics)" (Barker 2002: 137). Badiou reasons, "Subject and event come into being at the same time. . . The subject defines itself by binding itself approvingly to the demand that the good makes on it" (Critchley 2005: 221). In other words, ethics are situationally based. This is significant for economic exchanges in the sense that something can come out of these transactions such as a shared sense of cultural identity, cooperation, and empathy, all of which may lead to further transactions and economic stability and even growth. These ideas will be explored further in Chapter Three.

This interplay or dialectic between practice and theory is nothing new in social research (Bourdieu 1977; Certeau 1984). Situational ethics in relation to economic necessity, however, provides the proper motivation to help the ethnographer understand the rationale behind particular household strategies. The ethics of economic necessity are derivatives of the contextual social situation, historical background, and structural inevitabilities.

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I selected individuals, households, and institutions representative of various statuses, classes, ethnicities, genders, and domains and spheres of interactions and treated them as both unique cases and representative anecdotes. Again, this allowed me to document instances where situations were fashioned and translatable by the actors involved, both indigenous and foreign.

For several reasons, I made the conscious decision not to change the names of the villages or people under investigation throughout this document. The use of pseudonyms would potentially damage the ethnographic and historic integrity of the study. Village names are valuable clues indicating linguistic archetypes, settlement patterns, land-use and patrimony, and also hint at additional ecological relations between people and their environment. Nalú family names help trace lineages and settlement relations. Family and place names are an important part of the localized historical record by being written onto the landscape. They are also used to label the spiritual protectors of each family. These names continue to play a significant role in Nalú contemporary secret societies and traditional religion. At the same time, changes to their names reflect the affects of religious conversion, colonialism, ethnic heterogeneity, and popular cultural trends.

Although I often use real names in this thesis, I protected the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of my respondants and cultural consultants in a number of ways. Due to the low literacy rates, I obtained oral informed consent from all research participants face to face during all phases of the research. In other words, I asked permission to use conversations, observations, photographs, etc., and I constantly explained the aims, objectives, and potential implications of my investigation to the community. In addition, I regularly use nicknames throughout the thesis, refer to people by their first names only, or simply do not indicate the actors involved in particularly difficult situations. When describing something potentially uncomfortable or

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harmful to the community or people under investigation, I only report incidences that were satisfactorily resolved, or I generalize the event. Throughout my fieldwork, I emphasized the participants' rights to discontinue involvement with the study at any time with no penalty. I used no coercion or undue influence to gain participants. Participation was completely voluntary. There was no attrition of participants.

Two main limitations to this study have been identified. First, comparisons and generalizations are difficult when a single community is being considered. What is gained from this type of research design, however, is a more nuanced depth of knowledge, what Clifford Geertz refers to as "thick description" (1973: 3-30). In addition, although this is an ethnography, I am able to make some comparisons based on religio-ethnic differences between households, neighborhoods, and ethnicities within the community under study. Second, since only one year was investigated, this data provides an accurate seasonal account but cannot confirm more general temporal patterns. This was somewhat overcome by examining historical records and by collecting oral histories as well as survey data about the previous year's activities.

This presentation is based on an understanding of economic development at the local level as a process of cultural change, stability, and flexibility. I spent countless hours interviewing and interacting with Kassumba residents, and I am confident that what follows is an accurate representation of their practices, knowledge, beliefs, feelings, and economics.

My methodology was designed to provide a detailed picture of household livelihood strategies (i.e., how members of a household economically support one another). I sought to focus my initiatives at the village level to provide a greater depth of understanding in the practice of everyday livelihoods in Kassumba. These micro level observations provided a glimpse of both continuity in, and changes to, peoples' lives, possibly at the expense of missing larger scale

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influences and pressures. This is, however, a shortfall somewhat overcome by the additional perspectives provided by other social theorists. In addition, there is no shortage of diversity at the village level due to its ethnic and religious heterogeneity between the neighborhoods found there; this diversity is a valuable tool for comparisons. In order to address the fluid and adaptive nature of the observed economic practices, I rely on both temporality and context to understand the relationship between Kassumba residents, their environment, and the larger political economy.

Participant Observation

This method, with ethnographic roots dating back to Malinowski, has been revised by Barbara Tedlock as the "observation of participation," where the researcher uses "everyday social skills in simultaneously experiencing and observing their own and others' interactions within various settings" (1992: XIII). Upon identifying the various economic activities taking place in Kassumba, I participated in each to various degrees of success. For example, I helped prepare several rice fields for planting alongside Kassumba residents although I completed only one furrow to each of their three. After a day of activities – during which I would jot down scratch notes where, and whenever possible – I would write up my fieldnotes at the end of the day.

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Household Surveys

A total of forty-eight surveys, forty-one of which represented one-hundred percent of all the households in the village, were carried out to collect profile data on residents' sex, age, ethnicity, religion, education level and literacy, profession, wealth, and relationship to head-of-household, as well as economic data on house construction, land usage, gathering and agricultural practices, the raising of livestock, and household cost of living data. The survey was a modified form of a World Bank and Economic and Finance Ministry of Guinea Bissau questionnaire titled "*Inquérito Ligeiro Junto Às Familias*" (Joint Family Survey). Irrelevant and redundant questions were removed leaving a simplified household survey (See Appendix IV).

I administered all of the questions orally in Krioulu and then documented the responses with the aid of either a Balanta or Nalú assistant depending on the ethnicity of the household being surveyed. The average number of houses encompassed in a single survey was three while the number of residents per compound averaged eighteen. The survey was conducted with the head of household whenever possible; otherwise, a younger literate male was selected to answer. All surveys took place outside on the residents' verandas near outdoor activities such as cooking, making palm oil, and washing laundry. In general, anyone within earshot of the survey freely supplied answers to the questions posed, which increased the accuracy of the information being provided. In addition, other heads of particular houses within a compound were often consulted by the respondent to supply accurate answers, and then the compound totals were tabulated jointly. Redundancy was built into the survey as a way to verify response accuracy.

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Formal Interviews

I carried out thirteen one-hour (approximately) digitally recorded interviews with community leaders and elders from Kassumba and the surrounding area. These interviews provided a range of information on cultural practices, local history, politics, and household economics. All except one of these interviews were done in the Krioulu language without the use of a translator. One interview with a Balanta elder was conducted in Balanta and simultaneously translated into Krioulu by my assistant. Payment for these interviews was usually a small token such as tobacco, help collecting fruit for a few hours in their orchards, or photographs of them and their family.

Informal Interviews

Countless hours of informal conversations with local residents took place during the fieldwork period on a range of topics. Usually, these conversations occurred while traveling to and from local markets or other significant events in neighboring towns and villages, over meals, during local production such as the making of palm oil or collecting fruit, over meals or meal preparation, or during periods of leisure. Some of these conversations were documented on scratch notes, in fieldnotes, or have simply been recalled from headnotes during the write-up phase of this project. When possible, the conversations have been documented word for word. Otherwise, they have been paraphrased as accurately as possible.

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Genealogy

Six kinship charts were collected during my first two weeks in the field detailing the Keita, Kamara, and Sylla families of Kassumba Nalú. This method helped me build rapport with neighbors and it helped me understand the complex social organization of the residents. These three founding families of this village are very important since their ancestors and family spirits still hold sway over the landscape through the power of the sacred forest (*baloba*). As first settlers to this area, these families are the socially sanctioned landowners (See Chapter Two).

Focus Groups

I ran two focus groups, one with the young males and one with the young females of Kassumba Nalú. Many of the questions discussed were modeled after the Peace Corps' "PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action" manual (Peace Corps 1996). Questions posed included: (1) Describe a typical day in Kassumba? (2) What does the community of Kassumba need most? (3) What are the reasons for staying or living in Kassumba? (4) Why would you leave Kassumba?

Formal Observations

I conducted thirty formal observations throughout the neighborhood of Kassumba Nalú in order to get glimpses into household activities at randomized times of the day. Each household was assigned a number (1-7) and then times throughout the day in two hour intervals beginning

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at 7:00 AM and ending at 9:00 PM (1-8). Each day over a one month period (June), a time and household were selected at random for observation. This method was discontinued for two reasons. First, during many of the randomized times and places, no activities were occurring. Second, other potentially more informative activities were often simultaneously going on outside of the purview of the formal observation area.

Food Diary

I kept a food diary for seventy-four days (June-August) in order to more accurately document food consumption patterns by the residents of Kassumba Nalú. I resided with a typical Nalú family over this three month period and ate most of my meals with the family. I paid the family an additional 2,000 XOF ($4) per month for the added food expenses. These months coincided with the end of the dry season at which time food stocks are low for the residents of southern Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, consumption patterns are most likely at or below daily averages for the rest of the year.

Photographs & Digital Video

I also took photographs and video to inform this study acting "as a control factor for descriptions made from visual observations" (Crane & Angrosino 1992: 160). These photographs helped me build rapport as well; I distributed them as small gifts to research participants. Photographs and video provided visual documentation of the material culture, everyday activities, rituals, festivals, social networks, and other relevant incidents. I have

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included some photos in Appendix III that correspond to both chapter topics and important themes in the work.

Technological Note

I traveled to Kassumba with several pieces of equipment that I felt would be particularly useful. I took a laptop, solar panel, rechargeable battery, digital camera, digital voice recorder, and digital camcorder. The rechargeable battery, however, was unable to fully charge off the solar panel and often only gave me enough time to dump digital media onto the laptop before running out of energy. Therefore, much of my research was still conducted with a notebook and pen. Luckily, I purchased "Rite in the Rain" All-Weather Journal notebooks since on several occasions, I was caught without shelter in sudden downpours during the rainy season. I also had an incident while crossing a small inlet. I slipped and fell with my notebook in my pocket. Thanks to these notebooks, no data was lost.

BACKGROUND

The small, West African, Lusophone country of Guinea-Bissau is an ideal site to study the role of identification patterns in relation to household livelihood strategies. Guinea-Bissau has approximately thirty-three different ethnic groups, the five largest being the Balanta, Fula, Mandinka, Manjako, and Papel (Davidson 2002: 419, 2003: 53; MacQueen 2003: 22). The remaining ethnic groups account for approximately seventeen percent of the population. The inhabitants of this region are often described in the literature as refugees that were driven from

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their homelands in the interior Futa Jalon (Rodney 1970: 8). The mixed population is most likely a result of the Mali Empire's southward push during the eleventh century, and, by the thirteenth century, Fula invasions from the east. These ethnic groups are "marked by a particular identity, history, language, cultural traits, and other distinct social features" (Forrest 2003: 28). Overlapping history and cultural traditions such as the shared Krioulu language, however, suggest complex webs of "multiethnic alliances, social linkages, and political ties" (Forrest 2003: 28).

The religious affiliation of Guinea-Bissau's population is documented to be fifty percent indigenous beliefs, forty-five percent Muslim, and five percent Christian, although overlap between these three belief systems is probably much closer to reality.[6] Pre-colonial European competition, Portuguese colonial rule, and subsequent independence have inspired a proliferation of alternative memberships beyond religious or ethnic identification. One such alternative, nationalism and subsequent national political attachment, is an excellent example of how re-negotiating cultural identity can have positive or negative outcomes: inspiring unity and economic cooperation (See Chapter Three) or, inspiring disastrous instances of nepotism, corruption, and ethnic favoritism.

[6] For example, historian George E. Brooks suggests that the coastal riverine Africans of Guinea-Bissau had land-based commercial relations with Mande-speaking groups, including Muslim traders, before the arrival of Europeans from the Atlantic in the mid-fifteenth century. And yet, "Their social and cultural patterns continued largely unchanged down to the present century. Indeed, Muslim Mandinka and Portuguese and Luso-African Christians alike evinced great respect – oftentimes expressing fear and awe – for the spiritual practices of coastal-riverine groups, and frequently had recourse to their religious specialists for a variety of purposes: for establishing social relations, for ratifying commercial agreements, for mediation with local spirits, and for medical and spiritual healing" (1984: 12). Brooks implies that the Portuguese pre-colonial explorers and later colonial officials of Guinea-Bissau were generally reputed to be neglectful of their religious obligations toward themselves and their colonized populations. Few colonial administrators attended mass, observed holy days of obligation, or consecrated Christian marriages (1984: 19; See also, Rodney 1970: 143). Economic exploitation, above all else, was the dominant Portuguese policy throughout their tenure in Guinea-Bissau. For example, the anti-slavery Spanish Capuchin missionaries were recalled in 1686 and replaced by more amenable Portuguese Franciscans (Brooks 2003: 165; Rodney 1970: 104-105, 143-144).

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Overview

The population size of Guinea Bissau is approximately 1.5 million people,[7] often affording it the label "microstate" in the literature (Bartmann 2002). The country covers an area of 36,120 square kilometers (See Figure 1). Achieving independence from Portugal on September 14, 1974, the nation-state of Guinea-Bissau continues to undergo turbulent political instability.

Although 2005 saw a return to multiparty, democratic elections in the country, newly sworn-in President João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira previously served as an authoritarian dictator of Guinea-Bissau for nineteen years after his successful 1980 coup d'état overthrowing Luís Cabral.[8] Coups and attempted coups, military putsches, and a 1998 war, which was fought over policy concerns in Senegal's Casamance Region sharing cross-border ethnic affinities with Guinea-Bissau, consistently interrupt the political process (Lobban and Mendy 1997; MacQueen 2003). Vieira's return to leadership in Guinea-Bissau was under campaign promises of

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[7] According to the 2002 International Monetary Fund (IMF) website (http://www.imf.org), the last general population and housing census covering the entire national territory of Guinea-Bissau dates back to February 1991. The CIA World Factbook estimates the population for Guinea-Bissau at 1,503,182 (2008) while the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC; *Instituto Nacional de Estatística e Censos*) estimates the 2007 population at 1,389,497. The Tombali Region was estimated to have 97,557 inhabitants in 2007 by INEC.

[8] "As tensions developed during the late seventies, some Guinean PAIGC members in Bissau became wary of the high proportion of people of Cape Verdean origin in the Bissau-based government and played up their history of social advantages. Luiz Cabral's inability to grapple effectively with this issue contributed substantially to growing popular discontent, particularly in Bissau. The PAIGC lacked a strong, popular leader of Amílcar Cabral's stature to overcome this growing tension. He had been the main driving force of bi-nationalist unity between the two countries, and now there was no high-level party cadre who was able to stall the rise of anti-Cape Verdean sentiment. In 1980, resentment against Cape Verdeans in the PAIGC was exacerbated when the party began to formulate national constitutional proposals which specified that Cape Verde's president should be Cape Verdean while introducing no restrictions for Guinea-Bissau's president – a clear signal of potential continued Cape Verdean control in Bissau. Taking advantage of immediate hardships caused by severe rice shortages in the capital city, João Bernardo (Nino) Vieira, the prime minister and military commander, organised support groups with the armed forces and successfully carried out a virtually bloodless coup d'état. This move would produce an end to the relationship between Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, while also resulting in the ousting of many Guineans of Cape Verdean origin from top positions within the Bissau regime (Forrest 2002: 251).

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economic development and national reconciliation, neither of which materialized between 2005 and 2009. Vieira was eventually murdered on March 2, 2009 at the presidential palace in what was presumed to be in retaliation of the killing of Army Chief of Staff General Tagme Na Wai the previous day (IRIN 2009a, 2009b). Several unnamed sources speculate that these killings may be drug related. Political unrest is not helping the country's economic performance.

Today, Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranks 171 out of the 179 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index of 2008 (http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/). Guinea-Bissau's poor infrastructure and crippled economy are a result of its tumultuous past including fifty-nine years of Portuguese colonial rule followed by three decades of national instability. As of 2002, mining played an insignificant role in the country's economy although future mineral potential includes phosphate deposits in Farim District, bauxite from Boé District, diamonds, and offshore oil (Bermúdez-Lugo 2002). Agriculture continues to dominate the economy of Guinea-Bissau. Rice is the country's main staple crop (See Chapter Seven) while Guinea-Bissau's production and export of cashew nuts consistently ranks in the top ten in the world (See Chapter Five). The 1998 war led to a twenty-eight percent drop in the country's GDP. With a poor economic track record, international aid continues to try and prop up Guinea-Bissau's re-stabilization efforts.

Geography

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is a small West African country bisected by numerous rivers. It is part of a geographic region spanning from the Gambia to Cape Mount known as the Upper Guinea Coast or, according to the Portuguese, the rivers of the Guinea of Cape Verde

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(Brooks 2003: 4; Rodney 1970: 1-2). The *ria,* or sunken coastline,[9] is responsible for the intrusion of the Atlantic into the interior – promoting agricultural and navigational innovations such as growing rice and constructing large, ocean-going canoes respectively (Brooks 2003; Hawthorne 2003). Guinea-Bissau's eastern and southern areas share a border with the much larger ex-French colony, the Republic of Guinea (Guinea Conakry),[10] while Senegal's Casamance Region runs along Guinea-Bissau's northern reaches. One of the more illustrative summaries of this small wedge-like country's physical geography comes from the American journalist Stephanie Urdang, who spent time there during, and directly after, PAIGC's[11] struggle for independence. She wrote,

> Off its coast are a spattering of small islands, while the wedge itself is cracked by rivers that cover its surface. The jagged outline of Guinea-Bissau on the map lends itself to a caricature of the late-nineteenth-century 'scramble for Africa': Portugal barely managing to grab a bite of the enormous West African pie, spilling crumbs in its haste, before France and Britain push their way in and greedily slice up the area between them. (1979: 13)

The inhospitable nature of much of Guinea-Bissau includes thick forests, a humid climate, rampant disease, and a complex river system. This harsh geography is probably what ultimately encouraged the influx of refugees seeking a safe haven from invaders.

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[9] According to historian George E. Brooks, "The ria coast has the highest tides in western Africa. These tides sweep up the estuaries and penetrate many kilometers up rivers and tributary streams" (2003: 10).

[10] Guinea-Bissau's geographic border to the east is known as the Futa Jalon highlands. "This plateau area of the interior of Guinea-Conakary, rising to 4,500 feet, is the highlands for the Niger, Senegal, and Gambia Rivers. It has served as the homeland for a portion of the Fula people of Guinea-Bissau and is a major source for the regional spread of Islam" (Lobban and Mendy 1997: 175).

[11] African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde:* PAIGC). This nationalist movement and eventual dominant political party of Guinea-Bissau was founded on September 19, 1956 by Amilcar Cabral, Aristides Pereira, Luiz Cabral, Júlio de Almeida, Fernando Fortes, and Elisée Turpin (Lopes 1987: 29).

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History

The role of history is critical for research exploring household livelihood strategies. These histories explore Guinea-Bissauan: (1) pre-history (Brooks 1984), (2) Euro-African contact (Brásio 1952-1988; Brooks 2003; Hair 1997; Mark 2002), (3) general history (Forrest 2003; Galli and Jones 1987; Lobban and Mendy 1997; Rodney 1970), (4) ethnography (Gaillard 2000a) (5) regional history (Barry 1998; Birmingham 1999; Sweet 2003; Thornton 1998), (6) commerce and colonialism (Bowman 1997; Brooks 1993: Hawthorne 2003), (7) gender issues (Brooks 1976; Havik 2004; Roberstson and Klein 1997; Urdang 1979), (8) independence struggle (Chaliland 1969; Davidson 1981; Dhada 1993; Lopes 1987; Rudebeck 1974), (9) leadership (Cabral 1969, 1979; Chabal 2003; Chilcote 1991; McCulloch 1983), and (10) post-colonial history (Adebajo 2002; Bigman 1993; Forrest 1992, 2002; Rudebeck 1990).[12] The studies rely on shreds and patches of primary data from missionaries, explorers, traders, and settlers.[13] With such a vast array of detailed information exposing the cultural and historical complexity of the region, I focus in on a particular community to understand daily livelihood strategies.

The Community

Nalú occupy a border zone, divided between southern Guinea-Bissau and north-western Guinea Conakry. They make up less than one percent of Guinea-Bissau's population. Located among the West Atlantic cultures of the Upper Guinea Coast, the recent history of the Nalú has

[12] See Galli (1990), for a comprehensive bibliography.

[13] See Fage (1994), for a comprehensive bibliography.

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been marked by the blurring of their cultural identity through population and linguistic shifts and religious conversion. Centuries of contact with outsiders have led to a number of significant changes to Nalú culture (See Chapter Two). For example, through proximity, intermarriage, and exchange, the Nalú of today speak Susu as their primary mode of communication in both Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry. During my fieldwork, I observed that the Nalú language was only spoken during traditional ceremonies or by the most senior members of society. Most of the younger generations could not communicate effectively in this language. In addition, the Nalú have been slowly converting to Islam as a result of secondary contact with expanding Islamic empires such as Mali and through direct education since Koranic schools were the only form of formal education available to learn how to read and write before the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries in the fifteenth century. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, all Nalú in Kassumba and the surrounding areas self-identify as Muslim, although their traditional religion is still practiced by the oldest generation. These traditional religious practices, however, are diminishing in both attendance and membership.

Twenty percent of the population of Kassumba consists of Islamic Nalú while an additional seventy-nine percent are spiritist Balanta immigrants from the northern Nhacra Sector of Guinea-Bissau. The Nalú claim territorial hegemony and are considered the patrimonial landowners of the entire Quitáfine Sector. The neighborhoods of Kassumba are divided according to ethnicity, extended family households, and individual family houses. The Nalú family households are arranged along a primary thoroughfare with the entire community residing in a close knit neighborhood (See Figure 4). The Balanta compounds are made up of an enclosed extended family positioned around a central courtyard. Their neighborhoods are dispersed over a larger area and are connected by a series of footpaths. The natural vegetation surrounding the

village consists of swampy plains, mangroves, woodlands, and inlets. The Cacine River reaches the Atlantic Ocean within walking distance of the village, thus providing all residents with abundant aquatic resources to compliment their forest bounty. Additionally, rice-paddies, cashew and mango orchards, and manioc and vegetable gardens are cultivated beside the village.

Cultivated plants belong to the individual or family responsible for planting and tending to them; however, wild trees and other forest products are communally shared. Ownership rights of the land remain strictly in the hands of the Nalú although land that has been borrowed and subsequently cultivated by outsiders is considered theirs until they give up their claim by allowing it to lie fallow for several seasons. Once land is under cultivation, it is difficult for another to lay claim although disputes do occasionally arise. In addition, some active land management takes place such as the community's refusal to sell the sand from their beaches or restrictions on gathering in sacred sites.

Most rural economic activities follow seasonal patterns in relation to the rainy season, which generally stretches from June through November. Most agricultural activities (e.g., rice cultivation, planting manioc and/or vegetable gardens) take place during this period while house construction, palm oil production, and cashew harvesting are carried out during the dry season. Other activities span the entire year or overlap between these seasons such as fishing. In this community under study, most villagers (42%) primarily considered themselves sedentary fruit and food farmers, fisherpersons, and collectors of forest and marine products.

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APPROACH

This work is an exercise in cultural ecology,[14] economics,[15] and cultural identity.[16] I use Economist Clóvis Cavalcanti's label, "ethnoeconomics," throughout this thesis to represent the interaction between people, their environment, and their livelihood. Cavalcanti has suggested that ethnoeconomics is a theory aimed at explaining these complex interactions. He writes,

> The time seems to have come for the development of an ethnoeconomics that looks at how local, traditional and indigenous peoples conceptualize the many economic relationships that have built, characterized and maintained their societies; a discipline or a field of endeavour that examines the idea of progress among exotic peoples; that considers their notions of wealth, justice and equity; that interprets the manifold manifestations of markets, trade, gift and exchange; and that tries to understand the way individual interests combine to produce a durable social system and sustainable economic processes – or development for that matter. . . It must address the concepts, categories and practices that societies use to evaluate, assess, monitor and manage human, natural and heritage (including spiritual and aesthetic) 'resources'. (Cavalcanti 2002: 52)

This shift in perspective toward the examination of the way in which societies manage and resolve their resource issues is important as a tool able to critique and help reform the largely ineffective development initiatives that have taken place in Africa over the last fifty years. This tool should allow for a better understanding and evaluation of local economic behaviors. This perspective will help direct development resources toward avenues of desired economic improvement in cooperation with rural civil society. This cooperation should lead to much needed reform in current development initiatives.

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[14] Cultural ecology is how humans interact with their physical surroundings, how their environment affects their cultural practices and institutions, and how this process is re-shaped in that interaction (Frake 1980b: 18).

[15] Economics is the description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

[16] I define "identity" as a relationship with oneself and with other groups that can change, and as a product of three social processes: socialization, individual thought and action, and direct and indirect politics.

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I evaluate the various scholars who have addressed economics on the ground level in Guinea-Bissau and I situate my own findings within a local-global perspective. This approach demands both a historical background and an ethnographic grounding. Throughout this work, I reconcile my own observations against those of other commentators on Guinea-Bissau, including my consultants, to better understand how the economic situation in this tiny village fluctuates, improves, and remains the same.

My approach is to use "patterns of process" (Hannerz 1992) or the active relationship between structure and meaning as a continuation of culture change theory. I use this theory to expose rooted politico-economic structures of exploitation. I attempt to answer the question, how can we begin to explain the choices a particular community makes when it comes to their livelihood?

Simply stated, praxis is a process of becoming: theory becoming history or, more specifically, thought becoming action. Written from prison between 1929 and 1935, Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* are a collection of thought provoking social commentary on Italian Fascism, the direction of the transnational Communist Movement, and, more generally, theoretical relationships between structure and agency.[17] He illustrates this point by writing, "One's conception of the world is a response to certain specific problems posed by reality, which are quite specific and 'original' in their immediate relevance" (1971: 324). Gramsci utilizes Marxist sentiments while accounting for historical circumstances. He elaborates, "one cannot be a philosopher, by which I mean have a critical and coherent conception of the world, without having a consciousness of its historicity, of the phase of development which it represents and of the fact that it contradicts other conceptions or elements of other conceptions" (1971: 324).

[17] See also, "theory of structuration" (Giddens 1976).

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One of the most well-known and well-respected theoreticians of Marx and Gramsci's conceptions about praxis was Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. His was an exercise in humanizing[18] through radical pedagogy[19] in an attempt to achieve *conscientização* (critical consciousness) of the oppressed. Freire proposed that the relationship between thought and practice is dialectical, between "the concrete context in which practice takes place and the theoretical context in which critical reflection is done" (1978: 100). Freire's positionality is revealed in the following entertaining, yet murky statement, "Only through such praxis – in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously – can the act of helping become free from the distortion in which the helper dominates the helped" (1978: 10). Freire's ideological beliefs influenced early Guinea-Bissauan policy as a brief consultant for the country's education program beginning in May 1975, and as such, it seems only fitting to consider his explanatory approach when considering household livelihood observations. However, much of what was written about the progressive nature of Guinea-Bissau's schools (Friere 1978), rural hospitals (Dhada 1993), and political institutions (Rudebeck 1974) during the struggle was mainly a propaganda exercise used by PAIGC mobilizers and Amílcar Cabral to drum up international support for the ongoing independence struggle. What was being expressed in writing had little to do with actual conditions on the ground level.

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[18] "While the problem of humanization has always, from an axiological point of view, been humankind's central problem, it now takes on the character of an inescapable concern. Concern for humanization leads at once to the recognition of dehumanization, not only as an ontological possibility but as an historical reality. And as an individual perceives the extent of dehumanization, he or she may ask if humanization is a viable possibility. Within history, in concrete, objective contexts, both humanization and dehumanization are possibilities for a person as an uncompleted being conscious of their incompletion" (Freire 2000: 43; See also, Frake 1998).

[19] "The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side" (Freire 2000: 39).

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Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) was one of the world's most influential revolutionary leaders.

> As poet, agronomist, fighter, theorist, and diplomat, Cabral approached life dialectically. On the one hand, he was an intellectual and theoretician; on the other, he was an organizer and unifier. Throughout his life he struggled to eliminate the Portuguese presence in the colonies and strove to undermine imperialism in the broader international context. (Chilcote 1991: 3)

Cabral was engaged in cultivating unity (national, ethnic, and gendered) in the context of armed struggle and ethnic diversity of Guinea-Bissau. In 1964, Cabral emphasized his attitude toward theory and practice at a PAIGC party members' meeting,

> Always remember that the people are not fighting for ideas, nor for what is in men's minds. The people fight and accept the sacrifices demanded by the struggle in order to gain material advantages, to live better and in peace, to benefit from progress, and for the better future of their children. National liberation, the struggle against colonialism, the construction of peace, progress and independence are hollow words devoid of any significance unless they can be translated into a real improvement of living conditions. (Chabal 2003: 66)

To realize these aims, "PAIGC set itself the tasks of raising mass consciousness of the ideals of nationalism. Two main difficulties had to be contended with: a reluctance to break away from the ethnic system; and the extension of mobilization to the peasant masses" (Lopes 1987: 29). Cabral's innovative solution for ethnic cooperation in Guinea-Bissau plays a pivotal role in the

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understanding of economic initiatives even today.[20] In 1965, at the CONCP Conference in Dar-Es-Salaam,[21] Cabral opened with,

> If we do not forget the historical perspectives of the major events in the life of humanity, if, while maintaining due respects for all philosophies, we do not forget that the world is the creation of man himself, then colonialism can be considered as the paralysis or deviation or even the halting of the history of one people in favour of the acceleration of the historical development of other peoples. (1969: 76)

These same sentiments remain poignant when considering global economics today (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 2006; Rodney 1982).

Cabral was able to go about building a popular consensus in a context of revolutionary war. His strategy was a unique blend of international and localized mobilization, strict adherence to ideological non-alignment in the Cold War Era, and thoughtful military action designed to maximize resistance while minimizing casualties. In his combination of theory and practice, Cabral attempted to understand the worldviews of those he was struggling beside.[22]

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[20] Cabral concluded that national liberation could be achieved only through force of arms. The event that instigated Cabral's policy move was the Pidjiguiti massacre. On August 3, 1959, Portuguese authorities killed or wounded more than fifty striking dockworkers. The Portuguese colonial bureaucracy viewed the strike as political agitation that needed quelling. Ensuing crackdowns by the PIDE (Portuguese secret police) led to PAIGC party members fleeing the country. The failure to gain the needed support from Guinea-Bissau's urban dwellers required PAIGC political mobilizers to move their activities into the countryside where they met with ethnic heterogeneity and resistance to change. It took the PAIGC two years before they were ready to undertake their first direct military action. Although slow to gain momentum, "the pattern of PAIGC's armed action was that of 'classical' guerrilla warfare" (Chabal 2003: 58). Cabral's common forms of resistance, however, called for uncommon strategies for establishing "unity and struggle" in the countryside that persist today.

[21] Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (*Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas:* CONCP). Founded in April 1961, "the PAIGC had forged enduring links with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola:* MPLA) and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (*Frente para a Libertação de Moçambique:* FRELIMO)" (MacQueen 2003: 8).

[22] "According to Cabral the primary function of culture lies in its role of fabricating a sense of individual identity. A culture provides the individual with a sense of identity which signifies what a person is within his own social milieu in distinction from all other peoples. . . Cabral then makes the concession that a people's identity is tied to the maintenance and reproduction of the social system by a specific set of institutions and habits. Any change to those structures, the identity of which Cabral does not specify, would affect both culture as a whole and the people's intimate sense of selfhood. . . Identity is the central achievement of any culture and it serves to crystallise what is most distinctive and essential in each instance of the collective human experience" (McCulloch 1983: 85).

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He worked within the cultural reality of Guinea-Bissau in order to maximize efficiency without forbidding the practice of benign activities among disparate groups. For example, Cabral's pragmatic nature emerged when early in the struggle, many guerrillas refused to enter the holy forests where *iráns* (ghosts or ancestral spirits) resided and were thought to cause problems. The necessity of this natural cover led Cabral to argue convincingly that the *iráns* are nationalist and, therefore, work against the foreign invaders, not the rightful inhabitants of the forests (Chabal 2003: 80-81). His revisions to civil society, including decolonizing the minds of Guinea-Bissauans, gender equality, and building consensus through nationalism in the face of diversity, have contributed significantly to Guinea-Bissau's social order. Cabral has become an important cultural hero whose deeds and ideas are still part of the cultural memory. He has left behind a doctrine of practices and laws that encode people's everyday lives in significant ways, similar to that of Islam or other world religions.

The medley of ethnic groups making up this tiny African nation suggests to many contemporary scholars a potential site for research on heterogeneity, interethnic conflict, national destabilization, and balkanization. Joanna Davidson, however, remarks on the uncanny and "perplexing realization" that what one actually finds in the scholarly literature is that "relatively little interethnic conflict exists," she continues, "attention to . . . ethnic based rivalries . . . is far outweighed by the recurring trope of Guinea-Bissau as a successful plural society" (2002: 419), an argument used by Cabral and other PAIGC mobilizers during the struggle for independence against their Portuguese colonizers. Davidson goes on to suggest several factors as potential explanations for this intriguing phenomenon such as a shared Krioulu language, the Portuguese policies of assimilation and trade development, decentralized religious and political structures,[23]

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and blurry/negotiable identity boundaries (2002). I would add to this list, Cabral's contribution to civil society, a shared sense of national unity as a separate but equalizing layer to Guinea-Bissauan cultural identity. This shared sense of history and nationalism, however, only goes so far. State abuses of power can quickly escalate into confrontations with heterogeneous undercurrents such as what occurred in the 1998-1999 conflict.

The 1998-1999 war in Guinea-Bissau was not fought along strictly ethnic, religious, or nationalist lines. Senegal accused President Vieira's former chief of military staff, Ansumane Mané, of supplying arms to the separatist fighters in the Casamance Region bordering Guinea-Bissau. In a pro-Francophone move, which had begun in 1997 with Guinea-Bissau's acceptance into the French franc zone, Vieira sided with Senegal. His previous alienation of the Balanta ethnic group (the majority of Guinea-Bissau's enlisted military), his perceived disloyalty to local interests (by siding with Senegal in this dispute),[24] and Mané's popular support in the Casamance Region and Guinea-Bissau in general (from his successes during the struggle for independence), led to Vieira's eventual flight into exile in Portugal by May of 1999 (MacQueen 2003: 5; See also, Gaillard 2000b). This war, though largely destructive, was intermittent and localized to the capital of Bissau.

Although Guinea-Bissau has a potentially explosive socio-political environment due to its extreme heterogeneity, it is what lies beneath, a politically conscious population remaining calm

[23] "Meanwhile in the countryside, where some 85 per cent of the population live, the localisation of power meant that people were able to reconsolidate community-level political institutions. At the same time, they pursued production and inter-ethnic marketing activities that reflected precolonial trade strategies and networks, which had endured through the colonial epoch" (Forrest 2002: 238).

[24] "Actual or purported coup attempts were allegedly carried out by Vice-President (at the time) Victor Saúde Maria (1983) and the head of the armed services, General Paulo Correia (1985). All such attempts failed. Maria escaped to Portugal while Correia, not as fortunate, was executed along with six others in 1986. It was widely believed that ethnic affiliation was a factor, as Correia, a Balanta, had a large following among the mostly Balanta armed forces. President Vieira, who is Papel, may thus have sought to forestall the potential build-up of a pro-Correia Balanta military faction by getting rid of him. The fact that the highly-respected government general prosecutor, Viriato Pã (a prominent lawyer of Balanta background), was also executed suggests the extent of Vieira's concern (or paranoia) over an ethnically-inspired backlash" (Forrest 2002: 251-252).

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in the face of rupture, which baffles the social theorists. From this study, I conclude that economic cooperation plays an important role in Guinea-Bissau's unique resistance to inter-ethnic conflict, a resistance also attributed to a shared language, historical legacy, ethnogenesis, and decentralized religious and political composition. For Guinea-Bissau, a nation most in need of unity, interethnic cooperation is a way of life; their survival depends on it. Identity in action becomes more than simply thinking about the world and one's place in it; it helps reveal everyday strategies of survival and belonging and, where these strategies are working and/or breaking down.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The following summary of the content and objectives of individual chapters details the types of data and information presented in each one, and clarifies the scope and focus of this research. Chapter Two looks at the local history of the southern region of Guinea-Bissau with particular attention being paid to the ethnic patrimonial land owners, the Nalú. This history is retold in order to bring to light several new discoveries and interpretations as well as to expand the accessibility of this story to an English audience. I also orient my own collected oral histories into the retelling. I explore modifications to this history that reflect their recent conversion to Islam, ties to the land, political interactions, and socio-economic strategies. One of the principle objectives of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Nalú have been involved in consumption, production, and exchange with outsiders since their appearance in the written record. I must consider the foundational traditions of the Nalú from a broadened perspective before focusing in on a more controlled economic approach in later chapters.

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In Chapter Three, I analyze economic specificities as intransigent, reactionary practices aimed at negotiating globalist pressures. I ask whether an act requires explicit consciousness and articulation to be properly called resistance. Through the use of ethnographic data, I demonstrate what a post-colonial economic revolution on the ground in real time might look like. This struggle for survival has the potential of promoting positive changes in local economies by making them responsive to internal development needs. This chapter describes possible alternatives to the global world economy by examining some localizing and localized practices of indigenous peoples, specifically local economic cooperation.

Chapter Four addresses the question: How do the Nalú of Kassumba in southern Guinea-Bissau continue to represent themselves as both unified and unique? Working within indigenous socio-economic categories, this chapter explores the role of the African oil palm tree in local history, worldview, and contemporary practices. Drawing on months of fieldwork, I demonstrate how an indigenous plant can come to symbolize a people – their life and their death. The inhabitants of Kassumba, both Nalú and Balanta, fashion a wide array of cultural, religious, and functional artifacts from the palm's leaves and trunk. They produce palm oil from the flesh of the fruit for both domestic consumption and regional distribution. In addition, they fabricate soaps and cooking oils from the kernel at the fruit's core, represent the palm in claims to territorial hegemony and local history, assign gender roles according to palm related activities, and rely on the plant for economic security. This chapter illustrates how cultural identity is fashioned through the ethnoeconomic traditions surrounding the oil palm tree.

Chapter Five explores how rural lives in this small, semi-isolated village reorient themselves to account for internal needs, state controls, and global pressures. Through the consideration of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau, this chapter analyzes the multi-faceted

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economic environment of a single commodity. I explain the characteristics of the cashew and discuss its origins and history in Africa including its large-scale adoption by the rural population of Guinea-Bissau. I document the logistics of cashew production in southern Guinea-Bissau. I examine the secondary product of cashew wine including the implications toward cultural identity and abuse. I insert my research into the larger global economy. I investigate profit maximization by considering the processing and marketing of cashews by local producers. Finally, I conclude by discussing the future of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau including avenues of potential growth and investment.

Chapter Six untangles the development agenda and multi-stranded economic matrix of global fisheries in order to illustrate the need for alternative fishery policies that promote national economic expansion and local livelihood strategies in Guinea-Bissau. When it comes to the fishing sector, a bottom-up ethnographic approach can inform policy-makers about the impact of particular initiatives as well as necessary adjustments to these initiatives in order to protect, promote, and expand the local industry. In this chapter, I demonstrate that the people of Kassumba practice an integrative approach to their household livelihood strategy with a strong reliance on fishing and fishing related activities. I start by discussing how international fishery contracts with Guinea-Bissau promise development as leverage in the exploitation of their marine resources. I then move on to describing the local artisanal fisherpersons, processors, and marketers of fish in Guinea-Bissau. I conclude by defining a potential plan of action designed to re-invent the global fisheries matrix by giving voice to local perspectives.

In Chapter Seven, I draw mostly upon my field data to elaborate on the theme of economic reorientation. I compare my own observations and participation in rice production against the wealth of existing literature to demonstrate how both a turn from, and return to,

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paddy rice production is underway in southern Guinea-Bissau as a bipolar reaction to economic necessity and the global economy. This chapter also demonstrates how changes in land tenure are changing the social landscape.

Chapter Eight concludes this thesis by attempting to redefine the concept of development for Africa after more than fifty years of failed initiatives. I use my understanding of household economic strategies to propose incremental improvements in people's everyday lives while accounting for local knowledge and practices. I discuss how rural development is not simply a matter of promoting cultural change; I also consider the reliance on those activities that have proven track records along with considering the built in economic flexibility of communities and households that enable them to adjust to internal and external pressures in difficult environments. For example, the bottoming out of cashew prices and a decline in available fish in Guinea-Bissau, both directly resulting from global pressures, are pushing locals back into rice and palm production.

The topic of successful development remains one of the most pressing issues for Africanist scholars as can be attested to by its focus as the African Study Association's (ASAs) plenary session in 2008 at their annual meeting. Participatory methodologies have already been shown to have great potential such as the needs assessment approaches of the U.S. Peace Corps or ethnography. In addition, critical post-colonial theory has much to offer those aiming to deconstruct development toward rebuilding a more collaborative and effective project. Finally, the role of cultural identity is often overlooked by these same projects. I conclude by demonstrating how issues of cultural identity must be integrated into these projects to achieve true collaboration between international aid, the national government, and rural civil society.

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Chapter Two

(RE)TELLING THE STORY OF NALÚ (DIS)ENCLAVEMENT

The history of the Nalú has been recently retold bringing to light several important discoveries (Castro 2004; Fields-Black 1999, 2004, 2008a; Frazão-Moreira 2000; Hanquez Passavant 2000; Mouser 2002). Furthermore, a majority of the historical sources, from traders, missionaries, explorers, and colonial administrators, as well as more recent ethnographic and historical sources that situate the Nalú in print, are fixed in the colonial languages of French and Portuguese. In an attempt to synthesize these sources for an English audience, this chapter reconsiders the historical texts and draws on the arguments of the more recent academic works.

In this chapter, I will also orient my own collected oral histories into the retelling, which were given to me from several Nalú and Balanta elders, or *omi-garandi*, of the Quitáfine region located in southern Guinea-Bissau. These stories were collected during eight months of fieldwork (March-October 2007) in the village of Kassumba[25] and outlying areas. As Amélia Frazão-Moreira acknowledges in her essay, the production of oral history is at best a social process in which the actor is rebuilding a particular case such as the maintenance of social organization, territorial hegemony, or economic regard (2000: 403, See also, Stevens 1978b). She notes that the accounts of migration are adjusted to account for changes in religion, economics, politics, social life, etc. (2000: 412). Expanded below, my own research has found similar modifications to the Nalú oral traditions. These changes reflect their conversion to Islam,

[25] I was told that "Kassumba" in the Nalú language means that the "cup is completely full." Interestingly, however, "Sumbas" is a Mandinka term that means "Manes" or their subject peoples (Hair 1997b: 384). "Ka" in the Nalú language means "there" and is generally included as a prefix to all place names.

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ties to the land, political interactions, and socio-economic strategies. These oral histories can be explained as links to the past as well as points of socio-cultural changes (Stevens 1978b).

This exercise in ethnographic historiography is intended as an important step in the current study of Nalú economics. In fact, one of the principle objectives of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Nalú have been involved in consumption, production, and exchange with outsiders since the emergence of a cultural grouping of the same name appeared in the oral/written records. An overarching question, then, is how do the Nalú act on an economic-level in their own terms given the assumption that they must act within overlapping economic systems of considerable influence? This question cannot fully be tackled in this chapter alone and will be addressed throughout the thesis.

The sub-field of anthropological historiography is now deeply rooted in the discipline (Hobsbawm & Ranger, eds. 1983; Wolf 1997). The complex interrelationships between history, politics, and economics have led to a new theory of political economy, defined by Eric Wolf as, "inquiries into the economic foundations of different polities and societies in their changing trajectories" (1997: ix). For the purposes of this chapter, I must consider the foundational traditions of the Nalú from a broadened perspective before focusing in on a more controlled economic approach in later chapters. It is important to keep in mind that, "the invented traditions of African societies – whether invented by the Europeans or by Africans themselves in response – distorted the past but became themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed" (Ranger 1983). In this chapter, I acknowledge that identities and histories are constructed and contested, often in terms of one's political agenda. At the same time, I intend to write a history of the Nalú, one that acknowledges possible avenues of contention, but will not get bogged down in them.

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ONCE UPON A TIME . . .

Before I can write a history of the Nalú, I must first assume that they are an ethnic group, which I define as a named collectivity in which members identify as "a matter of self-ascription and ascription by others [including larger societal and global forces] in interaction . . . where actors themselves use [cultural standards] to evaluate and judge the actions of ethnic co-members, implying that they see themselves as 'playing the same game'" (Barth 1998: 6). These cultural standards include "myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members" (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 6) "as the epitome of their peoplehood" (Schermerhorn 1978: 12). This section focuses on the Nalú myths of common ancestry, shared historical memory, contemporary political actions, and outsider conjecture. I have come across several different theories of Nalú origins including their beginnings as an *irán*, or a nature spirit, as part of a mass migration from Mecca, as refugees from the Futa Jalon in the Guinea highlands, as refugees fleeing religious oppression and the expansion of the Mali Empire, and as a coastwise creep in which the Nalú originated in the littoral.

Nature Spirit

I collected this first origin myth from a 34 year old Balanta consultant. I had been living in Kassumba for three months, and for much of that time, a Balanta named Tchoca from the capital city was also living there as the DJ at the local *diskoteka* (dance hall). His childhood had

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been divided between Senegal and a large plantation outside of Catió in southern Guinea-Bissau. During the independence war against the Portuguese colonizers in Guinea-Bissau, Tchoca's family had sought refuge from the fighting across the border in neighboring Senegal and was later resettled in southern Guinea-Bissau by the country's newly independent government. The under-populated Catió region where Tchoca was to spend ten years of his youth was the patrimonial lands of the Nalú. While living among them as a boy, Tchoca was told the "true" origins of the Nalú by one of their elders. He had been advised during the telling that the story he was about to hear was secret and often forgotten by the Nalú themselves. Therefore, if confronted with this account, most Nalú would deny its validity out of ignorance or secrecy. According to Tchoca,

> A long, long time ago, an *irán*, or nature spirit, lived alone deep in the *matu*, or forest. He was aloof and avoided contact with the world of humans. However, one day a beautiful girl entered his grove and he fell in love. The *irán* changed his form into a human man and took this woman as his wife. They eventually raised a family together while continuing to shun the outside world. However, every few years, civilization would encroach on this family, which pushed them deeper and deeper into the *matu*. These migrations were learning experiences; with each contact, he and his children understood more and more about living as human. They eventually adopted human ways and interacted with them on a more permanent basis. As the *irán's* children, and children's children, married and raised families among the humans, they eventually became Nalú. (05/21/07)

Tchoca insisted, the Nalú continue to be a diffident people whose villages remain close-knit, and semi-isolated. A majority of marriages are endogamous and they continue to retain a profound knowledge of the *matu.* In his description of the Catió region, Lieutenant-Coronel of Artillery, António José de Mello Machado, made similar claims about the Nalú when he wrote,

> Refugees of the forest, the Nalú inhabited the bare places hidden in the trees, removing plants in order to cultivate. In accordance with their timid temperament and knowledge of the secrets of the great bush, they were known to prepare and to use powerful poisons that resulted from their occult practices, which imbued the Nalú with strength of arms. (1972: 14, translation mine)

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Tchoca warned me that the Nalú don't think like the rest of the world; "they are contrary." He continued, "The Nalú are like a snake entering its hole. You think it goes in head first and you can grab it. But, it actually back tracks with its head to protect itself. No matter how close you get, you will never really know the Nalú's true nature" (09/01/07). I learned in subsequent conversations with Tchoca and others that the Nalú are viewed as powerful diviners in Guinea-Bissau because they can directly communicate with spirits. We can only assume that this stems from the belief that Nalú ancestors were *irán*. In other words, they can hear the *irán* because it is in their blood. For this reason, their *balobas*, or sacred forests where the traditional religion is conducted, are frequented by many outsiders. Nalú themselves express the fact that any Nalú may speak with, hear, or make requests from, *irán*, which demonstrates their distinctiveness from those they serve. However, only those trained individuals who have demonstrated responsibility in their lives are allowed to speak with the spirits in the *baloba.* Making requests is viewed as potentially dangerous in the wrong hands and those without responsibility may try to harm others for personal gain. In addition, anyone belonging to the village where a *baloba* is located (i.e., *fidju di tera*; children of the land) cannot make personal requests there. The family/village spirits that reside in the *baloba* help people with illness, pregnancy, good fortune, and other petitions (*pidi*).

The Nalú of Kassumba maintain contact with their ancestors at the *baloba* located in the sacred grove of Kassunkal where two types of *irán* reside: *Ntakmon* is a nature *irán* from the ocean and is quite powerful; the other three are ancestor *irán* representing the three lineages living in Kassumba – Kakubu, Kabonka, and Kaklunk – each represented by a sacred wooden mask, or *pedra* (literally, "stone") located in a shrine on the men's side of the *baloba*. On the women's side is where requests are first voiced for the benefit of *Ntakmon* who possesses the

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head *baloberu*, or oracle. The person making the request is ritually bathed from one of three large clay pots containing medicinal and powerful water after returning from the men's side of the *baloba* where they have reiterated their appeal into a palm branch, which is then added to a large upright bundle of other palms. This practice is similar to other African religious rituals popularly known as fetishes throughout West Africa. The supplicant's feet are then bathed over the active family *irán* (only one mask is used at a time until the wood is worn out, then the next mask in line is substituted while a new one is made to replace the other taking its place at the end of the line) using medicinal water taken from the shrine housing the masks and poured out from a *konfurbedju* shells or other natural receptacles gathered from the ocean. The economics of the Kassumba *baloba* will be discussed in a later chapter.

This origin myth perpetuates ethnic boundaries between the Nalú and neighboring groups such as the Balanta, Fula, Beafada, Susu, and Baga. It expresses both a history of migration and a history of territorial hegemony in which the Nalú are located in a peripheral position in society as mediators between the natural and spiritual worlds. They guard their secrets as *fidju di tera* and continue to perpetuate this identity with some economic and political benefits even in the face of a shifting religious system toward Islam.

Mecca

Prevalent in many recent oral narratives, Mecca origins of the Nalú have been suggested to be the result of a retooling of social memory resulting from Islamic conversion (Frazão-Moreira 2000: 408, Fields 2004: 232). This socially functional interpretation corresponds to the Hijra, or migration of Muhammad and his followers to the city of Medina in September 622.

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Frazão-Moreira collected several versions of this story while doing anthropological fieldwork among the Nalú of Cabucaré from 1994-1996. For example, an elder of the village of Catchamba Nalú traced their radiation from Mecca through a series of Nalú words that later became village names along the route to their present location. According to this myth, they first arrived in Mande, but Fula were already there. Next, they traveled to Katimbo (Timbo), which the elder translated as a Nalú word for an instrument known as a *timba*. Next, it was on to Bejine, which in Nalú translate as "one who goes there immediately." Kalemaru was the Nalú's next layover, which means "the quick trade of rice for another product" in their language. From Kalemaru, the Nalú moved to a town called Corubal, which was the name of a type of tree growing there. At Foréah, also the word for another type of tree, the Nalú separated, going in two different directions toward Buba and Cacine in Quitáfine near where my own ethnographic research took place. Buba is Nalú for a large gazelle horn that the migrants blew upon arrival, while I later discovered that *tafin* is Nalú for "clean house" or a good clearing to set up a house or village. In Buba, the Nalú migrants split in two again, heading off in both the direction of Tombali and toward Cubucaré. Frazão Moreira suggests,

> the explanation of the toponyms thus legitimates the appropriation of a determined area, the attempts at hegemony being explained by various interpretations of the various people. . . the need to be identified with the places quoted in the accounts of migration is so important for the history of the people, that it leads to the construction of local explanations for the names of remote cities very recently added to the imaginary route. (2000: 406, translation mine).

I also collected several stories during my fieldwork, which claimed that the Nalú origins were in Mecca. In other words, the people migrating from Mecca were proto-Nalú. From the above story, we can determine that the Nalú did not actually start naming the landscape in their own language until reaching Timbo or much later. However, they may be able to loosely translate and/or appropriate toponyms since the words used for many villages may represent a proto-

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language shared by many throughout the Upper Guinea Coast and into the Guinea highlands. To illustrate, Frazão-Moreira points out that the Baga also claim to have named Timbo from the toponym *timba* or *tamba*, which translates to a drum used in ritual situations (2000: 406; See also, Bangoura 1973; Sarro 1997: 20). Therefore, the Nalú may not have been a distinct ethnic group until reaching Bejine or later (or, in actuality, may not have come from these earlier sites at all). In fact, the sparse linguistic evidence that is available places the split between Nalú and its closest linguistic neighbors at 2-3,000 years ago, easily predating Hijra (Fields 2004: 249, Hair 1997: 385).

I questioned my consultants about the seeming contradiction between Nalú's relatively late conversions to Islam with their explanation of Nalú origins in Mecca. During one interview with an elder from the neighboring Nalú village of Tamakeni, I was told,

> Nalú came from Mecca. The person who left first was the head of the *baloba* who could work wood. That old man named Hadjira [Hijra?] could woodwork very well, adding eyes and a mouth. He had a son named Ibrahima while living inside Mecca. At that time, God took his son and made him a Muslim. That son destroyed all the things of the *baloba*. The *baloba* doesn't have any power anymore. Today they continue to operate on a small scale, but they don't have any power left. One day, the father tied a chord or loincloth around his waist and went to the main *baloba*. At that time, his child came and destroyed all of his things. His son took his machete and destroyed the entire sacred forest. Hadjira came and said who did this. People responded that no one has the power to destroy the sacred forest except for your son Ibrahima. God gave Ibrahima the world. Ibrahima [Brahma] was accused by his father of lying to him not just once, but three times. Hadjira said, "Brahma, who did this?" Brahma responded, "It wasn't me." He lied. He said, "Brahma?" But, Brahma needed to leave the clearing and get home, so he lied, "My stomach hurts." He said to his father, "If you don't believe me, ask me again." Hadjira did, and he lied a third time questioning his father, "Who told you I did this?" Brahma's father made the decision to collect a lot of firewood, more than this house here, in order to burn Brahma. He tied Brahma to a post and threw him into the fire. This was possible, because back then, people had the strength of 40 people. God made the fire feel like salt water. Brahma sat there for four months. Hadjira came out and saw him sitting there. All of Brahma's clothes were made of gold. People approached Hadjira and said you are the one who lied, Brahma only speaks the truth. The people stopped the fire. At that time, the prophet Mohammad hadn't appeared

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> yet. Brahma left his homeland a Muslim. Fula's went with him. The Mandinkas fought with the Fula about being Muslim. Beafada's also left that day as Muslims. For the Nalú, they waited until they arrived here. The things of the *baloba* also came from Mecca. Hadjira is the person who started the things of the *balaba* found throughout the world. He left Mecca and went to another place that I can't remember, and then he arrived in Timbo. Some decided to stay, others went in different directions. Others, such as the Baga and Landuma stopped along the way. Each group founded a *baloba.* (08/18/07)

This story demonstrates how the Nalú are struggling to rectify Islam with their previous belief system. This elder describes the Nalú as distinct from the Fula, Mandinka, and Beafada as early converts, while at the same time reinforcing the ethnic boundaries between the Baga and Landuma who also separated themselves from the Nalú at a later date. However, the underlying theme of racial or ethnic unity is often portrayed in some form when recounting local histories of Guinea-Bissau. This may be a result of the strong nationalist movement begun by Amílcar Cabral during the independence movement or it may simply have arisen in an area of ethnic pluralism where cooperation was a successful strategy of survival. For example, I was informed on several occasions that the Balanta and Fula are from the same *raça*, or ethnic group originating in the Futa Jalon. However, once people began to convert to Islam and became known as the Fula, they tried convincing their brothers to do the same. When members of that society discovered that they would have to give up drinking, they decided against converting. Eventually, since they would not give up their traditional religion, the Fula said to their brothers, *bu lanta*, or "you get up and go," which eventually the Balanta did. Additionally, I was informed that the Beafada are actually Papel whose name was misrepresented in the language of the Balanta with "Beafada" literally meaning "my brother" in Balanta. Accounts such as these are important, not for their historical value or validity, but for the potential ethnographic interpretations that can result.

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Double Descent

The oldest living descendent of the first resident of Kassumba informed me that his family, Kekubu, later renamed Kamara, of Mandinka origins assigned during a twentieth century Portuguese census, originated in Mali. The other two families found in Kassumba, Kabunka and Kaklunk, both renamed Keita, a family dynasty of the Mali empire, are thought to have originated somewhere in the Guinea highlands possibly displaced as a result of the rise of the Kingdom of Kaabu, an early tributary of the Mandinka Empire of Mali that later broke away.[26] The story went,

> The Kamara family ancestor was exploring the Quitáfine [Cacine] area looking for a good place for his family to settle. He first rested in Kampeana, later traveling further south where he ran into Kabunka who was also scouting the area for a safe place to live. Kekuba asked Kabunka when he had arrived in the area. He responded that he had come across the Cacine River two weeks ago. Kabunka responded that he had arrived three weeks prior from the north traveling over land. As the first person in the area, he had priority over the land, settlements, and local spirits.

During the retellings, the lack of proof over who truly settled the area first was always reiterated making the two families co-leaders in Kassumba. According to this story, the origins of Kassumba were likely a result of refugees displaced during the rise and fall of empires throughout West Africa. P.E.H. Hair noted that interior origins are a common theme among the different cultural groups of the coast. He suggests,

> The hypothesis of ethnic dispersion from the Futa Jallon is a popular myth throughout the region and its core historicity tends to be supported by the recorded oral traditions of various peoples . . . But it is capable of being explained by the influence, particularly on dynastic traditions, of claims to connections with admired cultures of the interior (for instance, Islamic cultures). (1997b: 385)

[26] For a complex treatment of the possible origins of both the names Keita and Kamara, See Bühnen (1994).

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Accompanying historic, religious, and linguistic evidence helps to date the Nalú appearance on the coast of Guinea-Bissau sometime between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries coinciding with the expansion of the Mali Empire and subsequent contact with Europeans although they may have resided in the littoral all along.

Coastal Origins

Finally, Edda-Fields has suggested that the Nalú and Baga originated along the coast, what she calls proto-Coastal. According to her theory, "Nalu may possibly have diverged from proto-Coastal as a result of north-south movements of its speech communities along the coast" (2008: 59) diverging from the Baga speakers about 2500 BCE. Using linguistic evidence, Edda-Fields suggests that the Nalú originated along the coast a bit further south of their current location. The argument goes that the proto-Coastal peoples had to invent new vocabulary for the coastal environments instead of adopting that of earlier inhabitants. In this way, they may have been the first to reside in this locale. She also notes that the earliest written records describe the "'Baga' and Nalu inhabiting roughly the same territory that they continue to occupy today" (2008: 76-77). I am not sure if the proto-Nalú actually originated along the coast, but the immigrants arriving in Kassumba probably did.

RECORDED ENCOUNTERS

Nalú encounters with Europeans began around 1471 when they were first documented on Venetian nautical charts along the Guinea Coast (Hair 1967b: 252, 1979; Mota 1954: 151). This

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and other early records of the Nalú have been summarized elsewhere (Almada 1984; 13/1; Frazão-Moreira 2000: 407-408; Hanquez Passavant 2000: 385-396). What these early records show is that the Nalú were already located along the Upper Guinea Coast particularly near the Nunez River northward by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. According to P.E.H. Hair,

> Be all this as it may, what the rush of Atlantic trade to this region in the 1560s must mean is that the societies were stirred up economically and socially. And hence they evolved that acceptance of European penetration and influence which is so striking when the curtain is next lifted, with the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in the 1600s. (1979: 79)

The Nalú, although "stirred up" along with many of the other cultural groups along the coast due to early encounters with the Atlantic World, did not accept early European contact due to their aloof nature and negative first contacts with European slavers. Therefore, the earliest European references to the Nalú are scarce and often secondhand. They were sometimes described in these accounts as a kingdom and were usually noted in proximity to other cultural groups including the Landuma, Bijagos, Beafada, Baga, and Susu. These earliest Nalú descriptions reveal several important details beyond their proximity to other cultural groups. For example, they had a unique way of dress, language, and demeanor. By c. 1594 when André Álvares de Almada was visiting the coast, the Nalú had not yet been converted to Islam. They maintained a well respected relationship with the supernatural, collected palm wine, and traded in salt, slaves, woven mats, and ivory. The Nalú were known as innovative hunters and ranged over a large territory that was already being documented as belonging to them. Several of these earliest encounters noted that the Nalú could be found between the Grande River and the Nunez River, which is where they remain today.

Little contact was made between Europeans and the Nalú up through the eighteenth century. Instead, trade was often conducted through ethnic middlemen such as the Beafada

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either by choice or as a result of isolation perpetuated by the Beafada. The Nalú did not trade directly with Europeans for several centuries for two main reasons. First, some of the earliest encounters resulted in European traders enslaving Nalú through treachery, which was a fairly common practice before treaties and working relationships were established and maintained. This led to Nalú mistrust of Europeans. Second, the rivers of the Nalú such as the Cumbidja are fairly small with sand-bars and tides, which make navigation by larger European vessels difficult. Therefore, the Nalú producers were forced to trade through their Beafada neighbors.

The contemporary Nalú of Kassumba still tell stories of their earliest ancestors roaming the landscape. Leadership for these early Nalú was communal among the initiated males. They were collectors of palm and fishermen. Many of these cultural practices and early economic activities continue even today. Face markings in the form of two or three slits on the forehead and cheeks can still be found among some Nalú, for example. This was explained as medicinal to help protect sick infants from witchcraft and to remove any "bad" blood. Additionally, several Nalú elders can still carve canoes from the trunk of a Cottonwood tree, a skill documented during earlier encounters with this ethnic group. Finally, the Nalú of Kassumba continue to fish, collect salt, weave grass mats, and hunt and gather foodstuffs and other resources from their natural surroundings. Why did the earliest inhabitants settle this difficult environment along the coast with many mosquitoes and sandy soils that are difficult to cultivate and frequently flood? This Nalú enclave probably resulted from the rise and fall of West African Kingdoms and Empires beginning around the eleventh century.

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NALÚ EXPANSION

The Mali Empire rose from the ashes of Ghana beginning around the eleventh century. Dyulas brought with them from the east both trade and Islam and as a result, both the Mandinka ruling class and farmers of this state began to convert, willingly at first and later by force. The official date for the rise of the Mali Empire is 1230 when Sundiata Keita defeated the Susu resurgence, which dispersed Susu refugees as well as other smaller ethnic enclaves toward the coast. Odile Hanquez Passavant suggests that the Nalú may not have even existed before this move to the coast. She writes,

> I make the assumption that the 'Nalou' were constituted as a cultural group and were given, or accepted, the name at the moment when they left the Futa Jalon area toward the coast . . . It also seems that the first migration started a more or less continuous flow of small family groups which left the Futa Jalon to join Nalou already installed on the coast or other vicinities." (2000: 387-388, translation mine).

It was also at this time that Islam became the official state religion. Mali eventually fell in 1564, but the Mandinka kingdom of Kaabu located closer to the coast in present day Guinea-Bissau flourished until 1867. During this 300 year period, many ethnic groups fled further to the coast to escape religious persecution and enslavement. From its strategic location and the arrival of the Portuguese, Kaabu became a strong slave trading state. Eventually, it was the Fula of the Futa Jalon who destroyed Kaabu and established their own hegemony until the Portuguese intervened around 1890.

During much of this time, the Nalú were considered part of Forrea in the southwestern corner of Guinea-Bissau, which means "free land" in Mandinka (Lobban and Mendy 1997: 166-168). This territory was also shared with the Beafada. Forrea paid tribute to Kaabu. An influx of Fula immigrants, however, eventually led to the Fula state of Forrea in 1868. The Nalú of

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Kassumba maintain a story in which, the Nalú, being pursued by Fula invaders, escaped to Kassumba. "Kassumba" in Nalú literally means, "the cup is full," which I was told meant that these refugees could go no further. The Nalú elders then got together and wove a great magic that brought a giant serpent[27] to carve a deep gorge across their path, which was still noted on the landscape. This gorge then filled with water. When the Fula pursuers arrived, they could not advance. In this way, they were able to hold off their attackers and eventually arrest control of the region back from the Fula.

Finally, according to Theirno Diallo who wrote *Dinah Salifou: Roi des Nalous*, at the time of the Islamic revolution in the Futa Jalon beginning around 1725, brothers Yotpez and Yani led Nalú settlers from Forea in the Futa Jalon into Kassini and Kokandi. This loosely corresponds with my own collected oral histories from Kassumba (1977: 92-93). By 1857, the Nalú were already well established in Kassini where the elders entered into trade agreements with European stranger-traders, probably as a reaction to Fula encroachment (Havik 2004: 119). Conflict with the Fula took quite a toll on the Nalú in this region. At the same time, these same Nalú lands were being divided among the French and Portuguese colonial regimes as a result of trade agreements between the two countries. In addition, endogamous marriage practices, enculturation (i.e., Fulanization or Susuization), and Islamic conversion were having an adverse effect on the remaining Nalú, who were once considered a powerful kingdom in the Nunez River region in the nineteenth century.

[27] "Throughout the coastal area of Sierra Leone and Guinea today, serpent imagery is identified with a local water spirit called variously 'Ninkinanka' (among the Nalu, Landuma, and Dyola) and 'Niniganné' (among the Baga); in Portuguese Creole this same being is known as 'Rianséou'" (Blier 1993: 393).

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NALÚ ISLAMIZATION

Once Europeans established contact with West Africa, the Nalú were in a unique position to act as middlemen between the interior states and the coast. However, they did not fully embrace this role until the eighteenth century when they served as go-betweens for the Atlantic World and the Islamic Futa Jalon State (Bérenger-Féraud 1973[1879]: 316). It was also at this time that the Nalú began to convert to Islam through interactions with Dyula traders and the Fula of the Futa Jalon. The histories note, however, that while the Nalú identify as Muslim, theirs' is a less intense variety. The Nalú were semi-isolated at the margins of the Islamic states. They were also surrounded by cultural groups that retained their traditional religions such as the Baga. Historically, the Nalú were palm wine tappers and abundant alcohol sources remain throughout their environment even today. In addition, they practiced their own traditional religion with the accompanying secret society, the remnants of which are still found throughout Nalú communities and are even held in high esteem (Bérenger-Féraud 1973[1879]: 316-317). Writing in 1879, Bérenger-Féraud commented on the animosity felt by the Nalú toward the Fula; "They hate the Foulahs, who impose too strict of a sobriety on them or, perhaps, become their masters and make them their slaves" (1973[1879]: 334, translation mine). So why did they convert?

When I asked this question to my cultural consultants, the response I received was that conversion was gradual and largely took place through their children. Parents were interested in their children learning to read and write. In the nineteenth century, only Koranic schools were found in much of West Africa. Therefore, many of the Nalú sent their children away to be educated. These children then returned as practicing Muslims. Bérenger-Féraud noted this as well when he wrote, "The schools at Timbo are very well attended. Much of the Nalou nation

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sends their children to it. The masters are Arab; they teach the children basic reading and writing through the Koran" (1973[1879]: 324).

According to the oldest living person in Kassumba, a Nalú named Towli was the first to convert to Islam and learn to read and write from Quitáfine. His ancestors had migrated from Kaabu into Foréah and then on to Bejine, Tombali, and finally Quitáfine. He told me that today, the Nalú are divided into five groups, each speaking a separate dialect including Tombali, Quitáfine, Kabukuré, Guinea, and the Nalú-belé of Kassaka and Kamakondé. During this earlier time before the Nalú converted, they could not read or write, only mark wood in order to make tallies of cattle and other things. In 1939, the elder with whom I was speaking told me that he had entered the forest alongside twenty-nine other youths to be circumcised and initiated over a seven year period. He was eleven. At that time, the Portuguese were already installed at Cacine and some Nalú had begun practicing Islam. It was also at this time that the first few Balanta began immigrating into Quitáfine. By then, the Portuguese had set up a missionary school in Cacine, which gave the Nalú an option for where to send their children to be educated.

A second elder from the village of Tamakeni told me that his grandfather had been attacked by the Fula in the nineteenth century. He said that at that time, any captors of the Fula would eventually become Fula. This had a dramatic effect on the Nalú population. According to this elder, it was common during this period for the Nalú to continually run from their Fula pursuers. Wherever they ended up, they would take on the names of the people residing there. This is why their names today are different from their Nalú family names. I was told during this conversation that Islam only came as far as the fighting, to the frontier. When the fighting was over, the Nalú continued to visit the Imams who were mobilizing along the frontier zones. These Fula Imams would demand that the Nalú send their children to them to be educated, sometimes

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by force. In Kadiko, it was this elder's uncle, Alfa Kamara, who was the first Nalú to convert. He later went with his older brother and started a Koranic school near Cacine. If the Nalú of Kassumba wished to read and write, they had to attend this school.

Finally, according to the eldest family member of the Kassumba founder, the first Imam to immigrate to the Quitáfine region was Artur Isuf who lived and worked in Kolaque. He told me that the type of Islam that the Kassumba Nalú's practiced was "Ibrahim" and that they belonged to the Azeti Corett group. This Kassumba resident strongly identified with Islam and explained that Nalú conversion to Islam mainly took place between 1910 and 1915 with small differences found among the various Nalú villages depending on how strongly each isolated group accepted the new religion. He explained that although he no longer practiced their traditional religion, he did not want it to end. He went on to talk about how the War of Trouba between the Mandinka and Fula in the eighteenth century impacted the Nalú in a profound ways. They were left to search for a safe place to settle and eventually established a peace treaty under the guidance of Dinah Salifou with the Futa Jalon, which as I have already noted above, was short lived with further population displacement arising from further pressures from the Fula leadership.

Although the history of Kassumba is difficult to piece together from these accounts, using Theirno Diallo's (1977: 92-93) chronology as a guide, a group of Nalú were displaced around 1725 as a result of religious persecution and population displacement throughout the region as the Fula Empire gained strength. By 1754, the Nalú probably reached the coast near the Nunez River bringing with them very little except animal skins with water and rice seed (Fields 1999: 95). It may have been as late as 1820 or 1850, however, before Kassumba was founded. As battles increased between the Fula and those Nalú residing in Forea, many Nalú were either

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killed or forced to flee "taking refuge on the littoral in the marshiest zones dispersed between Tombali and Cacine" (Hanquez Passavant 2000: 395). This is most likely when Kassumba was founded by the grandfather of Brahma Kamara. At about the same time, a second group of Nalú refugees entered the area by crossing the Cacine River. They also claimed Kassumba and probably brought with them the Susu language. A third family arrived later before the conversion to Islam took place among the Kassumba residents. By 1910, it is likely that all three families of Kassumba were well established in the village. Already, by the 1850s, the Nalú of Quitáfine were signing treaties with both the French and Portuguese.[28] By 1891, the Nalú of the Nunez River region were under the direct administration of the French while it took longer for a clear colonial hegemony to emerge in southern Guinea-Bissau. As noted above, the Nalú had little contact with Europeans until the mid nineteenth century when their coastal lands became a point of contention between the French and Portuguese until 1906 when Cacine went to the Portuguese and the Nunez region was conceded to the French (Hanquez Passavant 2000: 386).

NALÚ-NESS

The Susu, an ethnic neighbor to the south of the Nalú territories in Guinea, have had a profound linguistic and cultural affect on contemporary Nalú (Hanquez Passavant 2000: 385). The Nalú ethnic language is rapidly disappearing with many of the Nalú youth unable to speak or understand it. In Kassumba, the language of the community is Susu while the primary language of education is the Krioulu of Guinea-Bissau. The Nalú language in Quitáfine is only spoken among the oldest generation of women or during traditional religious ceremonies and during gatherings of the secret societies. Susu will most likely overtake the Nalú language completely

[28] See Winston Franklin McGowan (1978).

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within one or two more generations. So what makes the Nalú a distinct cultural grouping when compared with their neighbors?

The Nalú, no matter their origins, continue to occupy and manage a large swath of coastal land divided between Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry. They self ascribe as both Nalú and Muslim. According to my sources, the Nalú of Quitáfine recognize that their language is distinct from the other cultural groups found throughout the region. They also feel that their traditional religion is powerful and deserves to continue in some form. At the same time, the residents of Kassumba are acutely aware that both their traditional religious practices and language are quickly disappearing. Politically, the Nalú of Kassumba regulate themselves for the most part through an informal council of male household heads. Economically, they participate in many of the same activities as other ethnic groups as both "rice-cultivators and rice-eaters" (Fields 1999: 87). The importance they assign to these activities, however, is somewhat distinct as I hope to demonstrate throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis. According to Edda Fields, the Nalú

> Represent themselves and their ancestors in multiple ways: as traditional practitioners of indigenous religions, fugitives from religious warfare, occasional participants in internal and external trade networks, recent converts to Islam, rice cultivators, rice eaters, and exploiters of floodplains and mangrove swamps. (1999: 88)

The Nalú are facing a difficult future. Their population is small and may decline further as they continue to emigrate, intermarry with other ethnicities, and acculturate with the Fula and Susu. By 1939, Balanta immigrants began to arrive in Kassumba adding an additional cultural pressure to the Nalú residing there.

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SOUTHWARD BALANTA IMMIGRATION

Balanta settlement patterns often reflect a dispersion or "fission" in which families break away from the larger community "when resources were insufficient or when intragroup rivalries could not be resolved" (Hawthorne 2003a: 47). In this way, Balanta from the north of Guinea-Bissau made their way into Tombali and eventually on into Quitáfine and Kassumba, which is considered the lands of the Nalú. Additionally, refugees from the war for independence were resettled in the south since population densities there were fairly low and arable land was abundant. Today, these Balanta immigrants outnumber the Nalú of Kassumba almost two to one.

The Balanta are the single largest ethnic group of Guinea-Bissau making up more than 30 percent of the population. They are generally egalitarian in socio-political organization or are ruled by a local chief. The Balanta continue to practice their own traditional religion, keep livestock, and cultivate rice. They are thought to be one of the original ethnic groups of what is today Guinea-Bissau alongside the Nalú and a handful of others (Havik 2004: 95). The Balanta have been considered the primary labor force for Guinea-Bissau and are noted for their agricultural skills. They also played a pivotal role in the independence movement of Guinea-Bissau.

INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

During an interview with Ousmané Keita of Kassumba on May 7, 2007, he said that Amílcar Cabral had passed through the area in 1956 while conducting an agricultural survey for

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the colonial government. I was later brought out into the rice fields and shown a cement marker that he had left behind. From 1953 to 1956, this same elder informed me that he had served as a military trooper in Bissau under the Portuguese. By 1960, five different PAIGC mobilizers under the direction of Cabral had visited Kassumba. According to Ousmané, the mobilizers were constantly under threat of the Portuguese troops in Cacine. He remembered that one of these recruiters was a Balanta, a second was a man named Alio from Kabukuré. The others were Manuel, Mansumba, and Corona.

The actual fighting for independence against the Portuguese colonizers began in 1959 at which time Amílcar Cabral returned to the south to hold a meeting in Kassenten. PAIGC held their first congress in the south of the country in Kassaka by 1961 and then again in 1962 because of its proximity to the Guinea border where they were setting up military bases. By 1963 through 1965, most of the residents of Kassumba were living in the forest and mangroves where the Balanta remained until independence ten years later. During this period, the south experienced bombings and Portuguese gun boats patrolling the Cacine River. The woods were often burned down; many people from Kassumba and the surrounding area died during these incursions. The Nalú did what they could to supply PAIGC troops with rice and fish. Both the Balanta and Nalú of Kassumba continued to cultivate rice in the mangrove swamps. By 1966, many of the Nalú, however, had crossed into Guinea Conakry to stay with friends in Kawalé. In 1971, some of the Nalú from Quitáfine returned to Guinea-Bissau where they set up a temporary village called "Washington," which was located in the Kassumba neighborhood of Kasseklang. The elders of the village worked magic so that it was protected from being spotted from the air. This village was never bombed.

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By 1973, Ousamané Keita was the first to return to Kassumba Nalú. He reported that no trace of the previous village remained except for some of the palm and mango trees. Ousmané started to construct a house there and eventually some of the previous residents returned. It has never reached the size that it was before the war when four stores could be found there along with a few "white" storekeepers. Ten long years after leaving Kassumba, Ousamané's children were finally able to participate in their initiation ceremony.

Alfonseca Kamara of Tamakeni also participated in the war. I interviewed him on August 18, 2007. He told me that he lived in the woods and took up arms alongside "Nino" Viera. This was a theme found among many elders, each telling a tale of when they fought beside the current president or Amílcar Cabral himself. Others would tell about times when the PAIGC mobilizers in their village had to dress in ethnic garb or women's clothing to hide from the Portuguese searches. For example, a story circulated about "Nino" being saved by a Balanta community by dressing like them when the Portuguese arrived to inspect the village for rebels. The fact remains, however, that the populace of Guinea-Bissau ended up fighting on both sides of the struggle with many casualties. Alfonseca had traveled to Guinea where he was trained in the use of three different types of weapons. He spent eleven years living in the forests where he planted rice and could only cook at night. They had to constantly be on the lookout for planes flying overhead. Alfonseca said that it was not uncommon for bugs to enter the feet of PAIGC soldiers, eventually killing them. The troops often used magical objects for protection as well as frequenting Islamic mystics for charms to protect themselves. At one point during the conflict, an Islamic mystic told Alfonseca that he must go to Guinea, the land of the Susu, or he would die. He had already lost his wife and two children at this point due to the war, so Alfonseca crossed the border into Guinea to avoid additional bloodshed. He told me that Nino, who was

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originally from Biombo, came to the South many times to mobilize people and to get arms coming into the country across the Guinea border. He was in charge of controlling the arms traffic and as he travelled throughout the country, Portuguese bombers would follow. Alfonseca told me that people supported Nino for president in 1980 because many of them remembered his deeds from the war effort.

CONCLUSION

The Nalú influence in Guinea-Bissau is small but effective (Arcin 1907: 172). Numbering approximately 10,000 in the country, they are less than one percent of the total population. They are also isolated in the southernmost reaches of the country along the border with Guinea Conakry. The Nalú have no representation in the national government and although emigration between Nalú villages in Tombali and Guinea Conakry is common, Nalú rarely reside outside of their patrimonial lands. Marriage partners are exchanged between male relatives and friends to strengthen family bonds and children are often given over to more affluent family members who can provide best for them including both a traditional and a modern education. The Nalú are a fairly closed society. For example, the Fula trader-in-residence of Kassumba had lived among the Nalú for more than twenty years and was still considered an outsider. Balanta began to migrate into Kassumba in 1939; however, they live in separate neighborhoods and do not intermarry with Nalú.

At the same time, the Nalú have a strong sense of hospitality. Outsiders are welcomed, fed, and customarily, the Nalú will even give up their beds to a foreigner. People throughout Guinea-Bissau know of the Nalú as the landlords of the South. They are also strongly respected

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for their traditional religion, which is usually ranked by Guinea-Bissauans as the second or third most powerful traditional religion in a country made up of many diverse cultural groups. The Nalú's cultural traditions are often equated to that of the Baga of Guinea Conakry or the Bijagos residing on the Bissagos Archipelago just off the coast of Guinea-Bissau. Both of these groups primarily continue to practice their traditional religions while the Nalú are becoming more and more Islamicized. Even today, however, the Nalú traditional religion is known throughout the region. They welcome many foreigners each year into their sacred forests to be cured and provided for from as far away as Europe.

Much of Guinea-Bissau's internal production of rice, the primary staple, comes from the south, which is considered the breadbasket of the country and is under the direct influence of the Nalú. Since their population is so small, however, the Nalú freely welcome immigrants into their territory, even providing them with arable land to cultivate. For example, during the armed conflict in 1998-1999 in Guinea-Bissau, when President Nino Viera was eventually ousted after eighteen years of leadership, many people from the capital city of Bissau fled southward to seek refuge until the fighting was over. While life is difficult in these isolated villages with little working infrastructure and poor healthcare, the inhabitants work together in a cooperative fashion sharing what resources are available.

When I arrived in Kassumba for the first time, I was immediately given a room and food to eat. At the same time, the Nalú of Kassumba invite Nalú friends and family from outside the community to come and live in their village since its environment is particularly rich. The Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba welcomed me into their homes and freely shared stories and meals. Whether one person from the U.S., a carload of foreigners from throughout West Africa wishing to make requests from the spirits of the sacred forest, or thousands from throughout Guinea-

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Bissau during the First of May celebration when truck- and boat-loads of people descend on Kassumba's beach, the Nalú response is always the same. They open their homeland to these strangers. At the same time, the Nalú understand that it is up to the "children of the land" to protect their meager resources from exploitation since the national government has been unable to thus far. It is their labor, for example, that completely transformed the mangrove swamps into working rice paddies in only four generations. They acknowledge, however, that they are a small group of people in a larger world-system. They can only provide the most basic healthcare to their inhabitants; they are forced to sit and watch as their rivers are overfished by foreigners; and they have no control over the prices they receive for their dried fish and cashew nuts by foreign buyers.

Throughout this chapter and thesis, I have, and will continue to, demonstrate Nalú resiliency in the face of these difficulties. Although outside pressures, economic, political, religious, and socio-cultural, are great, the Nalú of Kassumba demonstrate how small communities that can utilize both traditional subsistence strategies and growing market economies will develop a niche that can maintain, and better, their current livelihood strategies.

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Chapter Three

EVERYDAY ECONOMIC INTERFACE AS POTENTIALLY REVOLUTIONARY

"Production is co-operation, is communication, is language, is expression of a relation between human beings and it is specifically human" (Wa Thiong'o 1986: 13).

POST-COLONIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

In the following chapter, I will address the post-colonial underdevelopment hypothesis,[29] which can be summarized as an exploitative economic relationship between former colonies and their post-metropoles based on production and ideology slanted in favor of a (Western) world market that is historically linked to slavery and colonialism. "Anthropologists tend to endorse the globalist dreams of the people they study, and thus we lose the opportunity to address the located specificity of those globalist dreams" (Tsing 2000: 340). I will attempt to demonstrate the importance of economic change and stability as reactionary practices aimed at negotiating globalist pressures. In conjunction, I must address the questions previously posed by the Comaroffs: "Does an act require explicit consciousness and articulation to be properly called resistance? Should the term apply only to the intentions behind social and political acts, or may it refer equally to their consequences" (1992: 259)?

In the Postscript to Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped* Africa, A. M. Babu pleads that for innovative advances in development, what is first needed is a process of mental de-colonization (1982: 285; See also, Comaroff & Comaroff 1992: 235-264). He suggests that previous development strategies of stepping up imports, increasing aid and loans from developed

[29] See Lewis (1973); Rodney (1982: 13-28); San Juan (2002); Wa Thiong'o (1986).

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countries, and slowing population growth have been largely ineffective. Babu goes on to ask why these assumptions about development, which have consistently failed, continue to be prescribed. He explains,

> Economies are rendered always responsive only to what the Western world is prepared to buy and sell, and hardly responsive to our internal development needs. . . It becomes absolutely clear that the only way out of our current impasse is through a *revolutionary path* – a complete break with the system which is responsible for all our past and present misery. (Babu 1982: 285, 287, italics mine)

Through the use of ethnographic data, I demonstrate what a post-colonial economic "revolution" on the ground in real time might look like without neglecting globalizing processes and pressures (Cassell 1980: 36; Nash 2001: 16). This struggle for viable household livelihood strategies has the potential for promoting positive change in local economies by making them responsive to internal needs. My argument is in line with June Nash, when she argues:

> In order to reconstitute our understanding of people and locality we can learn from the initiatives of indigenous peoples how they intend to achieve a balanced relation with nature and at the same time live in a pluricultural world that respects *alternative* ways of seeking survival and living. (2001: 22, italics mine)

This chapter describes possible "alternatives" to the global world economy by examining some localizing and localized practices of indigenous peoples within a fully integrated world system.

Before continuing, I must make an additional note about my use of the term "development." When I use this concept, I wish only to convey successfully making a living, which usually requires the employment of a number of survival strategies.

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SINCERITY IN ACTION

What I attempt to demonstrate over the following pages is that economic endeavors at the local level can sometimes be understood as "sincerity in action." In other words, economic trans-actions are processual in nature and, in order to be successful, they must be shared, consented, and enacted. Anna Tsing explains how in these types of interactions, both the person and event must be considered when she writes,

> To understand even momentary successes of this kind of motley coalition, analysts must attend to the changing definitions of *interests* and *identity* that both allow and result from collaborative activities. They must focus on the historical specificity of the events that resulted in alliance and the open-ended indeterminacy of the regional processes stimulated by that alliance. (2000: 349)

Therefore, I argue in this chapter that everyday economic actions (Certeau 1984) occur in conjunction with macro, often Western inspired, political economic pressures. Nash clarifies,

> Everyday lived practice enables them [those on the ground level] to attest to ways of life that are alternatives to capitalism. . . These normative practices are not the result of passivity, but rather the product of practiced resistance by those who have experienced the trauma of conquest and colonization. (2001: 15-16)

These moments of interface behaviors contain the potential to spark revolutionary innovation, by which I mean practices not in line with Western ideas of development, progress, or globalization. Instead, the interactions are inspired by, regulated by, and enacted through the perceived needs of the group and/or individual, depending on the type of interface. I choose the term interface as an alternative to other economic or anthropological terminologies such as trade, exchange, barter, discourse,[30] dialogic,[31] dialectic,[32] encounter,[33] or negotiation,[34] each with its own

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[30] See Bakhtin (1981); Fabian (1983); Foucault (1977, 1978, 1980); James & Marcus (1986); Said (1978).

[31] See Tedlock & Mannheim (1995).

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proponents and critics although it too is not entirely value-free. What I wish to convey is a space in which primarily self-determining, often overlapping economies of differing scales meet on a personal level resulting in an act of producing. I will refer to these interfaces as either cooperative or competitive, depending on the outcome of the activity.

The cultural space of the interface where the transaction takes place is similar to Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*; although I emphasize the possibility of acting outside hegemonic lines as a direct result of the sincerity of the interaction, which can actually motivate the behavior. Bourdieu states, "'interpersonal' relations are never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction" (1977: 81). Contradictorily, I believe that it is the "truth" of the interaction that makes it interpersonal, forcing outside political pressures to become an afterthought. When these types of interactions occur, a revolutionary feat has taken place: what the philosopher Alain Badiou might describe as "the ethics of economic necessity (consumer politics)" (Barker 2002: 137).[35]

Above, I have labeled the different forms of economic interface as either cooperative or competitive in nature. These labels suggest strategies on the part of the actors (Nash 1950; Neumann & Morgenstern 1944). Briefly, in a cooperative economic interface, the outcome is beneficial to the social group and/or the individual actors involved (e.g., inward looking). These

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[32] See Diamond (1979); Gailey (1992).

[33] See Asad (1973).

[34] See Pottier, Bicker, & Sillitoe (2003); Stoller (2002).

[35] "Ethical experience begins with the experience of a demand to which I give my approval. *Approval* and *demand*: that is, there can be no sense of the good – however that is filled out at the level of content, and I am just understanding it formally and emptily – without an act of approval or affirmation. . . Subject and event come into being at the same time. . . the subject defines itself by binding itself approvingly to the demand that the good makes on it" (Critchley 2005: 215, 221). See also, Fletcher (1966); Rorty (2007).

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interfaces have underlying motives such as survival, cohesion maintenance, reciprocity, behavior modification, stress reduction, and building securities.[36] Cooperative inward-looking behaviors result from consensus decision-making processes in which people put forward a common effort for common benefit. This does not mean, however, that the individual's thoughts, actions, and rewards are removed from the schema.

In what I describe as a competitive economic interface, there is a shift in the outcome toward individual advantage over the cultural group. The inward-looking cooperative strategy is substituted for an outward, capitalist gaze, where empathy no longer regulates consumption, production, distribution, or exchange practices. The economic behaviors become shackled to the regional and global political economies and their Western ideological counterparts such as capitalism and alienated individualism (Gutkind & Wallerstein 1985). This shift leads to the refashioning of localized ethno- or cultural-economics (Cavalcanti 2002; McCarthy 1996; Wilk & Cliggett 2007: 117-152). The potentially revolutionary economic thinking and acting is replaced by foreign ways of thinking and acting.

One last theoretical note should be considered before looking at some real world examples of economic interface. Many impressive arguments for the agency of dependent peoples on the global periphery have been put forward, including everyday resistance to domination,[37] modification and innovation of diffused cultural elements,[38] the invention of traditions to better suit local contexts,[39] and the promotion and navigation of transnational

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[36] See Gudeman (1998); Wilk & Cliggett (2007: 153-176).

[37] See Scott (1985); Thompson (1993); Wolf (1997).

[38] See Appadurai (1996); Foster (2008); Hannerz (1992).

[39] See Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983).

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networks by indigenous peoples.[40] However, these arguments all work axiomatically within the context of globalization, trying to appropriate a foreign interloper from the inside. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o predicted, "It is the final triumph of a system when the dominated start singing its virtues" (1986: 20). Hybrid traditions and abstract universalisms such as creolization or Pan-Africanism, respectively, do not transcend colonial alienation. What a post-colonial critique calls for is something new, something undetermined by the current hegemonic system; something more in line with the revolutionary ideals of Wa Thiong'o (1986), Antonio Gramsci (1971), or Paulo Friere (1978, 2000, 2004).[41] However, this lofty goal may prove to be simply a theoretical exercise, unobtainable in real world interfaces, although I am suggesting here that certain types of alternative economic behaviors may prove to be empowering enterprises for those on the ground level.

A MULTI-FACETED REVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT

The West African micro-state of Guinea-Bissau has been cobbled together from a variety of nations. The population is an amalgam of political and religious refugees, traders, missionaries, indigenous inhabitants, and immigrants. Due to the multiple and overlapping cultural patterns exploiting a number of ideological and ecological niches,[42] this is an ideal site in

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[40] See Steiner (1994); Phillips & Steiner (1999); Binsbergen & Dijk (2004).

[41] See also, Mayo (1999).

[42] According to Frederik Barth, "Where two or more ethnic groups are in contact, their adaptations may entail the following forms: (1) They may occupy clearly distinct niches in the natural environment and be in minimal completion for resources. In this case their interdependence will be limited despite co-residence in the area, and the articulation will tend to me mainly through trade, and perhaps in a ceremonial-ritual sector. (2) They may monopolize separate territories, in which case they are in competition for resources and their articulation will involve politics along the border, and possibly other sectors. (3) They may provide important goods and services for

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which to consider economic interfaces. The country's ethnic make-up is a collection of approximately thirty-three different groups, with the largest, the Balanta, making up about 27% of the overall population.[43] The country's religious make-up is approximately 50% indigenous beliefs, 45% Muslim, and 5% Christian,[44] although a high degree of religious syncretism between these three belief systems is closer to reality.[45] The region's history is diverse. European contact with the littoral peoples of this territory began in the fifteenth century with Portuguese seafarers (Almada 1984; Álvares 1990; Azurara 1899; Brásio 1962, 1963; Coelho 1985; Donelha 1977; Hair, Jones, & Law 1992; Hair & Mota 1989; Pereira 1937). These encounters are usually where the history of the country begins, although some have extended their reach further back in time through the use of oral histories, linguistic and archaeological evidence, and Arabic sources (Barreto 1938; Brooks 2003; Forrest 2003; Gaillard 2000a; Havik

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each other, i.e. occupy recipricol and therefore different niches but in close inter-dependence. If they do not articulate very closely in the political sector, this entails a classical symbiotic situation and a variety of possible fields of articulation. . ." (1998: 19-20). I contend that for the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba, they interact according to the first and third types of cultural ecological adaptations.

[43] According to the 2002 International Monetary Fund (IMF) website (http://www.imf.org), the last general population and housing census covering the entire national territory dates back to February 1991. The CIA World Factbook estimates the entire population of Guinea-Bissau at 1,416,027 (July 2005 est.: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/), while the World Health Organization (WHO) lists a population size of 1,493,000 (2003 est.: http://www.who.int/en). The five largest ethnic groups are the Balanta (27%), Fula (23%), Mandinga (12%), Manjaco (11%), and Papel (10%) (Davidson 2002: 419; MacQueen 2003: 22).

[44] CIA World FactBook (accessed 03/23/2006: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pu.html).

[45] For example, historian George E. Brooks suggests that the coastal riverine Africans of Guinea-Bissau had land-based commercial relations with Mande-speaking groups, including Muslim traders, before the arrival of Europeans from the Atlantic in the mid-fifteenth century. And yet, "Their social and cultural patterns continued largely unchanged down to the present century. Indeed, Muslim Mandinka and Portuguese and Luso-African Christians alike evinced great respect – oftentimes expressing fear and awe – for the spiritual practices of coastal-riverine groups, and frequently had recourse to their religious specialists for a variety of purposes: for establishing social relations, for ratifying commercial agreements, for mediation with local spirits, and for medical and spiritual healing" (1984: 12). Brooks implies that the Portuguese pre-colonial explorers and later colonial officials of Guinea-Bissau were generally reputed to be neglectful of their religious obligations toward themselves and their colonized populations. Few colonial administrators attended mass, observed holy days of obligation, or consecrated Christian marriages (1984: 19; See also, Rodney 1970: 143). Economic exploitation, above all else, was the dominant Portuguese policy throughout their tenure in Guinea-Bissau. For example, the anti-slavery Spanish Capuchin missionaries were recalled in 1686 and replaced by more amenable Portuguese Franciscans (Brooks 2003: 165; Rodney 1970: 104-105, 143-144).

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2004; Hawthorne 1998, 2003; Levtzion & Hopkins 1981; Mota 1954; Rodney 1970). The past politico-economic interactions discussed in these historical texts play a significant role in shaping the patterns and processes of the present socio-cultural milieu among the peoples of Guinea-Bissau. For example, Guinea-Bissau is one of the only African countries to achieve and successfully sustain independence from a colonial power through armed struggle primarily due to the movement's leader, Amílcar Cabral (Chaliand1969; Davidson 1981; Dhadda 1993; Urdang 1979).[46]

Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) was one of the world's most influential revolutionary leaders.[47] He helped to eliminate the Portuguese colonial presence in Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau through armed struggle, while his intellectual efforts helped to unite a pluralistic society and undermine imperialism internationally (Chilcote 1991: 3). Cabral was engaged in cultivating unity (national, ethnic, and gendered) within the context of diversity. At a 1964 PAIGC[48] party members' meeting, Cabral emphasized his attitude toward the independence struggle when he stated,

> Always remember that the people are not fighting for ideas, nor for what is in men's minds. The people fight and accept the sacrifices demanded by the struggle in order to gain material advantages, to live better and in peace, to benefit from progress, and for the better future of their children. (Cited in Chabal 2003: 66)

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[46] For the sake of brevity and relevancy to the topic at hand, I will limit my historical discussion solely to Amílcar Cabral's revolutionary activities reaching fruition in 1974 and its impact on the local history of the village where I conducted my fieldwork (Cabral 1969, 1979; Chabal 2003).

[47] See Abdullah (2006); Cabral (1969, 1979); Chabal (2003); Chaliand (1969); Chilcote (1991); Dhada (1993); Fobanjong (2006); Lopes (1987, 2006a, b); Luke (1979); Mendy (2006); Rudebeck (2006); Urdang (1979).

[48] African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde:* PAIGC). This nationalist movement and eventual dominant political party of Guinea-Bissau was founded on September 19, 1956 by Amilcar Cabral, Aristides Pereira, Luiz Cabral, Júlio de Almeida, Fernando Fortes, and Elisée Turpin (Lopes 1987: 29).

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The population of Guinea-Bissau received little state protection or economic stability from the colonial Portuguese government (1879-1974) and even less respect (Bowman 1997). In 1969, Amílcar Cabral stated, "I saw people die of starvation . . . this is the fundamental reason for my revolt" (Cited in Chabal 2003: 31) although, of course, the issues leading up to the struggle for independence were much more complicated than this. Fed up with Portuguese abuses on their dignity, many Guinea-Bissauans' eventually followed Cabral's lead.[49] However, their failure to gain the needed support from urban dwellers required PAIGC political mobilizers to move their activities into the countryside, where they met with ethnic heterogeneity and resistance to change. It took the PAIGC two years before they were ready to undertake their first direct military action. Their strategy of mobilizing and relying on the rural masses instead of the educated, disaffected proletariat was an uncommon strategy for trying to bring about a nationalist revolution when compared to other such endeavors throughout the world.

Cabral's common forms of resistance called for uncommon strategies in establishing "unity and struggle"[50] in the countryside. The legacies of these nationalist actions still persist today. Cabral "sought to forge a durable unity of purpose by creating a common body of shared ideas which mainly derived from experiences in Guinea rather than from universal political doctrines" (Chabal 2003: 65).

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[49] In 1956, he founded the PAIGC and began a steady campaign of nationalist agitation both within and outside the country. Only three years later, Cabral concluded that national liberation could be achieved only through force of arms. The event that instigated Cabral's policy move was the Pidjiguiti massacre. On August 3, 1959, Portuguese authorities killed or wounded more than fifty striking dockworkers. The Portuguese colonial bureaucracy viewed the strike as political agitation that needed quelling. Ensuing crackdowns by the PIDE (Portuguese secret police) led to PAIGC party members fleeing the country.

[50] See Cabral (1979).

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He worked within the cultural reality of Guinea-Bissau in order to maximize efficiency without forbidding the practice of benign activities among disparate groups.[51] Cabral's socialist-leaning revisions to civil society contributed significantly to Guinea-Bissau's social order and the government's willingness to facilitate economic cooperation between diverse peoples. The leadership of the independence movement inspired a revolutionary ideology among its citizenry that is still an important part of their ideology and everyday lives, which is illustrated through their education (Friere 1978), collective action (Forrest 1992; Galli & Jones 1987), and mutual respect (Davidson 2002; Pattee 1973). For example, in Kassumba, the students attended a community elementary school with the administration and teachers coming from the village itself. In theory, the community schools seemed to be an ideal way of educating their youth with limited resources; in practice, however, the school was rarely in session; teachers lacked proper training, materials, or funds; and the students were more often used for their collective labor.

The number of ethnic groups making up this tiny African nation of approximately 1.5 million inhabitants conveys to contemporary scholars a potential site for research on heterogeneity, interethnic conflict, national destabilization, and balkanization. Joanna Davidson, however, affirms my belief that what one actually finds in the scholarly literature is that "relatively little interethnic conflict exists." She continues, "attention to . . . ethnic based rivalries . . . is far outweighed by the recurring trope of Guinea-Bissau as a successful plural society" (2002: 419). Davidson goes on to suggest several factors as potential explanations for this intriguing phenomenon, such as a shared language,[52] the Portuguese policies of miscegenation

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[51] For example, Cabral's pragmatic nature emerged when early in the struggle, many guerrillas refused to enter the holy forests where *iráns* (ancestral and nature spirits) resided and were thought to cause problems. The necessity of this natural cover led Cabral to argue convincingly that the *iráns* are nationalist and, therefore, work against the foreign invaders, not the rightful inhabitants of the forests (Chabal 2003: 80-81).

[52] See Scantamburlo (1999, 2003).

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and trade development,[53] decentralized religious and political structures,[54] and blurry/negotiable identity boundaries.[55] I would add to this list Cabral's contribution to civil society, a shared sense of national unity, and an ideology of cooperation. This shared sense of history and nationalism, however, only goes so far. State abuses of power can quickly escalate to confrontation, such as the 1998-1999 armed conflict, although these lapses seem to be opportunistic or political missteps by the country's leadership, and not the direct result of civil unrest (Forrest 1992; Ostheimer 2001; Vigh 2006).

CONTEXT OF COOPERATION

The village under study is located in the southernmost region of Tombali, in Guinea-Bissau. It is a part of the Quitáfine Sector located at the mouth of the Cacine River. The land is considered the patrimony of the Nalú,[56] an ethnic group divided along the state borders of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry.[57] The Nalú are divided into six groups, each with their own distinct dialects and regional affiliations.[58] As mentioned above, they number less than 25,000

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[53] See Hawthorne (2003).

[54] See Crowley (1988, 1990); Forrest (1987, 1988). "Meanwhile in the countryside, where some 85 per cent of the population lives, the localisation of power meant that people were able to reconsolidate community-level political institutions. At the same time, they pursued production and inter-ethnic marketing activities that reflected precolonial trade strategies and networks, which had endured through the colonial epoch" (Forrest 2002: 238).

[55] See Mark (1999).

[56] Alternate spellings: Nalu, Nalus Nalou, Nanuus, Naluns, Nanu, Maluces, Caluz, Calowsa, Calus, Calua, Caluma, Donayluy (Hair 1979; 1997: 383; Quintino 1969: 885). The Nalú are first documented on an anonymous map dated 1471.

[57] Current census data for the Nalú range from 10,000 to 25,000 people (Castro 2004; Passavant 2000: 385)

[58] (1) *Nalus-bravos/brabu (Canonké)*, Tombali, (2) *Nalus-bravos/brabu*, Cubucaré, (3) B*Esincenker,* Quitáfine (Cacine), (4) *Nalus-mansos (BEnalu)*, Guinea Conakry (Nunez River, Cadubu Island, Mel Island), (5) *Nalu-belé*

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worldwide, with 134 of them living in the village of Kassumba. The village is made up of six distinct neighborhoods, only two of which are presently inhabited by the Nalú, Kassumba Nalú, and Kadabu.[59] The other four neighborhoods support 542 Balantas, who began to emigrate from the northern Nhacra Sector, in search of food and arable land, into Quitáfine in 1939.

The way in which the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba portrayed their histories to me was as important as those histories themselves. For the most part, I report these stories as they were reported to me although I recognized that the implications of what stories, when, where, and by whom they are told, and the underlying meanings of these stories, is important and telling as I discussed in Chapter Two. What follows is a brief review of these long and complicated histories as they were given to me. I chose the stories which are most revealing about how and why the Balanta and Nalú have come to reside together in a single village in southerwestern Guinea-Bissau as an introduction to the concept of ethnic cooperation and competition.

The oldest Kassumba resident, at eighty years old, Ousmané Keita (05/07/07) said that the Nalú elders (*omi-garandi*) held a meeting with the first Balanta immigrants in Krioulu.[60] They discussed possible locations for Balanta settlement. The Balanta had brought along rice, cattle, and other necessities. Sambil was the first Balanta to visit the region in search of palm wine. He traveled from Kasheklang in Kassumba to Kassebesse and then on to Kadiko. After two or three years, Firéna Nasía, Bídong, and Nafá Mbana settled in Konfuque. A few years later, Foamfa and Yamta Nambana settled in Kassetti, another neighborhood of Kassumba.

(Bitlaraka), Catió, and (6) *BElik*, Kukuba, Guinea-Conakry (Castro 2004; Fields 2004; 239; Simões 1935: 133; Machado 1972; 14; Passavant 2000: 385).

[59] (1) Kassumba Nalú, (2) Kassumba Balanta, (3) Kashek-lang, (4) Kassetti, (5) Lafmedi, and (6) Kadabu.

[60] The Portuguese Creole language developed as a *lingua franca* used in trade with the Portuguese starting in the fifteenth century and was eventually adapted as a means of communication in all of Guinea-Bissau (Scantamburlo 1999; Wilson 1962).

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According to oral tradition, the Nalú have resided in Quitáfine since before the arrival of the Europeans. Kassumba was founded by Saba Kakuba (Kamara), who first visited the area while hunting and tapping palm wine. I was told that the name "Quitáfine" is both the name of the sector and the sacred forest (*matu)* next to Kassumba. In the Nalú language, "tafine" means *kao limpu* or "clean house," suggesting an area that would be easily settled. Today, Nalú generally self-identify as Muslim. However, in the Quitáfine region, the Nalú traditional religion is still practiced in the villages of Kassumba, Kassebesse, and Kampeana.

By the time of the Balanta immigration, the Portuguese were located in Cacine and only came to Kassumba once a year to collect taxes, which were set at approximately forty pesos per household, and adjusted according to the number of wives in each household. The Nalú were only able to obtain money by cutting palm kernel bunches (*tceben*) and then selling them at the Cacine store (*loja*). At this time, the Balanta did not pay taxes because they did not have permanent homes in the area. Instead, they would roam the forests accompanied by their age mates. The elders of both the Nalú and Balanta would get together and adjudicate if problems arose, such as when Balanta cows destroyed Nalú gardens. To help prevent escalating ethnic tension, most Nalú households were eventually enclosed by fences.

The Balanta elder, Caluthé Nangbwade (04/24/07), told me that the Balanta came from the north looking for land because they didn't have enough food for their families. The first Balanta, Sambil Nantung, entered the village of Taforé. Later, the second Balanta, Firena Nasia, went on to settle in Kassetti, a neighborhood of Kassumba. From there, the Balanta negotiated settlements in Kassumba, Kassebesse, and Konfuque. These early Balanta would hide from the whites, who burned their houses and rice paddies (*bolanhas*), and stole or killed their animals. The Portuguese were trying to force the Balanta into providing labor and taxes.

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In addition, Caluthé acknowledged that the Balanta refused to convert to Islam because they would be forced to give up drinking alcohol. According to oral tradition, the Balanta ancestors lived in the Futa Jalon of Guinea. Since they would not convert, the dominant group located there, the Fula, insisted, "*bu lanta* (i.e., Balanta)*, bu bai*" (you must get up, and go). The Balanta left the Futa Jalon and consider themselves the first to settle in the territory known considered Guinea-Bissau. Caluthé said that the Balanta came from Sara in the Futa Jallon, while the Nalú are from the territory of the Susu. According to Caluthé, the Balanta were the first to settle in Guinea-Bissau, with the Papel arriving second. The Nalú came later, although they were the first to settle in Tombali. According to this elder, the name Tombali is a Balanta and Nalú ethnonym. Tongho was the name of the first Nalú to settle here, while Mbali was the first Balanta in the entire southern region. When the Portuguese arrived, they gave the area the name Tongho-Mbali or Tombali.

EVERDAY ECONOMIC INTERFACE

The following information is based on the method of participation and observation. It was during my residency in the small, semi-isolated frontier community of Kassumba, where I witnessed and participated in a wide array of economic activities in cooperation with the Nalú and Balanta. These economic endeavors in the weak nation-state of Guinea-Bissau tend to be lightly regulated and, therefore, infrequently documented. With my new ethnographic data, I interpret trends in interface behavior with respect to ethnicity, household management, and the larger political economy. The analytic categories I use to classify the nature of all economic interface behaviors are: (1) Beneficial Production/Exchange, (2) Detrimental

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Production/Exchange, (3) Neighborly/Familial Cooperation, and (4) Neighborly/Familial Competition. The ethnographic anecdotes grouped in each of these categories, however, are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, these economic interface behaviors must be considered along two separate continuums: (1) the Global/Local and (2) the Cooperative/Competitive, in which the localized or inward-looking cooperative behaviors potentially promote home-grown economic success (see Figure 1).

Figure 6: Economic Interactions.

	Local (inward-looking)	**Global (outward-looking)**
Cooperative Interface	Neighborly/Familial Cooperation (*Revolution/Development*)	Beneficial Production/Exchange
Competitive Interface	Neighborly/Familial Competition (*Cultural Tension/Conflict*)	Beneficial/Detrimental Production/Exchange (*Possible Cultural Alienation*)

If there is an economic revolution underway in the sense of moving away from participation in the global economy in order to refocus efforts on internal economic needs and preferences, I believe that localized economic behaviors will be skewed in favor of cooperation and away from non-empathetic interfaces. I anticipate that among a semi-isolated, rural civil society, inward-looking interfaces should play a significant role in local production and exchange.

After a brief survey of my fieldnotes, I was able to extract a total of 103 instances of cooperative interfaces, which I further divided into beneficial production (17), beneficial

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exchange (29), neighborly cooperation (39), and familial cooperation (18). I also counted 43 instances of competitive interfaces subdivided into detrimental production (6), detrimental exchange (10), neighborly competition (19), and familial competition (8). Forty-six cooperative behaviors were tied to the market economy of Guinea-Bissau while fifty-seven instances of cooperative interface were less capitalistic in nature.

By exploring some illustrative anecdotes below, I will further describe these concepts. I find a strong reliance on cooperative, inward-looking household livelihood strategies. I also believe that noticeable economic (re)diversification should be observable in everyday economic activities if inward-looking economic survival strategies are underway in an attempt (implicitly or explicitly) to promote a new kind of self-reliance. I will provide examples of this economic diversification as well, demonstrating that Nalú and Balanta yearly economic strategies remain necessarily flexible. Finally, I will conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the role of the larger regional economy and its affect on local production. I will demonstrate that although globalizing forces are at work on Guinea-Bissau's rural civil society, the people of Kassumba are still in control of their land, labor, and economic activities.

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INTERFACE BEHAVIORS

Beneficial Production/Exchange

Kassumba operates under a mixed economy incorporating elements of capitalism and socialism.[61] However, the behaviors I have grouped under the subheading "Beneficial Production/Exchange" are capitalistic in nature. In other words, the socio-economic endeavors are generally more individualistic and motivated by profit. It is the market, generally influenced by internal and external demands, that determines investment, distribution, income, production, and the pricing of goods and services. In beneficial production and exchange, I suggest that empathy has a role to play. The producers and traders are selfish actors; however, attempts at purposefully sabotaging one's counterparts are usually limited since they are often kin, neighbors, or long-term acquaintances (i.e., resident-traders). If the individual can profit, and one's counterpart can benefit as well, there is little tension. However, the individual is generally unwilling to decrease their profits so that another may benefit. In this way, open tension and/or hostilities may arise between individuals who are producing and/or exchanging the same goods and services with limited internal or external demand for the product. This type of production/exchange often falls within the rubric of the larger national, regional, or global political economy. What follows are a few representative examples of beneficial production/exchange.

[61] Anthony Giddens explains, "The economic environment is constantly being altered in the light of these inputs [interface behaviors and their outcomes], thus creating a situation of continual mutual involvement between economic discourse and the activities to which it refers" (Giddens 1990: 41).

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I moved to Kassumba at the beginning of the dry season in February and spent time over the following month speaking with two transient Fula traders. They came to the region during the dry season to purchase fish for transport to Guinea Conakry or to Senegal. One day in early March, I followed Peter Barry to the semi-permanent fishing settlement of Kadiko. Peter had arranged to stay in Kassumba Nalú with another Fula trader-in-residence from Guinea Conakry, who had lived and worked in Kassumba for more than twenty years. Peter and I walked the three kilometers up the beach to neighboring Kadiko while the tide was out. He told me that he had originally planned on spending only two weeks in Quitáfine collecting fish. However, the low supply kept him around for several months. He was annoyed with how few fish there were to buy, telling me that for him to cross the border into Senegal, he would have to pay 1,000 XOF ($2) to the Bissau police in addition to the transportation and transit permit costs (approximately 8,500 XOF [$17]). When we arrived in the mixed community of Kadiko, the fishermen had only the smaller silver-grey *barbu/esquilão* (*barbus barbus*; barbel),[62] *djafal* (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*; Bonga shad), and *teinha/kakandja/rabu burmedju* (*Liza ramado[a]*; Thinlip mullet) for sale.[63] Peter was only interested in purchasing salt-cured, premiere-class filets (*skalada*) and dried swim-bladders (*folgu*; maw), which fetched a high price on the international market as isinglass.[64] Peter left with nothing. There was already a Fula trader from Guinea Conakry temporarily living in Kadiko, who was buying up all the smoked or sun-dried, third-class fish, particularly *djafal*. He was staying in Kadiko until he was able to buy up 500 kilograms before

[62] The *barbus barbus* may be misattributed by Scantamburlo (2003: 108) as the *barbu*. It is actually a type of carp (catfish) known as an *esquilão* in Portuguese.

[63] *Galeoides decadactylus* or lesser African threadfin were also regularly caught and sold with the other varieties mentioned.

[64] Isinglass is a substance obtained from the swim bladders of fish and is used mainly for the clarification of wine, beer, glue, and jellies; it is a form of collagen or semitransparent whitish very pure gelatin (Cheke & Ward 1998).

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returning to Conakry. He used public transportation to move his goods and made five trips per year with a small profit margin. This year, however, he said that he was going to trade his *djafal* in Gabu's market in Guinea-Bissau, and then take the more valuable *skalada* to Djowbé in Senegal where he could make more money. He paid the fishermen of Kadiko 200 XOF (about $.40) per kilo of dried *djafal*.

As we can see from this example, the fish trade is a transnational endeavor where the supply is currently lagging with the demand. In the few small communities located at the mouth of the Cacine River, such as Kassumba and Kadiko, there are a number of producers and traders involved in outward-looking economic activities. Also implied in this example is the decline in the number of available fish in the region, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

The residents of Kassumba are also very much involved in the transnational fish trade. For example, I observed three young Balanta males from Kassumba Balanta going out onto the Cacine River in their canoe daily for about eight hours per day to check, move, and clean their *skalada* nets. They told me that they take about 50 kilograms of salt-cured *skalada* filets to Dakar twice per year, where they sell them for 1,500 XOF/kilogram ($3). In addition to what they catch, they also buy some from other local fisherman for 500 XOF per kilogram ($1). The local Fula trader-in-residence also buys up any available *skalada* from local fishermen. On one particular occasion, I witnessed a Balanta fisherman sell two dried *skalada* at the Kassumba store run by this Fula trader for 1,750 XOF ($3.50). He pays 500 XOF ($1) per kilo for dried *skalada* and 250 XOF ($.50) per kilo for fresh premiere-class fish. The trader-in-residence's son makes several trips per year to the Djowbé market in Senegal to sell these fish, along with dried oysters and palm oil.

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While fishing is a male economic activity in Kassumba, the collection of oysters is reserved for female youths (ages 7-18). Nalú girls from the village of Kassumba regularly walk out into the riverbed during low tide where they spend several hours hammering away at the oyster shells clinging to the rocks. The work is difficult, spent entirely in the direct sun. Oyster gathering sessions usually last six or more hours, depending on the tides. The girls are bent over for the duration, shucking the shells and putting their finds into small basins. Oyster traders travel throughout Kassumba on a regular basis, leaving down payments with these girls in exchange for future yields. On one occasion, a trader named Bifass bought six liters of smoked oysters from a young girl for 3,000 XOF ($6). He had already left her 2,000 XOF ($4) as a down payment during a previous visit. Other girls preferred to sell to other traders. Bifass was always looking for more willing producers. He carried around an account book with approximately 100 names in it. One day after Bifass had left the house, I asked the girls if they always sold to him, or to another woman from the village who also regularly purchased oysters. They responded that they were willing to sell to whoever had money available. I regularly witnessed fifteen or more girls from Kassumba heading out to collect oysters together.

Participation usually depended on whether the girls had taken an advance or not. In other words, with an influx in money available (i.e., demand) and/or a need for money on the part of the girls, they would increase production. One liter of dried oysters was purchased for 500 XOF ($1). The most I ever saw a single girl collect in a single session was 2.5 liters, largely due to the time constraints put on the girls by the nature of the tides. The oysters are always available for collection, making gathering almost entirely dependent on demand.[65] The prime period for

[65] The harvest of mangrove oyster (*Crassostrea gasar* or *ostrea tulipa*) is an ancient practice that is still very much alive in West Africa. In Guinea-Bissau, there remains a very active trade in dried oysters that reach maturity in a single year. See Campredon & Cuq (2001: 95) ; Linares de Sapir (1971) ; Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Agriculture (1994).

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collecting oysters, however, was at the start of the rainy season (January-July), when the oysters were most abundant. The oysters were almost always taken to Bissau, where they were sold for 1,000 XOF ($2) per liter. They usually ended up being sold to hotels or restaurants throughout Bissau, or they were exported to Banjul, Dakar, or Europe. Collection and processing techniques were rudimentary, and the oysters are small in comparison to farm raised varieties harvested elsewhere.

A number of other Kassumba products are regularly traded regionally or internationally, including cashews, rice, palm oil, coconuts, peanuts, animals, timber, and even the iron tips of the manual plows (*radi*) used in the rice paddies. In addition, a number of products are brought to the region for sale, such as clothing, bicycles, generators, medicines, and tobacco. All of these exchanges operate according to market principles and are tied to the global economy, which contributes to the vicious cycle of underdevelopment throughout West Africa. The system axiomatically favors the West. Only through a real act of revolution can this unequal exchange be modified to benefit rural civil society of poor countries. These types of economic interfaces can quickly breakdown further into something even more detrimental to those on the ground level.

Detrimental Production/Exchange

The fish trade in Kassumba has truly become an international endeavor. I learned that the large green wooden boxes found in the Kassumba port were put there by South Korean fishermen who fill them with ice during the rainy season, which is the time of year when the fishermen of Kassumba are most successful due to the spawning patterns.

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The Koreans distribute fishing gear through the Balanta sector chief. If a fisherman takes any of the nets or other supplies, he must work off the cost of the equipment. The Koreans purchase the fish that the fishermen stock in the ice chests. For every ten kilograms of fish the Koreans will deduct one kilogram worth of fish from the cost of the equipment taken. What usually transpires, however, is that the equipment wears out before the debt has been paid, leading to a type of debt bondage. In addition, the government has been unable to regulate illegal fishing by foreign vessels.

The Cacine River is patrolled by only one government boat. When fishermen do not have the proper paperwork for their canoes, the government can confiscate their catch. On the surface, this seems like a reasonable policy. However, foreign vessels can easily afford the licensing fees, or they outrun or bribe the government patrols if necessary; but the local fishermen are hard pressed to pay the yearly fees to register their fishing canoes. In addition, local fishermen have to make special trips to the Cacine Port where the licenses are sold, but their canoes are ill equipped for the long journey, while the overland routes are inconvenient. Public transportation in this area is unreliable and comparably expensive. The patrol works for the government, but the people of Kassumba call them pirates. Therefore, fishing for Kassumba locals is becoming less lucrative and is leading to increased competition and stress (see Chapter Six).

Today no one lives in the fishing town of Kayanki (1988-1991) because it ran out of fish. The fisherman eventually moved away to the neighboring market town of Iraque. I accompanied a fish trader to a wedding in Cacine. She brought a grass matt, two brooms, and two chickens for the new bride. This proud woman informed me that normally she would be expected to bring fish from Kassumba, but there were no fish that year. Instead, she was relying more heavily on making palm oil. I asked her about the competition with the Fula in the fish market. She said

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that her family had priority to buy up the catches, but the trader-in-residence usually purchased all the premiere-class fish because he had more money.

On a separate occasion, I went with this fish trader to the muddy mangrove port of Fambindon. A Balanta woman was already waiting there to buy fish. Three canoes with Balanta fishermen docked with only enough fish for the first woman. She left with an assortment of 25-30 second-tier fish including *bagri* (*Arius parkii*; Guinean sea catfish), *kaudu/caúdo* (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*; nurse shark), and *pis-reia* (*Dasyatis margarita*; Daisy stingray). [66] My consultant was only able to leave the fishermen with some fried donuts in exchange for preference on the following day. On the next day, she was able to buy four *pis-reia*, two *pis-banda* (*Cynoglossus monodi*; Guinean tonguesole),[67] eight *djoto/rainha-bobo* (*Johnius* or *Pseudotolithus elongates*; bobo croaker), and one *djoto di riu*[68] in exchange for the 500 XOF ($1) worth of donuts from the previous day. She was quick to point out, however, that the number of available fish, compared to when her eldest son was an infant sixteen years ago, was much diminished.

As the five above anecdotes demonstrate, the free market economy is leading to overfishing and exploitation of the local fishermen in Kassumba and Guinea-Bissau. The government is agreeing to fishery contracts with foreign nations. Convinced that their domestic fishers are ill-equiped to properly exploit their valuable marine resources, government officials continue to sign lopsided agreements with foreign fishing fleets in exchange for financial compensation, which can be viewed as having both a positive and negative effect on the country depending on one's position. The local fishermen, unable to compete with these larger vessels,

[66] Scantamburlo (2003: 488) labels *pis-reia* as *Dasyatis say*; bluntnose stingray.

[67] Possibly misattributed by Scantamburlo (2003: 487) as *solea solea*; common sole.

[68] This is possibly a fish known as *bentana* or *Tilapia senegalensis* found in the brackish inlets of the Cacine River.

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are left to eek out a living on whatever fish remain close to shore. I explore these issues in greater detail in Chapter Six.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is necessary to recognize that domestic producers are often unable to compete with better equipped and funded interlopers. Without government protections and subsidies, the smallholders suffer more and more each year in a viscious cycle of exploitation from the outside. I suggest that through neighborly and familial economic cooperation, some of the detrimental effects of over-production and un-equal exchanges with foreigners can slowly and incrementally be overcome. These small changes to the country's way of doing business should lead to an economy geared toward promoting the smallholders and internal investors.

Neighborly/Familial Cooperation

Neighborly cooperation can be loosely defined as those interfaces between members of different cultural groups that often exploit different resources within the same community. Anthropological examples of this type of interface abound such as the classic example of the forest dwelling BaMbuti and the BaBira villagers in Colin Turnbulls's *The Forest People* (1961), or in Karl G. Izikowitz's famous essay about "Neighbors in Laos" (1969: 135-148). In addition, Joanna Davidson notes that this phenomenon is taking place throughout Guinea-Bissau (2002).

Familial cooperation, on the other hand, is a type of economic interface within a particular ethnic group. Both of these types of interactions are important markers of internal self-reliance, and are what I am considering revolutionary acts since they are not necessarily

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determined by the world market.[69] A common phrase found in Kassumba, and throughout Guinea-Bissau, demonstrates this type of thinking. The phrase *Obrigadu mata na Bolama* translates to "no thank you, killed someone in Bolama," which is a common response after declining an offer to *Bem no kume* (come and eat). It is in reference to a story about a person in Bolama who was embarrassed to accept charity from strangers. The food that was offered eventually ran out, and as a result of his earlier refusal to eat, he went hungry. This socialist ethic pervades Guinea-Bissauan culture and can be found in the frontier community of Kassumba as well.

The following examples demonstrate Neighborly/Familial cooperation. The first describes the idea of hospitality during evening meals in the village of Kassumba. The second illustration portrays the events surrounding a proposed soccer tournament in which both Balanta and Nalú male youths worked together. In the third anecdote, I describe how cashew production is a cooperative enterprise among the Balanta and Nalú of Kassumba. Finally, I conclude by describing the necessary labor inputs for successfully growing rice, which necessarily leads to a reliance on both friends and neighbors in order to achieve a successful harvest.

As I sat on my neighbor's veranda at dusk, watching fifty Balanta cattle grazing among the houses of Kassumba Nalú, I was invited to eat with the other men of the household. I made a quick calculation in my head involving when I had last eaten and the number of people sitting around waiting to eat, and I politely declined the offer. Everyone eats communally here in Kassumba, in groups divided by age and gender. The large bowls of rice and palm oil with fish

[69] As an interesting aside, Bronislaw Malinowski (1922[1984]) also describes these types of familial and neighborly interactions when he describes the Kula in the Western Pacific. His cooperative economic interfaces, however, are of a different nature, one that advanced social cohesion without necessarily leading to economic progress for the populace, which is the primary notion being advanced in this chapter and thesis. The Kula promoted social cohesion and prestige, while the Neighborly/Familial Cooperation found among the residents of Kassumba integrates and develops economic production, consumption, and exchange in order to build upons social cohesion and the profit motive.

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emerged from the back of the house, and everyone took their places around their respective pot. It was approximately 8:00 PM, which meant that it was dark outside. Someone held the flashlight to illuminate the bowl of food as it was served. The food was placed on the ground in front of the house, and after a quick rinse of the right hand and a blending of the oil and rice by the eldest member of the group (stirring from the center and swirling the sauce to the outside edge), people began to eat by grabbing handfuls of the rice and sauce.

This meal took less than five minutes, with each person getting about two handfuls of rice. I asked if anyone was still hungry, and many of them said that they were. This ritual would often be repeated, moving from one household to another, until everyone was full. Hospitality was always extended to everyone present, without regard to ethnicity, religion, or nationality.

A second example of neighborly/familial cooperation comes from the favorite pastime in Kassumba, soccer. During a meeting held at 6:00 PM at the construction site of Gbrill's new house, the sponsorship of a joint Balanta/Nalú Kassumba soccer tournament lasting ten days and ending with the First of May celebration was broached by some male Balanta youths. The proposed venture was warily considered by the Nalú present because they seemed to think that it would require a lot of work on their part. Another meeting was scheduled for when the Nalú elders could be present. The two groups eventually agreed to move forward with the tournament; however, the Balanta would have to do the brunt of the preparation work since it was their idea.

A few weeks later, I worked alongside both Nalú and Balanta youths building a wall around the soccer field out of palm branches. Days before, the young men had cut wooden poles and placed them in the ground every five feet all the way around the field. Afterward, we cut palm branches and wove them between the poles to create a barrier between the paying

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spectators and the non-paying holdouts. They also built benches for the home and away teams to utilize while the matches were taking place. Six teams registered and sixteen games were scheduled to take place over the ten days before the festival.

The soccer tournament never began, however, because the Balanta sector chief's younger brother died. The elders, both Balanta and Nalú, felt that it would be disrespectful to go forward with the tournament. The funeral (*txoro*) was held a day later, with many Nalú community members and Balanta family members attending the ceremony. As is customary in Balanta culture, guests brought alcohol to be drunk and animals to be sacrificed in order to aid in the transition to the afterlife by the deceased brother. Many of the Balanta who were in town for the *txoro* appeared at the traditional Nalú place of spiritual worship (*baloba*) in order to ask the spirits to intervene on their behalf on a number of different requests, such as curing illness, inducing pregnancy, and promoting success. The Balanta regularly attended the Nalú *baloba*, and even asked the Nalú to consult the Muslim mystics (*mooros*), on their behalf, in religious matters such as determining if witchcraft was involved in the death.

Ethnic relations in Kassumba involved mutual respect. Each group relied on the other in a variety of ways. In addition, the elders among both the Nalú and Balanta remained firmly in control of the village's political decisions. In the above example, out of respect for the deceased and their elders' wishes, both the Balanta and Nalú youths agreed to cancel their soccer tournament. I observed almost no protests to the cancelled soccer matches, even after the labor intensive preparations had been made. In addition, the spiritual practices of each group were respected by the members of the other. Without mutual respect, acknowledgement of cultural differences and similarities, and niche based diversification, Neighborly/Familial economic cooperation would not have been possible.

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Another equally beneficial relationship between the Islamic Nalú and the spiritualist Balanta revolved around the production of cashews. I visited the cashew orchards near the village of Katunigh several times. After collecting the fruit, which is gathered after it falls from the tree; the cashew fruit was brought back to the house for processing. First, the nut was separated from the fruit. Both women and men processed cashew nuts. Most were collected, cleaned, and sold to local traders and foreign buyers. Many of the raw nuts from Guinea-Bissau ended up in India and China to be processed and then re-sold to the West. The fruit, on the other hand, was a completely local commodity. After separation from the nut, the fruit was smashed in large wooden canoe-like apparatuses attached to trees in order to funnel the juice into a small opening at one end, where it was collected into plastic buckets and tanks. This juice was either drunk immediately or strained and fermented over three days in order to make cashew wine. While I was helping the Nalú orchard owners harvest their nuts, several Balanta women were also working in the orchard. In exchange for their labor, the owner gave them the fruit to make into wine. This was later consumed by the males of their families, sold to other Balanta at 100 XOF ($.20) per liter, or made into *cana*, a type of cashew rum made by distilling the wine. This symbiotic relationship worked out well, because the Nalú orchard owners received free labor, while the Balanta had fairly easy access to a culturally valuable resource. The Islamic Nalú, on the other hand, had no use for the cashew wine since it was forbidden by their religion to drink alcohol.

During my time in Kassumba, cooperative interfaces were common. For example, after planting rice fields, the family that I resided with had leftover plants. The head of the household requested the use of some un-worked land that was owned by a Balanta currently residing in Kassenten. When community members did not have enough arable paddies to plant their rice,

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they often looked to one another to borrow more arable land. On another occasion, a Balanta male requested that the resident Nalú carpenter build a coffin for one of his recently deceased relatives.

These, and many other types of similar interfaces documented during my fieldwork, are good examples of a community coming together to develop their resources in a way that does not necessarily impact the larger global economy, although everyday ways of life are greatly improved by these community oriented behaviors. Through the values of hospitality and respect, working together on joint projects, exploiting different economic niches, and economically engaging group strengths, the Balanta and the Nalú are helping one another to improve their day to day lives in valuable ways. The above examples are only a few of the documented examples during my fieldwork period.

Neighborly/Familial Competition

According to my model, Neighborly/Familial competition is the least adaptive form of interface behavior. These behaviors have the most potential for leading to cultural tension and conflict (Rothchild 1997). In Kassumba, these types of behaviors were often enacted through interethnic displays. In the following section, I expose cases of theft, lying, and cheating, each of which caused tension between family, friends, and neighbors. If unchecked in variously socially appropriate ways, which I explore below, these incidents could lead to potential altercations and disruptions to the cooperative interfaces flourishing in Kassumba over the research period.

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I witnessed, or was told about, several incidences of theft that would fall into this category. For example, the son of the Fula trader-in-residence witnessed an eighteen year old male steal 10,000 XOF ($20) from his bedroom. He never confronted the youth about this incident. The Fula trader also showed me a list of people who owed him money. The list was long and totaled more than 100,000 XOF ($200). He said that if those who owed him money did not pay him back, he would collect by not reimbursing debtors for their fish that they would bring to him to buy during the rainy season. His father also had a large number of uncollected debts accumulated from the Nalú and Balanta residents of Kassumba over several years totaling thousands of dollars. Their only judicial option was to file a complaint in the neighboring town of Iraque with local authorities, which usually proved unsuccessful. Written contracts were never used in Kassumba since fifty-nine percent of the population was illiterate[70] according to my survey. Often, traders-in-residence were willing to "eat" their losses because they had little legitimate recourse; in addition, they wished to remain in good standing with the community that they served.

I witnessed several incidents of theft in Kassumba. On one occasion, two Balanta boys sold a rooster to a resident Nalú for 1,000 XOF ($2). The following day, these youths returned to collect the rooster because it had been stolen from their neighbor. Balanta youths were known to steal livestock from neighbors and then sell them in other villages. I directly observed three other incidents of livestock theft, although I cannot elaborate because I do not wish to incriminate the parties involved. Additionally, fish, cashews, mangoes, and manioc were taken from one another without permission. These behaviors were not strictly defined as theft, but

[70] For the purposes of this study, illiteracy is defined as the inability to read or write a simple phrase in any language.

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they sometimes escalated both intra- and inter-ethnic tensions. If a situation between two parties was already tense, these interfaces could lead to outright confrontation.

To illustrate, a fifteen year old Nalú girl returned to the village after collecting oysters with a pair of sandals that were not hers. Several Balanta girls appeared at her house demanding their slippers back. The situation was quickly calmed when the Nalú girl returned the sandals without incident, arguing that she had thought they were discarded. Everyone knew that she was not being truthful, but they allowed the excuse in return for the re-establishment of cordial relations between the two parties. The Nalú girl was not punished, and once the Balanta left, the entire family compound laughed about the situation.

Additionally, while watching Nalú fishermen prepare their nets, I asked why they did not buy new buoys and sinkers, opting for rocks and buoyant rubber sandals instead. They told me that they refused to purchase new expensive nets with real buoys and sinkers because, inevitably, they would be stolen. On another occasion, two Nalú teenagers were caught stealing manioc out of their neighbor's garden. The neighbor was upset, but felt that he had no recourse. His wife told me that the perpetrators *ka ten vergonia* (have no fear of punishment, no shame, or no embarrassment from social pressure, which usually works to prevent theft from friends, family, and neighbors).

Because of the limited availability of certain resources, cooperation between the Balanta and Nalú is often necessary. On one occasion, however, a Nalú borrowed the canoe of a Balanta without asking permission. This man used the canoe to row to a neighboring town with his younger brother to collect bundles of grass to re-thatch his roof. Upon his return, he left the canoe in the village port instead of returning it to the river where it had been commandeered. The following day, the Balanta canoe-owner made his way to where the canoe should have been

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docked so that he could go fishing in the river. Of course, the canoe was not there, and because of low tide, it was grounded in the port; the Balanta missed an entire day of fishing due to this incident. The canoe owner was furious and said that if the canoe was not returned to the river by the following day, he would retaliate. The threat was not taken too seriously, but accompanied by other incidents of a similar nature; these types of interfaces could eventually exacerbate existing social tensions.

On another occasion, a Nalú teenager was accused of impregnating a Balanta girl from a neighboring village. He denied the charge. His friends and family insisted that he resolve the issue quickly and quietly by paying the family of the girl a small fine. If unable to pay, and if available proof was convincing, the youth could quite possibly have been caned with sticks in a public venue. Without any proof on either side, however, he paid a small fine and noting more was done.

To illustrate these types of interface further, a young Nalú girl had gone to the room of a local oyster buyer to collect her cousin's money. The oyster seller paid the girl 2,000 XOF ($4), all that was owed to her cousin. The following morning it was discovered that the cousin had known nothing about the money being collected. The young Nalú had spent the money on bread, cigarettes, and candy the night before at the local store. She refused to admit what she had done; her uncle, believing the word of the oyster buyer over that of his niece, struck her as punishment. She was also told that she would have to pay her cousin back for all of the money she had stolen.

A final incident in this analytic category is about the first wife of the compound in which I lived. During a particular week, she bought a fair amount to smoke and sell at the weekly market. However, on two separate occasions, her extended family from another village requested that she give them fish to feed their hired labor working in their rice paddies. She had

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purchased 4,000 XOF ($8) worth of fish, but was left with only a few rays and skates to sell. When asked about her weekly profit, she informed me that she had *kai na balançu semana li* (fallen in her balance for the week). In other words, she had sold her remaining fish for only 2,500 XOF ($5), 400 XOF ($.80) of which went toward buying peppers, onions, and soap for her household. She ended up losing 1,500 XOF ($3) that week due to these obligations to her extended family.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Although much of this chapter has focused on ground level socio-economic transactions, "It is of course important that we insert this awareness of macro trends into our accounts of local resistance movements" (Nash 2001: 22). Guinea-Bissau has been described as a weak state, unable to meet civil society's most basic needs. National and regional politics exacerbate the economic difficulties of Guinea-Bissau's population. For example, the *Sete de Junho* armed conflict beginning in 1998 between President Vieira's private army and Guinea-Bissau's military eventually embroiled both Senegal and Guinea Conakry as well. The infrastructural damage to the capital city of Bissau, caused by troop movements and fighting was quite severe. The remainder of the rural civil society was left mainly to their own devices. At the same time, the few international aid organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and outside government and private interests left the country during this conflict and are proving slow to return. NGOs in Guinea-Bissau continue to be funded by Western nations and are one of the few means of earning a salary in the country. In this work, I briefly discuss the two still operating in Kassumba, Nimba, which is responsible for building guest residences and the local discotech,

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and the *Associação Desenvolvimento Ensino Communitário* (ADEC), which built and continues to fund the community school in Kassumba through the help of UNICEF as well as financing other microcredit programs for women.

The southern Quitáfine Sector witnessed the evacuation of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers and Africare, both important investors in local development initiatives. The village of Kassumba also witnessed the withdrawal of Italian investors, who were preparing to build an oceanfront hotel along the mouth of the Cacine River. The social, economic, and political consequences of this conflict were alarming, further inhibiting the reach and protective duties of the central government. This did not mean that the struggle to make a living stopped. In fact, according to anthropologist Henrik Vigh, it was again time for Guinea-Bissauans to "take a bearing of the changes within their socio-political environment and seek to make the best of emergent social possibilities in order to direct their lives in an advantageous direction" (2006: 8). To this sentiment, I add that it was also time for Guinea-Bissauans to take stock of their emergent economic potential. I have argued that the people of Kassumba did exactly that by reorienting themselves toward an inward-looking and empathetic strategy; what I have termed cooperative economic interface.

Today, producers and traders navigate their way into and out of Kassumba with little state control over the circulation of products. Distributers sometimes pay an internal road tax or bribe to local police while moving about inside Guinea-Bissau, or they may purchase a fairly inexpensive transit visa when transferring goods between state borders. However, many strategies have been developed to limit or interfere with the few government attempts at control over economic interfaces that are in place at the local level. For example, if carrying more five-hundred coconuts in a single trip to Bissau from Kassumba, customs requires the payment of a

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tax. In order to avoid this inconvenience, traders may take several trips into the capital, or a driver stows additional cargo inside the vehicle under passenger benches in order to avoid paying customs. I witnessed this strategy on many occasions for coconuts and palm oil. In addition, those moving between Kassumba and Guinea Conakry can easily hop onto a fisherman's canoe into the neighboring country, by which route they avoid port towns and the likelihood of encountering customs agents and police. I participated in this type of border crossing when purchasing gasoline because Senegal had cut off its supply to Guinea-Bissau over taxation disputes.

The people of Guinea-Bissau must continue to utilize every economic advantage at their disposal when conducting business, including cooperation. I am advocating for the need to continue the focus on a mixed economy.

The semi-isolated village of Kassumba with a population of less than one-thousand inhabitants is tied to the global market in a number of ways. I was asked on several occasions to take people back with me to the US. Even the isolated villagers of Kassumba had family living abroad in West Africa, Europe, and the US. Generally, people would say that they wanted to immigrate because their children would get a better education and higher paying employment. Studies (Bordonaro 2003, 2006) are already looking at why Guinea-Bissauans select countries as their ideal; for one, it may be Germany while others daydream about immigrating to the US based on stories passed along by friends, family, and more distantly related acquaintances. One may know someone in Holland who is able to get him a visa for Italy. For many, however, emigration is simply a dream. The reality of their conditions, brought about partially by globalization, affects their desire to travel and therefore, they draw the following conclusion: the world is easy for some and harder for others.

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As I develop later in this work, if the imaginary is definitively linked to globalization, this attachment is flexible on the side of production. During my stay in Kassumba, I witnessed a true restructuring of the focus of production, the source of which is primarily the decrease in both world and national cashew prices in addition to overfishing, particularly over the last few years. I explore these issues in great detail in Chapters' Five and Six. Instead, the producers of Guinea-Bissau rely on their smaller internal and regional markets to make a living.

For the time being, the price of one kilogram of cashew nuts dropped from 250 XOF ($.50), which could be exchanged for one kilogram of rice, to 100 XOF ($.20) within two years. The value of fish remains stable; but as we have seen before, the amount available seems to be getting smaller over the last two decades according to locals. Without fishing as a primary alternative when the value of cashews declined, people then returned to rice and palm oil production. Many locals expressed the opinion that these were not ideal alternatives however, since rice production was overly labor intenstive and palm oil production was dangerous. In fact, according to a survey conducted by Gaillard, he was told that the primary cause of death among men was falling from oil palm trees while among women it was childbirth (1995). Whether these responses were true or not, their expressions represent a real fear among the people. This suggests that introducing other shorter species of palm may be a big improvement although there are cultural impediments to these new palm oil trees, which I discuss in Chapter Four. Therefore, other activities were intensified as well such as girls collecting oysters; keeping animals; seeking out professional work such as carpentry, teaching, government positions, and working alongside NGOs; maintaining vegetable gardens; growing other crops such as peanuts, coconuts, and manioc; collecting and selling medicines; and gathering and re-using items of value washed up on shore.

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CONLUSION

Given the global economy is made up of "an increasingly dense web of economic transactions, communications and movements of goods, money and people linking the developed countries with each other and with the underdeveloped world" (Hobsbawm 1989: 62). How might one go about revolutionizing economic transactions to create a world in which the underdeveloped masses can flourish under the overwhelming shadow of global economics? I have suggested that for the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba, an inward-looking focus during economic interfaces have helped them begin to redirect their economic efforts into a stream of growth potential. The unique context of these economic interfaces provides a rich soil for cooperation.

As I have demonstrated, if people's household livelihood strategies are flexible, and they can maintain or infuse a semblance of empathy into their economic interfaces, then positive economic growth should follow. For a real economic revolution affecting a majority of the population to take place, however, introspection, cooperation, and empathy are crucial to develop a system responsive to internal development. Chapters four through seven help prove this hypothesis.

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Chapter Four

PEOPLE OF THE PALM

The Nalú men[71] approached the *Mbara*, or sacred place deep in the forest, from the multitude of mazelike paths worn over time. Sunlight was breaking through the foliage reaching the elders waiting for their kinsmen to return with fish, palm fruit, and palm wine. They sat around a large clay pot of fresh wine, drinking and adjudicating village problems. During this earlier time, social control for the Nalú was a matter of spiritual appeasement. The *irán*, or ancestor and nature spirits of the *Mbara*, provided support for their kinsmen in exchange for offerings of wine and food.

This story reminded me of the contemporary *baloba*, or sacred place in the forest where the Nalú still practice their traditional religion. For the Nalú, I will demonstrate throughout this chapter that the African oil palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*)[72] and its uses remain a real and symbolic representation of their life and death in the humid tropics and mangroves of littoral West Africa.

Flexible livelihood strategies[73] allow people such as the Nalú to adjust to specific historical, environmental, political, cultural and economic conditions. These supportive

[71] They were dressed in "garment[s] of skins in which they bear their shameful parts. These are partly hidden, partly unconcealed, for they place the penis beneath large straps which are fastened around it, but the testicles hang outside, apparently so as not to squeeze them. They walk very stiffly in breeches of this sort. Their noses are pierced from one nostril to the other, near the tip. They make many patterns on their legs and neck" (Almada 1984: 13/1).

[72] The African oil palm tree was first classified as *Elaeis guinneensis* in 1763 by Nicolaas Jacquin (Lynn 1996: 1).

[73] I define "livelihood strategy" as an adaptation or complex of adaptations made to achieve a means of support or subsistence for a social unit composed of those living and working in a unique space. According to Madge, "An important feature of rural Africa lies in the dynamic flexibility of household livelihood strategies. Flexibility is essential for rural African households are required to respond to environmental, economic, social and political changes both within and between years" (1995: 109).

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adaptations occur at various rates and levels (Madge 1995: 109).[74] The aggregate of these socio-cultural conditions influencing the life of an individual, community, or culture as well as the reactions to them is what ultimately helps fashion cultural identity[75] and lifeways. The inherent dynamic flexibility of these adaptive strategies, however, does not necessarily imply cultural change. In fact, in this chapter I demonstrate that a continued reliance on a particular plant, the African oil palm tree, has helped the inhabitants of the small, semi-isolated village of Kassumba in West Africa successfully maintain economic security[76] and adjust to internal and external pressures.[77]

This paper helps support feminist social geographer Clare Madge's theory on rural endurance in which both cultural change and stability must coexist.[78] She brings to light some of the shortcomings of a "development discourse based on a dichotomised model of rural livelihoods and a linear theory of progress" (1995: 109). Madge emphasizes,

> Through practice and active experimentation, rural people learn how best to seasonally adjust their productive bricolage. They produce a performance best

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[74] E.g., daily, weekly, seasonally, or yearly and personal, household, community, cultural, national, regional, or global. According to feminist social geographer, Clare Madge, "An important feature of rural Africa lies in the dynamic flexibility of household livelihood strategies. Flexibility is essential for rural African households are required to respond to environmental, economic, social and political changes both within and between years" (1995: 109).

[75] I define "identity" as a fluid relationship with oneself and with others. It is a product of three processes: socialization, individual thoughts and actions, and direct and indirect "politics".

[76] I will define economic security as consistently meeting needs such as those identified in Malsow's hierarchy including what he calls the deficiency needs of survival (e.g., food and water), safety and security (e.g., shelter, employment, resources, health and property), love and belonging, and self-esteem in addition to self-actualization (i.e., the instinctual need of humans to fulfill their potential) (Maslow 1954).

[77] According to a 2006 World Bank report on Guinea-Bissau, "The South is where a majority of the locally produced rice and food in Guinea-Bissau is cultivated. Low-land (*bolanha*) rice cultivation in paddy fields is the primary activity for most households, followed by the production of fruits - pineapple, banana, oranges, etc - ***as*** *well as exploration of forest products (extraction of palm oil and wine)* and horticulture" (48, italics mine).

[78] Madge's study stresses "the interconnective and cyclical nature of productive, consumptive and reproductive spheres" (1995: 109).

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> suited (at that particular time and place, given the constraints they face) to their individual, household and societal needs. (1995: 121)

The following chapter takes a similar approach to that of Madge, investigating the collection, production, consumption, use, innovation, distribution, and sale of palm products as part of a complex household livelihood strategy developed, practiced, and modified over time among the rural Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba in southern Guinea-Bissau.

Several recent studies have demonstrated the value in concentrating on a single commodity (Coe & Coe 1996; Kurlansky 1997; Mintz 1985; Steiner 1994) to better understand the meanings and processual nature of its uses; explore arbitrary, causal, and functional associations; and describe the commodity's "'social life,' whose value, spirit, and meaning changes through time" (Steiner 1994: 2). Similarly, I highlight the palm in order to capture the integrated nature of the individual, community, culture, history, and political economy of southern Guinea-Bissau's rural civil society.

This chapter is both an exercise in cultural ecology[79] and economics. I borrow economist Clóvis Cavalcanti's (2002) term, "ethnoeconomics," to describe the interaction between people, their environment, and their livelihood. He suggests that ethnoeconomics is a theory aimed at explaining these complex interactions. Cavalcanti writes,

> The time seems to have come for the development of an ethnoeconomics that looks at how local, traditional and indigenous peoples conceptualize the many economic relationships that have built, characterized and maintained their societies; a discipline or a field of endeavour that examines the idea of progress among exotic peoples; that considers their notions of wealth, justice and equity; that interprets the manifold manifestations of markets, trade, gift and exchange; and that tries to understand the way individual interests combine to produce a durable social system and sustainable economic processes – or development for that matter. . . It must address the concepts, categories and practices that societies

[79] Cultural ecology is how humans interact with their physical surroundings, how their environment affects their cultural practices and institutions, and how this process is re-shaped in that interaction (Frake 1980: 18).

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> use to evaluate, assess, monitor and manage human, natural and heritage (including spiritual and aesthetic) 'resources'. (Cavalcanti 2002: 52)

This shift in perspective toward the examination of the way in which societies resolve resource issues is important as a reform tool for development initiatives (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000; IMF 2008; World Bank 2006). This approach should better understand and evaluate local economic behavior. It should also help direct development resources toward avenues of desired economic improvement from the perspective of the populace.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. First, a note on background and methodology help re-establish the parameters, purpose, and perspective of this study. Second, the historical periodicity of the palm in Guinea-Bissau is presented. The use-value of the palm in addition to how each product is made by Kassumba residents for subsistence purposes is examined in the third section. Fourth, village economics are explained taking some account of regional, national, and global influences. And more importantly, the fifth section focuses on the role of the African oil palm tree in the history, settlement, and territorial hegemony of the Nalú in the Quitáfine Sector of southern Guinea-Bissau. The section titled "Palm and People" explores the palm in relation to Nalú rites of passage, gender roles, and other forms of cultural identity. "Palm and Prayer" examines the significance of the palm in Nalú traditional religion. Finally, in the conclusion I discuss how my study informs the theoretical debate concerning rural livelihood and the alienating and marginalizing affects of globalization. It also briefly considers how foreign initiated, top-down development programs may have axiomatic flaws and how a shift toward ethnoeconomic considerations should contribute to a better understanding of rural African needs and livelihoods. It becomes obvious that the failures of development plans are a consequence of the practices of development in relation to the logic embedded in them.

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A Note on Background and Methodology

The political economy of Guinea-Bissau is discussed elsewhere in this dissertation as well as the methodology and contextual background of this study. A few notes of importance to this particular chapter, however, are briefly reiterated here. I will remind the reader that: (1) this study is based on field research conducted in a single rural community in southern Guinea-Bissau during 2007; (2) the village of Kassumba is made up of 689 people divided between six neighborhoods in Quitáfine (sometimes referred to as Cacine), which is the southernmost sector in the Tombali Region of Guinea-Bissau; (3) Tombali contains seven percent of Guinea-Bissau's total population (INEC 2007); (4) the ethnic make-up of the village of Kassumba is a majority immigrant Balanta who live in four homogenous neighborhoods; and (5) the smaller Nalú population resides in the other two neighborhoods making up the village along with a Fula family and a few other ethnically diverse traders-in-residence.

As I wrote before, I administered forty-one detailed surveys (representing one-hundred percent of all the households in the village) were carried out to collect profile data on residents' sex, age, ethnicity, religion, education level and literacy, profession, wealth, and relationship to head-of-household, as well as economic data on house construction, land usage, gathering and agricultural practices, the raising of livestock, and household cost of living data. In addition to this survey, I collected detailed qualitative data through participant observation, informal interviews, oral histories, and two focus groups. I paid particular attention to subsistence usage of collected products including how often and how many products were gathered and income generated from the production and sale of these resources over time. Interviews, focus groups, and participatory activities provided me with details on a range of information including the

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history, motives, and behaviors behind certain household livelihood strategies on the part of individuals and groups. Particular uses, values, and identifying characteristics of these activities and objects were carefully noted during the fieldwork period.

Rember that less than two million people live and work in the West-African micro-state of Guinea-Bissau, making it one of the smallest countries in Africa. Nalú occupy a border zone, divided between southern Guinea-Bissau and north-western Guinea Conakry. Located among the West Atlantic cultures of the Upper Guinea Coast, the recent history of the Nalú has been marked by the blurring of their cultural identity through population and linguistic shifts and religious conversion. Centuries of contact with outsiders have led to a number of significant changes to Nalú culture. For example, through proximity, intermarriage, and exchange, the Nalú of today speak Susu as their primary mode of communication, or *lingua franca*, in both Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry. The linguistic database Ethnologue reports that many Nalú are bilingual in Susu due to intermarriage in the border zones.

The natural vegetation surrounding Kassumba consists of swampy plains, mangroves, woodlands, and inlets. The Cacine River reaches the Atlantic Ocean within walking distance of the village, thus providing all residents with aquatic resources to complement their forest bounty. Additionally, rice-paddies, cashew and mango orchards, and manioc and vegetable gardens are cultivated beside the village. Cultivated plants belong to the individual or family responsible for planting and tending them; however, wild trees and other forest products such as the oil palms are communally shared.[80] Ownership rights of the land remain strictly in the hands of the Nalú although borrowed land under cultivation by outsiders is considered theirs until they give up their claim by allowing it to lie fallow for several seasons. Once land is under cultivation, it is

[80] "When palm-nuts are ripe what you collect is yours, what I collect is mine. (Originally there was, and still in many parts of West Africa there is no individual ownership in the oil-palm)" (Sarbah 1909: 248).

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difficult for another to lay claim although disputes do occasionally arise. In addition, some active land management takes place such as the refusal to sell the sand from the Kassumba port or restrictions on gathering in sacred forests.

Most rural economic activities follow seasonal patterns in relation to the rainy season, which generally stretches from June through November. Agricultural activities (e.g., rice cultivation, planting manioc and/or vegetable gardens) take place during the rainy season while house construction, palm oil production, and cashew harvesting are carried out over the dry season. Other activities span the entire year or overlap between seasons such as fishing (See Figure 7). In this community, most villagers (42%)[81] primarily considered themselves sedentary fruit and food farmers, fisherpersons, and collectors of forest and marine products. Although all of the economic activities listed in Figure Seven have important roles to play in Kassumba livelihood, the collection of palm fruit bunches was, and still is, one of the most important, flexible, and utilitarian wild products gathered from the forest.

[81] In the 2007 survey, twenty-nine percent of the population of Kassumba were students who aided the household with economic activities whenever possible. Twenty-three percent of the population listed "unspecified" as their profession, often because these persons were too young to perform economic activities on a regular basis. The remaining six percent of the population listed a wide variety of professions. They also contributed to the economic activities of the household on a regular basis.

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Figure 7. Calendar of Peak Food Production in Kassumba

Rainy Season:

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

Rice Cultivation:

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

Cashew Harvest:

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

Fishing Season:

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

Palm Oil Production:

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

PERIODICITY OF THE PALM

The Nalú, Balanta, and African oil palm tree are all indigenous to West Africa, each flourishing in the humid tropics and mangroves of the littoral.[82] As a household staple, palm oil has been documented in the African dietary repertoire for more than 5,000 years. The flesh of the wild fruit was likely consumed by indigenous populations long before any evidence can attest. The earliest recorded proof, however, appears at Abydos in ancient Egypt where

[82] The African oil palm tree flourishes in a warm, moist, loamy soil in the humid tropics in groves of varying density mainly in the coastal belt between 10 degrees north latitude and 10 degrees south latitude.

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archaeologists unearthed a tomb dated at approximately 3,000 B.C., which contained the remains of a vessel and its contents. After chemical analysis, the remnants were shown to be a mixture of palmitic, azelaic, and pimelic acids, which in combination suggest long term storage of palm oil (Friedel 1897; See also, Berger & Martin 2000; Lynn 1997: 1).[83]

Followed by many others, the first descriptions of palm in European accounts of the West African coast appear in the journals of the Venetian sea captain and explorer, Alvise (Luís) Cadamosto, in the 1460s.[84] He recorded, "There is also to be found in this country [coast of West Africa] a species of tree which bears red nuts with black 'eyes' in great quantities, but they are small" (Crone 1936: 44). In the 1480s, Pacheco Pereira, a Portuguese sea captain, explorer, and cartographer, also noted various uses of the oil palm tree along the coast (Pereira 1937: 126-8). His account attested to the indigenous palm oil industry flourishing there. Red palm oil production, sale, and use in cooking as well as the drinking of palm wine and the application of palm leaves as thatch by the local inhabitants were described in Pereira's early account.

By the seventeenth century, palm products and the importance of the oil palm tree were regularly being considered by Europeans in West Africa. For example, Jesuit documents written from the Upper Guinea Coast in 1605 had the following description:

> Another law is that any black who falls from a palm-tree[85] and dies is considered a witch, and as such he loses his possessions, and his wives, children and relatives

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[83] Other uses of the palm in ancient Egypt have been put forward. J. M. Sarhah states, "It is a tree of great antiquity, for in the most expensive method of embalming the dead the ancient Egyptians used the sap of the tree (that is palm-wine) for rinsing the abdomen after the intestines had been extracted through an incision, five inches long, made in the left side of the body" (1909: 232).

[84] Cadamosto began his voyages in 1455. His accounts were first published in Milan, 1507-8, in Antonio Montalboddo Fracanzano's *Itinerarium Portugallensium e Lusitania in Indiam et Inde in Occidentem et Demum ad Aquilonem* (Crone 1937: 42-44).

[85] Mature palm trees are single-stemmed and can grow to 20 meters (66.62 feet) or more. Falling out of these trees is a common form of injury for young men throughout West Africa. According to Chinua Achebe in his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibo men recognized the danger in this activity and men of title were forbidden from tapping palm trees for wine in Nigeria (1959: 69).

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> become slaves. Since this land has many palm trees, and the blacks are very fond of wine and often go up the trees to get it, it happens that many of them do fall and some of them die, in which case this tyrannical law is applied immediately to their goods and families. (Mota & Hair 1989: 9/5)

Injury and death from tumbling out of coconut, oil, or other palm trees is fairly common in West Africa as this excerpt suggests.[86] During my nine month stay in the village of Kassumba in 2007, three different teenage males fell from oil palm trees. It is important to note that one-hundred percent of the able-bodied adult Nalú men who no longer cut palm fruit bunches attributed their retirement from this activity to a particularly bad fall.[87] Despite the risks associated with harvesting palm fruit bunches, it plays important practical, economic, and spiritual roles in societies throughout West Africa.

As early as 1613, Manuel Álvares of the Jesuit mission of Cape Verde described the various ceremonies pertaining to public order among the Manes, Nalú, Bagas and the other ethnic groups in the district of Sierra Leone. In one instance, father Álvares noted the use of palm in the activities of their secret society;

> When the officials come to proclaim *poro*, as they approach the village they drum on fresh water-turtle shells; and (then) with garlands made of green vegetation on their head they go four times round the open place in the village singing. Then they make the proclamation. Once this has been done, they hang from a tree the sign of the *poro*, which consists of a small whisk, like a brush or a small palm broom, made (in fact) of palm. Next to this are tied the straws which denote the number of things to be paid by criminals which have been incurred as a penalty for breaking the laws. They have so much respect for the whisk, together with fear of the penalty that in this place where all evil abounds only the evil of murder is no more than most rare. (Álvares 1990: additional material, annual report for 1613, ch. 3: 1-2)

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[86] Witchcraft accusations for those falling out of these trees would have allowed for the enslavement of friends, neighbors, and even family members at the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

[87] Nalú no longer tap palm wine due to their religious constraints on drinking alcohol. They continue to gather the fresh fruit bunches for the production of palm oil, afternoon meals, and as an economic commodity to be sold or traded.

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Among the Nalú of Kassumba, the palm continues to play a significant role in rituals involving their traditional religion and secret societies. I will discuss the role of the palm in these activities in more detail below in the section on Palm and Prayer.

Following Álvares, Portuguese Franciscan André de Faro who was a member of a missionary journey to Sierra Leone beginning in 1663 also mentioned the ritual use of palm products in West Africa. In his description of a "Landomazes" [Landuma] funeral ceremony, Faro records, "During this wake they consume large quantities of palm wine, which is the colour of milk, and honey wine, and those thought more important kill their cows on these days" (1982: 27). He also noted the use of palm wine in offerings to the spirits by a group of people known as the Baga. Faro wrote,

> But the devils have greatly blinded the Bagas through the trickery of the idol or *china* [*irán*] that they worship. This can be a stone in the forest over which they pour rice-flour, palm wine, and many other things; and they build it a very well-constructed house. (1982: 68)

Documenting similar experiences in the seventeenth century, Francisco de Lemos Coelho described,

> This land [coast of Guinea] produces fish in abundance. The blacks from down-river (?) bring it here in smoked form, in great quantity. There is much *chaveo* [P. *chabéu*; K. *tceben*; palm fruit bunches] the fruit from which the red oil is made, and there is no shortage of hens, which it goes with (?). (1985: 24)

By the close of the seventeenth century, Jean Barbot, a commercial agent on slaving vessels voyaging between Guinea and America in 1678-79 and 1681-82, wrote a lengthy account of western Africa in which he noted palm oil and palm wine on a number of occasions. For example, in one letter Barbot recorded,

> There are no vines there, instead the wine drunk by the natives comes from the palm-tree (they call this palm-wine *miguolu*). Later I will describe to you the way in which they obtain this wine, and equally the way in which they obtain palm-oil, which has many uses apart from being edible. When fresh, this oil is not

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> unwholesome, and it gives a pleasant taste to the meats with which it is cooked. (Hair, Jones, & Law 1992: 73)

Barbot continues,

> This palm oil is of great use to the inhabitants [of Guinea] in several respects for besides its serving to season their meat, fish, etc., and to burn in their lamps to light them at night, it is an excellent ointment against rheumatick [sic.] pains, winds and colds in the limbs, or other like diseases. (1732: 204; Cited in Lynn 1997: 1)

Many of these uses for the palm described by Barbot are still found among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba today and will be discussed in detail below. Barbot's observations about the value placed on the palm by indigenous populations were nothing new by the seventeenth century. In fact, the Europeans too had discovered the worth of this product as both a food source and commodity much earlier than Barbot's expedition.

The trade in palm oil between African suppliers and Europeans began as early as the 1480s (Pereira 1936: 128). Palm oil sales to Europeans grew alongside the transatlantic slave trade as a way of provisioning vessels to the Americas. By the eighteenth century, the type and quantity of palm products being traded was steadily increasing as a natural resource helping to fuel the Industrial Revolution in Britain for candle making, soap manufacture, and as a lubricant for machinery. This fascinating story of the rise of large-scale palm oil and palm kernel oil production has been well documented (Berger & Martin 2000; Jones 1989; Lynn 1989, 1997; Martin 1956; Martin 1988). Instead of examining the industrialization of palm production in West Africa, this chapter focuses on the reliance of the palm in its many facets by smallholders in Guinea-Bissau where large-scale production never developed *en masse*.

Smallholder production of palm products has remained the primary mode of operation in Guinea-Bissau. This does not mean that the palm kernel has been insignificant in the country's economic endeavors and development. Historian Walter Hawthorne, after examining the

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nineteenth century records on Guinea-Bissau, concluded that, "communities of the Guinea-Bissau area helped feed an Atlantic appetite for palm oil, wax, skins, and rice" (2003: 186). In these same archives, Hawthorne found export estimates for Portuguese Guinea (present day Guinea-Bissau), in which smallholders were already responsible for providing 1,400 metric tons of palm kernels to the expanding Atlantic World (particularly France, Britain, and the United States) in 1882 alone (2003: 186).

Portuguese Guinea's internal markets were just as demanding for palm products. Governor Honório Pereira Berreto noted, "the internal commerce [of Portuguese Guinea] consists of rice, beeswax, hides, palm oil, turtles, everything amounting to a little more or less than 50:000$000 réis each year; and it is conducted with the savage Papels of the Island and others, with Berames, Balantas, Bujagós, Biafadas, *Nalús*, and Mandingas" (Baretto 1947: 1-48; Cited in Hawthorne 2003: 187, italics mine). Europeans continued to make direct reference to the Nalú in relation to palm production in the nineteenth century until their local economy was disrupted at the beginning of the twentieth century by Fula invasions and political missteps that decimated their population and weakened their regional hegemony. Philip Havik recently described this period in Nalú history. He wrote,

> Soon, Nalú in the Cacine area were producing groundnuts for the –Atlantic market as well as bartering palm oil, latex, beeswax and ivory, besides salt used to treat hides . . . Friendship treaties were concluded between Nalú elders and Portuguese officials that involved the 'cession' of 'all their territory' that exported large amounts of groundnuts, beeswax, palm oil, rice and hides . . . European *ponteiros* also maintained cordial relations with the Nalú on the Cacine River, exhanging [sic.] floodplain rice for palm kernels with the Nalú and Biafada. The introduction of export crops such as groundnuts and coffee and the growing importance of the palm products, wood and rubber trade in the nineteenth century also attracted British and Belgian settlers to the area. (2004: 119-120; See also, Gaffarel 1887; Puvel 1909-10; Sanderval 1882; Vallon 1860: 477)

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Although the twentieth century saw the Nalú all but vanish from the written record due to a number of factors discussed elsewhere in this thesis (See Chapter Two), the socio-economic importance of the palm has remained significant for the Nalú and other neighboring populations of Guinea-Bissau more generally (e.g., the Balanta).

Finally, political scientist Joshua Forrest notes that palm kernels remain one of the three principal exports from the microstate of Guinea-Bissau along with cashew nuts and peanuts. In 1983 the country was exporting 10,600 tons of palm kernels worth 1.3 million dollars. However, exports decreased by 1986 and 1987 with only approximately 12,000 tons sent abroad over those years for an estimated export value of approximately one million dollars per year (Forrest 1992: 84). According to Forrest,

> There are thousands of basket weavers, salt extractors, pottery fabricators, fishnet makers, and producers of cashew wine and palm oil. In the case of palm oil, typically a man goes into a palm zone and collects palm leaves and stems, and his wife or sister makes palm oil on the spot for immediate sale. (1992: 95)

These smallholders continue to rely on informal, non-farming activities for food and as a supplemental source of income because of their competitive prices, year-round supplies, and numerous applications as non-edible goods. In other words, it allows small landholders to extract subsistence materials from the natural environment and participate in the cash economy at the same time.

The remainder of this chapter provides evidence that the Nalú continue to utilize the palm in their everyday lives as a source of income and rallying point for their cultural identity.[88] The ethnoeconomics of palm in the village of Kassumba have never been documented. In addition, I provide detailed descriptions of traditional village processing. Finally, I hope to re-open the discussion about Guinea-Bissau and West Africa more generally as a potential area for further

[88] For an alternate discussion of oil-palm and its uses throughout West Africa, see Sarbah (1909).

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investment in large-scale processing of palm oil, most of which has recently shifted to Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia.[89]

With the global demand for palm oil increasing yearly due to its use as an important ingredient in food production and as a biofuel (UNDP 2007-08: 144), the economic growth potential in this sector cannot be ignored by investors in West Africa. Currently, no oil palm development initiatives are underway anywhere in Guinea-Bissau. The World Bank in a 2006 report acknowledges, "Although the production of other food and fruit crops [oil palm] is mainly for subsistence, there is significant potential for industrial processing" (73). According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC; *Instituto Nacional de Estatística e Censos*), palm oil (*oleo palmo*) production and export remained fairly consistent from 1997 through 2003 at a little over six million metric tons per year,[90] a decrease of about half since the late 1980s. This is a likely result of increased cashew production over this same period. Without a semblance of stability in the political arena, economic initiatives such as re-developing palm oil production must be (re)considered from a more localized perspective. Before a shift in the scale of palm economics can be discussed, however, an understanding of current processing techniques needs to be explored.

TOOL KIT

In the title to this chapter, I have labeled the Nalú, the "People of the Palm." I do this for several reasons; the most obvious is that I was able to document the fabrication of more than

[89] In recent years, Malaysia & Indonesia have accounted for more than 80 percent of the total amount of palm oil produced worldwide (Brown & Jacobson 2005).

[90] The annual average over this seven year period was 6.315 million tons of red palm oil.

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twenty different products from the oil palm tree with many of these having multiple uses (See Figure 8). I will attempt to describe some of these cultural artifacts as well as how they are made and what they are used for in this section. Elsewhere in West Africa it has been documented that,

> The uses of this tree are many, supplying such necessaries as food, drink, clothing, timber for building, light, fuel, a powder similar to fuller's earth, drugs, materials for roofing huts and making baskets, mats, fishing-nets, brooms, and ropes. (Sarbah 1909: 232)

For the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba, these items fulfill needs in a number of cultural categories including culinary, economic, religious, and medicinal.

Palm Oil (*siti*)[91]

Palm oil or red palm fruit oil is the second largest edible oil making up approximately twenty-three percent of the world's fats and oils, eighty percent of which is used for food. Estimates suggest that within a decade, it will become the largest single oil traded globally topping 30,000 million tons annually. The virgin form of palm oil is high in carotenoids (Vitamin A; responsible for its deep red color) and tecotrienols and tocopherols (Vitamin E). The reason that this type of oil is so popular world-wide is that its balanced fatty acid composition (45% palmitic, 40% oleic, 10% linoleic, and 5% stearic) allows large-scale food

[91] "Overall, traditional societies tend to maximize across nutritional needs. They pick the crop mix that provides the best diet for the least input. They have a high-yield starch staple, a plant protein source, and – almost always – an animal protein source as well. *Usually there is a special oil source*" (Anderson 2005: 83, italics mine).

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manufacturers to make hydrogenated- and trans-fat free products.[92] There is a recent and extensive scientific literature on the uses and health implications of palm oil.[93]

Native to West Africa, the African oil palm tree flourishes in the tropics. The palm fruit bunch weighs approximately 10-50 kilograms[94] and contains 200-4,000 or more small reddish-orange fruits per bunch; each fruit is made up of an outer skin (the exocarp), a pulp or fruit flesh (mesocarp) containing the palm oil, and a central seed consisting of a dark shell (endocarp) and the kernel, which itself contains an oil (Berger & Martin 2000: 1; Poku 2002: 3; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 167-168). The indigenous African oil palm groves of West and Central Africa consist of the thick-shelled variety of fruit with a thin mesocarp, called Dura (Poku 2002: 5).

In Guinea-Bissau, most of these palms remain self-seeded.[95] No palm plantations currently exist in the Quitáfine Sector of southern Guinea-Bissau although some villagers in Kassumba do plant a small number of palms with a larger fruit known locally as *tceben de Angola*. This variety of palm, however, is viewed locally as slow to produce and involves more personal attention.[96] Among the Nalú of Kassumba, *tceben de Angola* is regarded as a seasonal snack and not as the primary source of palm oil.[97]

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[92] See (http:www.americanpalmoil.com/) and (http://www.palmoilworld.org/).

[93] See Food and Nutrition Bulletin (1994).

[94] Elsewhere listed at 12-56 lbs per fresh fruit bunch (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 167-168).

[95] "Generally when growing wild it has been sown through the agency of animals, who, carrying away the ripe fruits scattered at the foot of the tree, feed on them and leave the seeds, which germinate and grow on the spot" (Sarbah 1909: 233).

[96] In actuality, for all varieties, the fruit tends to take five to six months to mature from pollination. However, the palm fruit matures throughout the year making the indigenous varieties available year-round, while the sowed varieties tend to produce at the same time.

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The peoples of Kassumba continue to produce the red palm oil by the traditional village method. First, the fresh fruit bunch is cut from the palm by a male using a palm branch cord (*korda di sibi palmera*, see below) and a wooden pole about four feet in length with an iron blade fastened to the end (*mantcadu di korta*).[98] The palm fruit bunches are rarely accessible from the ground because larger fruit bunches are found in taller oil palm trees (Vanderyst 1920). The cut fruit bunches in Kassumba are often sold to the village women for 50-100 XOF ($.10-.20),[99] depending on the size and quality of the fruit.

The African oil palm tree is a hardy evergreen with pinnate (feather-like) leaves up to fourteen feet in length that decay and fall off as the plant matures. The tree flowers in its fourth or fifth year at a height between four and twelve feet at which time it begins to bear fruit, beginning with two or three small bunches and then increasing its output to an average of five fresh fruit bunches over the next five years. When the tree is between ten and thirty years old, it averages between two and twelve large bunches of fruit per year. The tree continues to produce at this rate for sixty to one-hundred and fifty years and grows to height of approximately seventy feet. Every year the tree bears twice, once in the beginning of the rainy season (April-August) and again toward the end of it (November-March). Since every oil palm tree does not bear fruit

[97] This plant is most likely the hybrid of Dura cross-bred with the shell-less variety Pisifera, which has led to Tenera, a fruit with a much thicker mesocarp and a thinner shell. It has been suggested that West Africans in general were slow to adopt the Tenara variety because of a higher fat content leading to undesirable coagulation of oil and a poorer flavor (Poku 2002: 5-6).

[98] The tapered blade is fixed in place by inserting the smaller end into the pole and then heating the wood and fastening a metal band around the handle.

[99] This is based on a simplified exchange rate of $1 per 500 XOF, which will be used throughout this dissertation. The official figures for 2007 list the rate at 493.51 XOF per U.S. dollar. Between 1997 and 2003, it was estimated that a fresh fruit bunch of *tceben* sold for 195 XOF in the capital of Bissau, which is about double the cost in Kassumba (INEC 2007).

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at the same time, however, there is generally a constant supply (Sarbah 1909: 234-236; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 167-168).[100]

The fruit bunches are left to sit in the outdoor kitchen area either whole or in sections.[101] The fruit is carefully covered by thorn branches to prevent animals such as Balanta free-ranging pigs from eating it. It is left to naturally ferment for three days to a week, which loosens the fruit enough to be picked from the spiny fruit clusters (or sepal) by hand. If the fruit is unable to be detached, the spikelet is boiled whole until the fruit comes loose. Otherwise, the fruit is separated and placed in the direct sun for a few hours. This is done to continue fermentation and to help remove a final skin clinging to the small red fruits. Once dry, the fruit is winnowed using a *bolé*, or round concave basket woven from palm leaves about two feet in diameter. The fruit is tossed into the air and re-caught while the dry skins blow off the fruit and settle to the ground. If the skin stubbornly clings to the fruit, it is removed by hand.

Next, the fruit is boiled in a large pot, caldron, or fifty-gallon drum for approximately four hours until the fibrous mesocarp is softened. This is known as soft oil production and is the only way palm oil is made among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba (Berger & Martin 2000: 6; See also, Sarbah 1909: 239). Next, the fruit is removed from the hot water and crushed using a large wooden pestle and mortar. Small quantities of hot water are added during this process. Two or even three women will utilize pestles in a single mortar when crushing the fruit during this labor intensive stage of oil production.[102]

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[100] Sarbah, as one of the first to provide a technical description of palm oil cultivation and production, remains accurate when compated with more modern accounts. Therefore, I will cite this early source throughout the chapter.

[101] The separation of the smaller spikelets of fruit bunches is done by a male relative by placing the bunch atop a *pilon* (large wooden mortar) and chopping in a downward motion with the *mantca*du as the bunch is rotated.

[102] Teenage boys will sometimes aid in red palm oil production, particularly if the batch belongs to that particular boy. Sometimes the women of a boy's homestead will produce oil for him in order to increase his profits.

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The mash is returned to the water where it is rinsed, siphoned, and squeezing by hand. This process is often repeated leaving only the hard black kernels (*karus*) behind. The pulp is then discarded. A metal sieve is used during this step with openings large enough for the kernels to fall through since they are saved for later use (see below). The kernels are removed from the orange liquid and it is once again boiled to reduce the amount of remaining water. Once the mixture has boiled steadily for at least fifteen minutes, it is removed from the heat and cold water is dumped into the hot liquid. This process makes the bright red oil rise to the top of the pot, separating from the water. The oil is carefully skimmed with a calabash and poured into a separate container where it is left to cool. During this final step, if water remains in the oil, it may be boiled and skimmed a second time.

One fifty-gallon drum of fresh fruit (189 liters) produces approximately twenty liters of red palm oil depending on the ripeness and quality of the *tceben*. In other words, three to five fresh fruit bunches makes one liter of oil.[103] Average yields given elsewhere suggest that twenty to twenty-five percent oil can be extracted from fresh fruit bunches, although these figures were calculated according to modern high-yielding varieties of palm (i.e., Tenera) and extraction techniques (i.e., large-scale fully mechanized processing) (Poku 2002: 5).

The Nalú also produce small quantities of the oil directly from the fresh fruit (Lewkowitsch 1922: 546). When this is done, the oil is not completely removed from the water leaving behind an acidic sauce known as *bonto* in Quitáfine. In September 2007, I prepared two servings of *bonto* with the Nalú women of my household. The ingredients were: (1) five cups of boiled palm fruit, (2) one green mango or one-quarter cup lemon juice, (3) salt (to taste), (4) one

[103] Sarbah suggests that "a five-gallon measure of fruit yields at least half a gallon of pure liquid oil" (1909: 237). If this is so, then a fifty-gallon drum would produce five gallons of oil (18.93 liters), which is equivalent to the rates I was given among Nalú producers.

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bouillon cube, (5) one onion, and (6) one-quarter cup of *malgueta* chili peppers (P. *malagueta*; *Capsicum frutescens*). I began by boiling a fish with salt in a separate pot. Next, I boiled the palm fruit in water. After about 20 minutes, I squeezed and strained the fruit and added a peeled green mango. After it cooked down, I pulled the mango, separated the fruit from its pit, and then re-added it to the sauce. I then crushed the *malgueta* in a small wooden pestle and mortar to remove the seeds. Next, I added the sliced onion, bouillon cube, and *malgueta*. Finally, I added salt to taste and the fish.

I documented the amount of *bonto* consumed by the residents of my household over the months of July and August.[104] Over these two months, this family consumed *bonto* 1.13 times per day. If we use the recipe above as a starting point, then one serving of *bonto* contains approximately two and a half cups of palm fruit.[105] About 9.46 liters of fresh fruit makes one liter of oil.[106] If one serving is .59 liters of fruit, that is equivalent to .06 liters of oil or 4.22 tablespoons.[107] This means that the average person in my household consumed approximately 4.77 tablespoons of palm oil per day.[108]

In addition, palm oil is used in a number of other recipes in southern Guinea-Bissau as well as the fruit being consumed raw as a snack. These results suggest, however, that an adult

[104] A total of 29 people (including myself) made up this household consisting of four houses. According to Poku, the months of July and August contribute approximately 15 percent of the yearly palm yields in West and Central Africa. April, May, and June are the most productive harvest months at 41 percent of the yearly total (2002: 29). I was told that the months April, May, and June are considered the *kampanha di tceben* (palm oil season), which corresponds with Poku's observations.

[105] Two and a half cups of fruit is equivalent to about .59 liters of fruit.

[106] According to Poku (2002: 5), one fruit bunch contains approximately 60-65 percent fruit.

[107] According to Poku (2002: 8), "Palm fruit contains about 56 percent oil (25 percent on a fresh fruit bunch basis) which is edible with no known toxins. It is thus suitable for small-scale processing." If we consider this figure, then .59 liters of fruit would produce .33 liters of oil or 22.34 tablespoons (equivalent to 2,681 calories). This of course seems to be the absolute upper estimate based on an ideal environment with optimal oil extraction.

[108] Of course these are very rough estimates based on a single household over the months of July and August and most likely, the amount of *bonto* eaten per day fluctuates according to the time of the year.

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Nalú of Kassumba is getting at least 572 calories per day from the palm oil found in *bonto* alone, about a fifth of the suggested caloric intake of an average "'reference human' (a 72-kilogram [150 pound] adult), if active, [who] needs about three thousand calories per day" (Anderson 2005: 40).

Besides *bonto*, the Nalú of Kassumba use palm oil in a number of ways. On several occasions after working all day in the rice-paddies, my hands were left raw and bleeding with open blisters. The wooden handle of the *radi* (P. *arado*), or traditional man-powered plow similar to a long wooden inverted shovel with an iron tip for slicing through mud, would get wet and chafe the skin on the palms of the hand. On August 3, 2007, I wrote in my fieldnotes,

> I put *siti* [palm oil] on my hands again and I rested them by the fire. They [several Nalú villagers] said it will help my hands dry up. I have recently been asked on a number of occasions if I have been accompanying Nyambi into his fields to work. They never let me respond to their question, however, instead turning over the palms of my hands for closer inspection.

Palm oil is often rubbed onto the hands and then heated by a fire for approximately 10-20 minutes to dry up blisters.[109]

When palm kernel oil (*siti di karus*, see below) or another alternative oil is unavailable, palm oil is also used to fry foods such as doughnuts (*pankets*), chicken, *kagre/cacre* (a type of fiddler crab; *Uca Gelasimus tangeri*), or *kombe* (Susu; K. *berbigão*; a type of marine bivalve mollusk; *Cardiidae*). Palm oil is also simply poured over rice as a seasoning/sauce. This is a common practice when transporting food over long distances in order to keep the rice hot and to prevent it from sticking together. Among the Nalú, this rice with palm oil is known as

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[109] Again, on August 18, 2007, I wrote, "We arrived in the *bolanha* [rice paddy] around 8:30 AM and stayed until 2:30 PM. I was beyond exhaustion, to the point of collapse. My hands hurt so badly. I actually heated them with *siti* tonight, hoping it will help. Our lunch arrived around 11:30 AM. Fatu and Fatu brought it. I ate with Nyambi and Dgibi who outdistanced me in the *bolanha* at a rate of about three *regua* [mud furrows] to my one. We finished the final quarter of one *prigu* [a single paddy made up of many *regua*] before moving on to, and completing, a second, smaller one."

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amingbent (Nalú), or *mput* (Susu). This is how the afternoon meal is brought to the laborers in the rice paddy with the accompanying *bonto* sauce (*turi* in Susu) often containing fish or another available protein in a separate container. Traditionally, this meal was brought by female relatives to the male workers in the fields in two *kabash* (calabashes), but today, large Chinese enamel bowls with lids are used. Finally, palm oil is also used by the Nalú as a hair conditioner, skin cosmetic and reddener, or as a lotion to moisturize dry skin when more effective alternatives are unavailable.

Palm Kernel Oil (*siti di karus*)

Palm kernel oil is a secondary product from the palm fruit bunch for the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba primarily used as (1) fry oil, (2) lamp oil, or (3) in soap manufacture (see below). Palm kernel oil is extracted from the palm fruit seeds. This oil contains about 80 percent fatty acids including 48.2% lauric, 16.2% myristic, 15.3% oleic, 8.4% palmitic, and a variety others (Ang, Liu, & Huang 1999). The central seed from which palm kernel oil is extracted consists of a dark shell (endocarp) and the kernel. The kernel makes up about five to seven percent of the fresh fruit bunch and approximately twenty-one or twenty-two percent of each individual fruit (Poku 2002: 5). Making *siti* (P. *azeite/óleo*) *di karus* (palm kernel oil) is a labor intensive process for the Nalú; therefore, they make palm kernel oil on an intermittent basis. According to the Nalú women, it takes roughly thirty kilograms of *karus* to make one liter of palm kernel oil, or about one bucket full of *koku di tceben* (the palm fruit nut) to make about one and a half liters

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of palm kernel oil.[110] The oil is either entirely consumed by the household or sold locally at variable rates to friends and neighbors. I documented the oil being sold locally for between 150 and 500 XOF ($.30-$1) per liter. The economics of palm kernel oil will be discussed below in the section titled "Palm-onomics".

Nalú palm kernel oil processing starts by burning the palm nuts for at least twenty minutes either separately, away from the general processing area, or mixed into cooking fires or fires being used to process palm oil.[111] The shelling of the endocarp is done by crushing the burnt nut between two stones in order to separate the internal kernel from the hard external shell. The kernel is then ground into a paste in the *pilon* using a little lemon juice and water. The paste is mixed with a small quantity of water and then the entire mixture is boiled to release the palm kernel oil, which is periodically skimmed from the water's surface (Poku 2002: 42).

Among the Nalú, palm kernel oil is used as fry oil for cooking a variety of foodstuffs such as fried dough, coconut sweets, and different types of crabs and other shellfish. Favorite breakfast treats made by Nalú women and girls who wish to make a small amount of money are known as *pankets*, a small, round fried doughnut with sugar. On March 13, 2007, Dede made a batch of *pankets* for door-to-door sale around the village. Three doughnuts cost 50 XOF ($.10). The recipe she used to make her *pankets* was: (1) three kilograms of wheat flour (rice flour can substituted) (1,000 XOF; $2), (2) one kilogram of sugar (100 XOF; $.20), (3) a leavening agent (100 XOF; $.20), and (4) palm kernel oil (no cost, if made at the household). She was able to make ninety doughnuts by carefully controlling her portion size, which equaled thirty batches at

[110] Other figures suggest 10 tons of fruit yield 750 kilograms of seed kernels which yield 250 kilograms of high quality palm kernel oil. Additionally, for every 100 kilograms of fresh fruit bunches, typically, 1.6 kilograms of palm kernel oil can be extracted.

[111] The palm nuts are burned outside the processing area for several reasons including the unpleasant odor of burning nuts and safety. For example, on August 9, 2007, I witnessed a hot *karus* fly out of the fire and hit Mary, a young Nalú girl, in the eye. It was badly infected two days later.

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50 XOF each for a total of 1,500 XOF ($3). The cost to make the *pankets* was 1,200 XOF ($2.40). Dede netted 300 XOF ($.60) for her efforts as long as she did not give any away to family members or eat any herself. In addition, if Dede bought palm kernel oil, the venture would no longer be profitable.

Next, palm kernel oil is flammable and makes an excellent lamp fuel. Simple lamps are used by both the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba. They are made from sealable Nescafe coffee tins and a cloth wick. The lamps burn fairly cleanly and brightly with a single lamp that is burned several hours per night lasting for more than a week before needing to be refilled. Forty-six percent (19/41) of the survey respondents in Kassumba said that their household regularly used palm kernel oil lamps to illuminate their houses at night.

A third important use of palm kernel oil is in the manufacture of black soap (*sabon pretu*). In addition to making palm kernel oil, palm kernels have a number of other uses among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba. These palm kernels are fed to Balanta pigs whose jaws are strong enough to crush the hard seeds. Also, in a discussion on September 4, 2007 with Fatu of Kassumba, she described how when she younger, she would collect *karus* seeds from the forest. When the palm fruit was ripe, it would fall from the trees. If no one cut the fresh palm fruit bunch, which is discovered by searching the ground around oil palm trees looking for ripe shed fruit, then the fallen fruit would rot eventually exposing the internal seeds, which are much hardier. The intact *karus* would be gathered up by the Nalú girls and large batches would then be sold to manufactures for a small amount of money.

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Palm Wine (*binhu di palmu*)

As noted above, the sap of the oil palm tree is an important source for alcoholic beverages throughout Africa with important social and religious functions. For example, the Egyptians used palm sap in their embalming process while many West African cultures continue to utilize the sap as wine during cultural festivities and religious rituals and ceremonies. Writing in the 15th century, Cadamosto had much to say about this wine:

> They [coastal West Africans] drink water, milk, or palm wine. This wine is a liquid which flows from a tree similar to, but not identical with, that which bears dates. There are not many of these trees: they give forth this liquid, which the negroes call 'mignol', almost the whole year. They proceed in this manner: they make three or four gashes at the foot of the tree, from which flows a brownish liquid like the whey of milk, and place gourds beneath to collect it. A tree does not yield a large quantity, about two gourds in a day and a night. It is very good to drink, and is as intoxicating as wine if water is not added. When first collected it is as sweet as the sweetest wine in the world, but day by day it looses [*sic.*] its sweetness and becomes sour. It is better after three or four days than at first. I drank it many times during my sojourn in this country, and preferred it to our own. There is not a sufficient quantity of this *mignol* for everyone to have it in abundance, but all have a reasonable amount, the chiefs the greatest. The trees which yield this wine are common to all [that is, they are not the property of a particular person], for they do not have orchards, or own such trees individually. They are all in the forest, common to everyone to tap and to avail himself of the liquor. (Crone 1936: 43)

The Nalú of antiquity used palm wine as a lubricant in judicial matters and as an important offering to their ancestral and nature spirits. The Nalú continue to use palm wine in their traditional religious practices although these have greatly diminished in importance. Balanta on the other hand continue to practice palm wine extraction in Kassumba by both tapping and felling oil palm trees.

There are two methods for procuring palm wine from the sap of the African oil palm. Palm wine tapping is done by a technique found throughout western Africa that has remained

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unchanged for thousands of years. The tapper uses a palm branch cord (see below) to climb to the top of tall slender male tree. He obtains the milky white sap by cutting off the male flower-spike, or by making a deep incision in the trunk just below the palm fronds in the upper portion where the leaves first emerge. A small sliver of wood about six inches in length is inserted into the incision to act as the tap. The sap slowly leaks from the wound traveling the length of the tap into a suspended collecting vessel, often a gourd[112] or plastic water bottle. As many as four taps can be applied to the crown of a single oil palm at once. By the time the tapper returns to the tree, the natural sugars have already fermented into a sweet, refreshing alcoholic beverage ready for consumption or sale. Using this method, a single tree can produce approximately 30-200 liters of wine per year with a productive tree yielding up to four liters a day for two months without a break. The tree's capacity for fruit production, however, is greatly diminished by tapping (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 177-178). In fact, tapping may sometimes kill the oil palm tree or dry up fruit production entirely.

A more invasive technique is to fell an entire tree. Once felled, the tree is often left for a number of days. If abandoned for more than a couple of weeks, however, it provides an extremely poor yield. This method is much the same as that described in the early twentieth century literature.[113] A well cut into the trunk is left to drain into a collecting pot, calabash, or plastic bottle. As the flow begins to dry up after a day or two, it can be stimulated by firing the mid-rib of the palm leaf on the side of the hole nearest to the trunk on a daily basis. In addition,

[112] "John Sparke the younger, *rapporteur* of John Hawkins's second slave-raiding voyage to Guinea in 1564/65, . . . reported the use of a 'gourde' to collect palm wine" (Hakluyt 1927-28: 7/15, Cited in Alpern 1992: 28).

[113] "The crown of the palm is cleared of old leaf stalks, and a small hole is made about four inches square. The depth depends upon the thickness of the palm, the whole of the young leaves, which are used as palm cabbage, are cleaned out of this hole, and then another small hole is made inside the square hole, and a reed inserted with the end leading into a vessel to collect the wine. Twice daily the wound is renewed by cutting a small slice in this hole towards the crown of the palm; after about three days a torch, made of the dead leaf-stalks of the palm, is lighted and blown in front of the wound to kill all insects that may have got in the wound" (Evans 1907: 146; cited in Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 178).

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slicing off a fresh section of the charred wound helps the sap continue to flow for approximately sixteen to forty-two days. The most this method yields is about twenty-six gallons (98.42 liters) of palm wine per tree (Evans 1907: 146; cited in Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew 1909: 178).

Due to the natural yeasts in the air as well as those left behind in the tappers reused containers, palm sap begins fermenting immediately. It only takes approximately two hours to have a wine with four percent alcohol content. Longer fermentation means stronger, more acidic wine. Beyond a few days, the wine spoils into vinegar. Palm wine is a good source of vitamin B complex. Beyond simple health benefits, palm wine has a significant social role for the peoples of West Africa.

Palm wine played a significant role in Nalú social events before Islamization in the twentieth century. This beverage was used as a remedy for physical illness, and was known for its diuretic properties and staying powers for men working long hours in the rice fields (Sarbah 1909: 247). Palm wine was also used as a token of respect for the ancestors and other spirits revered by their traditional religion. They would often spill a small quantity of wine onto the ground at the start of important ceremonies. The Nalú of Kassumba continue this tradition in the *baloba*, and the Balanta of Kassumba were also regularly observed applying drops of alcoholic beverages to specific parts of their body before drinking in a similar sign of deference to the ancestors. Palm wine was also used among the Nalú for guests at weddings, birth celebrations, and funeral wakes although these practices are quickly fading from social memory, being replaced by new Islamic traditions. Similar to what Clare Madge observed among the Jola of rural Gambia, "As conversion to Islam proceeded during the late 19th/early 20th centuries, the cultural significance of palm wine decreased" (1995: 114) among the Nalú.

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In addition to the Nalú and Balanta of Quitáfine, a few remaining Catholic Manjakos who settled in the area two generations prior also place importance on palm wine. The Manjakos originally came to this southern region in search of oil palm trees; they were tappers and made their living by producing and selling palm wine. However, I was informed that most of the Manjakos eventually moved, or were chased away by the Nalú because they were destroying many of the oil palm trees. Since the Nalú conversion to Islam and before the Balanta had immigrated to the region, the Manjakos no longer had a viable market for their primary economic activity forcing many to emigrate elsewhere. The Manjako holdouts shifted their economic activities to resemble those of their Nalú and Balanta neighbors including palm oil production and the growing of rice, peanuts, cashews, and a variety of other vegetables.

The first Balanta to visit Quitáfine in 1939 arrived in search of palm wine. He visited the villages of Kassumba, Kassebesse, and Kadiko. Many of the Nalú, however, had stopped tapping wine by this time and did not have anything to offer Sambim. While collecting these local histories, I was told by two separate Nalú elders that as youths, they were very good palm wine tappers. Therefore, palm wine was still important for the Nalú less than 80 years ago.

During my stay in Kassumba, I saw very little palm wine being produced or sold. When I first arrived in February and March of 2007, a liter of palm wine could be purchased for 100 XOF ($.20)[114] on Fridays and Saturdays at the local market (*lumu*) in the town of Iraque about fifteen kilometers outside of Kassumba. By July, only one Balanta youth was still tapping palm wine in the area at a rate of between two and five liters per day. He charged 200 XOF per liter ($.40) and by August, he was unable to continue tapping because the rain was getting into his

[114] The average price for a liter of palm wine in Guinea-Bissau between 1997 and 2003 was 157 XOF with a yearly increase of about 25 XOF. In 2003, the price for a liter of palm wine in Guinea-Bissau was 250 XOF (INEC 2007).

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containers hanging on the trees, which tainted the supply. Palm wine tapping is generally a dry season activity for this reason and is most successful in the months of December through May.[115]

Black Soap (*sabon pretu*)

Black soap otherwise known as *sabon pretu* in Guinea-Bissauan Krioulu is an important cultural byproduct of palm processing. This product has helped indigenous populations of Guinea-Bissau and West Africa stave off infection in this harsh environment. Although European imports have made their way into the region, *sabon pretu* is still utilized when imports are unavailable or when the soap is viewed as a better alternative, for example as a particularly strong cleanser. This hygienic marvel was once described in a visit to a guerrilla-held territory in Guinea-Bissau during the struggle for independence by freelance journalist Barbara Cornwall when she wrote,

> Long before the introduction of commercial soap, they [indigenous peoples of Guinea-Bissau] had learned to extract a substance from jungle trees which the men told me was "very strong" and irritating to tender skins. But it did the job and at the same time soothed sandfly and mosquito bites. At one production center, the PAICG was now manufacturing blocks of soap made from palm oil and soda. (1972: 182)

The indigenous method of production has been developed, perfected, and shared by innumerable people throughout West Africa although local variance in both recipe and processing are found.

Chemically, this soap is the salt of fatty acids, similar to any other variety. The chemical reaction that yields soap is known as saponification. In the saponification of a fat to form soap, an alkali and water hydrolyze the fat thus converting it into soap (fatty acid salt) and free

[115] My observations correspond with those of Madge (1995: 113) who listed the months November-June as the period of palm wine collecting by Jola males of a rural Gambian village in 1989.

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glycerin (glycerol). In the specific case of *sabon pretu,* it is made from the reaction of mixing the fatty acids found in palm kernel oil with an alkali that is leached from the ashes of the oil palm tree itself (i.e., lye in potash, *potassium hydroxide*). The leftover wood from the fresh fruit bunches are burned and then the ashes are filtered or leached with water over many days. The water is boiled down and then left to evaporate. What remains is the alkali (known locally as *sinza*), which is able to be utilized in soap-making. To make the soap, two parts *sinza* are mixed with two and a half parts of palm kernel oil. The mixture is heated to a boil and then mixed vigorously. Afterward, the soap is poured into metal pots and left to cure for several days.

Claire Robertson described village soap making as a cottage industry carried out by women. She said that this commodity all but disappeared in Nigeria and Ghana in large part due to outside competition (1987: 110). Pockets of black soap production in Guinea-Bissau, however, remain. The women of Quitáfine recognize the benefits of Western soap as good hair and skin conditioners that incorporate additive fragrances and skin softeners. When these are unavailable, however, the Nalú and Balanta are able to rely on their environment to provide an antibacterial product that has been proven quite effective over time. It is important to note here, however, that black soap contains carcinogens primarily as a result of the use of *sinza*. Therefore, alternatives may prove to be healthier for residents in the long run.

This soap is not only for personal hygiene among the Nalú and surrounding populations; it is also used as a minor commodity. It is sold, traded, and shared among friends, family, and neighbors as gifts and as gestures of goodwill. This soap, then, is culturally significant as both a disinfectant and commodity.

I witnessed the Kamara women of my household make *sabon pretu* at least once per month. They often kept some of the soap, gave some away as small gifts, and sold the remaining

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balls that measured about the size of a fist. Each ball was sold for 100 XOF ($.20). If the entire batch of approximately 15-20 balls of soap were sold, the producer would net three or four dollars. According to my forty-one household surveys conducted throughout Kassumba, 3,405 balls of soap were made for sale in a single year (2006) amounting to $681.00. This figure does not include the additional soap made simply for personal consumption or given away as gifts.

It can easily be imagined that as many as 10,000 balls of soap or more are made annually by the residents of Kassumba. Based on the available figures, on average each household made at least four batches of soap per year (83 balls). In addition, the people surveyed spent $3,065.10 in 2006 on soap purchases including foreign laundry detergents and the indigenous *sabon pretu*. The two local boutiques estimated a combined yearly sale of $1,537.40 in imported soap potentially leaving $1,527.70 going toward the purchase of *sabon pretu*. As a commodity, black soap continues to make up approximately one-quarter to one-half of all the yearly soap purchases made in Kassumba. It has not, as Robertson suggests elsewhere in West Africa, all but disappeared due to Western pressures. Therefore, this data suggests that *sabon pretu* remains a significant cultural artifact and simple commodity. The secret to the survival of this soap may lie in the value placed on the natural environment by the Nalú and Balanta, since it is their surroundings that inevitably plays a significant factor in their economic security and livelihood.

Additional Uses

In the Mirriam-Webster entry on palm, it states, "a leaf of the palm [is] a symbol of victory or rejoicing. . . a symbol of triumph or superiority" (2003: 893). It is easy to see why a plant with the unique ability to provide a population with economic security makes a good

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representation of their triumph and superiority. It is the functionality of the oil palm tree that aided in the development of the Nalú's self-reliant nature. This plant has allowed the Nalú to continue to look internally to their environment instead of being forced to bow to external global pressures. They can rely on the oil palm tree to supply them with valuable commodities to trade; foods to eat; medicines, soaps, and implements for healthcare; building materials; and a variety of other important social and cultural necessities. J. M. Sarbah recognized the value of this plant and transmitted his findings to the Royal African Society in London at the beginning of the twentieth century. He recorded, "The main nerves . . . on the exterior of the *pinnae* or leaflets are used for brooms, whisks, and so forth; and the exterior of the mid-rib or petiole . . . , is cut into strips for basket-work" (Sarbah 1909: 234). Lorraine Bangoura echoed these sentiments decades later when she wrote,

> The versatile palm tree furnished oil, either red or white, depending on the part of the nut used, as well as wine. The leaves were used in making brooms, bags, rope, fences, and fly switches. The strong wood from the trunk was used for building bridges. (1972: 369)

Decades later, among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba, I was able to witness the production and use of many of these articles mentioned by these two observers.

The trunk (single-stemmed) often reaches a height of sixty to eighty feet (approximately 20 meters) with a diameter of one to three feet. This flowering plant grows fairly tall and straight making the trunk of the *Elaeis* ideal for use as house beams, bridges, and other construction projects. The wood is hard and fibrous. When selecting palms for felling, the Nalú are careful to select older more mature trees that are harder and drier than their younger counterparts, and therefore, need less time to cure before they can be used. The best trees for felling are usually distinguished by sight since the trunks are larger, darker, and contain signs of aging such as holes worn into the stem.

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On August 30, 2007, I helped restore two bridges along the road between Kassumba and Kassebesse that had started rotting away from use, age, and standing water. The previous logs had been placed at ground level allowing the fresh water on either side of the road to pass beneath during the rainy season. All the male villagers, both Nalú and Balanta, from Kassumba and Kassebesse had been invited to aid in the refashioning of these public bridges. Sixty-one people showed up with ADEC providing each person three kilograms of rice and one-half liter of oil for their efforts. ADEC's programs aimed to maintain the areas infrastructure and encourage entrepreneurial initiatives among the various womens' groups.

Only one Balanta man from Kassebesse, and none from Kassumba, showed up to help restore the bridges alongside the thirty Nalú males. I was told that Carlos (the Balanta section chief) was asked by De Barros, a Nalú head of household, to inform the other Balanta of Kassumba about the upcoming work day. It is important to note that Carlos did not pass along the invitation, possibly because the Balanta were preparing their rice fields for planting ahead of their Nalú counterparts. In addition, Carlos was still upset with the Nalú of Kassumba because over the past ten years, all of the outside-funded construction projects were being carried out in Kassumba Nalú (e.g., guest residences currently under construction, two Fula-run boutiques, a community primary school, the *salon*/*diskoteka*, a closed well with a manual pump, and a community health center) excluded the Balanta neighborhoods from this infrastructural development.

Replacing the logs of these two oil palm tree bridges occurred yearly and was labor intensive. The only available tools to complete the task were machetes, home-made axes, and cords made from vines and palm leaves. First, oil palm trees were selected for felling in the nearby woods. Next, several men took turns chopping down the trees using the axe. After a tree

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was down on the ground, measurements using palm leaf cords strung together were used to measure the appropriate lengths. Again, using machetes and axes, these logs were trimmed to their appropriate sizes. Next, as many as twenty guys would line up, ten on either side of the log, passing cords made of vines and palm underneath the log. They would then hoist the log and carry it into position. In the meantime, old logs were removed to make room for the new ones. Each bridge contained ten logs approximately fifteen to twenty feet in length, which meant that seven trees were cut down (three logs from each tree).

On several other occasions, I helped villagers fell oil palm trees to make roof beams for their adobe houses. In April, Nyambi, the local schoolteacher and head of the household where I resided, had been cutting down oil palm trees all day for the roof beams of his new house. Normally, people in Guinea-Bissau like to use a type of hardwood called *sibi* for their beams. *Sibi*, however, does not grow in Kassumba, so they use beams made from the oil palm tree (*sibi palmera*). The iron wedges and sledge hammer that he had used were borrowed from the hotel project being funded by Nimba, a Bissau-based NGO. He used seven different types of tools for the job including: (1) *mantcadu* (P. *machado*) *di findi lenha* (wood cutting axe), (2) *mantcadu di korta tceben* (a pole with an iron tip used to cut palm fruit), (3) *tarsadu* (machete), (4) *feru di kunha* (iron wedge), (5) *martel* (sledge hammer), (6) *Madera di kunha* (wooden wedge), and (7) *maretta* (wooden sledge hammer or club). Nyambi needed more than twenty palm trees cut giving him approximately eighty to one-hundred and twenty beams. Once Nyambi spotted an aging tree that was likely to fall all the way to the ground instead of catching in the surrounding canopy and vegetation, we would clear the undergrowth and chop it down with the axe. After it fell, we measured it with a pre-measured length of palm leaf cord to see how many beam lengths could be rendered from the trunk (often two, sometimes three). These logs would be cut, again

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with the axe. Next, depending on a log's thickness, it would be split in half lengthwise and then either split again or cut into thirds.[116] The beams were left in the forest for a few days to dry out.

Framing a roof in Quitáfine is a specialized skill. When constructing a rectangular "Portuguese-style" house (Bérenger-Féraud 1973[1879]: 330),[117] a carpenter must be hired to frame the roof with the *sibi palmera*.[118] Windows and door frames, ladders, doors, and variety of other necessities are fashioned from the trunk of the African oil palm tree by the Nalú and Balanta as well.

Besides the trunk, several other parts of the palm are utilized by the Nalú and their neighbors in a variety of ways. For example, leaf stalks are used as fence posts, climbing cords, cooking fire fuel, fence blinds, and burial material. The pinnate (feather-like) compound leaves of the oil palm tree emerge from the top of the leaf stalk. As the palm ages, its leaf stalks mature, dry up, and eventually drop away from the trunk. These dry husks are gathered by women and girls as firewood. The stalks are not ideal as cooking fire fuel, but they are usually

[116] First, a line was gouged down the length of the trunk using the machete. Then the iron wedges were inserted into the cracks and pounded down with the sledgehammer. The wooden wedges would then be inserted to hold the opening with the wooden mallet. As the log split, the iron wedges were removed and advanced followed by the wooden wedges. As this was going on, an additional person would come along and cut the fibers holding the pieces together with the machete. These steps were continued until the trunk split.

[117] "The *maisons à la portuguise* were characterized by four elements: they were built of *banco*, or sun-dried clay (essentially adobe); they were rectangular in form; the outer walls were often whitewashed; and they had either a continuous veranda around the exterior wall or a smaller vestibule in front of the entrance" (Mark 2002: 49).

[118] First, beams are placed to outline the tops of the mud brick outside walls. Next, a long center beam bisects the house lengthwise and is connected to the previously assembled wall frame. Three shorter beams finish off a rectangle using the center beam as the bottom. This frame rises up out of the center of the house, the upper beam of which will be the peak of the roof. Two beams run at angles from the frame's side supports to the center beam to give the peak beam at the top of the rectangle additional strength. Angles are then cut into one end of each of the remaining beams so that they can be better attached to the peak. Four long beams are run from the peak to the corners of the house and nailed into place along the outer wall beams. Then, a number of beams are run from the roof's peak to the front and back of the house. To finish the sides of the roof structure, a single beam is attached to the peak and the wall beams at the center. The remaining beams are run from the long corner beams to wall beams, getting shorter in length as they get closer to the wall beams along the outside edges. Finally, the numerous beams running from the peak to the walls are stabilized by attaching beams around the midpoint of the entire structure. This frame parallels the wall beams. A second set of stabilizing beams frame the house below the wall beams outside of the house. Posts are attached from these supports to the ground or verandah approximately every five to ten feet to give the entire structure additional strength.

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collected along with the other varieties of dried wood that are more suitable for longer burning. The stalks dry and burn quickly, making them good kindling for starting fires.

As fence posts, leaf stalks are suitable choices to deter animals from entering small gardens. They are up to fourteen feet in length at full maturity tapering from a wide convex trunk to a much narrower tip covered in leaves sprouting from each side of the stalk. Similar to the oil palm tree trunk, the leaves do not cover the entire stalk. They sprout from the stalk tip and move down the stem's base as it grows. Spiked protrusions along the outside edges of the wider leafless base are often left behind. After removing the leaves and cutting away much of the thinner part of the stalk, the remaining post approximately five feet in length is sharpened at the narrow end and inserted into the ground. These stalks are tightly placed side by side around the perimeter of a Nalú vegetable garden. The fence remains three feet above the ground which is low enough for an adult to reach the plants from the outside or enter the garden by stepping over the posts, while high enough to deter free-range livestock and other wild animals from eating the garden's contents.

When still vibrant and flexible, the Nalú also cut leaf stalks from the upper head of the oil palm tree. Long sturdy stalks are stripped of their leaves and fashioned into climbing cords (*korda di sibi palmera*).[119] This is done by first measuring and cutting the stalk to the appropriate length for the specific climber (about three times the length of the climber's outside leg). The smaller end of the stalk is removed until the desired length is reached. Next, the spikes are whittled away and the entire stalk's thickness and width are reduced. The width is primarily reduced at the wide end, which grows closest to the trunk while the thickness is reduced at the narrower end. All of the reductions are cut from the underneath of the stalk, leaving the stronger outside fibers intact. A notch is carved into the wide end at the beginning of the cord. Along the

[119] For a good illustration of this climbing cord, See Carreira (1947: 57).

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second half where the cord has been made much thinner, long slits are cut through the stalk running lengthwise for a few feet making that end of the cord flexible enough to be bent into a curve. Next, three feet of the thinnest end is slit all the way to the end of the cord. These lengths are twisted and braided to give the slimmer end more flexibility and strength. The notched and braided ends are tied together in a slip knot so that pressure actually makes the knot stronger while climbing.

Before the cord is used, the braids are wetted or soaked with water so that it is flexible enough to tie without cracking or breaking. The thin, flexible belt-like side of the cord cradles the lower back of the climber while the thicker side of the cord is what is wrapped around the trunk during climbing. The climber puts the cord around the trunk and his lower back and then fastens the slip knot. Climbing is done by placing both feet (usually bare) onto the trunk with the legs of the climber perpendicular to the trunk and parallel to the ground. Most of the pressure is then felt along the lower back where the cord has been positioned. The climber also has each hand holding the midpoint of the cord on either side. In order to climb the tree, the arms are flexed simultaneously. While releasing the arm flex, the cord is temporarily detached from the trunk and slid up the trunk followed by the feet. This motion is repeated all the way up the trunk to the head of the oil palm tree and then reversed on the way down.

I regularly accompanied young men into the forest to watch them cut palm fruit kernels.[120] Falls were often attributed to old worn out cords giving out and therefore, cords were replaced often (as regularly as once every two weeks during the peak palm oil making season).

[120] I even tried to climb the trees myself without much success such as a day in April when I wrote, "I climbed about one quarter of the way up a palm tree today using a cord. It is not easy. I had to wear my sneakers because the knots on the tree from where all the leaf stalks fell off hurt the soles of my feet. Almost everyone has a story about falling out of a palm tree. In fact, I was told that a man usually stops climbing after a particularly bad fall."

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Finally, palm stalks with intact leaves were used as thatch to enclose the walls and ceilings of many structures including *baraka* (temporary houses or cabanas) or as a funeral cover to prevent newly buried bodies from being dug up by animals. For example, during the First of May celebration held on Kassumba's beach, people often construct temporary *baraka* along the shoreline to stake claims to particular areas days in advance. These *baraka* are spaces where food is served to friends and family and where merry-makers can rest and get out of the sun. Vendors also build these temporary structures to sell their wares from during the festival.[121]

While attending a *smola* (literally, paying respects; a Muslim funeral) in a neighboring village with many Kassumba Nalú residents, we received sad news that the daughter of Nyambi's sister had just died in Kampeana from yellow fever (*febri amarelu*). She was only ten years old. It had only taken her three days to pass once she became ill. In that time, she was taken to a traditional healer. Many of those same people attending the original *smola* in Kolaque went on to Kampeana where the girl's body was being interred. Men and women were segregated. The men prayed and buried the body while the women went into the house to mourn. First, the men wrapped the body in a white sheet. A hole about three feet deep was dug with a *radi* and machete in the back courtyard of the parents' house; the body was put in the ground from a bier and then the hole was covered with a second white sheet while two men inside the hole spread dirt around the body to hold the second cloth in place. After these men were helped from the pit, large sticks were placed at angles over the body, then smaller branches and grass (*padja*). Finally, they covered everything with a mound of dirt. Palm stalks were

[121] On one instance a few days before the first day of May, I helped the local store owner build a temporary *baraka* along the beach. We cut four wooden stakes with a "Y" at one end from *po di tarafe* (saltwater mangrove trees) and stuck them in the ground about four feet apart. We then lashed sticks to these supports in order to frame the simple roof. Palm leaves were placed on the top and two sides of the structure. Several of the leaves were tied to the wooded supports to keep them from blowing away in the wind.

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placed on top of the mound along with a marker to designate the position of the body's head. The final funeral for the entire family was held a week later.

Elaeis leaves are also utilized by the Nalú and Balanta for a variety of reasons. Often, the new leaf shoots are sought before they split open and fan out along the stalk at maturity. As mentioned above, the main nerves (petiole) are used as brooms and fly and mosquito whisks. The rest of the leaf is separated from the exterior of the mid-rib by hand or with a knife. These are then bundled in the same direction. A small tin can is forced over the bunch starting at the smaller end to hold the bundle together into a very effective broom (*basora*). Young leaves are also tied end to end to make a natural cord that is used to measure, secure roof beams, and bundle and weave roof thatch. The leaves are also regularly bunched into a circular cushion used to pad the top of the head for carrying objects. In addition, leaflets are cut into strips to weave baskets; hats; shelves to place clean cooking materials away from animals, or to smoke fish, shellfish and other meats; *balai di feki* (winnowing baskets); and *kirintin* (wind breaks). Additionally, these pinnate leaves are used as a natural medium to communicate with the *irán* of the *baloba* as a type of fetish. Finally, palm leaves are also regularly collected and spread on the ground as a natural covering to sit, sleep, or butcher animals on.

Palm hearts found in the crown also make a nourishing vegetable, but its extraction kills the tree. The Nalú also recognize the nourishing and curative properties of the palm heart (i.e., palm-cabbage; *korson di palmera*). They pull apart the palm heart and eat or suck the white part to cure a sore stomach if it is accompanied by mucus and blood in the feces. Among the Nalú, this illness is known as *Salma*.

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Figure 8. African Oil Palm Tree Uses/Products in Kassumba

1. Red Palm Oil	2. Palm Kernel Oil
3. Black Soap	4. Sauce for Rice
5. Eaten Raw as a Snack	6. Dry up Blisters
7. Fry Oil	8. Lamp Fuel
9. Commodity	10. Ash
11. Libation	12. Diuretic
13. Hunger Suppressant	14. Ceremonial Gift
15. Brooms	16. Bags
17. Hats	18. Fences
19. Kindling	20. Fly Switches
21. Bridge Planks	22. Roof Beams
23. Doors	24. Window Frames
25. Climbing Harness	26. Cooking Fire Fuel
27. Blinds	28. Temporary Huts
29. Funeral Covers	30. Ground Mats for Sitting/Butchering
31. Head Pad	32. Measuring Tape
33. Rope	34. Winnowing Baskets
35. Wind Breaks and Shelving	36. Fetish/Spirit Conduit
37. Palm Heart	38. Cure for Upset Stomach
39. Mosquito/Sandfly Repelant	40. Candied
41. Slingshot Ammunition	42. Pig Fodder
43. Skin Softner	44. Hair Softner

Other minor uses among the Nalú and their neighbors for the various parts of the palm include the use of the woody base or infrastructure of the fruit palm bunch (*katcu di tceben*). The *katcu* can be pounded out into a fly or mosquito whisk, burned to keep sandflys (*melgas*), mosquitoes, and flies away, or burned for ash and then leached to make *sinza* used in soap production. The male flower can also be made into a whisk. The palm fruit can be cooked with sugar as a sweet or eaten plain as a snack. Finally, I witnessed Nalú boys using discarded palm kernels in their slingshots when hunting or scaring away small birds from the rice paddies.

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PALM-ONOMICS

Historical documents show that palm products have been traded internationally as an economic commodity since the fifteenth century when the first European explorers arrived in West Africa. Earlier archaeological evidence demonstrates the long-distance exchange of palm between peoples of Africa for thousands of years. Palm's economic importance in West Africa continues today (Lynn 1997; Poku 2002; World Rainforest Movement 2001). My observations among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba confirm the continued reliance on this versatile plant as an important commodity in both local and global markets.

One of the oldest residents in the Quitáfine region at 80 years old, Ousamané Keita of Kassumba, recounted in May 2007,

> We [Kassumba Nalú] paid taxes to the Portuguese residing in Cacine per household. One household had to pay 40 pesos. We would cut *tceben* and go sell it at the store in Cacine to get money. If you sold your *tceben* at the local Portuguese-run store, then you could turn around and pay your taxes. Per year you would pay one time and they would credit your account (05/07/07).

Both local and European demand for palm fruit bunches, palm oil, palm kernel oil, palm wine, and black soap encouraged exchanges between these disparate peoples. Today, the demand and exchange in palm products continues.

During my stay in Kassumba, Ousamané Barry, the son of the local Fula trader-in-residence, was stockpiling red palm oil. On several occasions, I witnessed him carting twenty-five liter plastic containers (*bidon*) of oil to the market town of Iraque for storage. Throughout July and August, both Fatu and Dede from my homestead were making *siti* for Ousamané. He had left money with both Nalú and Balanta women throughout Kassumba to encourage the production of more palm oil. When asked why he was buying up so much, Ousamané told me

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that he had a friend in Europe who could get him a visa for Spain, but it would cost him 2.5 million XOF ($5,000). Ousamané's plan was to rent a large container truck to take *skalada* (salt-dried, premiere-class fish filets), *folgu* (swim-bladders of premiere-class fish used as isinglass), *ostra* (smoke-dried oysters), and *siti* (red palm oil) just over the border into Senegal to the market town of Djowbé.[122] He had paid out enough money to buy up eight tanks (200 liters per tank) worth of oil. Ousamané collected and transported the oil in small batches to the market town of Iraque and then on to Bissau where it was saved in a collective storage facility (*armazena*). His 1,600 liters of palm oil cost 800,000 XOF (500 XOF per liter)[123] from local producers of Kassumba. The container truck rental cost Ousamané an additional 15,000 XOF per tank, or 120,000 XOF total for transportation. His total cost was 920,000 XOF, plus any incidentals. After selling the oil for 1,000 XOF per liter, he grossed 1,600,000 XOF and netted 680,000 XOF ($1,360) once the purchase price and transportation fees were deducted. His palm oil profits were approximately twenty-seven percent of the money he needed to get to Europe, which demonstrates that Ousamané relied heavily on trading red palm oil. He must, therefore, consider this product to be one of the more cost-effective investments in Kassumba available for exchange. His was the biggest of the five largest purchases of palm oil that I documented in 2007 in Kassumba.

These five purchases alone totaled 2,525 liters or 1,262,500 XOF ($2,525) worth of oil. In addition, although not documented in any systematic fashion, I personally witnessed the

[122] The only name similar to "Djowbé" on any map is Sare Jowbe, which is situated in Fulladu East, Upper River, The Gambia; its geographical coordinates are 13° 19' 0" North, 14° 21' 0". Djowbé may simply be the name of a market in an undisclosed town in Senegal.

[123] Between the years 1997-2003, the average price for one liter of palm oil in the capital city of Bissau was 966 XOF (INEC 2007). In 2007, on average, one liter of palm oil was purchased in Kassumba for 500 XOF and then resold for approximately 1,000 XOF in Bissau.

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production of more than 210.5 liters of palm oil from the Kamara household over the same seven month period.

Figure 9. 2007 Kamara Kitchen Palm Oil Production

Month	**Liters**
March	35.5 (17%)
April	80 (38%)
May	28 (13%)
June	57 (27%)
July	0 (0%)
August	10 (5%)
September	0 (0%)
TOTAL	**210.5**

The periods of highest productivity in the Kamara kitchen loosely match Poku's 2002 peak harvesting months for Central and West Africa in which more than fifty percent of palm fruit availability occurred during the months of March, April, May, and June (29).[124] Over these same seven months in 2007, I counted two-hundred and two fresh fruit bunches cut and/or purchased by the Kamara family alone. Again, the documentation of the cutting and purchasing of fresh fruit bunches was not recorded in any systematic way and the actual number of cut and purchased fresh fruit bunches by members of this household were in fact much higher. In order

[124] It must be noted that Clare Madge found that the months of palm fruit collection in a Gambian village took place in August-November and January-April, only partially overlapping with the findings here. The source of her data is from fieldwork conducted in 1989 (1995: 113).

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to get a more complete picture of palm oil production, I conducted a household survey encompassing the entire population of the village of Kassumba.

According to the survey data, respondents estimated that 9,256 liters of red palm oil were purchased by the residents of Kassumba in 2006. They also estimated that a total of 14,115 fresh fruit bunches were purchased; this figure does not include fresh fruit bunches that were cut and then used by a household without purchasing. Therefore, the number of fresh fruit bunches cut by the members of Kassumba are, in fact, much higher.[125] According to the surveys, Kassumba residents also sold 13,715 liters of palm oil and 7,675 fresh fruit bunches over the last year.

From these figures, we can see that the local demand for fresh fruit bunches is high since the number of bunches purchased outnumbered those sold almost two to one. Another observation of note is that of the 13,715 liters of palm oil being sold, 9,256 liters of that is being purchased locally for consumption or resale (67%). This leaves approximately 4,459 liters available for direct export (not factoring in re-sold oil). Local speculators often purchase palm oil only to export and resell it at a higher price. These local speculators make the figures above somewhat redundant, therefore, I must calculate the value of the trade based solely on the sales' figures alone. Whether sold for the first time, or resold, each liter will net approximately 500 XOF since the original purchase price is usually 500 XOF and resale generally nets 500 XOF after deducting the purchase price. In other words, one liter is bought for 500 XOF and sold for 1,000 XOF. Based on the figures above, approximately 13,715 liters of palm oil were sold by the residents of Kassumba in 2006. That means that they made about 6,857,500 XOF on palm oil sales in a single year or 9,953 XOF ($19.91) per person per year (3.9% of a Kassumba resident's yearly income of 256,675 XOF [$513.35]).

[125] I estimate the number of fresh fruit bunches cut in 2006 in the village of Kassumba to be closer to 80,000.

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In addition to calculating yearly earnings for the production of palm oil, I also estimated the average amount one could expect to earn from manufacturing palm oil based on hourly rates. On April 20, 2007, I observed oil production in Kadabu, a Nalú neighborhood made up of a single extended family. Three family members, an aunt and her two nieces, made twelve liters of palm oil in a single day. The experienced aunt worked continuously from 8:00 AM until 6:00 PM, only taking a fifteen minute break for lunch. The nieces' combined labor added an additional seven hours of work. The twelve liters of palm oil were worth 6,000 XOF ($12) based on the constant price of palm oil in Kassumba of 500 XOF per liter. It took the women 16.75 hours to produce twelve liters of oil, which is equal to 358 XOF/hour ($.72). This rate, however, fluctuates quite a bit in Kassumba depending on the experience and number of available labors, fruit quality and quantity including seasonal variation, available equipment (i.e., caldrons, firewood, sieves, etc.), and other distractions such as childcare, meal preparations, and simultaneous alternate economic endeavors (e.g., smoking fish, collecting cashew nuts, etc.).

Therefore, I suggest that on average someone producing palm oil in Kassumba using the traditional village method could expect to earn approximately $.50-$1 per hour if the price of palm oil remains fixed at 500 XOF per liter. These figures confirm that palm oil production remains one of the most lucrative economic activities available to residents of Kassumba, although it is also one of the most dangerous. Interestingly, I would like to underscore the fact that Kassumba residents always present as the poorest in the country while according to my survey data, they averaged a higher yearly income per person per year at $513.35 compared to the national gross domestic product (GDP) average of $283[126] for the population of Guinea-

[126] Gross Domestic Product (nominal) per capita, the value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a given year, divided by the average population for the same year. This figure is an average of the International Monetary Fund 2007 estimate of $206, The World Bank 2006 estimate of $185, and the 2007 Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook estimate of $458.

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Bissau in 2007. I should not that the GDP estimates are probably inaccurate due to the lack of good data. The three palm oil producers in the above anecdote earned $4 per person, well above the national or local average per day of $.78 or $1.41 respectively.

Based on the figures above, palm oil production seems to be an important local commodity and export. Using only traditional village methods of production, Kassumba's 689 residents are producing upwards of 20,000 liters of red palm oil per year divided between local consumption, local sale, and export.[127] Therefore, without any plantations, about 80,000 bunches of indigenous palm fruits are finding their way into local producers' hands.

According to anecdotal evidence from the residents of both Kassumba and the capital city of Bissau, the quality of southern palm oil is considered to be of a far higher quality than that available elsewhere, such as the Bissagos Islands. Bissau's residents specifically seek out this oil coming from Quitáfine. I was told on a number of occasions that it is their production methods described above that gives the oil its distinct flavor and palatability. The Nalú take pride in their palm oil and their identity is tied to this idea. It was Alfonseca Kamara who told me,

> God came and gave the Nalú food that tastes better than all other races. Our *bianda* [rice and sauce] is much tastier than all other races. Much better. God made it so that we have *kaldu* [broth or stalk] here, he put salt here, rice, *tceben*, everything we need to eat all in one place. The Nalú can't eat the food of the Balanta without feeling it. We can't eat the food of the Manjako. We can't even eat the food of the Fula. But, every race likes the food of the Nalú. They eat it well. God sure can arrange things! . . . . Now, the Nalú have colonized the Balanta living in this area. They have even started cooking like us. (08/18/07)

All this being said, the Nalú's identity, livelihood, and economic well-being are also tied to other products of the palm.

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[127] If we consider the amount of *bonto* consumed by the residents of Kassumba based on the figures provided above, the amount of palm oil consumed by the entire population can be roughly estimated at 15,089 liters per year in addition to any oil made for sale, trade, exchange, or export.

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Palm kernel oil is a local commodity; it is produced, sold, and bought by family, friends, and neighbors on a fairly small scale. Only 1,797 liters of palm kernel oil were documented as being produced for sale by the residents of Kassumba in 2006 amounting to about 2.6 liters per person. This oil was sold for 598,100 XOF ($1,196.20) or $1.74 per person, which was about .34 percent of a resident's annual income. As described above, palm kernel oil production is much more labor intensive than making red palm oil. The prices paid for palm kernel oil are also much more variable ranging from 150 XOF per liter to as much as 500 XOF per liter. Of the forty-one survey respondents in Kassumba, only fifty-six percent indicated that their household sold palm kernel oil last year while eighty-three percent produced red palm oil for sale. The same household sold the largest amount of palm oil (6,000 liters) and palm kernel oil (400 liters) in a single year, which amounted to forty-four percent and twenty-two percent of the total oils produced for sale respectively.[128] The consumption practices for palm kernel oil were not collected systematically although the majority of the palm kernel oil was burned in lamps, used as a cooking oil to make fried foods and then discarded, or employed in the production of black soap.

Black soap sales provided the residents of Kassumba with an additional 340,500 XOF ($681) in 2006 according to my survey data. This amounted to $.99 per person or .19 percent of a person's yearly income. Twenty-four households (59%) admitted to selling black soap. Three-thousand four-hundred and five *monto*, or fist-sized balls, which cost 100 XOF each, were estimated to have been sold in 2006. Data about black soap manufactured for personal consumption is unavailable. Black soap sales in Kassumba accounted for twenty-two percent of all soap purchased, which suggests that it is still viewed as an effective disinfectant (see above).

[128] This household contained thirty-nine people divided between six houses, which accounted for almost six percent of the entire population of Kassumba.

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Finally, palm wine continues to be an important local commodity for the Balanta of Kassumba as the main producers, purchasers, and vendors of this liquor in the village. In 2006, 12,064 liters of palm wine were bought by local Balanta while only 4,970 liters were sold meaning that almost two-thirds of the palm wine consumed in Kassumba came from outside the village resulting in a 730,200 XOF ($1,460.40) deficit.

Overall, the residents of Kassumba spend approximately 7,266,650 XOF ($14,543.30) purchasing palm oil, palm fruit bunches, and palm wine. They earn approximately 12,895,350 XOF ($25,790.70) selling palm oil, palm fruit, palm kernel oil, black soap, and palm wine. Therefore, the population of Kassumba netted an annual profit of 5,628,700 XOF ($11,257.40) in 2006 for palm products. In proportion to overall yearly earnings, a single resident of Kassumba made 18,716 XOF ($37.43) from palm products, about 7.3 percent of their estimated annual income.

When considering that these products are made by the traditional village method without the use of any processing machinery and that the palm fruit is almost entirely self-seeding with no cultivation, this is an incredible feat indeed. From a mechanical point of view, it also demonstrates the future growth potential of a village industry with an infusion of very little capital. As one of the Nalú's oldest economic activities along with fishing, they continue to utilize their natural environment to provide security and a sense of self. In strictly economic terms, palm production is not insignificant although other endeavors such as fishing, rice cultivation, and cashew farming may contribute more to the populations' economic security overall. As I hope to demonstrate below, however, the African oil palm tree is more than a simple commodity; it ties the Nalú to their land, each other, and their traditional religion.

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PALM AND PLACE

Although political tension is often cited by Nalú historians as the impetus of population displacement, I argue that it was usually ecological and political considerations that led to the establishment of new settlements in particular areas. For example, the African oil palm in conjunction with fish was an important motivation for deciding to populate the Quitáfine region. The riverine areas of southern Guinea-Bissau offered the Nalú ancestors a protected refuge and exploitable environment on the periphery of West African political upheavals of the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries.

According to historical and contemporary records, Nalú territory stretches from the left bank of the Nunez River in Guinea Conakry northward to the right bank of the Tombali River of Guinea-Bissau (Almada 1984: 13/1; Fields 2008: 3-4; Hair 1967: 47; Hanquez Passavant 2000: 385; Mello Machado 1972: 14, 16; Pereira 1937: 93). Much of the population today continues to situate itself along the Atlantic waters including the riverine inlets. In Guinea-Bissau, the Nalú, with an estimated population of less than 10,000 today, mainly live along the Tombali, Cumbijã, and Cacine rivers. These swampy lowland tidal zones were, and remain, ideal environments for fishing, the development of African rice culture (Fields 2001, 2008; Hawthorne 2003; Linares 1981), and the successful propagation of the indigenous African oil palm tree. The ecology of this region continues to be a major factor in shaping Nalú worldviews and economic outlets.

I refer to some testimonies given to me by Nalú elders in order to underline this point. Alfonseca Kamara, the eldest living Nalú of Tamakeni, a village just outside of Kassumba, explained,

> The first Nalú who settled here [in Quitáfine] didn't know anything except *tceben* and how to fish. They shared everything. They didn't even have cows, nothing. .

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> . . The first Nalú would go out tapping for palm wine. They wouldn't bring it back to their houses. They had special places to bring it. (08/18/07)

While a Nalú elder of the village of Kassebesse, Jakin Kamara, had this to say about his family's decision to settle there,

> Bidjing of the Nalú left neighboring Kambulmam [present day Katunigh], which translates as 'place to sit', in search of *tceben*. He left and came back explaining that he saw a place with huge *tceben*. He told his family, 'let's go sit there'. His friend asked him, 'in what area?' He said '*ka-tceben* [Kassebesse]', which meant "here, where the palm trees have fat *tceben*". My family left Katunigh and came to stay here. Others were called in to settle the area as well including a man named Babrick. Abdullai also came to Kassebesse from Kasheklang and was given Babrick's sister in marriage. (08/17/2007)

Incidentally, *ka-tceben* or Kassebesse remains the name of the village today.

I was repeatedly regaled with stories about the early Nalú who were river fishermen and forest hunters and gatherers. They used river-fishing nets similar to the Balanta women of today except that their nets could be closed like a purse trapping their catch inside. In addition, they spent a lot of time collecting palm wine and cutting *tceben*. These earliest residents of Quitáfine were communal and put their daily yields together so that they could be distributed to each family according to need. The palm wine was also collected and shared among the men of the Mbara. Eventually I began to ask the elders of Kassumba where their Nalú ancestors originated (See Chapter Two).

I was told that the two primary families of Kassumba Nalú had separate origins. The Keita's were from the north possibly arriving in Quitáfine in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries over land as a result of the expansion of the Mali Empire, which was founded by Sundiata Keita beginning in 1235 (Mello Machado 1972: 4). The Kamara family was from the Futa Jalon highlands of Guinea Conakry and entered into Quitáfine by crossing over the Cacine River. All my consultants were quick to point out that the Kamara family arrived in Kassumba

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first, just before the Keita's. This early migration from the Futa Jalon highlands may have been sparked by population pressures and warfare when the semi-nomadic Fula settled there in waves over several generations. The rise of the Susu Empire in the same region, however, may have triggered the migration of the indigenous inhabitants from the Futa Jalon starting as early as the eleventh century (Bünhen 1994: 1-2). Whether caused by pressures from Susu or Fula invaders, many of refugees eventually made their way to Guinea-Bissau (Rodney 1970: 6). These origin myths probably account more for the diffusion of Kassumba Nalú family names and do not necessarily accurately explain Nalú origins.[129] It is more likely that the Nalú were displaced from somewhere much nearer the littoral before settling in the Quitáfine region, which was just outside the reach of these expanding African empires (Bünhen 1994: 11).

According to Brahma Kamara of Kassumba, the oldest living male relative of the first resident of Kassumba,

> The Nalú didn't want to fight with their Fula pursuers. They left Guinea Conakry and came as far as Kassumba. They stopped here because it was a good place that had palm trees. They also had the ocean close at hand where they could catch fish. The Nalú like to eat fish. The Nalú of the past were fishermen, cut *tceben*, and tapped palm wine. There was everything the Nalú needed here. The Nalú needed to live beside the ocean. (04/12/07)

Amélia Frazão-Moreira explains that "in each Nalú village, there can be found individuals related by chains of membership to the founding patrilineage of the village" (2000: 409, translation mine). She goes on to suggest that these village founders were often displaced from elsewhere and regularly passed down stories to their kinsfolk describing the circumstances of the founding of the new village.

[129] "Traditions of the litoral [sic.] Nalu, Landuma, and Baga have them as originating from Futa Jalon. I believe that this must be interpreted as an 'adopted origin.' The motif of migration from Futa Jalon reflects the wish to borrow the historical prestige of the Futa Jalon, first as part of the Susu empire, later as the site of the Muslim Fula revolution" (Bühnen 1994: 39).

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Similar to other cases (See Chagnon's fission-fusion theory among the Yanamamö of South America 1997), it seems that Nalú villages were splitting and new settlements being established as a result of political tension and in an effort to seek out new resources and refuges, not because of population growth. These political tensions included macro-scale upheavals such as the expansion of the Susu, Mali, and Fula states and micro-scale confrontations such as the example given by Frazão-Moreira in which, "According to some, they [Nalú migrants] gave up Caboxanque because one of the settlers had killed a cow which had belonged to the Balantas who lived there. The relationship between the two groups fell apart" (2000: 409, translation mine).

Although political tension was often cited by the Nalú as the impetuous of population displacement throughout their history, it was usually ecological considerations that led to the establishment of new settlements in particular areas. As described above, it was the existence of good fishing grounds and abundant oil palm trees that determined site selection. Because the Nalú were the first inhabitants of Quitáfine, they are recognized as the *dona di tcon* (owners of the land). "The accounts of migration in the origins of these people appear as accounts which legitimate their territorial occupation and the assertion of political hegemony, carried out primarily through the identification of the regional toponyms derived from their language" (Frazão-Moreira 2000: 412). These toponyms, however, not only help the Nalú claim and re-claim their territorial hegemony; they also often help express the reason for settlement in a particular locale in the first place. Edda Fields expresses this point in relation to rice cultivation when she summarizes,

> Yet, the origins of the "Baga", Nalu, and Landuma as political and cultural identities began on the coast and in the mangroves where rice eaters and rice growers from both linguistic sub-groups began exploiting a difficult and unfriendly ecological niche on the periphery of the Fuuta Jaloo [Futa Jalon]

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> mountains and interacting with other West Atlantic speech communities and the powerful Fuuta Jaloo [Futa Jalon] state. (1999: 105)

I believe, at least for the earliest Nalú of Quitáfine, that the African oil palm in conjunction with fish was the impetus for deciding to populate the region. Similar to the Balanta migrants of the twentieth century, once an ideal location was found, these settlers would call on their friends and family to help colonize it. The riverine region of southern Guinea-Bissau offered the Nalú ancestors a protected refuge and exploitable environment on the periphery of West African political upheavals of the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries.

The history of the village of Caunepo illustrates this settlement pattern well.

> The village of Caunepo was established before World War I by a Nalú man called Samodú that came from old Cassaca. Samodú was a tapper of palm wine and sought out a good place to make a living. He discovered that the palms of this place known locally as Caunepo gave a lot of wine. The Nalú word 'caunepo' means 'wine that drips to the side'. Later Ansumane Baraca Kamara, a Susu trader, came to collect local products such as coconuts, gum, etc. He negotiated a deal and joined Samodú in order to develop agricultural activities (production of rice and fruit plantations). Later in 1902, a request was made for land in Caunepo for an elder of Cambeque named Fumpor. Fumpor constructed a house for him and his family there. Later people of different ethnic groups arrived (Susu, Nalú, Beafada, Manjaco, Landuma, Papel and Djacanca) and settled together forming the current village of Caunepo that has 50 families and about five hundred inhabitants. (PRODEC 2000: 3)

Local histories such as this are important bridges linking the regional ecology and the Nalú cultural identity and claims to territorial hegemony.

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PALM AND PEOPLE

Male and female work was often separate among the Nalú in ancient times.[130] For example, males were responsible for adjudicating over a calabash of palm wine in the Mbara while the women were at home raising children and making palm oil or *bonto* sauce for the evening meal. Gender divisions of labor are still observable in Kassumba today. In this section, I discuss gender differences[131] in palm production.

Nevertheless, an interesting aside is the fact that Nalú boys and girls are currently being educated at similar rates in Kassumba. Of the 134 Nalú (66 males, 68 females) residing there, 63 (31 males, 32 females) currently classify themselves as "student" when asked about their profession. This means that forty-seven percent of the Nalú population considers themselves to be students. However, seventy-three percent of Nalú males in Kassumba classify themselves as literate (i.e., able to read and write a simple phrase) while only forty-nine percent of Nalú women consider themselves literate. This can be compared to an overall literacy rate for males of

[130] The Comaroff's suggest, "The differences between male and female 'work' were most apparent perhaps in everyday productive processes, the routine activities that created persons while persons created themselves" (1990: 200).

[131] There are a number of observable gender differences among the Nalú of Kassumba. For example, of the ten teachers (six Nalú, four Balanta) currently residing in Kassumba, all of them are males. Of the 17 professions listed by members of Kassumba in the household survey, women defined themselves as (1) domestic, (2) fisherperson, (3) trader/shopkeeper/businessperson, (4) student, (5) spiritual, (6) potter, and (7) hairdresser while men labeled themselves as (1) agriculturalist, (2) fisherperson, (3) trader/shopkeeper/businessperson, (4) military/police, (5) teacher, (6) student, (7) conductor, (8) carpenter, (9) spiritual, (10) development project, (11) mechanic, and (12) construction. Only four of these professions were gender neutral (i.e., selected by both males and females). The survey, however, only considered primary professions and many of the men and women of Kassumba perform a wide variety of tasks and supporting roles that overlap with these gendered classifications. For example, only men labeled themselves as "agriculturalist" while women of Kassumba have been observed planting rice, harvesting cashews and rice, and performing a number of other important agricultural tasks alongside males. Also, if a man classified himself as a teacher, that did not mean that he did not plant rice, own a cashew orchard, or go fishing on a regular basis. A man who defined himself as a fisherman would regularly be observed heading out in a large wooden canoe to set or check his nets, however, women also fish in the rivers and inlets of Kassumba with small nets, smoke and/or salt cure fish, own canoes, and/or sell their catches at the local market. Therefore, both men and women, young and old, have integral parts to play in fishing and other economic activities, although these roles may be viewed as more masculine or feminine by the Nalú themselves.

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Kassumba at fifty-two percent and for females at thirty percent. The overall literacy rate for the residents of Kassumba is forty-one percent. This discrepancy probably means that the equal schooling of males and females among the Nalú of Kassumba is a recent phenomenon and that men are remaining in school longer (in fact, the average is 5 years for males compared to 2 years for females or 4 years for males and 3 years for females when considering only those who currently consider themselves to be students).

Teenage boys and men cut *tceben* fresh fruit bunches from the oil palm trees. Starting at the age of approximately fourteen, boys go out in groups of two or more in search of ripe fruit to harvest. Older males eventually go out cutting unaccompanied by a partner. Ripe trees are found by wandering through the forest looking for ripe fruit scattered on the ground near an oil palm tree. This alerts the climber that the tree may contain fresh fruit. Climbers tend to frequent areas where they have had previous success or where a grove is situated close to the village. Longer excursions are avoided because of the weight and awkwardness of carrying several fresh fruit bunches at once. Males either sell their harvest to women of the village for 50-100 CFA ($.10-$.20) depending on the size of the bunch, or they keep the fruit bunches to extract the red palm oil themselves with the help of their female relatives. In addition, cutting fresh fruit bunches for the daily meal is the responsibility of the husband or eldest son of the household. The husband is considered neglectful if he is not providing *tceben* for his family's meals. Otherwise, women are forced to rely on their sons to gather palm fruit or to purchase it from a neighbor.

The women of my household regularly complained about not having enough palm fruit and were always chiding their male relatives for their lack of initiative. This is the only task in palm oil production that is not performed by women. I often observed strategies used by women

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to get the needed fruit either for the daily meal or to make oil. One strategy was to openly criticize relatives in public. A second was to encourage and pay young cutters to bring back fruit. On one occasion, a village woman had made *kungutu*, a type of sweet made from rice flour, peanut flour, and sugar; she would only agree to trade it for palm fruit bunches.[132] Although not an activity carried out by the Nalú anymore, palm wine tapping was another solely male activity in Kassumba. Today, Balanta males continue to tap palm wine during the dry season.

Women produce palm oil, palm kernel oil, and black soap according to the processes described above. Men aid their kinswomen in the production process by cutting the fruit from the bunch, picking the individual fruit from the clusters, or smashing the fruit into pulp using the large wooden pestle and mortar. Younger males are regularly coerced into aiding in these aspects of production by the women of the household. Girls as young as seven are also recruited to help produce oil. The household women operate as a cooperative, collectively producing for one individual and then another on subsequent days. Although no financial benefits are returned to any except the owner of the fruit bunches, kinswomen are willing to aid one another so that the labor is reciprocated at a later date.

The money earned from palm oil production belongs to the individual who produced it. I witnessed Nalú women using their earnings from palm oil, or the palm oil itself, to purchase goods. As in the Gambia (Madge 1995: 115), earnings from palm oil production in Kassumba were (1) reinvested in economic endeavors such as the purchasing of more palm fruit bunches or second-class fish, (2) used to purchase household necessities such as rice, soap, bouillon, onions,

[132] "Amongst the Balante [Balanta], women also typically engage in the production and sale of *congutu*, a snack made from rice and peanuts" (World Bank 2006: 48).

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candles, etc., (3) utilized to pay school fees, (4) applied to ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, etc., or (5) spent on cloth and clothing.

Palm oil is an important resource in ceremonies and cultural events. For example, Dede's uncle arrived on his motorcycle at the end of April to pick up twenty-five liters of *siti* to take back with him to Cacine. Fatu had received a cash advance to produce seventy-five liters for Dede's uncle. She filled the order with the help of the other females of her household including her junior wife, mother-in-law, mother, adopted children, cousins, and daughters by distributing the money to them for their contributions. At the wedding in Cacine on May 4, 2007, the bride (*noiba*) was presented with ingredients for her first meal (*bianda*) (chickens, palm oil, rice, tomato paste, bouillon) by the female members of the groom's household. She was also given a number of other items as part of her bridewealth from her husband's male relatives including a needle, cloth, and money.

In August when Maria was set to leave for Mamadou's house as his new bride, it was the responsibility of her family to cook *bianda di txoro* (crying food; *cama wa búndi* in Susu), which is the bride's traditional last meal traditionally containing a protein, rice, and palm oil. Palm also finds its way into marriage ceremonies in other ways as well. For example, I helped make the *basora* (broom) out of palm fronds for Maria's dowry. Generally, this is done by the female relatives of the bride. In addition, as part of Maria's bridewealth, the men of Mamadou's family rebuilt the women's outdoor shower and old cooking *baraka* of her childhood residence with new palm fronds.

Most of the other minor uses of the oil palm tree fall within the men's sphere. For example, house construction is largely a male activity.[133] Male tasks are generally those that are

[133] Women, however, will aid the men by transporting adobe bricks to the construction site from the mud quarry and women will flatten the dirt floors of a house using water and a wooden mallet to harden and level them. Therefore,

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more dangerous or time consuming outside of the household since women are left to raise the children and perform daily household duties such as meal preparation. Men are freer to spend several days cutting roof beams, thatching roofs, and erecting adobe brick walls over several days since the mud needs time to cure. Therefore, it is the Nalú men who are observed making cord from palm leaves to thatch roofs, cutting down oil palm trees and splitting them into beams for roofs, doors, and window frames, and building *baraka*'s, showers, and cooking structures. Women gather the dried leaf stalks for cooking fires or to make fences for small vegetable gardens closer to home. The African oil palm tree is a gender neutral plant utilized in a variety of ways by both sexes for cultural, social, economic, and spiritual purposes.

PALM AND PRAYER

The African oil palm has a special role to play in Nalú traditional religion. This sacred space or sacred forest is generally referred to as the *baloba*. The Nalú of Kassumba call their *baloba* the *kasunkal*, which is the name of the sacred forest where it is located, or more specifically, the name of the *irán* that resides in that sacred forest. In his dictionary of the Krioulu language of Guinea-Bissau, Luigi Scantamburlo defines a *baloba* as,

> A sacred space where ethnic groups practice their cults of traditional African religion: the space is made up of a hut with a single room containing family or village religious symbols. – In the *baloba*, women will sit on one side of the *baloba*, men will sit on the other side. (2003: 102, translation mine)

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we cannot say that it is the more labor intensive or heavier tasks that are performed by Nalú men. I have witnessed Nalú women carrying as many as three mud bricks atop of their heads for more than a half mile, which is equivalent to the capabilities of any man. In addition, making *tera batidu* (beaten earth floors) is extremely labor intensive, taking several days to complete an entire house.

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Although the *baloba* has two sacred spaces, one for men and one for women, it is the women of Kassumba Nalú that remain much more active in maintaining their traditional religion. Many of the men who regularly pray at the local mosque refuse to attend ceremonies at the *baloba*.

Kasunkal remains a particularly well known and powerful sight of Nalú traditional religion. The Nalú are still regarded as one of the most adept practitioners of African traditional religion, second only to the Bijagos in Guinea-Bissau. People arrive at the *kasunkal* from throughout the state, region, and world with a variety of requests for the powerful spirits that reside there.

The *baloba* of Kassumba has shifted locations throughout the centuries as a matter of necessity since the coast of the Cacine River continues to erode the shore. Today, the *baloba* is protected by palms that are forbidden to be harvested. There are two main access points, either along the beach, or, during high tide, through a small path worn along the back of the *kasunkal*. Upon arrival at the *baloba*, everyone removes their shoes and is then divided into three areas according to sex and residency status. Males go to the left side, women to the right, and *ospri* (visitors or foreigners) go to a special waiting area on the women's side. The women's part of this sacred space has a number of worn wooden benches made from discarded pieces of canoe, several calabashes and plastic offering containers, a separate area for cooking, and a gated enclosure at the foot of an oil palm tree containing three large clay pots with medicinal water inside. Like in many other places on the coast such as among the Diola (Journet 1987, 1993), only a fully-initiated female member of the *baloba* is allowed inside this locale unless an *ospri* is invited inside by the religious specialist to bath with the sacred water, which occurs when a woman is trying to get pregnant. Otherwise, the *ospri* making a request is bathed from outside

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the sacred corral, only being allowed to touch the wooden stakes outlining it. Bathing on the women's side of the sacred space, however, is actually the last step when attending the *baloba.*

First, *ospri* wait for the senior female of the *baloba* to become possessed by the *irán* residing there. This spirit then listens to each *ospri*'s request through its oracle and a translator selected from among the *fidju di tera*. Afterward, the *ospri*, one by one, are led to the men's side, accompanied by a local sponsor. It is here that the palm plays its most significant role.

The men's side of the *balaba* has two items of note. First, the clearing contains a hut with a small table and a number of natural objects such as shells containing more of the sacred water. Sitting on the table shrouded in cloth are three "stones" (*pedra*) or wooden carvings housing the *irán* of the three families of Kassumba. Beside this hut is a large bundle of palm branches reaching over six feet in height. When an *ospri* enters the male side of the *baloba*, he or she is asked to speak all of his/her desires into a new palm branch so that the *irán* can hear what is being requested. Once these wishes have been clearly spoken to the palm, it is added to the bundle of other requests made throughout the year. These palm branches serve an important function in the *baloba* acting as conduits to gain access to the supernatural. The Nalú can directly communicate with their family spirits; however, outsiders need the aid of their natural surroundings and the *fidju di tera*.

If and when a need is satisfied through the aid of the spirits in the *baloba*, it is the responsibility of the *ospri* to show their thanks and respect to the spirits by providing an offering, the size of which is in proportion to the wealth of the supplicant and the size of the request. This offering usually consists of an animal sacrifice and meal, of which palm oil is a main ingredient. If this offering is not forthcoming within a year of being granted a request, the *ospri* is in danger of retaliation by the *irán.*

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When I attended the *baloba* in July, an offering of chicken, rice and oil was being prepared since an *ospri* had conceived. On that same day, the medicine was replaced inside the clay pots by putting new bark inside them and removing the old. A car with three women also arrived in Kassumba that day from the capital city of Bissau. One wanted to get pregnant; another wanted her husband to return from abroad. On a separate occasion in September, more than fifteen *ospri* including two men from Senegal and a mother and daughter from Bissau were in attendance. The men asked the spirits to help find them work while the daughter was having mental problems.

Besides foodstuffs, payment and offerings made at the *baloba* included alcohol, tobacco, and money. The use of alcohol and tobacco are holdovers from before the Nalú converted to Islam. These types of offerings, however, are still readily accepted there. Many of the Nalú compartmentalize their religious practices at the *baloba* and the mosque, with each religious practice fulfilling separate religious functions. Even the most fundamentalist Muslims among the Nalú recognize the importance of the *baloba* and respect its practitioners. Palm wine is still an acceptable offering at the *baloba* although more abundant cashew wine and *cana* (distilled cashew wine), or foreign liquors such as Pastis from Guinea Conakry or sugar-cane rum from Cape Verde are more often used today.

CONCLUSION

Working within Nalú socio-economic categories, this chapter explored the role of the African oil palm tree in Nalú history and contemporary practices and worldviews. Drawing on months of fieldwork, I addressed how an indigenous plant can be shown to symbolize a people,

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their life and their death. The Nalú fashion a wide array of cultural, religious, and functional artifacts from the palm's leaves and trunk. They produce palm oil from the flesh of the fruit for both domestic consumption and regional distribution. In addition, the Nalú fabricate soaps and cooking oils from the kernel at the fruit's core, represent the palm in claims to territorial hegemony and local history, assign gender roles according to palm related activities, and rely on the plant for economic security.

This chapter illustrates how cultural identity is fashioned through the ethnoeconomics of the palm plant. This study also helps to revise the theoretical debate concerning rural livelihood and issues of development. Ethnoeconomic studies such as this one contribute to the empathetic potential for development programs and agencies emerging from ethnographic and participatory methodologies when considering rural African needs and livelihoods. The Nalú are divided by national borders; their language is disappearing; their religious traditions are being replaced; and their patrimonial lands are taking on Balanta migrants at an alarming rate. And yet, the Nalú of Kassumba continue to represent themselves as both unified and unique by re-enacting the continuity of palm production as a tradition, commodity, and form of control in an ever changing environment.

Scholars have recognized that an important aspect of rural African society is the "dynamic flexibility of household livelihood strategies" (Madge 1995: 109; See also, Richards 1992). One must be careful, however, when describing these explicit or implicit strategies of rural societies as "development." These ways of life represent household security, not necessarily economic growth or progress. The level of reliance on diverse household strategies fluctuates according to both seasonal and long-term shifts in food supplies, cultural requirements, and local, regional, and global socio-economic conditions. Therefore, in order to carry out

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effective needs assessment, livelihood must be examined from two separate positionalities: on the ground in real time through ethnographic methodologies and over time through the historic records and oral histories. It is this intersection between ethnoeconomics and the larger political economy where true contributions and innovations in social welfare can be located.

I have found the use of the African oil palm tree throughout the written record and the contemporary socio-economic practices in Guinea-Bissau. I suggest that palm production is an area in need of further consideration by outside investors to improve the economic security of the population under study. Many impediments to increasing palm production, however, must be overcome before these investments will prove effective.

First, without infrastructural improvements in Guinea-Bissau, the isolated communities of the south will continue to aim for self-sufficiency instead of increasing production for export.[134] Second, the reluctance to plant and harvest higher-yielding hybrid forms of the oil palm is a difficult obstacle for the Nalú, one that cannot be remedied overnight. The indigenous variety is thought to taste better, make higher quality oil, and does not need pre-production investments of labor for planting, weeding, and pruning. More importantly, the year-round availability of the indigenous oil palm has been, and continues to be, an important part of the Nalú's short- and long-term economic security strategy. We have seen that in times of uncertainty and need, the Nalú rely on their land and natural environment to provide a wide array of necessities. Therefore, an immediate shift to plantation-style palm oil production is unlikely to succeed in the near future.

[134] According to the World Bank, "Given the poor road and transport conditions in the South, however, households and communities have a hard time marketing and selling their produce. . . Unable to access markets, the communities are rarely compensated well for their produce. The constraints in accessing markets, and transforming and conserving their products, lead each year . . . to the rotting and wastage of tons of products, particularly fruits and horticultural produce. Due to the geographical isolation, especially of these communities, many of the households aim for agricultural self-sufficiency" (2006: 48). One possible solution is water transport of goods, however, Guinea-Bissau is currenly lacking adequate ports, ships, and other necessary infrastructure although plans for a large port in Buba are being developed.

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Several transnational organizations have begun to document the social and environmental impacts of developing oil palm plantations (Brown and Jacobson 2005; World Rainforest Movement 2001). These include, (1) the appropriation of large areas of land from indigenous peasant populations, (2) deforestation, (3) decreased biodiversity, (4) pollution of fresh water supplies and diminished health of local populations from pesticide use, (5) soil erosion and decreased fish supply, (6) long-term investment as a tree crop, which means that the supply will remain relatively stable since the growers must continue to harvest the fruits even during periods of depressed prices, (7) competitive pricing internationally due to competition with other subsidized oils, and (8) Western nations price control with little or no input from the producers in developing nations (World Rainforest Movement 2001: 10-12).

The reasons for expanding palm production are persuasive as well such as, (1) continually expanding northern markets for oil,[135] (2) high exportability, which leads to an increase in foreign exchange for oil producing countries, and (3) high levels of external investment available to expand oil production in developing nations from the World Bank, IMF, and UNDP (World Rainforest Movement 2001: 11-12). Therefore, small-scale producers of red palm oil such as the Nalú must consider these arguments carefully. As we will see in Chapter Five on cashew production, Guinea-Bissau has already felt the effects of global pressures on an agricultural monocrop with disastrous results.

I propose that the solution to Nalú economic advancement is already present in their current lifestyle and livelihood. When considering their needs, wants, short-, and long-term household strategies, small-scale palm oil processing seems to be the appropriate investment opportunity. I agree with Poku who stated in his 2002 report to the Food and Agriculture

[135] "Palm oil is the world's best-selling vegetable oil, representing 40 per cent of the total global trade in edible oils" (World Rainforest Movement 2001: 11).

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Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that, "Small-scale agro-processing seems to hold the key to rural poverty reduction and the prolific oil palm tree provides the best raw material for starting rural industries" (2). I contend that a continued reliance on forest collecting or small-scale farming (less than 10 hectares of land) will not disrupt the current indigenous land management strategies and ownership practices of the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba.

It is during fruit digestion and mash pressing that investment at the community level could affect positive improvements. I strongly suggest that through the purchase of a communal spindle press, production time will be saved, oil yields will improve, and labor investment will decrease. Communal production strategies are already the norm in Nalú society. At the household levels, fifty-gallon metal drums could aid in producing larger batch sizes, improved fruit boiling, and faster oil purification although fuel needs would slightly increase as well. On numerous occasions, the women of Kassumba Nalú prayed for a drum to wash up on shore; those that were available in the neighborhood were traded back and forth between households. The resulting increase in red palm oil would be consumed locally and traded regionally with no impact on the current price schemes. Also, by relying on indigenous plants, the seasonality of the oil is already minimized.

At the same time, investments in palm kernel oil factories at the inter-village level could aid in the production of oil from the palm kernels.[136] Household producers could save some of their palm kernels for local production and consumption as black soap and cooking oils while transporting others to the palm kernel factories where they could sell the raw kernels to the

[136] "The stages in this process comprise grinding the kernels into small particles, heating (cooking), and extracting the oil using an oilseed expeller or petroleum-derived solvent. The oil then requires clarification in a filter press or by sedimentation. Extraction is a well-established industry, with large numbers of international manufacturers able to offer equipment that can process from 10 kg to several tonnes per hour" (Poku 2002: 9).

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factories to produce exportable clarified oils.[137] In conclusion, relatively small investments could increase the already high value placed on the African oil palm by the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba. Bottom-up considerations such as the one presented in this chapter illustrates how a scalpel should be used where historically a sledgehammer has been wielded by development agencies.

[137] Environmental impact would be negligible in this type of production strategy. For example, the dried bunches could be used as fuel or discarded as agricultural mulch to enhance moisture retention and organic matter in the soil. Palm kernel shells could also be used as a source of fuel when burnt or as gravel on roads. The ash could then be recycled as a fertilizer or cleaning agent by making potash soap from combining it with oil (Poku 2002: 44).

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Chapter Five

PLAYING THE MARKET: THE CASHEW HARVEST

Development experts have suggested that structural adjustment and market liberalization policies in Africa have led to high levels of uncertainty and risk for agricultural-based modes of livelihoods often leading to "deagrarianization"[138] (Bryceson 2002; Dias 1996; Eapen, et al. 2003; Ferguson 2006: 11; Galli 1990; Kanji, et al. 2004; Poulton 1998; Vijfhuizen, Artur, et al. 2003; Vijfhuizen, Braga, et al. 2003). Although the shortsightedness of these development policies in Africa have been demonstrated time and again (Duarte 1996; Hanlon 2000, 2001; McMillan, Rodrik, & Welch 2002; Rudebeck 1990; Soludo 1999), policy-makers continue to blame these setbacks on corrupt officials, weak governance, political instability, outside circumstances, and lack of resources on the African continent (Creppy & Wodon 2006; Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2006; Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000, 2005; IMF 2008; World Bank 2006). In order to negotiate both long-term and immediate economic insecurities, rural populations continue to rely on the diversification of subsistence and income sources as a "safety net" (Forest 1998: 8-10; See also, Ellis 1998, 2000; Madge 1995). Recognizing this trend toward diversification, Deborah Bryceson concludes that rural populations are involved in a dangerous game of "occupational experimentation" in which "the uncertainty and wasted energy embedded in trial-and-error, income-earning efforts could be alleviated with a more directional policy approach taking account of rural producers' pressing current aims and long-term occupational

[138] "Deagrarianization is defined as a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income-earning reorientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood" (Bryceson 2002: 726; See also, Bryceson 1996).

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futures" (2002: 725, 726). This argument, however, has several pitfalls that need to be addressed.

First, it has been documented time and again that household[139] livelihood strategies, whether implicitly or explicitly selected, are not chosen through haphazard experimentation, but rather, they are fashioned according to a complex set of socio-economic negotiations over time and space (Bennett 1962; Deaton 1999; Ellis 1998, 2000; Madge 1995; Swantz 1998). Second, the reorientation of rural livelihoods by diversifying survival strategies does not automatically imply a shift toward wage labor, occupational experimentation, or deagrarianization. When considering Guinea-Bissau, for example, Joshua Forrest notes,

> Cultivating a diversity of food and cash crops serves as a partial safety net for consumption needs for some peasants, enabling them to purchase food products with money obtained from selling cash crops when they are unable to depend on their own food crops to cover all consumption requirements. This has expanded the consumption alternatives for agriculturalists without their having to rely on the state-controlled system. (1998: 9)

The diversification and reorientation of rural production meets both internal needs and external demands. In fact, this strategy may, in time, promote a kind of re-agrarianization in which domestic populations unearth new niches in a globalizing world economy (Clute 1982; Deaton 1999; Jao 1999), although these issues are much more complicated than this, as I will demonstrate below.

For Horace Campbell and many other critics of development in Africa, "agricultural transformation . . . entails breaking out of the international and regional division of labour which condemns the rural producers to a life of servicing the needs of other economies" (1984: 861). The rural producers cannot simply be given a voice in the re-orientation of their economies; civil

[139] For the purposes of this chapter, a household will be defined as an independent *fugon* (i.e., cooking fire or consumption unit). "A household is usually composed of an adult married man with his wife/wives, and children, who live together in an adobe house with each adult in a separate room. This residential unit can also include foster children, or a grandparent as well as other kin nor friends" (Funk 1988: 23).

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society must promote their own internal growth while still acknowledging the external demands of a global system of great disparity. Through the consideration of cashew[140] production in Guinea-Bissau, in this chapter I analyze the multi-faceted economic milieu of a localized illustration inexorably linked to the national and international political economies (Appadurai 1986; Chalfin 2001: 210; Foster 2002; Steiner 1994). This ethnography explores how rural lives in the small, semi-isolated southern village of Kassumba take into account internal needs, state controls, and global pressures when determining and employing household livelihood strategies.

This chapter is divided into six sections. I explain the characteristics of the cashew and discuss its origins and history in Africa including its large-scale adoption by the rural population of Guinea-Bissau in the introduction. In the second section, I begin to explore the logistics of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau through the analysis of a particular village. Third, I examine the secondary product of alcohol including the implications for cultural identity and abuse. The fourth section considers cashews in relation to the political economy of Guinea-Bissau. In the fifth section, I investigate profit maximization by considering the processing and marketing of cashews. Finally, I conclude by discussing the future of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau including avenues of potential growth and investment.

The Product[141]

The cashew evergreen tree (*Anacardium*[142] *occidentale*; K. *pe di kadju*[143])[144] grows up to fifteen meters (49.2 feet) in both width and height with thick, twisting branches that, without

[140] For comprehensive bibliographies devoted to the cashew, See Grundon (1999) and FAOBIB, keyword "cashew" (http://www4.fao.org/faobib/).

[141] Unless otherwise specified, the material for this section came from Azam-Ali & Judge (2001) and Mitchell & Mori (1987).

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pruning, reach the ground and re-root. The trunk is short and oddly shaped making the tree bushy and sprawling. This flowering plant[145] has been harvested throughout the world for foodways, medicines, industry, and as an economic commodity for more than four-hundred years. The cashew tree was originally cultivated to combat soil erosion since it requires little attention, is resistant to drought, and quickly establishes deep roots in well-drained, sandy soils found throughout the tropics.[146] The tree has an extensive root system, which helps it tolerate a wide range of moisture levels and soil types. Most cashew trees start bearing fruit after two or three years and are considered fully mature by the seventh year. On average, it takes the cashew trees of Guinea-Bissau five years to begin producing edible nuts. The cashew tree can live up to sixty years although most stop producing after about thirty (Lekberg 1996: 8).

Cashew trees have a great deal of variability although only a few varieties have been named. Generally, a distinction is made between those with yellow and those with red cashew apples. Cashew trees are sown by placing a seed directly into the soil at a depth of no more than ten centimeters (3.9 inches). Seeds[147] should be thoroughly dried for a year before being planted

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[142] The Anacardiaceae family of plants also includes the mango and poison ivy. Ten species of *Anacardium* are recognized by Mitchell and Mori (1987: 1).

[143] For the remainder of this chapter, foreign italicized words are given in Krioulu, the Portuguese-African Creole language that developed in both Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, which is the lingua franca of the research sight of Kassumba alongside Susu. The spelling of these words is taken from Scantamburlo (2003).

[144] This plant is also sometimes referred to by the scientific label *Anacardium curatellifolium* A.St.-Hil.

[145] The cashew tree has leathery oval-shaped leaves and reddish flowers that grow in clusters with five thin petals each.

[146] Cashew trees are susceptible to cold damage and grow best in an altitude from sea level to 1,000 meters (3,281 feet) with annual rainfall of 500 millimeters (19.69 inches) to 3,750 millimeters (147.64 inches), although 760 to 1,270 millimeters of rain per year is ideal.

[147] Seeds should be water tested prior to planting. Those that sink should be chosen since they tend to germinate more quickly.

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at the start of the rainy season.[148] Two or three seeds are sown together in a single hole, stem end up, at a slight incline; germination takes fifteen to twenty days. Seedlings should be planted at least ten meters (35.81 feet) apart for optimal growth. In Guinea-Bissau, however, cashew trees are normally planted much closer together, and they are intermixed with other fruit trees such as mango, *cabaceira*, and coconut palms, which reduces their productivity. According to some experts, however, the lower yields are counterbalanced by the number of trees crammed into a single hectare by the small-holder farmers of Guinea-Bissau (Andrighetti et al. 1994; Lekberg 1996: 8).

From the receptacle of the cashew flower, a pear-shaped false fruit (or pseudofruit) known as a cashew apple (*fruto di kadju*) develops, which can be either eaten raw, juiced (*sumu di kadju*), fermented into a wine (*binhu di kadju*), or distilled into a strong rum (*kana*)[149] in Guinea-Bissau. Additionally, the cashew apple is sometimes used to prepare jams and syrups (IRIN 2006b). For example in France, cashew jam was being consumed as early as the 18th century (Ohler 1979: 214).

The cashew apple is rich in vitamin C (262 mg/100 ml of juice).[150] It is approximately two to five inches (5.08-12.7 centimeters) in length and has a smooth, shiny, fragile skin that does not allow for easy transport. Because of this, the cashew apple is generally a local foodstuff

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[148] In Guinea-Bissau, this would be May through July.

[149] "*Kana* is a term used for distilled alcohol from sugar cane, cashew wine, or in rare cases from palm wine. *Kana* is indispensable for offerings and all major ceremonies and parties" (Einarsdóttir 2004: 179).

[150] The cashew apple contains five times more vitamin C than an orange. A glass of cashew apple juice meets an adult's daily vitamin C (30 mg) requirement. It is also rich in sugars and contains large amounts of tannins (35%), calcium, iron, and phosphorous as well as an oily substance (3%). The nutritional information for the fresh cashew apple (per 100 grams) is: (1) Water 84.4-88.7 grams, (2) Protein .101-.162 grams, (3) Fat .05-.5 grams, (4) Carbohydrates 9.08-9.75 grams, (5) Fiber .4-1 grams, (6) Ash .19-.34 grams, (7) Calcium .9-5.4 milligrams, (8) Phosphorus 6.1-21.4 milligrams, (9) Iron .19-.71 milligrams, (10) Carotene .03-.742 milligrams, (11) Thiamine .023-.03 milligrams, (12) Riboflavin .13-.4 milligrams, (13) Niacin .13-.539 milligrams, (14) Ascorbic Acid 146.6-372 milligrams (Morton 1987; For alternative figures, See Mota 1956: 51-59).

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unless processed within two or three hours after harvesting, otherwise it spoils. The pulp is juicy and yellow with a spongy, fibrous texture. It has a sweet and acerbic flavor that can irritate the tongue and throat after eating.[151] It is recommended that the fruit should be picked from the tree by hand to avoid bruising the delicate flesh. In the village of Kassumba in southern Guinea-Bissau, however, cashews are rarely harvested in this way.

The raw cashew nuts (*kastanha di kadju* or *kuku di kadju*)[152] or processed cashew kernels are the main commercial products of the cashew tree although yields of the cashew apples are eight to ten times more than the weight of the raw nuts.[153] The processed cashew kernel loses an additional average of seventy-six percent of the weight of the raw nut (Das 1985: 766).[154] The true fruit of the cashew is actually the external kidney-shaped cashew nut, which is a heavy shell that contains a single seed covered in a skin.

The cashew tree flowers for between two and four months after pollination and then the fruit and pseudofruit mature about three months later. First, the fully-grown, yet unripe, cashew nut (i.e., the drupe) appears at the end of the stem; the stem (i.e., peduncle or receptacle) eventually expands to form the hanging rhomboid-to-ovate apple.[155] The cashew nut is 2.5 to 4 centimeters (.98-1.57 inches) long. The shell is about 5 millimeters (.2 inches) thick with a tough inner (testa) and outer skin. The edible, fragile seed or cashew kernel found within is a

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[151] I tasted my first cashew apple on an old Portuguese plantation on the Cape Verde Islands where it became my favorite fruit. I quickly learned that if you eat too many at once, the acid burns the back of your throat.

[152] Joseph Hanlon defines cashew terminology as follows: "We use raw nuts to mean the unprocessed cashew nuts after harvesting but without further processing (other than drying). We use kernel to mean the cashew nut as eaten by the consumer" (2000: 43). I will use his terminology throughout this chapter.

[153] According to Roy van der Drift, "The nut/fruit ratio is one to nine" (2002: 185).

[154] Of the 76% loss during cashew kernel processing, 20-25% of that is the cashew nut shell liquid (CNSL).

[155] "After fertilization, the pedicel of bisexual flowers enlarges to form a fleshy hypocarp. This combination of hard drupe and accessory hypocarp (cashew apple) constitutes the 'double fruit' of *Anacardium*" (Mitchell & Mori 1987: 13).

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rich source of fat (46%), protein (18%), calcium, phosphorus, and iron. It has a high percentage of polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly, linoleic acid.[156]

The double shell of the raw cashew nut contains a dermatogenic phenolic resin known as urushiol (or cuboidal oil) found in honeycomb-like cavities. Urushiol contains ninety percent anacardic acid and ten percent cardol. The liquid is a skin irritant toxin that is also found in its close relation, poison ivy. This caustic goo is known commercially as cashew nut shell liquid (CNSL). The CNSL content is between twenty and twenty-five percent of the raw nut. CNSL is used as an industrial raw material with more than two-hundred patents for industrial applications including friction particles for brake linings, reinforcing synthetic rubber, and as an ingredient in epoxy coatings for waterproofing and anti-corrosion beginning in the 1930s. As a skin irritant, CNSL has also been used in local medicine throughout the world to treat skin disorders such as corns, eczema, psoriasis, warts, and leprosy.[157] When heated, CNSL produces noxious fumes; during household consumption in Guinea-Bissau, the nuts are burned in their shells over a hot open flame until the CNSL burns away in a thick black smoke making kernel extraction and consumption safe. Once the black and viscous CNSL is removed, the cashew nut shells can be burned to provide heat and energy for further industrial processing. Extracting CNSL for commercial purposes in Guinea-Bissau is currently not practiced even in industrial processing.

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[156] Cashews contain 180 calories per ounce (6 calories per gram), 70 percent of which are from fat. The nutritional information for raw cashew nuts (per 100 grams/3.5 ounces) is: (1) Carbohydrates 30.19 (Sugars 5.91 grams, Dietary fiber 3.3 grams), (2) Fat 43.85 grams, (3) Protein 18.22 grams, (4) Thiamin (Vitamin B1) .42 milligrams (32%), (5) Riboflavin (Vitamin B2) .06 milligrams (4%), (6) Niacin (Vitamin B3) 1.06 milligrams (7%), (7) Pantothenic acid (Vitamin B5) .86 milligrams (17%), (8) Vitamin B6 .42 milligrams (32%), (9) Folate (Vitamin B9) 6%, (10) Vitamin C .5 milligrams (1%), (11) Calcium 37 milligrams (4%), (12) Iron 6.68 milligrams (53%), (13) Magnesium 292 milligrams (79%), (14) Phosphorus 593 milligrams (85%), (15) Potassium 660 milligrams (14%), (16) Zinc 5.78 milligrams (58%) (USDA nutritional database 2008, http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/cgi-bin/list_nut_edit.pl; percentages based on recommended daily allowance [RDA] for adults).

[157] On January 21, 2009, I was told by a Nigerian taxi driver in Atlanta that youths in Nigeria regularly used cashew nut shell liquid to burn tattoos onto their skin. I did not witness similar practices in Guinea-Bissau.

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Origins and History

Domesticated long before the arrival of Europeans, the multipurpose cashew tree is indigenous to the northeast coast of Brazil where it was used by the local populations for food and medicine. The English word "cashew" was derived from the Portuguese name for the fruit of the cashew tree, *caju*. This word in turn was derivative of the indigenous Tupi of Brazil that called the plant *acajú* (Mitchell & Mori 1987). It was first recorded by Europeans in 1558 by a French naturalist monk.[158] Cashew trees were introduced in Mozambique and coastal India by Portuguese and Spanish merchant-explorers beginning in the sixteenth century, where it quickly became a staple of the local populations (Rodrigues 1962: 63). Early European settlers began to cultivate the easily transportable tree crop and, once processed, the kernel was utilized as a source of sustenance on long voyages throughout the world (Meaney-Leckie 1991: 318). Stanley Alpern found that the first sighting of a cashew tree in Africa was in 1682 by Girolamo Merolla da Sorrento in the Congo (1992: 29).

The expansion of European sea trade led to the diffusion of a wide variety of old and new world plant species into Africa although specific evidence is often lacking (DeCorse 1998: 238). By the nineteenth century, the cashew plant had been documented throughout West Africa including Ghana (1690), Gambia (1750), and Nigeria (1826) (Alpern 1992:30). Originally, the tree was intended to combat soil erosion.

[158] A. Thevet, wrote, "The country from Cape St. Augustine to near Naragnon, dividing the territory of the King of Spain from that of Portugal, is far too good to belong to the cannibals as it bears fruit in abundance and roots and vegetables together with great numbers of the tree called 'acajous', which bears fruit as large as your fist and shaped like a goose-egg. Some make from these a beverage, though the fruit itself is scarcely edible, having an unripe flavour. At the base of the fruit hangs a sort of nut, as big as a chestnut and with the shape of a kidney. As to the kernel therein, it is excellent to eat when lightly cooked. The rind is full of oil, very bitter tasting, of which the savages can extract a far greater quantity than we can from any of our nut shells" (Cited in Ohler 1979: 15).

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A global demand for this versatile nut was slow in materializing due to processing difficulties. Small quantities of kernels were first imported into the U.S. in 1905. The 1920s saw the first whisper of worldwide commoditization for the cashew nut. Commercial shipments began from India to the U.S. in 1923 when a load of forty-five tons of cashew kernels arrived infested with weevils (Ohler 1979: 16). By the 1940s and the start of WWII, American industrialization promoted the cultivation of this plant like never before beginning with contracts with the Brazilian government. Research was underway in Brazil by American scientists in an effort to advance the war effort at which time CNSL was discovered.

CNSL was found to be one of the few natural sources of phenol, an alcohol used as a synthesizing agent used to help form a petroleum substitute for ammunition, rubber, and a wide variety of other wartime necessities (Holanda 1971; See also, Meaney-Leckie 1991: 318). By 1945, the partially American-owned company, Brasil Oiticica, was processing CNSL on a large-scale with the roasted cashew kernels as a byproduct. Federal import regulations, however, required the extraction and sale of CNSL to the U.S. before secondary cashew products could be imported. Since the burgeoning producers in India and Mozambique had limited processing capabilities, and the distance between the largest market and these potential suppliers was made even more treacherous due to the war, these industries had limited early success in the cashew trade (Esteves 1961; Meaney-Leckie 1991: 318-319).

Since the 1940s, the international demand for cashew kernels has consistently risen although the U.S. remains the largest importer.[159] Between 2004 and 2005 for example, world

[159] The top six cashew nut (shelled) importers are: (1) United States (114,200 tons valued at $549,078,000), (2) Netherlands (36,180 tons), (3) United Kingdom (21,350 tons), (4) Austria (12,610 tons), (5) Germany (12,390 tons), and (6) Canada (11,000 tons) (FAO 2005).
Note: India (542,610 tons) and Vietnam (14,360 tons) are the two largest importers of raw cashew nuts (with shell). These nuts are not consumed domestically; they are processed and resold on the international market (FAO 2005).

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imports of shelled cashew nuts increased by six percent (FAOSTAT).[160] Cashews continue to be one of the top three edible nuts[161] produced in the world making up almost twenty-seven percent worldwide at 3.1 million tons, 3.1 percent of which came from Guinea-Bissau in 2005 (FAO 2005). In that same year, worldwide trade in cashew nuts exceeded $2.5 billion and demand is steadily increasing. Today, more than thirty-two countries are trying to cash in on this billion dollar global industry.[162]

As the premiere importer of cashew kernels, the U.S. has a profound influence over the world price, which is set in U.S. dollars per pound. The price of W320 grade (320 kernels per pound)[163] in 2007 was trading at between $2.05 and $2.10 f.o.b. (free on board),[164] which is equivalent to between $4.42 and $4.62 per kilogram (Boillereau, et al. 2007: 33). The value-added during processing is quite significant for this luxury food item. For example, prices paid to West African producers for their raw cashew nuts during the 2007 season ranged from $.25 to $.50 per kilogram, while the producers in southern Guinea-Bissau received only $.20 per kilogram due to the failure of cashew policy revisions (Boillereau, et al. 2007: 5).

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[160] Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), http://faostat.fao.org/default.aspx.

[161] A nut is defined as "a hard-shelled dry fruit or seed with a separable rind or shell and interior kernel" (Merriam Webster 2007: 853). The other most popular tree nuts traded internationally include almonds, walnuts, pecans, and pistachios.

[162] The top ten cashew nut (with shell) producing countries are: (1) Vietnam (941,600 tons), (2) Nigeria (636,000 tons), (3) India (573,000 tons), (4) Brazil (236,140 tons), (5) Indonesia (122,000 tons), (6) Philippines (113,071 tons), (7) Ivory Coast (93,970 tons), (8) Tanzania (90,400 tons), (9) Guinea-Bissau (85,200 tons)*, and (10) Mozambique (68,328 tons)** (FAO 2006). Elsewhere, Guinea-Bissau is estimated to have produced 73,400 tons of cashew nuts in 2006 and 94,000 tons of cashews in 2007 (IRIN 2007f). **Mozambique produced 95,000 tons of cashew nuts in 2007 (allAfrica.com 2008).

[163] W320 is the reference grade (and one of three most preferred by roaster/salters) in the international market.

[164] The term "f.o.b." is commonly used when shipping goods, to indicate who pays loading and transportation costs, and/or the point at which the responsibility of the goods transfers from shipper to buyer.

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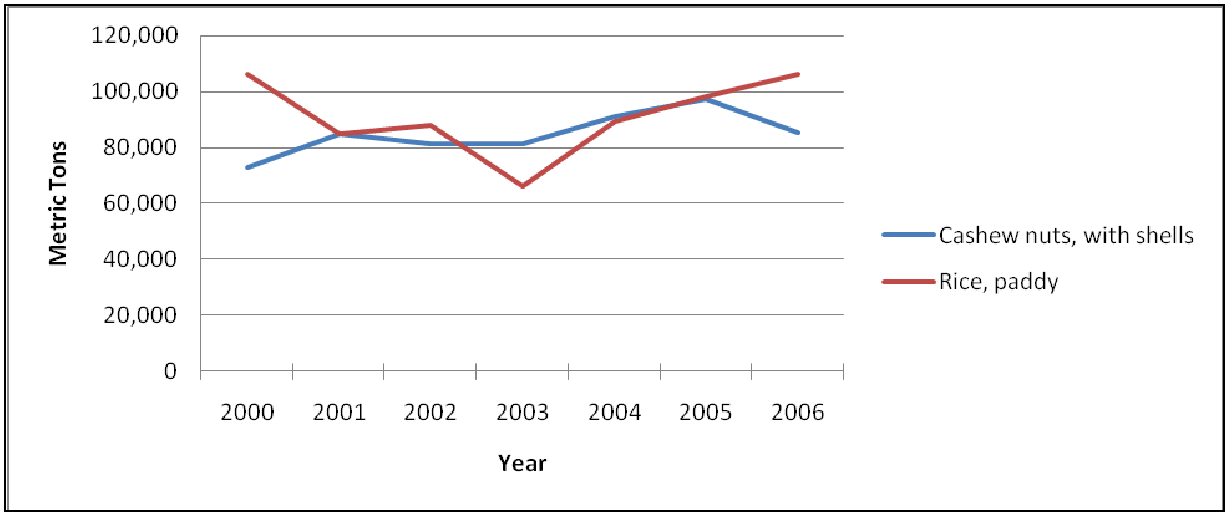
Cashews play a significant role in Guinea-Bissau's economy. In the last five years, this commodity has started to match paddy rice as the largest quantity agricultural crop being produced in the country. As a generator of national revenue, cashews overtook all other exports from Guinea-Bissau including peanuts, fish, and timber by the 1980s. From 1984 to 1994, the production of cashew nuts in the country expanded yearly at an average rate of twenty percent with production consistently increasing every year since.

Figure 10. Production Quantity – Guinea-Bissau

Commodity (Metric Tons)	Year						
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Cashew nuts, with shell	72,725	85,000	81,000	81,000	90,905	97,277	85,200
Rice, paddy	106,081	85,056	87,865	66,424	89,192	98,340	106,000

SOURCE: FAOSTAT (2008).



Raw cashew nuts generate approximately eighty-five to ninety percent of the Guinea-Bissau's export revenues annually, and the quality of their nuts is the best on the African

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continent (Boillereau, et al. 2007: 26; IRIN 2007e). In fact, the American aid project known as Trade and Investment Promotion Support (TIPS), which played a significant role in the development of Guinea-Bissauan cashews in the 1990s, claimed that the country had an ideal environment including soil, climate, and altitude for growing cashews making the yields here higher than in most other countries reaching as much as one ton per hectare of cultivated land (Lekberg 1996: 8; TIPS 1996).

In 2007, Guinea-Bissau sold 96,117 tons of cashews (87,195,875.65 kg) overseas according to a report released by the Guinean Trade Ministry. This was an increase of 2,791 tons (2,531,952.61 kg) or 2.9 percent from 2006, which was actually lower than the projected ten percent due to dismal purchasing prices that led to producer apathy and more localized trading and consumption. As of 2007, almost all of the raw nuts from Guinea-Bissau were being sold to India with more than 250,000 families participating in cashew farming (Macauhub 2008). Guinea-Bissau is one of the largest exporters of unprocessed cashews in the world. Although this plant has probably been present in Guinea-Bissau since the sixteenth century, however, intensive cultivation is a fairly recent phenomenon as a substitute for peanut production beginning in the 1980s.[165]

Cashew cultivation probably began in Guinea-Bissau alongside the rise of the *ponta* system (privatized farms or plantations generally owned by foreigners), which arose in the 1860s due to migrations from the Cape Verde Islands because of severe drought (Galli & Jones 1987: 28; Cited in Funk 1988).[166] These settlers were mainly Cape Verdean born Luso-Africans

[165] "With the demise of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, peanuts and palm kernels became Guinea-Bissau's main exports; by 1950, they accounted for 80 percent of the value and 90 percent of the tonnage of exports. . . During the 1930s, Guinea was providing nearly all the peanuts and rice imported by Portugal from its colonies" (Bigman 1993: 27, 44).

[166] Galli writes, "In general, *ponteiros* were CapeVerdeans who came to Guinea to make their fortune" (1995: 54). George E. Brooks describes the period from c. 1630 – c. 1860 as the dry period in West Africa (2003: 102-121).

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(Brooks 2003: 59-63) since Portuguese Guinea was unsuccessful at attracting Portuguese settlers because, "they thought the climate too hot and unhealthy" (Galli & Jones 1987: 28). Writing in 1936, Major Luís António de Carvalho Viegas, the acting governor of the colony, wrote,

> They arrange for Balantas to clear the land and establish rice fields. They put up a mud house and *plant a few cashews* and mango trees and traffic in rum, tobacco and rice in return for groundnuts and rice at 100% profit. Rarely do they use their land or turn their hand to agriculture. (Galli 1995: 61, italics mine)[167]

As this quote suggests, cashew trees appeared on the *pontas* of Guinea-Bissau for subsistence and decorative purposes, not for commercial export.

The Portuguese eventually established cashew plantations starting on the island of Bolama in the 1940s with a cashew variety from Mozambique (Brooks 1973, 1991). According to the Ministry of Rural Development and Agriculture (MDRA), these plantation owners were utilizing the cashew as a substitute for peanut cultivation in an attempt to rejuvenate their exhausted lands. Before and during the war of independence in Guinea-Bissau, the Portuguese planters began to distribute their cashew nuts as seeds to the indigenous populations; however, the value of this plant was not recognized by the local farmers until much later (Franca 1994; Lekberg 1996: 4).

According to the World Bank, planting cashews in Guinea-Bissau stared as a peripheral economic activity in the 1970s. The first plants sprung up in the northern regions of Oio and Biombo and quickly spread to the rest of the country (2006: 72). "The production was also

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According to Patterson's population statistics, Cape Verde's population decreased by 9% between 1864 and 1867 from 97,009 inhabitants to only 67,517 due to drought, famine, and migration (1988: 297).

[167] Major Luís António de Carvalho Viegas original quote was, "*Construia-se, depois, uma casa em lama, coberta a côlmo, só se diferenciando da palhota indigena pela sua fórma rectangular ; plantavam-se uns cajueiros e mangueiros, enquanto o «balanta» suáva e tresuava no corte do mato e arroteamento dos terrenos, adquirindo ao pseudo-concessionário, já arvorado em comerciante licito ou ilicito, aguardente, tabaco e arroz para seu sustento, que viria a pagar na futura colheita com o ónus de 100 %, bem como o que recebesse para semente : arroz e mancarra*" (1936: 537-538).

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greatly stimulated by the 1976 policy of the 'Armazens do Povo' (literally 'the People's Warehouse') of exchanging unprocessed cashew for rice" (Lekberg 1996: 5). Then beginning in 1983 as part of the implementation of a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP; *Programa de Ajustamento Estrutural – PAE*), the independent state of Guinea-Bissau announced a development plan for the next three years in which increasing cashew nut production was a major initiative (Galli 1987: 27; Monteiro & Monteiro 1996; Nunes 1999: 18).

Laura Bigman documented the local impact of this policy on local foodways and agriculture in her 1993 book, *History and Hunger in West Africa: Food Production and Entitlement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde*. She wrote,

> In 1984, the government offered the commodity of greatest domestic demand in exchange for a promising new export: one kilo of imported Asian rice went for two of cashew nuts. Cashew trees had been introduced by the colonial government in the 1950s, and a small manufactory in Bolama had begun turning out canned juice, bottled soda, and fruit preserves in the 1970s. Following a drop in the world price for peanuts, however, the PAIGC succeeded in making cashew nuts the country's number one earner of foreign exchange, trebling exports between 1979-1989. Suddenly long lines of women appeared carrying calabashes loaded with nuts collected from spontaneous plantings or sometimes stolen from privately owned trees. Private traders also profited by buying rum, watering it down and trading it for cashews which they then exchanged for state rice and smuggled into Senegal. (1993: 115)

Also in the 1980s, the government of Guinea-Bissau was under a lot of pressure to liberalize; by 1987, "the government announced the free market economy and committed itself to promote private sector initiatives" (Nunes 1999: 19). Rosemary Galli followed up on these government policies when she described the contents of a 1987 World Bank report, "which highlights the expansion of cashew production by 'large' farmers in response to government incentives" (1989: 372). She explains,

> Unfortunately, the World Bank report does not give the social origins of these farmers. It would not be surprising to find that a large number were state officials and their families, *not*, however, because of their different psychology, rather

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> because of their privileged access to information about markets as well as to inputs and credit. (372)

Therefore, it seems that in Guinea-Bissau, cashew production for export was stimulated by the national government as a substitute for both subsistence and cash crops affecting *pontas* and the livelihood strategies of small holders. I will discuss the development of these cashew producing *pontas* and small holdings in the following section.

HARVEST TIME

The unification of Guinea-Bissau under the newly independent PAIGC government in 1974 was a priority. The former Portuguese plantations left vacant after independence waxed and waned with the new government's initiatives to nurture both a national development strategy and coalesce a disparate civil society. Many strategies were attempted including giving the land over to indigenous inhabitants, managing land through state-control, and selling off plots to individual ownership; each approach had nominal success. In the following section, I attempt to describe land use strategies in Guinea-Bissau as they relate to cashew cultivation. I begin by discussing the fate of the plantation system and then move on to talk about both the environmental and the social implications of growing cashews in Guinea-Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau has a total area of 36,125 square kilometers (km^2),[168] 28,000 km^2 of which is land (77.5% of the total area) and the remainder of which is water (8,125 km^2) (Smith-Morris & George 2007: 589). Arable land is estimated at 8.31 percent of the country's total with

[168] Búcar Indjai confusingly lists the area of Guinea-Bissau as both 35,525 km^2 (as an aggregate of the regional areas) and as 36,125 km^2. He lists the country's average population density at 23 inhabitants per square kilometer (2002: 71, 82, 85-86).

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permanent crops being cultivated on 1,937.6 km^2 in 2005.[169] The southern region of Tombali where my research took place has an area of 3,136.44 km^2, which is the third smallest of the eight regions dividing the country,[170] even though it is considered the breadbasket of Guinea-Bissau due to the production of agricultural surpluses, especially rice (Indjai 2002: 85-86; IRIN 2007a).[171] Tombali had an estimated population of 97,557 and population density of 116.64 people per square kilometer in 2007, well above the national average of 38.5 people per square kilometer (INEC est. 2007). The research village of Kassumba is situated in the sector of Cacine[172] with an area of 910 km^2 (Dodman & Sa 2005: 9) and an estimated population of 17,301, which gave this locale a population density of 19 people per square kilometer in 2007.[173] Finally, the village of Kassumba is roughly estimated to encompass 7.5 km^2 with a 2007 population of 689 inhabitants, giving the research site a population density of 91.87 people per square kilometer, approximately three times that of the national average. Estimates suggest that as much as eighty-five percent of Guinea-Bissau's population is involved in agriculture out of necessity and opportunity (Indjai 2002: 92).

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[169] These estimates come from the 2008 CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pu.html). According to Nunes, the 1995 planting area was equivalent to 103,000 hectares, 85 percent of which was under cultivation by traditional farmers, which is equivalent to 1,030 km^2 (1999: 42).

[170] These regions are: (1) Gabú (9,149.83 km2), (2) Bafatá (5,980.99 km2), (3) Oio (5,403.31 km2), (4) Cacheu (5,174.86 km2), (5) Quínara (3,138.37 km2), (6) Tombali (3,136.44 km2), (7) Bolama-Bijagós (2,624.34 km2), and (8) Biombo (836.37 km2) as well as the autonomous sector of Bissau (80.49 km2), the capital of the country (Indjai 2002: 85).

[171] Tombali accounts for about 70% of the country's rice production (Smith-Morris & George 2007: 584).

[172] The other three sectors of Tombali are: (1) Catió, (2) Bedanda, and (3) Quebo.

[173] These figures are based on INEC estimates until 2004 and then a growth rate of 2.035% (CIA World Factbook 2008).

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Figure 11. 2007 Population Estimates

Location:	Area (km^2)	Population	Pop. Density (people/km^2)
Guinea-Bissau	36,125	1,389,497	38.5
Region of Tombali	3,136.44	97,557	116.6
Sector of Cacine	910	17,301	19
Village of Kassumba	7.5	689	91.9

SOURCE: INEC (2007); 2007 Household Survey.

Pontas

Some of the arable land under cultivation in Guinea-Bissau has been systematically and professionally farmed, known locally as *pontas*, while the rest of the agricultural production takes place at the community, village, or household levels. Between 1992 and 1993 for example, four-hundred and forty-three registered agricultural entrepreneurs, known as *ponteiros*, worked on *pontas* of five hectares or greater inside the borders of Guinea-Bissau cultivating 7,371.47 hectares (73.71 km^2)[174] of land (3.8% of the total area under cultivation in Guinea-Bissau), 93.8 percent (72.46 km^2) of which was reserved for perennials (mostly cashew trees).

[174] These figures come from Indjai (2002: 92). I use his estimates since they are published in the official journal of Guinea-Bissau's National Research Institute. His numbers, however, do not correspond to the data given in the back of the same issue of Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses, Nova Série no. 5 (Julho 2002: 185-246) for 1992 in which 88 *pontas* are listed as occupying 14,667.83 (Indjai [2002: 110] gives 10,970 hectares) hectares of land. I am assuming that this discrepancy can be explained by suggesting that the remainder of these *pontas* were either too small (i.e., under 5 hectares) or not under cultivation in 1992. Indjai's figures are also different from Nunes (1999: 57-58) who, citing the Ministry of Rural Development and Agriculture (1994), states that "the total area of cashew trees is more than 103,000 hectares filled with cashew, and annual increase is calculated between 15-20% . The national production of raw nuts comes from 37 thousand small traditional village producer's 'tabanka' that represents 90% of total national production. While commercial farmers 'ponteiros' produce only 10% of total production." Nunes gives a total area of 6,458.15 hectares of land producing cashews for 1992 in his "Table 11: The production of cashew nuts by regions (Guinea-Bissau)," which disagrees with his earlier estimate of 103,000 hectares (1999: 58).

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If the optimal distance between cashew trees is ten meters, then these medium- to large-sized *pontas* supported approximately 724.6 trees producing about 6,521.4 kilograms of raw cashew nuts using an average yield of nine kilograms per tree per year. Actual figures, however, show that 1,852 kilograms of cashew nuts were harvested from these *pontas*, averaging only 1.99 kilograms per tree (approximately 930.65 trees), which was only eight percent of the country's total exports in 1992 (Indjai 2002: 92-93).

This example demonstrates that the potential yield was much greater than the actual yield per hectare on these plantations, leaving plenty of room for increasing output. In that same year, it was estimated that there were 36,979 small holders with 3,898,551 cashew trees giving higher average yields of 5.34 kilograms of raw cashew nuts per tree for a total harvest of 20,824,000 kilograms (Indjai 2002: 93).[175] It seems, therefore, that small holders at the community, village, or household levels are maximizing production when compared with the plantations.

By 1996, Roy van der Drift found that of the total area under cultivation (103,000 hectares; 1,030 km^2), twenty-five percent was being used to grow cashews (257.5 km^2) in Guinea-Bissau.[176] Of the total agricultural land, small farmers were utilizing 880 km^2 while *ponteiros* divided up the remaining 150 km^2 for their plantations (2002: 179).

According to Indjai, 1986 saw the greatest number of recorded *pontas* operating in Guinea-Bissau at 352. This may have been the result of new government incentives. Bigman summarizes,

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[175] A final point of confusion before continuing is the fact that Indjai goes on to note regional production of cashew nuts for 2002 in which the total number of *pontas* in Guinea-Bissau producing nuts is 1,091 covering an area of 6,458 hectares. Counted within this total is 76 *pontas* in the southern region of Tombali covering 345 hectares of land. In the very next table, Indjai lists 36,999 small holders with 2,513,151 trees producing 17,824,000 kg of raw cashew nuts on 24,988 hectares. Tombali has 3,012 of these small holders with 143,542 trees providing 741,000 kg of nuts from 920 hectares (2002: 94). Obviously these numbers do not match his figures given elsewhere.

[176] For that same year, 1996, the Government of Guinea-Bissau's Program for National Unity and Development sighted a USAID figure of 1,185.95 km^2 strictly under cashew cultivation (Government of Guinea Bissau 1997: 21).

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> In Bissau, where the government work week was reduced from six to five days, civil servants were encouraged to become weekend ponteiros. New legislation facilitated ponteiro access to loans and import-export opportunities. Those who could did take advantage of the opportunity to arrange land concessions from the state and hired sharecroppers to cultivate bananas or sugar cane for rum production. A number of high-ranking state officials signed up for land concessions in order to qualify for a share in $10 million worth of credits being offered through the state for commercial agriculture. Few of them had experience either in farm management or farming, and, according to a survey conducted in 1988, only some 160 out of 800 ponteiros had their acreage under cultivation, despite the fact that exploitation was a condition of concession. (Bigman 1993: 117; See also, Galli 1990; Handem 1987)

By 1997, just before the armed conflict in Bissau, there were still 129 functioning *pontas* in the country. A year later, when the fighting in the capital city was at its peak, only eight plantations were listed as active although this number has begun to rebound slightly (Indjai 2002: 107-111).

More recently, a comprehensive study of Guinea-Bissau's cashew sector conducted by Jaeger & Smith (2004) found that about five percent (1,750 km^2) of the country's total land area was committed to cashew production with a growth rate of about four percent per year, which is much lower than the twenty percent growth rate of the 1990s. As the fruit trees continue to mature, it has been speculated that exports could exceed 100,000 tons per year by 2010. Small holders make up the core of this agricultural machine with an estimated 90,000 households cultivating plots of less than three hectares. Additionally, *ponteiros* own some 2,200 properties ranging in size from 20 to 3,000 hectares. These have been estimated to cover twenty-seven percent (810 km^2) of the Guinea-Bissau's arable land (Barry Creppy & Wodon 2006: 69).

By 2001, only one *ponta* was listed in the southern region of Tombali, a plantation of three hectares owned by Sado Baldé of S. Sambel in Quebo (Soronda 2002: 245). The sector of Cacine, which had twenty-five *pontas* between 1906 and 2000 totaling 3,280 hectares, had zero by 2001 (Indjai 2002: 106-107). None of the twenty-five now defunct plantations listed for the sector were located in the village of Kassumba. It seems that while the expansion of cashew

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production in Guinea-Bissau was originally promoted by governmental initiatives aimed at the *ponta* system,[177] local producers have incorporated the crop on their agricultural lands due to its biological, cultural, and economic capacities with little continued government stimulus.

Nature

I have already begun to discuss the impetus and roadblocks to cashew plant cultivation in Guinea-Bissau above. I will now continue to explore the reasons why cashew production has been adopted by the smallholders at such an incredible rate including the biological, cultural, and economic implications.

A 1996 study titled "Selection of Superior genotypes of Cashew (*Anacardiun* [sic.] *occidentale* l.) in Guinea-Bissau and Development of in Vitro Techniques for Their Propagation" led by Dr. Raul Sardinha and Ana Bessa of the *Institute de Investigação Científica Tropical* in Portugal found seven strata of cashew trees in Guinea-Bissau grouped according to characteristics of the cashew apples,[178] each tree with different cash crop potential. The researchers noted that current variability between the average lighter nut group (4.0 grams) and the heaviest (8.7 grams) amounted to a 4.7 gram difference, which would greatly affect the

[177] The *ponta* system in Guinea-Bissau has ebbed and flowed with government policies including early Portuguese attempts to woo settlers to the colony and subsequent crackdowns by the colonial government on illegal economic activities operating out of these local plantations. After independence, land was nationalized and privatized *pontas* discouraged. Economic reform of the 1980s again promoted the privatization of agriculture. Ursula Funk writes, "Today, a few *ponta* (private farms) continue to exist and several civil servants have invested in the establishment of new *ponta*. . . Sugar cane, cashew and fruit trees are among the products grown on the *ponta*. At the same time, the expansion of this capitalist farming system has been limited by government monetary and trade policies" (1988: 9; See also, Cabral 1988; Cabral 1979; Hochet 1983; Paulini 1984). Joshua B. Forrest discusses the need for the national government to understand local land tenure and use strategies to make better informed policy decisions (1992: 85-87).

[178] The cashew apple characteristics selected for included: (1) Type of grouping of the nut, (2) Form Branching, (3) Color, (4) Size, (5) Astringency, and (6) Size Consistency.

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potential value since the current market system is designed to pay farmers according to raw nut weight.

The cashew plant is somewhat fickle and extremely variable (Ohler 1979: 85-98). As noted above, it takes the trees approximately five years to begin producing cashew fruit and may only continue to yield fruit for as little as fifteen years.[179] For example, "in Mozambique, trees can produce 25 kilos of nuts one year and nothing the next. This is partly due to the impact of the powdery mildew (*oidium anacardium*), but rainfall, insect infestation, humidity and temperature all affect yields in a variety of ways" (Kanji et al. 2004: 77).

Environmental conditions play a big part in cashew tree health and productivity. The optimal temperature for cashew tree development and fructification is twenty-seven degrees Celsius (80.6 degrees Fahrenheit) with a lower and upper limit of between five and forty-five degrees Celsius (41-113 degrees Fahrenheit). Humidity levels above eighty percent increase disease and pest infestation such as the fungi *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*. In addition, the cashew tree is a *heliophila*, which literally means having a fondness for the sun; it requires between 1,800 and 2,500 hours of sun per year. The cashew plant thrives in well drained, easily rootable soil with a pH level of between 5.6 and 6.5 (Nunes 1999: 32-35; Ohler 1979: 79-84). A variety of propagation techniques have been developed over the centuries throughout the world; however, in Guinea-Bissau most cashew trees are planted from direct seeding (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001; Ohler 1979: 99-125).

Diseases, insects, and animals are a major source of crop loss in all cashew-growing areas. More than twenty diseases and sixty species of insects have been known to attack the

[179] "It is often stated that the tree will not grow more than thirty to forty years, or that its economic life-time is only so long. Yet production of cashew trees has nowhere been recorded for such a long time and such statements cannot be supported by facts. It is obvious that growing conditions will have a considerable influence on the life-span and development of the tree, and consequently also on its economic life-time" (Ohler 1979: 53).

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cashew plant during all stages of development. Pests include fruit flies, weevils, leaf-chewing caterpillars, beetles, aphids, and some mites (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001).[180] They can cause considerable damage to the tree and the crop by bringing about the death of the floral-flushing shoots or the early abortion of young nuts possibly leading to the loss of entire harvests or even trees. To date, no systematic study of environmental risk factors for cashew production in Guinea-Bissau has been undertaken although some anecdotal evidence is available (IRIN 2005, 2006a).[181] The most serious potential threats to the plants in Guinea-Bissau include *Analeptus trifasciata*, *Euproctis ssp.*, and *Colletothrichum gloeosporioides*, which can lead to anthracnose. So far, these pests have been minimal. In fact, for most Guinea-Bissauan farmers, the biggest risks are fire and theft (Lekberg 1996: 1, 9). Considering the environmental parameters of successful cashew cultivation, then, Guinea-Bissau seems to be an ideal fit, demonstrated by both the quantity and quality of the nuts harvested over the last three decades.

Nurture

As the economic potential of cashews was demonstrated throughout the countryside time and again in Guinea-Bissau, the indigenous population adopted this plant like wildfire. Cashews have repeatedly been shown to be an ideal crop for smallholder production (Sahn & Sarris 1994:

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[180] Ohler classified these insects into: (1) borers, (2) girdlers, (3) leaf and flower eaters, (4) leaf and shoot suckers, and (5) attackers of apples and nuts (1979: 157-190).

[181] Barry, Creppy, & Wodon make note of this potential threat to the future success of the cashew sector in Guinea-Bissau when they write, "Another constraint facing the sector is the absence of research and development, and vulgarization activities. Cashew trees are grown naturally without using advanced scientific methods, while in other countries research programs are carried out in order to improve the size of the nuts and their capacity to resist deadly diseases such as the Fungi *Anthracnose* and *Oidium Anacardii*, which have already affected plantations in Mozambique. So far, Guinea-Bissau has been fortunate as these infections have not spread in the country, but risks remain" (2006: 71).

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296). They were identified by a study of the agro-industry in India as a crop that met rigid criteria: (1) drought resistant, (2) easily processed locally, (3) little capital investment, (4) employs a large portion of both the rural and urban labor force, and (5) availability of lucrative market for the end-product (Meaney-Leckie 1991: 317). Beyond its potential as a cash crop, a second study in Mozambique[182] showed that,

> Cashew remains an important crop for household consumption and as such contributes to household nutrition and food security. Ninety-three per cent of the women interviewed said that they processed nuts themselves (at home) for consumption, with only one woman reporting that her husband did the work. Sixty-four per cent of the women process the fruit in some way, making juice and alcohol which may be consumed, sold or given as gifts or payment in kind, for example, for help in their fields. . . The use of cashew at the local level has a role in household food security, provides income and strengthens social relations (in today's terms, it builds social capital). (Kanji et al. 2004: 84).

I documented similar arguments among the smallholders of Kassumba, which I will discuss below.

For many of the reasons cited above, by 1992 in Guinea-Bissau, there were approximately four cashew trees per capita. In my research village of Kassumba, only eleven percent (75/689 people) of the population was not involved in the economics of cashews according to my 2007 household surveys. The remainder of the population participated in the cashew harvest from March through June known locally as the *kampanha di kadju*. During the harvest months, fully ripe cashew apples fell to the ground. In very dry climates such as Guinea-Bissau where the topsoil remains dry overnight the nuts could be left under the trees for several weeks without their quality being affected. The apples, however, would begin to spoil almost immediately. The average yield of nuts from a mature tree is in the range of one to forty-eight

[182] L. H. Gann, also writing about cashews in Mozambique, described them as "a crop particularly useful for people devoid of capital or specialized skills" (1975: 4). A 1996-1997 survey in Mozambique conducted by the Ministry of Planning and Finance found that 26 percent of all rural families owned cashew trees (Hanlon 2000: 30).

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kilograms per year with the average per hectare being seven-hundred to one-thousand kilograms, although harvests outside these limits occurring regularly in part due to the environmental factors discussed above (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001: ch. 2.1; Lekberg 1996: 8).

Harvesting cashews in Guinea-Bissau is sometimes done by "male contract or temporary wage laborers seasonally or on a long-term basis," particularly on the plantations (Funk 1988: 9; See also, Hochet 1983; Paulini 1984). More often, the small holders of Guinea-Bissau reap cashews as a family affair. On April 23, 2007, I harvested cashews for the first time. I noted that,

> After conducting my household survey, I stayed and worked in a small Balanta orchard, which contained about twenty trees. We stood in the shade waiting for the cashew apples to fall to the ground to collect them at the height of their ripeness. We, however, were not alone. Two pigs waited with us. As a saturated fruit dropped from the tree, he and I would sprint off in search of this prize. More often than not, by the time we found the apple, it was in the process of being devoured by a pig.

During the harvest, men, women, and children often went into the orchard twice daily as the ripe fruit fell from the trees.[183] Whether determined by the time of day or action of the tides, the ripe cashews tended to drop twice per day for about one-hour duration. In this way, the fruit was able to be easily gathered before pests or spoilage ruined them. At the same time, nuts would be collected from any of the cashews that had been previously missed, while leaving behind the rotting fruit piled up in the orchard. On April 23, 2007, I described my experiences with the cashew harvest as follows,

> When I arrived at Katunigh to harvest cashews, I immediately realized that there were too few of us to collect all the fallen nuts. The labor party consisted of four adult Balanta women who were processing juice, a family of five Nalú including the husband, wife, and three young daughters, two neighbor boys, Howa from Kassumba who had invited me along, and three elderly Nalú women of Kassumba. Most of the workers were extended family and each had a stake in the

[183] "The entire family participates in the cashew harvest, including the father. . . the harvesting work is mostly done by the women and children, while the clearing of the rice fields is done by the men" (Lekberg 1996: 12-13).

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> orchard. Collecting the cashews was unorganized. We entered with buckets and began to collect the apples and nuts wherever they lay heaviest on the ground. We took the entire cashew if the apple was undamaged. Otherwise, we would twist the nut from the apple, taking it and leaving the rotten apples piled up under the trees. A thick blanket of dried leaves lay on the ground making spotting the fruit quite easy although the missed nuts no longer attached to their pseudofruit were more difficult to spot. Sometimes we had to rake our feet across the leaves to look for the previously missed nuts underneath. Fruit flies and mosquitoes were thick as we wove our way through the maze of low lying branches. After the buckets were full, we returned to the house to separate the nuts from the apples leaving much of the fallen cashews uncollected. The nuts were laid in the sun to dry while the best apples were squeezed for their juice.[184]

It was during this work session that Howa informed me that she personally gathered approximately twenty or thirty kilograms of raw cashew nuts per day from her orchard. She started about a week earlier and kept up at this rate for about another month, which meant that she would gather approximately 950 kilograms in total.[185]

During my stay in Kassumba, I witnessed no planting, clearing, or weeding of cashew trees during the 2007 harvest. The trees of this village were grouped in one of three ways: (1) scattered groves or individual trees located on communal land, (2) small household orchards near residences of often less than one-hundred trees, and (3) in large orchards containing a variety of fruit trees owned and harvested by an extended family (often 100+ trees).

Cashew apples were harvested for juice or immediately consumed by picking the ripe fruit or by collecting it soon after it had fallen from the tree. Otherwise, the apple was left to rot

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[184] Ohler described the harvest in the following similar manner, "The apples are detached from the nuts and thrown away. To trace the nuts easily, the surface under the tree has to be free from weeds. In some places, the whole area under the tree is swept clean of dry leaves as well. . . The quantity which can be harvested per unit of time depends very much on the yield of the trees. . . Per manday a maximum of about 50 kg can be harvested, but in several cases this quantity cannot be attained. . . The above explains that harvesting is a time-consuming and labour-intensive job. However, it is not heavy labour, and this implies that women and children can participate as well. . . If the apples are used for processing, picking from the tree is preferred to reaping. When falling to the ground, especially if there is no weed cover under the tree, the apples may burst and lose a considerable quantity of their juice. Once damaged, the apples may ferment and deteriorate rapidly. The riper the apple, the sweeter it will be, and, therefore, it is recommended to pick the fruit when it is about to fall. At this stage the nut has already been fully grown for a period of about two weeks, and is shrinking" (1979: 191-192).

[185] According to the figures above, this suggests that her orchard is about one hectare in size.

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on the ground. In general, the juicing of fruit was done in the orchard, which eliminated difficulties arising from transporting the fragile fruit, by Balanta women. The apples from the trees that were not protected by fences in Kassumba and the surrounding villages were often accessible to the public for consumption although it was customary to remove the nut and leave it under the tree for the owner to collect. Scattered groves, individual trees, and household orchards were generally cultivated for local consumption with little surplus although during years when the price of cashews was higher, this local food crop could quickly and easily be transformed into a cash crop.

Children were often seen gorging on both stolen cashew apples and nuts throughout the cashew season. No reprimands were observed for this behavior, which I am assuming directly correlates with the low prices paid for raw cashew nuts in 2007 (about $.20 per kilogram). For example, on March 16, I wrote, "I saw ten kids who had gathered twenty cashews. They squeezed them into juice and made cups from leaves." From March through August in Kassumba, I regularly witnessed children roasting (*yasa*) cashew nuts on grated, open metal pans. These were then consumed or shared out to friends and family after extracting the kernels from the burnt outer shells by smashing the nuts with rocks.

The taste for cashews as both a subsistence and cash crop has steadily been on the rise in Guinea-Bissau with annual increase in the production per year listed at between four and twenty percent (Macauhub 2008; Nunes 1999: 62).

Cashew tree cultivation has consistently increased in Guinea-Bissau over the past several decades. In 2008, the government of Guinea-Bissau estimated that 1,800 km^2 of land was given over to cashews, coconut palms, oil palms, mangos, and a variety of other fruit trees

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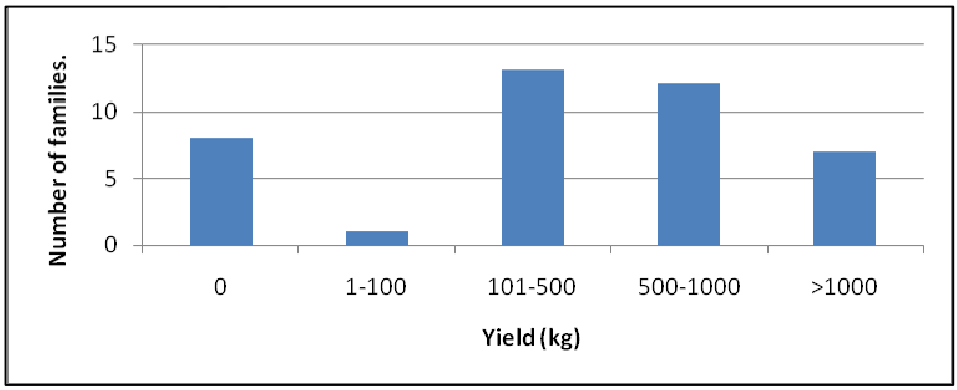
(Government of Guinea-Bissau 2008: 30).[186] This is approximately half of all the available arable land in the country. In the research site of Kassumba, only twenty percent of the households surveyed (8/41) did not harvest any cashews in 2007. The remaining 567 people were responsible for harvesting 33,267 kilograms of raw cashew nuts while 49,968 kilograms were sold for export.[187] This harvest equated to 48 kilograms of raw cashew nuts per person in Kassumba or approximately 3,696 trees if one fully mature tree produced an average of nine kilograms of raw cashew nuts per year.

Figure 12. 2006 Cashew Harvest Estimates of Kassumba



Kassumba residents harvested .038 percent of the total cashews exported from Guinea-Bissau in 2006 (33,267kg/87.2 million kg).[188] In that same year, they made up .05 percent of the country's total population (689/1,389,497 people, INEC est. 2008). They sold .057 percent of

[186] The Macauhub (2008) lists cashew plantations as taking up more than 175,000 hectares (1,750 km^2) in Guinea-Bissau with this area expanding by about 4% per year.

[187] 16,701 kg of cashew nuts were sold above the yearly harvest suggesting holdover from the previous year. The discrepancy between raw nuts harvested and sold is explained by several people saving portions of last year's nuts waiting for a better sale price.

[188] Based on 2008 figures released by the Guinean Trade Ministry (Macauhub 2008).

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Guinea-Bissau's raw cashew nut exports for that same year (49,968 kg/87.2 million kg). This meant that the people of Kassumba harvested raw cashew nuts at an average rate of 48.28 kilograms per person while the national average in 2007 equated to 62.75 kilograms per person. Although they were growing cashews at a high level, Kassumba residents were below the national average. Therefore, I suggest that Kassumba's population relies on this cash crop to a lesser degree than other villages due to alternate economic activities and isolation from population centers where nuts are bought and sold.

Ethnically, there was a difference in cashew production between the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba. The Nalú harvested approximately 54 kilograms of raw cashew nuts per person (7,400 kg/137 people) while the Balanta gathered about 47 kilograms per person (25,867 kg/545 people). The Nalú, therefore, on average produced thirteen percent more cashew nuts than the Balanta suggesting a higher significance in their household economic strategy although these figures were not statistically significant. These ethnic differences are reversed when it comes to the alcoholic byproducts of the cashew apple. I contend that these differences in economic patterns in relation to the cashew are highly suggestive of a niche-based strategy in which these ethnic groups are cooperating to some degree. Anecdotal evidence below backs up these claims.

Figure 13: 2006 Raw Cashew Nut Harvest in Guinea-Bissau

	Raw Cashew Nuts Harvested (kg)	**Population**	**kg/person**
Guinea-Bissau	87,195,875.65	1,389,497	62.75
Kassumba	33,267	689	48.28
-Nalú	7,400	137	54.01
-Balanta	25,867	545	47.46

SOURCE: IMF (2007); INEC (2007); 2007 Household Survey.

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During the 2007 cashew harvest in Guinea-Bissau, many of the cashew apples rotted on the ground or were eaten by cows, pigs, birds, insects, or other animals. According to Ohler, "the cashew apple is generally still of minor economic importance despite its great potential. . . the cashew apple is a valuable source of minerals and vitamins" (1979: 214). Transport, seasonality, capital investment, and marketing are all major stumbling blocks for further development of this byproduct beyond use as a minor local commodity. In Guinea-Bissau, however, the manufacture and sale of cashew juice, *kana*, and cashew wine is on the rise. In 1996, for example, 80,000 tons of cashew wine worth $12 million was produced (Nunes 1999: 42). My estimates show that of the potential 169,137.81 liters of cashew wine from the village of Kassumba in 2006, at least 36.36% (61,498 liters) was utilized as juice, wine, or *kana*. These figures were obtained using the amounts sold in 2006, which means that the actual amount used would increase by factoring in direct consumption, although this data was not collected.[189]

I will discuss alcohol extraction and cultural implications in the following section. It is unlikely, however, that the percentage of the yield will increase significantly over the following years unless further value is added to cashew juice processing. The reason is that the nut can only be harvested once they are fully mature; many of the cashew apples begin to perish in mere hours after coming loose from the tree before it is able to be gathered and transported to processing locations. In fact, in Guinea-Bissau the fruit juice is often immediately extracted right in the cashew orchard and then the pulp is simply discarded.

[189] This is an extremely rough estimate based on the following assumptions: (1) an average nut weight of 6.35 grams (Sardinha & Bessa 1996), (2) a total apple weight of 7.5 times that of the nut, (3) a 68% extraction rate of juice from the apple, (4) an estimate of 1 kg of juice being equivalent to 1 liter, which is actually the conversion rate for water, and (5) that 100 liters of cashew wine makes 15 liters of *kana* (Ohler 1979: 67-78, 214, 216).

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LET'S HAVE A DRINK

Alcohol and Anthropology

Alcohol and anthropology have been bedfellows for quite some time. Anthropologists have considered "alcohol studies" from a variety of angles including drinking rituals and discourse, social geography, identity, economics, health implications, and history (Douglas 1987; Frake 1980; Heath 1987; Hunt & Satterlee 1986; Mandelbaum 1965; Robbins 1973). According to Mandelbaum, alcohol is the most popular and widespread substance in both time and space that is used by humans to "get special body sensations"; it is valued as both a ritual and societal artifact. He continues, "Cultural practices in drinking range from avid immersion to total rejection" (1965: 281). The following section will focus on alcohol use, abuse, and rejection in the research site of Kassumba, focusing on the economic and cultural implications of fermented cashew wine and distilled cashew juice known as *kana*.[190] This section begins with a general introduction to both cashew fermentation and distillation. Next, alcohol use, consumption, and exchange in Guinea-Bissau are discussed. Finally, this section concludes with a report on the pitfalls of alcohol overuse and local strategies utilized to deter this phenomenon.

[190] Wim M. J. van Binsbergen discusses national production and circulation of commodities in Guinea-Bissau including "*canna* (rum, produced mainly in state distilleries in the capital and further to the east); . . . and cashew wine primarily from the Balanta-dominated Bula region north of Bissau" (1984: 18-19). I observed both of these local commodities being manufactured in Kassumba as well, particularly in the months of April, May, and June.

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Fermentation and Distillation

By the turn of the twentieth century, cashew alcohol was already being known. J. H. Holland in his review article of 1912 simply titled, *Alcohol*, explained how the Portuguese promoted the local distillation of spirits from the juicy pedicels of the fruit in order to develop it as a medicinal salve, heavily taxable commodity, and/or spirit particularly in their colonies of Goa, India and Mozambique (116).

The cashew apple can weigh anywhere from fifteen to five-hundred grams. The juice of the apple is high in sugars, about 10.7 percent (7.9% glucose, 2.6% fructose). Cashew apple's physico-chemical characteristics include an average of 67.1 percent juice with an acidity level of .3 percent and pH of 4 (Rao 1979: 161). The juice is almost colorless or pale-yellow. By discarding the skin and pulp during pressing, much of the astringency caused by the high tannin content of the fruit is removed although sometimes the juice continues to irritate the mouth and throat depending on the quality and type of fruit. During industrial processing of the juice in such countries as India and Brazil, the juice is pasteurized by boiling before packaging (Ohler 1979: 214-219). No pasteurization occurs during juice processing in Kassumba.

Fermentation of the juice produces a wine of four to six percent volume alcoholic content after two to ten days if untreated with yeasts or sugar (Andrighetti, et al. 1994: 34-35; Ohler 1979: 217).[191] Estimates from inside Guinea-Bissau suggest, "Every 100 kg of fruits can be turned into 65 liters of juice, and within two days the alcohol content of the fermented juice is 6 percent. Two hundred liters of cashew juice can be distilled into 30-35 liters of *cana* (with 30 percent alcohol content)" (Drift 2002: 185). These estimates are on par with what my

[191] Alcohol in regular beer ranges from about 1 to 10 percent while wine from grapes ranges from 8 to 16.5 percent alcohol content.

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consultants told me, one-hundred liters of distilled cashew wine make fifteen liters of distilled *kana.* Further, about four-thousand liters of juice can be extracted from one hectare dedicated to cashews (Lea 1990; Lekberg 1996: 9).

First, before fermentation and distillation can take place, the juice of the apple must be extracted and strained. This is done according to a variety of techniques throughout the world including the use of screw presses. In southern Guinea-Bissau, juice extraction occurred in the orchard under the shaded canopy of mature cashew trees. Generally, this was a task performed by women (Havik 1995: 31-33). In April 2007 I wrote,

> When I arrived in Katunigh, I helped separate the nut from the apple for several buckets full of fruit. There was a small family made up of a husband, wife, and their three children in the orchard picking up the fallen fruit on the ground. The Islamic Nalú orchard owner (who was female) gave many of the apples to Balanta women of Kassebesse in exchange for their help in harvesting the cashew nuts.[192] Elderly Nalú women of the household, however, were also seen extracting the juice to make wine in the orchards. These women crushed the apples using a large wooden pestle and their bare hands in one of four apparatuses that looked like the front end of a tipped canoe attached to the side of a tree with a hole in the bottom. Once the juice was extracted and strained, they let it sit around in plastic containers for three days so that the juice would ferment into wine from the natural yeasts in the air. After the midday meal, I headed back into the orchard to help the owner collect the fallen fruit for the second time that day. There were numerous cashew, mango, coconut, and calabaçeira trees intermixed. We filled another three large buckets, leaving behind small or rotten apples in piles only taking large apples and all the nuts back to the processing area near the house. Once back, we separated the rest of the nuts from the apples. We then laid the cashew nuts in the sun to let them dry out thoroughly before gathering them into plastic rice sacks. The mosquitoes and fruit flies in the orchard were thick, especially in the shade. I was sent home with two kilograms of *kuku di kadju* and one and a half liters of juice, which I felt was a pretty significant gift worth more than $.70.

[192] "The non-Moslems are more interested in keeping the fruit to make cana and wine to sell than to use it as a payment, since the value of the fruit is higher than for the nuts. The Moslems on the other hand do not have any direct interest in the fruits expect as payment. . . A lot of women that do not own any cashew get an income making wine and cana from the fruits they keep as payment from working on the plantations. The squeezing is done by hand by the women and their children" (Lekberg 1996: 19, 21).

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The Islamization of the Nalú has decreased the importance of alcohol in their cultural practices. However, the use and consumption of alcohol has not been entirely extinguished.

There is currently a gender, generational, religious and ethnic divide among the Nalú of Kassumba when it comes to alcohol consumption. Many belonging to the eldest generation continue to embrace traditional ways of life, particularly among the women. Many elderly Nalú females were observed making wine, drinking, and pouring out libations to the ancestral and nature spirits. On the other hand, Muslim prohibitions on alcohol consumption have deterred a majority of Kassumba Nalú from customs involving alcohol. Many youth who have not as of yet fully embraced the Islamic faith, still partake in alcohol consumption although, it is often done in secrecy beyond the view of elders. I was once told by an adult Nalú male, "I am eighty percent Muslim and twenty percent Christian" referring to the times he liked to drink alcohol and consume pork such as during intense periods of manual labor in the rice-paddies.

Drift, working among the Balanta of Foia in the southern region of Quinará in Guinea-Bissau, observed similar differences between the genders and age groups. He wrote,

> Male elders continued to dominate traditional mangrove rice farming at a village and family level, whereas other economic activities were pursued primarily by youth and women. . . During the period from March to June, most of the women spend their time picking cashew and squeezing the fruits. The massive presence of cashew trees and the wealth of nuts, representing the money and rice they can purchase, and juice for making alcohol are striking to older people in Foia, who contrast the situation with the old days when they used to live on what the forest offered them. (2002: 180, 184-185)

Drift goes on to hypothesize that "the alcohol by-product is a main stimulus for cashew expansion. Alcohol is a product with considerable value in various local societies within Guinea-Bissau" (2002: 180). As he makes clear, one of those societies that rely tremendously on the alcohol byproduct of the cashew are the Balanta.

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The Balanta of Kassumba use alcohol for a wide array of social, ritual, cultural, and economic functions. The following is summarized from my fieldnotes:

> Dry season Sundays are for the youth of Kassumba. Nalú adults usually spend Friday and Saturday attending the mosque in Iraque and vending, haggling, and socializing at the accompanying market (*lumu*). Inter-village, inter-ethnic soccer matches are often scheduled for Sunday afternoons. The evenings are reserved for dancing at the local *diskoteka*. DJ Tchoca, a Balanta from the capital city of Bissau, would prepare his equipment. The six neighborhoods of Kassumba would hear his music blast through the dusk air just before the evening meal announcing the impending dance. At around 11:00 PM, the generator would be pulled to life and the adobe-bricked dance hall twice the size of the neighboring mosque would await its first customers. Dancing usually began early, and admittance was free. After a crowd gathered, everyone was ushered outside by local bouncers and asked to purchasing a 250 XOF ($.50) ticket for re-entry. Generally speaking, the grounds outside the *diskoteka* were divided between Nalú adults sitting on a nearby veranda, while Nalú boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 23 would enter and exit the hall when their favorite tunes were played. Vendors spread their wares at the entrance of the dance to entice the youths into buying candy, cigarettes, batteries, donuts, smoked fish, and a wide variety of other items. What one would not see would be the cashew wine vendors. These women were always Balanta. They would situate themselves in the shadows behind the dance hall. Loitering teens unwilling to purchase entry or needing fresh air after a particularly vigorous dance would stand outside in the glow of the entryway light bulb. Upon closer inspection, one would occasionally see a flicker of light in the dark distance. Balanta women set up their wares on the grounds behind the *diskoteka* often with an infant coddled on their back. They would be surrounded by a group of male Balanta teens. These boys would take turns purchasing one liter bowls filled to overflowing with cashew wine for 100 XOF ($.20) making sure to share with friends and onlookers. This would guarantee the buyer inclusion in the next round of drinking. Occasionally, someone would also be found with a bottle of *kana*, the distilled cashew wine, dividing this spirit between friends and onlookers as well.

Kana is made by boiling cashew wine inside a sealed fifty-gallon drum. A long copper tube runs from the top of the drum eventually coiling through water where the evaporated alcohol is cooled from the gas state back into a liquid. After cooling the *kana* pours from the tube as a clear spirit ready for consumption.

The importance of alcohol for the Balanta of Kassumba is expressed by its incorporation into all major rites of passage, religious ceremonies, and daily routines. Much has already been

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written about the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau's use of alcohol as an economic and ritual mainstay, particularly among the Balanta Brassa[193] of the village of Foia (Drift 1990, 1992, 2002). For example, in preparation for a wedding ceremony, Drift illustrated a Balanta drinking session, which was something I also found myself repeatedly participating in throughout the course of my fieldwork. He writes,

> Selu, a younger man who appears to be the one who brought the *cana*, is appointed to be distributor. Our one and only glass consists of an empty tomato-paste tin. Against our western protocols, Selu is the first to drink, which is called *tira colaude* ("draw out death"), to show that the liquor he offers will not harm anyone. Then, he fills the small tin carefully and, following the hierarchy of age, starts to serve every man in turn. Every time, the tin is carefully presented with the right hand accompanied by some fingers of the left hand, while Selu bows slightly to the older men. The recipient accepts the tin with a serious nod, and purposely spills some drops on the ground "for the ancestors." Another man puts some drops of *cana* on the amulet he is wearing around his neck. The tin is generally emptied in one sip, with a serious expression on the face, followed by a groan and loud spitting on the ground. In spite of the relaxed situation we are in, drinking is a highly serious matter that needs a "strong head." Unlike youth, older people are generally considered to have "strong heads" such that they have a leadership and perhaps even a guardian role in the proceedings of these drinking sessions. . . After the third liter, the conversation is lively. A standard joke is pretending to have had enough to drink. In the end, everyone reaches a consumption level of about one liter per capita, resulting in a condition which the Balanta call *momsida*, literally "full with liquor." (2002: 181-182)

The Balanta who settled in Kassumba do not belong to the Brassa subgroup described by Drift although the customs surrounding alcohol, as I will demonstrate below, are similar in nature. The Kassumba Balanta are from the subgroup Nhacra sometimes referred to as *Balantas manso*

[193] Brassa refers to the Balanta originating in the sectors of Mansoa and Safim. According to Funk, "Following a tradition by the Mandinga who had called them *balonto* which means 'those who refused' implying the Mandinga domination. The people give themselves the names Brassa and Bejáa" (1988: 43). Many Balanta Brassa migrated southward in search of swamp lands suitable for wet rice cultivation often finding employment on the *pontas* (Drift 2000: 158-160). Brassa is the largest subcategory of the Balanta in Guinea-Bissau, and as such, much has been written (Callewaert 2000; Drift 1990; 1992, 2002; Handem 1986; Hawthorne 1998, 2000, 2003). Walter Hawthorne describes the Balanta as divided between six subgroups: "B'nhacra (or Bunge), Baitche (Patch), Kuntoé (B'sofa), Bejaa, Monsoanca, and Bnaga. Early Portuguese observers called the Baitche and Kuntoé *Balanta brabo* [i.e., "brassa"] (wild Balanta) or *Balanta de dentro* (Balanta of the interior). They referred to the B'nhacra as *Balantas manso* (docile Balanta) or *Balanta de fora* (Balanta of the exterior). And they dubbed the Bejaa *Balanta-mané* ("Balanta-Mandinda" or Balanta who resemble Mandinga)" (1998: 59; See also, Handem 1986: 10-19, 241f).

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(docile Balanta) or *Balanta de fora* (Balanta of the exterior or rural areas) (Hawthorne 1998: 59). As previously noted, they came from Nhacra located near the capital city of Bissau in the northwest and found refuge in Kassumba beginning in 1939. Drift suggests that this migratory period was stimulated by the rise of the entrepreneurial *ponteiros* who needed a laborforce to work on the expanding southern plantations (2002: 183). I was told, however, that the earliest Balanta immigrants in Kassumba appeared looking for wine and land to settle with their families since the northern region had become overpopulated leading to a lack of food. The reason for Balanta expansion into the south is probably a combination of these explanations.

My field site base-of-operations was located in the neighborhood of Kassumba Nalú, which bordered many Balanta settlements. Today in fact, the Balanta of Kassumba outnumber the Nalú more than three to one. As described in Chapter Three, cordiality and cooperation between these two ethnic groups was generally observed in the majority of social and economic interactions. Some tension, however, was visible, particularly when alcohol is involved. Historically, the male Balanta initiates would raid the Nalú settlements stealing cattle, crops, and other livestock. Mistrust was prevalent and walls were erected around entire villages. Today, a general suspicion remains along with a newer apprehension resulting from religious differences. For example, during a focus group with more than fifteen female Nalú teens, I was told that they did not like their Balanta neighbors because they were thieves. Additionally the girls were quick to express that they would not marry a Balanta boy because they were not Muslim. Nalú females would never visit a Balanta household alone. When attending Balanta ceremonies, which most of the Nalú of Kassumba did regularly, they would arrive in large groups and leave in a similar fashion. I was repeatedly instructed to never be caught in a Balanta neighborhood after dark because it was dangerous.

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I once described the Balanta of Kassumba as "the rowdy friends in which your mother disapproved." The following anecdote should help express these sentiments. During my stay in Kassumba, I attended many Balanta funerals (*tcur*)[194] for both young and old. The rituals for each were similar although the milieu was profoundly different. The family of the deceased along with the aid of religious specialists would perform their duties as intermediaries between those left behind and the spirits. Once the body was interred, the empty bier in the form of a stretcher with a symbolic representation of the deceased on top would be carried on the heads of entranced bearers (often influenced by the consumption of large amounts of alcohol). The bearers and bier would act as a divination instrument used to gather information by an elder male relative about the cause of death and distribution of the inheritance. The bier, under both the influence of the ancestors and the bearers, would sway to and fro as well as moving forwards and backwards in response to particular questions signaling answers during the examination.

Witchcraft was the only explanation for deaths among the Balanta. Immediate family members were often the first to be accused. Dying young was a great cause for concern. When an elderly person perished, his or her *tcur* was more celebratory. I observed over several nights in mid-July 2007 that:

> The *bombolong*[195] continued to "talk" out its message informing all those within earshot that Caluthé, the oldest Balanta male of Kassumba, had just died. Friends, neighbors, and family members from all corners of the country began to pour into

[194] According to Drift, *oca tchur* is a mourning ceremony for a relatively old person (2002: 195).

[195] The *bombolong* is a pair of large wooden slit-drums used by the Balanta as a form of communication over great distances. Balanta males are taught to translate these messages during the male circumcision initiation known as the *finadu* (or *fô* in Balanta Brassa). Drift explains, "Until now, the *fô* has been considered to be the main ritual in Balanta society. It is organized every eight to nine years at a village level, but certain relatives from outside are also allowed to participate. The initiates are men of approximately thirty to thirty-five years of age, who are circumcised, then isolated for a period of over two months and given numerous lessons and secrets by the older men. After the *fô*, a man is considered a *lante n'dang*, an adult man, and he is allowed to wear the *bareta vermelha*, a red hood, which is proudly used when men are traveling and during important ceremonies. . . This hood was introduced by the Portuguese, and probably traditionally was used by fishermen. Somewhere in history, the Balanta integrated this item into their tradition as a main sign of male adult status. Hoods are still imported from Portugal" (2002: 182, 193, 195).

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> the Nangbwade *morança*[196] bringing alcohol and animals to be shared out. Looking around at the piles of cow and pig carcasses, the *tcur* among the Balanta brought to my mind the *potlatches* of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America in which social capital was built by destroying or giving away large quantities of valuable goods, in this case cattle, pigs, and alcohol.[197] I arrived after the body had already been interred and its substitute was encased on the bier that would later be used to divine the reason for Caluthé's death. In the meantime, I was plied with cashew wine and *kana* as I waited with Paulino who was explaining what I could expect to see next. At the appropriate time, the bearers began their run to the ocean with many of the funeral guests carrying large sticks following just behind stomping in time along the dusty trail. Paulino and I joined the procession only pausing long enough to quench our thirst from the bottom half of a water bottle used as the container for dividing up the liters of *kana* brought along. After half an hour and several miles, we reached an inlet where the statue was bathed and returned to the bier. At the same time, a large calabash was filled with the ocean water for our return trip. The Balanta believed that it was their responsibility to aid their deceased in reaching the land of the dead across the ocean. On the way back to the *morança*, we detoured through the winding trails and neighborhoods of Kassumba including the Nalú village stopping at each household where offerings for the deceased were accepted. These offerings were almost always in the form of alcohol that would be portioned out to the crowd.

In addition to ceremonial usage, "alcohol plays an extremely important role in the maintenance of family relations and community networks" (Drift 2002: 189) among the Balanta.

For example, alcohol was used in offerings to family and household spirits residing within *morانças* in exchange for representation in the supernatural world on behalf of particular

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[196] "A Balanta village generally consists of a number of partilineal family compounds, *morانças*, which can consist of up to ten or even twenty houses. Formally, the male *morança* elder was in charge of most socioeconomic and religious affairs. Rice production was organized on a *morança* level in terms of land distribution, labor mobilization, production and harvest management. The male elders of the *morança* kept the rice in huge clay pots and were in charge of its distribution according to daily consumption needs as well as ritual obligations" (Drift 2002: 183).

[197] "In the Balanta perception of life, it is totally acceptable, even desirable, to ostentatiously display, destroy or consume one's wealth during a mourning ceremony, especially when the deceased in question is an elder. This is in marked distinction from 'normal life,' when it is considered dangerous to reveal your wealth. In this respect, the Balanta are highly egalitarian. A person who has enriched him/herself individually should hide this wealth, otherwise s/he can be forced to share it or may become a victim of witchcraft. The Balanta generally hide their savings or invest them in prestige goods that do not serve as an individual indulgence. This is the case with cattle. There is a heavy taboo on selling cattle. Individual cattle owners pool their cattle at the level of the *morança*, for big mourning ceremonies. . . Bringing family wealth out into the open, for example for a mourning ceremony, is considered to be a *legitimate* demonstration of the *faye*, that is, the labor power of the family. Such displays do not result in jealousy because after the display of family wealth everybody joins in consuming it" (Drift 2002: 188-189).

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individuals and nuclear and extended families. These ancestral spirits would act as protectors for their human families as long they were remembered, respected, and appeased. Both male and female elders communicate with these ancestors. Contracts between the spirits and living family members are personalized with some spirits willing to accept few or intermittent offerings while others are more demanding exacting retribution on their caretakers if unsatisfied with the arrangements.

The Balanta generally provided their ancestor spirits with weekly or yearly offerings consisting of rice, tobacco, palm oil, cashew wine, and *kana*. This was done at a small shrine containing the residence of the ancestor spirit often in the form of an iron object. Of the eighteen households reporting the amounts of cashew wine and *kana* offered to their ancestor spirits in 2007, a total of 426 liters of cashew wine and 300 liters of *kana* were given over. That is an average of 23.67 liters of cashew wine and 16.67 liters of *kana* per household with the largest offering being 400 liters (200 L of wine, 200 L of kana) in a single year by a *morança* consisting of six houses and thirty nine people. In addition to alcohol, this *morança* presented the ancestors with one goat, eight chickens, one fifty kilogram sack of rice, and one bundle of black tobacco from Guinea Conakry.

Additionally, cashew liquor was repeatedly bartered for labor such as for house construction or working in the rice paddies. For example, Mamadú Keita told me that he could hire a Balanta workgroup for his rice fields at a rate of 15,000 XOF per day ($30) depending on the size of the group. This price was negotiable if a certain amount of alcohol was offered as a portion of the payment. On August 8, 2007 I wrote,

> Sulimani and I went in search of cashew wine today. We heard that Bingaté's *morança* received a big shipment from Guinea Conakry to help them pay their workers. When we arrived at his house, there were fourteen *radi* (manual rice plows) propped against his house. They had organized a work group with people

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> from Kasheklang. They said they were planting more than eighteen *latas*, or about five and a half fifty kilogram sacks of uncasked rice, this year. I bought twenty liters of wine for 2,000 XOF ($4), the cost of one beer in many places in the U.S. We all shared the cashew wine on Bingaté's veranda while the workers discussed their upcoming work commitments in their neighbors' fields.

During the household survey, when asked about the cost of constructing their houses, twelve Balanta respondents quoted the price in terms of how much rice and alcohol they distributed to friends and family who helped them build their adobe and thatch structures. These households reported that a total of 805 liters of cashew wine ($161) and 210 liters of *kana* ($210) were purchased, which is equivalent to $371 or $30.92 per household paid out to the laborers in alcohol alone.

Drift estimates the amount of cashew juice available for wine and *kana* production in 1996 by using Kamara and Vayssié's estimate that thirty percent of the fruit is lost and five percent is consumed, which only leaves about sixty-five percent of the total available fruit (1996). Similarly, using my own estimates for cashew nut and cashew apple production in 2007 as a starting point, I calculate that the potential estimated yield for cashew fruit juice in all of Guinea-Bissau was more than 289 million liters, which is a 159 million liter increase (122%) from 1996's estimates of 130 million liters of juice (Drift 2002: 186). However, 1996 raw cashew nut production estimates were 39,916,128.56 kg (Nunes 1999: 42), and estimates for 2006 were 87,195,875.65 kg. This means that raw cashew nut production in Guinea-Bissau has increased over the last eleven years by approximately 118 percent. If we increase the juice production estimates provided by Drift by a similar 118 percent, we are left with a 2007 potential juice yield of between 283.8 million and 289 million liters.

The Balanta of Kassumba were responsible for selling 23,742 liters of cashew wine in 2006 while in that same year they purchased 2,340 additional liters. They also sold 5,659 liters

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of *kana* and bought 8,294 liters. These figures show that while cashew wine was abundant with large quantities available for sale, the same could not be said for *kana*. Based on the large quantities of this processed spirit that were purchased, it seems that there was a *kana* deficit among the Kassumba Balanta in 2006. Approximately $10,407.40 worth of alcohol was sold in Kassumba while $8,762 worth of alcohol was purchased. Therefore, overall, the Balanta of Kassumba sold more alcohol than they purchased, which means that they probably had a surplus. Using the same figures from above, and excluding the 123 Balanta children under five years of age, the remaining 419 Balanta had an estimated 90,721.61 liters of juice available, or 216.52 liters per person.[198] Cashew juice is only viable for one or two days before fermenting. Therefore, it is assumed that a large percentage of the cashew liquid is consumed as liquor. These estimates suggest a high potential for alcohol abuse and alcoholism, the topics that will be taken up in the next section.

The Fomentation of Fermentation

Ohler explains that "by the end of the nineteenth century [in Mozambique] it was suggested [by the Portuguese colonialists] that the cashew area should be reduced because of the abuse of the cashew apple" (1979: 217). In Guinea-Bissau, the negative aspects of alcohol consumption have only recently come to light. In a footnote, Drift lists some of the pitfalls of alcohol and alcohol abuse in Guinea-Bissau including the lack of public policy to regulate consumption, production, and distribution of this drug (Drift 1992); alcoholism and a lack of

[198] These figures are based solely on Balanta raw nut cashew production in Kassumba of 27,367 kg. It excludes the additional juice from Nalú orchards, which could push these estimates even higher. This amount is twice as large as the 100 liters of Coca-Cola consumed per capita in the U.S. in 2007 (http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/ourcompany/ar/percapitaconsumption_north_america.html#united_states).

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treatment facilities (Drift & Mamadú 1997; Drift & Viegas 1997); poor hygiene and potential chemical implications of local production and storage; and links to social deviancy and at-risk youth (Drift 2002: 195). The most alarming issue, however, is the fact that alcohol related problems among the Balanta and other groups of Guinea-Bissau are a fairly recent phenomenon, and the rise of negative consequences related to alcohol abuse are increasing as fast as the expanding cashew sector. Previously, alcohol was tightly controlled by the village elders of Guinea-Bissau as primarily a ritual offering to the ancestors. These alcohols included palm and honey wines, both of which were difficult to gather in large enough quantities or high enough alcohol content to promote abuse.

Drift goes on to identify four main differences between traditional and modern uses of alcohol in Guinea-Bissau. First, the amount and availability of alcohol has increased tremendously at all levels of society in conjunction with the growing cashew sector. Second, local production of cashew wine and *kana* means that alcohol is always available in spite of infrastructural difficulties (i.e., poor roads, lack of industry), economic booms or busts, the availability of work, world market fluctuations, or government policy. Third, women and youths are now involved in alcohol production and exchange, which was a domain previously reserved for male elders. In fact, "It was women and young men, especially migrants or petty traders, who introduced the techniques of fermenting, conserving and distilling cashew wine and liquor that they had gained familiarity with elsewhere" (Drift 2002: 185). Finally, it is no longer off-limits for Balanta youth or women to drink alcohol.

I directly observed all four of these modern usages of alcohol among the Balanta of Kassumba. Alcohol is now readily available throughout the year and is relatively inexpensive. Youth and women both produce and consume alcohol on a regular basis. I witnessed alcoholism

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among men, older women, and teenage boys alike. Particularly at funerals and other ceremonies where large quantities of spirits were easily accessible, I found myself fighting off the advances of drunken people trying to fight with, dance with, or steal from me. As Drift points out, as a dry season activity, the cashew harvest actually overlaps with the Balanta ceremonial season (May – June) so that alcohol is consistently available and abundant as a social lubricant and ritual staple (2002: 187-188). It is not that the offering of alcohol to the local ancestors by the Balanta is a new concept; just the participants, amount, and frequency of alcohol consumption have increased to match the supply.

It is interesting to note that the increased use and abuse of alcohol by the Balanta played a role in the rise of a revitalization movement (Wallace 1956) among the immigrants of Catió, located in the southern region of Tombali. In 1984, a prophetess named N'Tombikte founded a mass movement largely of Balanta women called *Kiyang-yang*[199] (Callewaert 2000). They expressed discontent with Balanta society, particularly the strict control wielded by male elders through contact with the ancestors and as accusers of sorcery and witchcraft. Inger Callewaert summarized the modernizing movement,

> as a certain transition from kinship to elements of individualism, the decrease of the gerontocratic leadership's monopoly in favour of women's and young men's leadership competencies (mainly within the movement but with consequences for daily life as well). (2000: 277)

This movement, similar to the Code of Handsome Lake among the Seneca of the Iroquois people,[200] produced fifteen commandments aimed at directly revising Balanta society. In Drift's

[199] While interviewing the founder of the Kiyang-yang movement, Inger Callewaert was told the designation of the term. She wrote, "Mtombikte told me that during her initial seizure Nhaala gave her the name *Kiyang-yang*, which means 'shadow.' But in the first phase of the persecution, when she was brought to the authorities in Catió, there was a misunderstanding by a police-officer who apprehended the name as the name of the phenomenon. This misunderstood naming circulated all over the country and is still used by everybody referring to the movement, although the adherents prefer to say *kmbi ni Nhaala*, children of Nhaala" (Callewaert 2000: 69).

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analysis of this movement, he notes that it was largely unsuccessful in getting rid of alcohol abuse and household crippling ceremonies such as the funeral potlatches. For example, one of the commandments called for the prohibition of pork and alcohol consumption at funerals (2002: 190), both of which continue to be staples at these ceremonies throughout the country. Women and youth, however, have enhanced their positions in Balanta society, although this advance was probably not the result of the *Kiyang-yang* alone, but rather a side-effect of national liberalization and democratization as well as added control over alcohol production and distribution.

It was strikingly apparent during my research that the increased availability of cashew alcohol has had a fairly recent effect on Kassumba society in negative ways. After my first visit to a Balanta *morança*, I described them as a "rowdy bunch." The five males of the household, a father and four sons, were sitting under a large *polon* tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*) on grass mats (*mampufa*) exchanging cupfuls of *kana* when I arrived. When they finally reached a point of heavy intoxification, they napped or loitered under the tree for the rest of the afternoon. Meanwhile, the women of the household were washing laundry, preparing the midday meal, looking after the children, and making palm oil.

On another occasion in May, my assistant Tchoca and I left Kassumba Nalú to continue conducting household surveys among the Balanta *morانças*. As we walked along the dirt path through the middle of a cashew orchard in search of the next *morança*, we happened upon a

[200] The very first section of the "Great Message" from the Code of Handsome Lake discusses the use of alcohol among the Seneca. It states, "The first word is One'ga? [whiskey or rum]. It seems that you never have known that this word stands for a great and monstrous evil and has reared a high mound of bones. Ga?'nigoêntdon'tha, you lose your minds and one'ga? causes it all. Alas, many are fond of it and are too fond of it. So now all must now say, 'I will use it nevermore. As long as I live, as long as the number of my days is I will never use it again. I now stop.' So must all say when they hear this message. Now the beings, the servants of the Great Ruler, the messengers of him who created us, said this. Furthermore they said that the Creator made one'ga? and gave it to our younger brethren, the white man, as a medicine but they use it for evil for they drink it for other purposes than medicine and drink instead of work and idlers drink one'ga?. No, the Creator did not make it for you" (Parker 1913: Section 1).

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violent attack in which a father was beating his daughter. Tchoca stepped in and calmed the situation. We later learned that this beating had been instigated by a lack of alcohol. The father woke in the morning ready to begin drinking cashew wine anew when he discovered that his cache was missing. His daughter had taken the wine and was in the process of distilling it for sale as *kana* 200 liter metal barrels.[201]

Although it was less likely for the Islamic Nalú of Kassumba to drink alcohol on a regular basis compared to their Balanta counterparts, some abuse was apparent. A particularly serious offense happened just before I arrived in Kassumba. The youngest brother of the Kamara household, Mister, had beaten his wife after a night of heavy drinking. I later learned that the beating started because he suspected that his wife had been unfaithful. She fled the neighborhood and took up residence with her mother in the nearby fishing village of Kadiko. Her three children, however, remained behind in the Kamara household as per custom since they legally belonged to the father and his relatives. I was visiting Kadiko for the first time later that week when I recognized a villager from Kassumba Nalú there as well. He had gone to Kadiko as a representative of Mister and was negotiating the return of Mister's wife. She agreed; several nights later the wife came back to her husband and children. Unfortunately, this was not the end of their troubles stemming from continued infidelities and alcohol consumption. By the time I left Kassumba in October, the wife was again residing with her mother. The husband had sent his eldest son away to be raised in another household (*kriason*) while his daughter and youngest

[201] Einarsdóttir recites similar anecdotes in her ethnographic account among the Papel of the Biombo region. She writes, "Frequently violence is exercised when the perpetrator lacks arguments and tempers are high. Copious consumption of alcohol such as cashew wine, palm wine, or *kana* is a contributing factor. Heavy drinking is a relatively new custom, some say. In the 'old days' there was no *kana*. Segunda [Einarsdóttir's interviewee] remembers when she was a child and her father sent her to buy *kana* in the Portuguese shop. Money was limited so she would only buy half a liter. The shop assistant would wrap the bottle with a cloth and she would try to hide it in her *pano*. Only when inside the house where nobody could observe her would she hand it over to her father. 'In those days we did not know how to boil *kana*,' Segunda says. 'But today with a lot of cashew, everybody drinks. Men drink, women drink, young people drink, and even children sometimes drink. Today everybody knows how to boil *kana*'" (2004: 49).

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son became known as *fidju di morança* (children of the household). The wife's lover had been jailed after being unable to pay a fine for his indiscretions and the wife was not permitted to visit her children any longer. The husband continued to amass debt, drink heavily, and rely on his extended family to provide for him and his children.

The fermentation and distillation of the cashew apple has had both positive and negative implications for the residents of Kassumba. The potential economic and social value of the processed apple actually exceeds that of the cashew nut, especially as a female economic outlet. In fact, the value of the *kana* is twice that of the nuts (Lekberg 1996: 21). At the same time, increased production means increased availability and possible abuse. Explicit and strict rules need to be agreed upon around the processing and consumption of cashew spirits if its full potential is to be realized without undermining the harmony of Kassumba's plural civil society.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

So far, the societal costs of mono-cropping[202] and alcohol abuse have been largely ignored since cashew production is nationally lucrative and, as mentioned above, to date it has been the best crop alternative for a poor, rural-agrarian civil society. As an alternative to labor-intensive rice production, a cashew-rice exchange has materialized in the Guinea-Bissau countryside with buyers literally appearing on the doorsteps of producers. In a minor field study of small cashew producers in Guinea-Bissau, Ylva Lekberg documented,

[202] "In both colonial and postcolonial eras [in Guinea-Bissau], commoditization encouraged a monoculture that threatened large areas of the country with soil erosion (and thus diminishing product). . . Since the mid 1980s, there has been a search for a new export crop. World market prices stimulated the expansion of cashew production in Guinea. However, the fall of world market prices in the late 1980s dampened hope that cashews could become a significant generator of hard currency for the country as a whole" (Galli 1995: 73-74; See also, Government of Guinea-Bissau 1997).

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> The main reason given for planting cashew today is to get access to rice. Many farmers run out of rice at the same time as the cashew harvest begins, and can therefore trade cashew for rice until the next rice harvest. In that sense cashew increases food security. . . because it increases the farmer's purchasing power. . . and decreases his 'food gap', i.e. the time between last year's rice running out, and this year's harvest. . . Farmers plant their rice in June and harvest their cashew in April which implies that they plan the rice field partly based on the previous cashew harvest. What could happen is that the farmers over-estimate the cashew yield the following year and therefore only plant a small rice field. (1996: 1, 17)

This agricultural shift, however, is partially responsible for the fact that thirty-six percent of the country's cereal needs cannot be met by local production (Barry, Creppy, & Wodon 2006: 74-75; IRIN 2006c, 2008).[203]

Based on her anthropological fieldwork conducted between 1993 and 1998 in the Biombo region in Guinea-Bissau, Jónina Einarsdóttir is quick to point out that,

> Women sell the cashew nuts to traders for cash or rice and thereby they have become the de facto providers of rice for the family. Every year, the months August to November are recognized as the famine time in Biombo, because the rice acquired through exchange during the cashew season is finished and the rice in the fields, if there is any, is still not ripe. A couple of months before the cashew fruit is ripe again in April traders begin to offer rice on credit. (2004: 43)

Since Einarsdóttir's fieldwork, the economic situation in Guinea-Bissau has become even more tenuous. The armed conflict between the sitting president and the country's military destroyed much of the country's infrastructure in 1998-1999.[204] Then in 2005, floods ruined as much as eighty-five percent of the country's rice paddies when high tides spilled ocean water over the dikes (IRIN 2006g, 2007a).[205] Then, changes to the 2006 cashew policies in Guinea-Bissau led

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[203] In fact, while local demand is increasing alongside the population in Guinea-Bissau, the 2007 rice harvests were 9 percent less than in 2006 (IRIN 2008).

[204] "Another issue is the fact that transportation costs are relatively high, especially for exports out of the country. The country does not have a railway system, and possesses only 10 percent of paved road for a network o f 4,400 km. The road network in rural areas is generally unpaved and in bad condition. The country has a large river transportation network yet to be developed" (Barry, Creppy, & Wodon 2006: 73).

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to Indian buyers leaving the country (see below). In addition, "global consumption of cashews has declined, especially in the United States where food market analysts say health scares and nut allergies have cut demand" (IRIN 2006g; Lin 2001).

Repayment of the debts accrued by local inhabitants during the "famine time"[206] is now more difficult. Cashews are practically being given away, sometimes at rates of five kilograms of nuts to one kilogram of rice. Some producers who are able to do so are still holding raw nuts from the previous year's harvest. What was once a profitable exchange, two kilograms of imported Asian rice for one kilogram of raw cashew nuts or at least one to one, is no longer the case.[207] In 2006, and again in 2007, raw nuts sold on average for 100 XOF ($.20) per kilogram; this was equivalent to an exchange rate of two and a half kilograms of raw cashew nuts to one kilogram of rice (IRIN 2008).

Pricing

India, with the most processing plants for cashew nuts in the world, was estimated to be running at a deficit until the year 2000 when the Indian growers were finally harvesting enough

[205] "WFP [United Nation's World Food Programme] attributes this [food insecurity] to a number of factors, including destruction of rice paddies by floods in August 2005 followed by low rainfall in September 2005, insect invasions and structural problems in Guinea-Bissau's economy" (IRIN 2006e).

[206] "During the so-called 'lean season' in 2007, from June to August, 43 percent of people in rural areas [of Guinea-Bissau] did not have adequate food, according to WFP [UN World Food Programme], and some 20 percent of the population of 1.6 million received food aid" (IRIN 2008).

[207] "Between 1986 and 1993, the minimum price of cashew was set every year by the government and the traders, and the official barter rate was 3 kg of cashew for 1 kg of rice. After pressure from the farmers association, ANAG (National Association of Guinean Farmers), the barter rate changed to 1:1. Since 1994 the price has been decided by market forces, but ANAG gives recommendations to the farmers about the minimum price. . . In 1992, the farmer's association called ANAG, was initiated by farmers and subsequently promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and USAID. It was formed mainly to defend the economic interests of the farmer and provide training in growing different crops such as citrus, mango, and cashew. In 1993, ANAG studied the farmer's real cost in producing cashew, and consequently began negotiations with the traders and the government about the price paid. This resulted in the change from 3 kg of cashew for every kg of rice to a 1:1 barter rate in 1994" (Lekberg 1996: 5-6).

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cashews to supply their own factories. In the meantime, Indian buyers plied the world looking for cheap raw nuts to be brought back to India for processing. As buyers, India has held a monopoly on the cashew market enabling them to push down the prices paid to wholesalers in countries such as Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau (Hanlon 2001). Several countries have tried a variety of strategies to combat this monopoly such as Mozambique banning the export of unprocessed cashews by allowing the local industry to have first refusal of domestic production and by increasing the export tax (Hanlon 2001).

Guinea-Bissau tried a similar strategy by fixing the price at which farmers could sell their cashews at 350 XOF per kilogram ($.70),[208] denying foreign access to local producers, forcing all shipments of nuts through the port in Bissau, and implementing a hefty export tax of six percent (reduced from 34% since 1989)[209] (Barry, Creppy, & Wodon 2006: 69, 73).[210] This was a price increase of 100 XOF ($.20) from 2005 partially instigated by political pandering to garner votes in the 2006 national elections (IRIN 2007a, 2007b). These strategies, however, profoundly misfired and led to the mass exodus of Indian buyers and wholesalers such as the Singapore-based conglomerate OLAM,[211] the world's largest supplier of raw cashews, leaving almost

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[208] This price was still below the international standards for 2007 (IRIN 2006c). For example, Indian producer were being paid an average estimate of $1.14 per kilogram for raw cashew nuts in 2007 (Cashew Week 2008).

[209] According to Galli, the government of Guinea-Bissau finally adopted a two-year SAP under pressure from the World Bank in an attempt to limit spending and increase revenue. Internal taxes on alcohol and gas were imposed along with a 50% export tax on cashews and an increase in the cost of fishing licenses (1990: 59).

[210] "Olam and other international traders are also hobbled by a recent law that prohibits them from buying directly from the farmers. Many of the local businessmen they must go through are at the same time senior government officials – a practice that presents a serious conflict of interest, experts say" (IRIN 2007b).
"On a regulatory and administrative level, the cost of doing business in the cashew sector also remains relatively high, as documented by Jaeger and Lynn (2004). Instability and weak governance remain major disincentives for the much needed domestic and foreign investments in the sector. This situation is further complicated by changing regulations, unclear and cumbersome administrative requirements for existing and new businesses, and dysfunctional legal enforcement ass [sic.] well as inadequate utilities and seaport systems. In addition, the current export tax on cashew nuts (6 percent) is high relative to other export taxes (typically at 2 percent), thereby having a negative effect on rural incomes" (Barry, Creppy, & Wodon 2006: 69).

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nineteen thousand tons of cashews in Guinea-Bissau to rot in 2006 (IRIN 2006f, 2006g, 2007d, 2007f). In an attempt to remedy these failed policies, Prime Minister Aristides Gomes stepped down and was replaced by N'Dafa Cabi (IRIN 2007c). The sale price for raw cashew nuts was also lowered to 200 XOF ($.40) per kilogram (2007d). This gesture, however, was viewed as too little, too late and the nuts continued be sold for much less.

By 2007, some suggestions were put forward by the non-governmental organization (NGO), *Acção para Desenvolvimento* (Action for Development), which included lowering taxes, allowing overland transport to Senegal,[212] removal of illegal roadside tariffs, closely monitoring world prices, and cutting out the middlemen by allowing the buyers direct access to the cashew farmers (IRIN 2008). These suggestions were the exact opposite of the 2006 failed policies. Additionally, the World Bank reiterated Jeager and Lynn's (2004) suggestions for improving the business environment for the development of the cashew chain in Guinea-Bissau (2006: 83). These included the clarification of taxes and fees associated with doing business in Guinea-Bissau, structural improvements to the port, enforcement of laws in order to protect investments, and a built in flexibility to the cashew procedures to anticipate market fluctuations. The government, however, is slow to revise their stance since the 2006 policies were designed to tightly control the trade making revenue for both the government and especially, its officials.[213]

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[211] "Olam shut down in the middle of last year's season when the government decided that it had to pay an extra US$2.4 million in taxes and confiscated 6,000kg of the cashews it had already bought" (IRIN 2007b).

[212] Although the ability to regulate and tax Guinea-Bissauan cashews leaving West Africa from Senegal is all but impossible, it may prove an effective strategy due to high export costs from the port of Bissau. Barry, Creppy, & Wodon estimate that, "the cost of freight to India (a major importer of Guinea Bissau's cashew nuts for processing) is significantly higher in Guinea-Bissau than in other West African ports. The cost of a 20 feet [sic.] container shipped from Bissau to India was quoted as US$1,400 in June 2004 (rising to US$1,700 by late June) compared with US$600 from Abidjan. The higher costs are in part due to shipping line charges for calling at Bissau port and the absence of competition in Guinea-Bissau's freight market" (2006: 73).

[213] During an interview with an IRIN reporter, Bacar Djassi, the Secretary of State for Food Security, said, "In fact we are doing everything we can to stop the export of cashews through Senegal because we don't have the ability to impose taxes there" (2008). In fact this illegal trade across borders has been going on for decades. Bigman

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Hoping to avoid the disastrous consequences from fixing sale prices in 2006, by the following year the government simply suggested a purchasing price of between 200 and 250 XOF ($.40 - $.50) per kilogram of raw cashew nuts. By early April, rumors were already circulating about what prices the farmers of Kassumba could expect for their raw cashew nuts. Barry, the local trader-in-residence (*komersianti*) of Kassumba heard that the government was close to signing a deal with the Chinese to buy cashews. He was hoping for 200 to 250 XOF per kilogram. As a middleman, Barry would buy up all the raw cashew nuts for sale in Kassumba and the surrounding villages and then transport them to Bissau and resell them. On April 23, 2007, I awoke to hear an announcement go out over the radio; the national government was suggesting a sale price of 300 XOF per kilogram ($.60). Accordingly, people in the southern region hoped to sell their *kastanhu di kuku* to the local middlemen for 250 XOF per kilogram, which was an even exchange with one kilogram of rice. Others thought this announcement was too good to be true although rumors were already buzzing around town that people had sold some of their cashews at the local market of Iraque for 150 XOF, which was 50 XOF more than the going rate in 2006. Two days later, on April 25th, I asked Barry what price he would be willing to buy the raw cashew nuts for. He would not quote me a price because he was not buying any nuts yet since he was still unable to negotiate a contract in Bissau. He did, however, say that he would buy the nuts at 150 XOF here in Kassumba if they were buying them for 250 XOF in Iraque and 300 XOF in Bissau. As a middleman, Barry was mandated by law to pay at

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acknowledges this movement of commodities between states when she writes, "Thus, it was the itinerant merchant or the individual producer who sold rice—or peanuts, palm oil, cashew nuts or hides—illegally in Senegal or the Republic of Guinea in exchange for French African francs (CFA [XOF]). With CFA, one could buy an array of commodities across the border; moreover, producer prices were higher than in Guinea-Bissau. In those areas where Guinean producers were engaged in smuggling or dependent on the djila, people were no more eager to sell export crops such as peanuts and palm oil to the state than they were rice. With fewer exports, the state was unable to raise the foreign exchange with which to acquire commodities to satisfy the needs of the population, which set up a vicious cycle" (1993: 114).

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least 250 XOF per kilogram. Although prices were supposedly enforced by the military, most traders in the semi-isolated locales rarely had to worry about government intervention.

The rumored prices never materialized because no contracts with foreign nations were ever finalized. Some government officials went as far as to suggest that it was the middlemen such as Barry that were the reason cashew farmers were not receiving a good price for their products. For example,

> According to Mr. Badji, ex-Minister of Agriculture (interview of December 14, 2004), Indian firms get to buy cashew at prices well below the world market price. He estimated that producers in the past may have received about 20-30 percent of the full export value of cashew at the farm gate, with 20-25 percent going to intermediaries, and 40-60 percent going to import/export companies. Of this latter figure, Mr. Badji now estimated that the Indian companies received about 70 percent of the import/export companies share, in return for providing financing. To compensate for this, he claimed, the actors towards the lower end of the value chain have become increasingly squeezed, to the detriment - particularly - of the small producers. (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2006: 61)

The government tried to regulate the prices paid to the smallholders as well as tried to keep down the cost of basic goods, however, regulation is proving to be extremely difficult especially in the isolated rural communities in the southern part of the country (IRIN 2006d).

By July of 2007, Kassumba residents could wait no longer to sell their raw cashew nuts. If the rainy season arrived, peoples' entire harvest could be ruined by the moisture. Time and again, I was told by the farmers that they were getting 100 XOF ($.20) per kilogram similar to the year before when the price had fallen out of the market. Frustration abounded. Lamina, a Nalú who owned one of the largest cashew orchards in the area, told me that he traveled all the way to Bissau looking for the best price for his raw cashew nuts. Everywhere offered him the same price, 100 XOF per kilogram. He ended up selling two-thousand kilograms of nuts for a mere $400. If processed, these same nuts could have sold for as much as $9,040 at W320 grade

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in 2007 in the U.S.[214] By October, there were no more pretensions; cashew prices were reported at between 50 and 75 XOF even though the government was recommending a price of 200 XOF. According to the United Nations News Organization, IRIN,

> The cashew harvest this year was good with an estimated 94,000 tonnes of cashew nuts exported to date,[215] which already exceeds last year's exports of 73,400 tonnes. Not only is the international price of cashews down, but the dollar is down against the euro which has further decreased the amount Guinea Bissau's farmers get for their product. The former Portuguese colony's currency is fixed to the euro while the price of cashews is set in dollars. (2007f)

Therefore, not only was the international price of cashews down, but the dollar was down against the euro. The problems facing Guinea-Bissau continue to change. As the tree crops mature, the harvest is increasing yearly. The net profits, however, continue to decrease as the prices paid for raw cashew nuts are decreasing both nationally as a result of poor infrastructure and failed government policies and internationally from new competition and decreased demand by consumers (World Bank 2006: 75) as well as a devalued dollar when compared to the Euro.

Going Rate

In 2004, it was estimated that the export of ninety-three million kilograms of raw cashew nuts generated an inflow of foreign exchange of $65 million (IRIN 2005). This was an average of $.70 (350 XOF) per kilogram. By 2005, FAO calculations listed Guinea-Bissau as producing 81 million kg worth $53.2 million, which equated to a lower rate of $.66 (330 XOF) per kilogram. By 2006 and 2007, the dramatic decrease in the average purchasing price of cashews

[214] This amount was calculated using the average listed above of $4.52 per kilogram for W320 grade cashew nuts sold in the U.S.

[215] An April 2007 IRIN news story reported, "The National Cashew Commission said last year that out of 110,000 tonnes of production last year only 93,000 tonnes were exported" (2007d).

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left Guinea-Bissau reaching out to the international donor community (IMF 2008). It has generally been agreed that the reference price for cashew nuts in 2006 fell to an average of 100 XOF per kilogram. If this is true, then the 77.3 million kilograms of cashews exported in that year only brought in $15.5 million.[216] In 2007, stakeholders generally agreed to pay 200 XOF per kilogram (100 XOF of which made its way into the farmers' hands) (IMF 2007: 31). This means that the estimated 87.2 million kilograms of raw cashew nuts generated approximately $34.9 million for the state.[217]

Figure 14. Raw cashew nut exports from Guinea-Bissau, 2004-2007

Year	Exports (millions kg)	Export earnings (millions $)
2004	93	65
2005	81	53.2
2006	77.3	15.5
2007	87.2	34.9

SOURCE: IRIN (2005); FAO (2005); IMF (2007, 2008); author estimates.

Over these same four years, 2004-2007, the World Bank suggested that the economic situation improved in 2004 in large part to the fifteen percent increase in cashew production over 2003 in Guinea-Bissau. Similarly, 2005 saw a real GDP growth rate of 3.2 percent largely buoyed by cashew exports. By 2006, however, almost half of the 110,000 tons of cashew nuts produced were still unsold by October of that year. Guinea-Bissau's economy modestly

[216] The U.S. Department of State estimates export revenues for cashews at $66 million. For that same year, the IMF estimates $58 million worth of exports from Guinea-Bissau, much of which was raw cashew nuts (27% according to my estimates) (IMF 2008: 23).

[217] The IMF estimated $85 million worth of exports from Guinea-Bissau in 2007, much of which was raw cashew nuts (41% according to my estimates) (IMF 2008: 23).

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recovered in 2007 with an increase of 2.5 percent GDP.[218] According to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) country report for 2008, Guinea-Bissau's preliminary projections for 2007 pointed to real GDP growth of 2.7 percent, which was slightly higher than in 2006 (2007: 30).

In the village of Kassumba, smallholders remembered receiving 200 to 250 XOF per kilogram of raw cashew nuts in 2004 and 2005. By 2006 and 2007, however, they were only getting half that amount. Only 3.5 percent of the total income for Kassumba residents in 2006 came from raw cashew nut sales. By adding in other cashew related products such as cashew wine and *kana* that are primarily sold to local consumers, 6.4 percent of their income came from cashew related products. Although the amount of cashews being harvested is probably increasing on a yearly basis in Kassumba, the recent dramatic decrease in prices paid for a kilogram of cashews has sent the residents of Kassumba looking elsewhere for their livelihood and household income. Luckily, I found that their built-in livelihood flexibility such as fishing, palm oil production, and a return to rice among other things has allowed them to adapt to these severe price fluctuations caused by national and international political, economic, and social changes.

Finally, writing in 2002, Drift stated that cashew was the highest yielding crop in terms of an individual's daily earnings. Based on data he culled from Kamara and Vayssié (1996) and Cornelis (1997), Drift calculated an average daily earning from cashew fruit at 1,956 XOF ($3.91) and cashew nuts at 5,860 XOF ($11.72).[219] He compared these figures to that of rice production in the *bolanha* (rice-paddy) where an average daily income was estimated to be 1,140 XOF ($2.28) (2002: 186).

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[218] This information was obtained from the web: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/GUINEABISEXTN/0,,menuPK:356680~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:356669,00.html on June 30, 2008.

[219] World Bank estimates cashew *ponta* wage labor at about 2,188 XOF per day ($4.38) (2006: 72).

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My calculations for Kassumba in 2007, however, were quite different. If we consider Howa, one of the orchard owners from Kassumba, she was able to average thirty kilograms of cashews per day during peak harvest time (approximately 45 days). At the going rate of 100 XOF per kilogram, that meant that Howa could earn 3,000 XOF ($6) in a single day's work. At the same time, the fruit would net an additional 9,945 XOF ($19.89) if converted into wine and sold for 100 XOF per liter. These estimates are at the upper limit though because over the month or month and a half harvest season, yields from the trees begin and end at lower rates. The figure of thirty kilograms per day was during peak yields. Additionally, wine needs three or more days to ferment and then takes several more days to sell. Personal and familial consumption habits should also be weighted as well as the number of days it takes to sell a particular batch. Therefore, although cashew planting and harvesting appears to be a highly lucrative economic endeavor, the harvest season is short and potential cash earnings spread over the entire year, relatively low. Considered from another perspective, 567 people belonged to cashew producing households, of which fifteen were five years old or younger. Therefore, 552 people harvested 33,267 kilograms over approximately forty-five days. This works out to an average of 1.34 kilograms of cashews per person per day or 134 XOF ($.27). Daily earnings from fruit works out to 552 people producing 110,280.11 liters of cashew wine, or 4.44 liters per person per day (444 XOF/$.89). These are well below Drift's daily estimates, again, reflecting the poor prices paid to small holders in 2007.[220]

Development strategies aimed at rejuvenating the cashew sector throughout Africa are now touting the need for in-house processing of cashew nuts before exporting them to the consumer. Many feel that this strategy is the only recourse in order to add value to the nuts and

[220] These daily figures are also well below TIPS 2006 estimates of $10/day for growing cashews versus $4/day by growing rice (Lekberg 1996: 29).

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sidestep countries such as India who continue to control the market (Dekker 2004). A 2006 World Bank report, however, warned,

> The authorities may decide in the future to promote cashew processing by raising rates in order to discourage raw cashew exports. Although the overall net effect of such policy may be positive in the long run, it is likely to have a disproportionate effect on rural incomes in the short-term (as kernel processing will take years to fully develop). (79)

The report goes on to estimate that a ten percent increase in export taxes would be equivalent to an additional fourteen percent loss on the part of the smallholders because, "The international sales price will not change; rather the buying price from the farmer will be reduced to maintain margins in the chain" (2006: 79). Therefore, advances in processing should be pursued slowly with government and international subsidies designed to prop up the smallholders instead of making them shoulder the cost of industrialization. Cashew nut processing in Guinea-Bissau will be considered in the next section.

ONE FOR YOU, TWO FOR ME

Household Processing and Medicinal Uses

For many generations, India demonstrated to the world that large-scale cashew nut processing could be done in the home by family labor. Originally for personal consumption or local sale, surplus nuts quickly made their way into the growing export market. For reasons of quality control, health, and safety, however, industrial processing is on the rise in major processing centers such as India, Brazil, Mozambique, and elsewhere, although, some have

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suggested that hand processing actually improves the overall number of whole kernels versus the mechanized methods (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001: Ch. 5.1; Errington and Coulter 1989).

Processing in Kassumba is done strictly for local consumption by "open pan roasting," which is when a circular metal pan about two feet in diameter containing about one kilogram of nuts is quickly heated over an open fire with constant stirring in order to prevent burning. As the nuts are heated, the

> CNSL is exuded onto the pan and eventually ignites, producing clouds of thick black smoke. After heating and burning for about two minutes (judged by experience) the pan is dowsed in water and the nuts are thrown off and allowed to cool, during which the shells become brittle and can be readily removed from the nut. (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001: Ch. 5.2.1).

This is done by hand using two rocks to gently crack the burnt shell and remove the nut.

Not only are nuts processed in Kassumba, but, both cashew wine and *kana* are also made for local consumption from the cashew apple. These processes have already been described earlier. Additionally, medicines are made from several parts of the cashew plant. Indigenous to Brazil, it is not surprising that the indigenous peoples of that country have discovered numerous uses for the plant including soothing and curing asthma, bronchitis, corns, coughs, diabetes, psoriasis, sore throats, mouth ulcers, and many other ailments. The Tikuna in the northwest of Brazil drink cashew apple juice to combat the flu and they brew the bark and leaves into a tea for stopping fits of diarrhea. Several scientific studies have demonstrated the exceptional nutritional value of the nut and apples as well as documenting the cashew's antimicrobial properties that indigenous people of South America have known about for centuries (Taylor 2005). Leslie Taylor in her text, *The Healing Power of Rainforest Herbs*, condenses the main medicinal actions of the cashew plant as: (1) antiseptic, (2) antidysenteric, (3) antibacterial, (4) antiulcerous, and (5) astringent; she also lists the main uses, which are (1) for diarrhea,

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dysentery, and colic, (2) as an internal and external antiseptic against bacterial infections, (3) for stomach ulcers, (4) for ear and eye infections, and (5) to stop bleeding and heal wounds (Taylor 2005).

Although the peoples of Guinea-Bissau have had much less time to explore the cashew plants medicinal potential, they have discovered some of its medical properties. For example, the Nalú of Kassumba told me that they use the cashew plant to help cure both malaria (*palidismo*) and coughs with phlegm. First, to cure malaria, one gathers new leaves (*folia*) from the cashew tree along with the leaves of the acacia. The new leaves from the cashew tree are then rubbed together. Next, the person suffering from malaria ties them to their head and stuffs others up their nose. Then, the acacia leaves are boiled in water and the person steams themselves over the mixture using a towel over the head to hold in the steam. They must keep their eyes closed and sit over the bowl until they sweat a lot. Afterwards, they should bathe in clean water and, finally, drink a little of the acacia leaf tea. To clear up a cough with phlegm (*tursi*), one must collect the small, new leaves of the cashew. The leaves are then simply chewed twice per day for two or three days until the cough dries up.

As the cashew plant has spread throughout the world, the medicinal byproducts from the leaves, bark, apple, and nut have been locally cultivated. The nut, however, remains the plants primary commodity and appeal throughout the world and as such, improving the quality and quantity of cashew kernels produced by enhancing processing techniques is a constant concern.

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Industrial Processing[221]

The processing of the cashew is done to add social, use, and economic value to the plant. As I have already discussed earlier, this can be done in a number of ways from the extraction of CNSL as an industrial component to the fermentation and distillation of cashew apple juice as a local spirit that is drunk, exchanged, and exploited for social, economic, and ceremonial purposes. The leaves and bark of the cashew tree are also processed into effective medicines that cure a wide array of illnesses for indigenous populations. Most importantly however, the raw nut that hangs beneath the cashew apple can be cracked to obtain the cashew kernel, a nut with tremendous value as a luxury food item that has international appeal. The adding of value to this commodity is done through shelling, packaging, and marketing. The more rapidly and carefully this can be done, the more value the nuts will have. Prices for cashews are set in dollars per pound according to the standard W320 grade, which means that the cashews must be unscorched, symmetrical, and whole to garner the premium prices. Smaller, broken, and scorched nuts are sold much cheaper.

Cashew producing nations such as Guinea-Bissau are currently reaching a critical point in which providing raw cashew nuts wholesale to processing nations such as India is no longer as

[221] Over the years, many good cashew production, processing, and marketing studies have been conducted on cashew nations and regions such as India (Das 1985; Harilal, et al. 2006; Labour Bureau 1998; Lindberg 2005; Pillai & Nair 1980), Brazil (Meaney-Leckie 1991; Nunes 1999), Mozambique (Cramer 1999; Hanlon 2000; Kanji 2004; Kanji et al. 2004; Kyle & Negiz 1999), Nigeria (Laurent & Russell 1968), Tanzania (Poulton 1998; Seppälä 1998), West Africa (Boillereau, Adam, & Cock 2007), and Sri Lanka (Wettasinghe & Pannila 2002) to help work out their specific, exploitable niches in the international cashew trade. Similar undertakings have been carried out for Guinea-Bissau's cashew sector (Barry, Creppy, & Wodon 2006; Jaeger & Lynn 2004; Nunes 1999; Thomas 2004). Explanations of the harvesting and the processing of cashews have been repetitiously noted in these works with little real variation between countries. In addition, a comprehensive treatise on cashew nut processing was written by D. C. Russell in 1969 under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. His work also explains in great detail how cashew nuts get from the tree to the consumer.

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profitable as it once was due to more cost effective processing, a spike in the number of competing cashew growing nations, and a decrease in international demand.

Many government officials and development agencies are now considering future investments involving in-country processing in order to cut out profiteering, processing nations. In this way, the growers would be able to directly reach their consumers. Without effective processing, marketing, and competitive pricing, however, this investment may not be as successful as anticipated. For example, as already discussed above, the World Bank demonstrated that increased taxes aimed at developing cashew processing in Guinea-Bissau would most likely be shouldered by the small holders, therefore actually decreasing their income in the short term.

The Guinea Agricultural Sector Assessment (GASA) 2004 report perceptively noted that, "Since cashew turnout is about 22.5% (raw nuts to kernel),[222] prices for kernels would have to be 4.4 times higher than for raw nuts if production costs were negligible" (Thomas, et al. 2004: 52). Therefore, there is much to consider when a country is deciding whether to export raw nuts or process them into finished kernels. During interviews among small cashew producers of Cansamange of south-eastern Guinea-Bissau, Lekberg found that,

> When asking the villagers if they would be interested in processing the cashew the general answer was no. It seems as if the villagers are aware that the merchants are making a lot of money on the rice trade [for cashews], but they were still not interested in processing. During the interviews two main reasons for this lack of interest appeared. First they felt that the processing is too labor-intensive, and secondly they reasoned that no one currently buys the processed nuts. Other reasons that were raised included the difficulty for the small-scale farmers of taking the processed nuts into Bissau and selling them by themselves, since the merchants currently only buy unprocessed nuts. When the merchants come, they take all the nuts, regardless of size and quality, and the farmers get all the money at once. (1996: 15)

[222] Ohler suggests, "The percentage of whole kernels at the end varies between 55 and 85%, depending on processing methods and plant management. In general, 65% may be considered a satisfactory result" (1979: 201).

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Therefore, aid organization such as Trade and Investment Promotion Support (TIPS) and *Ajuda de Desinvolvemento de Povo para Povo ná Guiné-Bissau* (ADPP) promoting cashew processing in the countryside of Guinea-Bissau must be cautious.

TIPS began a processing initiative in the 1990s starting a training center at Quinhamel where farmers were taught about processing in a one-month course. Upon completion, they were offered the option to buy processing machinery for $130. This localized processing may be ideal in order to increase family income; however, there still remains a fairly low demand for processed nuts, although, as we will see, demand is steadily increasing locally and regionally each year as more and more people are able to purchase luxury food items such as cashew nuts.

The processing of the raw cashew nuts to cashew kernels generally involves the following: (1) the raw nut is fried, roasted, or steamed to both extract the CNSL and soften the hard outer shell; (2) the outer shell is cracked or cut with a saw, hammer or impact-shelling machine; (3) the kernel is removed and dried; (4) the thin, inner testa skin is peeled away from the kernel; (5) the kernels are sorted and graded[223] into whole or broken, large or small, and white or scorched; and (6) the kernels are sanitized and packaged (Andrighetti et al. 1994: 39-46; Cramer 1999; 1254; Hanlon 2000; Kanji et al. 2004: 78; Ohler 1979: 201-213). The leftover shells can be burned in factory furnaces to produce heat for processing or electricity. Cashew processing remains a highly labor-intensive activity since people are better than machines at separating the kernel from the shell without causing breakage. Therefore, factory employees often work on a piece-rate basis. In Guinea-Bissau, workers were paid 40 XOF per kilogram in the national factory ($.08). In order to protect their skin from the harsh CNSL, workers must coat their hands with oil. Additional concerns include stockpiling enough raw cashews to keep a factory running year round since the harvest season only lasts from one to three months.

[223] For the range of grading, See Ohler (1979: 209-212).

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In Guinea-Bissau, a number of processing centers have been established over the years. For example, in 1990, a plant known as Oltremare with a capacity of 1,500 tons per year opened using technology from Italy (Andrighetti et al. 1994: 77). A smaller cashew-processing center established by TIPS in Quinhamel boils their raw cashew nuts in a large cauldron for twenty-five minutes; they then dry them in the sun for two days. The outer shells are eventually removed using a foot-powered shelling machine. After drying for seven more hours, the testa covering is manually detached by workers. The cleaned kernels are graded according to size and wholeness while the smallest pieces are collected for use in cooking. After the kernels are classified according to international standards, they are roasted and packed for shipping. Every part of the cashew nut is used; the outer shell is burned to fire the cauldron; the testa skins are added to livestock feed (Azam-Ali & Judge 2001: Ch. 5.1.1).

In June 2007, I visited a government run cashew factory. The economic value added to the cashew nuts during processing was undeniable. The factory manager explained that if they had four kilograms of raw cashew nuts purchased for 800 XOF ($1.60), after production they would be left with one kilogram of kernels worth 3,000 XOF ($6). They employed four different workers (crackers, shellers, winnowers, and sorters) at a rate of 40 XOF per kilogram. I was informed by one worker that she could sort between forty and sixty kilograms per day. The sorting was the most time consuming of the four tasks. The process was quite labor intensive. First, they baked raw cashew nuts for fifteen minutes, two-hundred and fifty kilograms at a time. Next, they cracked them open in a vise, and then shelled them in teams of two men per cracking machine: one to crack the hard outer shell, the second to separate the kernel. Next, the nuts were pressure steamed to loosen the remaining skin. Then they were winnowed by hand, sorted (into at least twelve different varieties based on color, shape, size, and amount of breakage), sterilized,

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and finally, packaged. They were also buying gasoline for a generator to run the factory. Soon, with the help of technology and a technician from Brazil, they were going to use the cashew husks to produce electricity for the factory and surrounding neighborhood. I was told that the factory running at optimal capacity, which it was not for various reasons such as workers not showing up because of school obligations, lack of constant raw cashew nut supply, and other infrastructural difficulties, could produce several hundred metric tons per day for export to Europe, America, Senegal, and South Africa although currently much of their produce was ending up on the local markets of Bissau.

Over the last decade in Guinea-Bissau, several public and private processing plants have begun operations including three factories with a capacity of 1,000 metric tons each, two with capacities of 250 and 500 metric tons, and twenty-one other localized factories with a combined capacity of 780 metric tons annually. Of the combined potential of 4,080 metric tons of processing capacity, about 2,500 tons were directly exported in 2007 while 580 tons were sold at local and regional markets (Boillereau, Adam, & Cock 2007). If 87,196 metric tons were exported last year, then only 2.9 percent of these exports were processed in these factories. The potential for further development of household and factory processing is great if the costs outweigh the benefits. As previously noted, Guinea-Bissau has many obstacles to overcome when it comes to processing cashews domestically including political confusion, high transportation costs, and poor infrastructure before this economic endeavor can become cost effective for both the nation-state and small holders. There remains, however, room for immediate expansion.

In 2007, prices were relatively cheap on the domestic market; cashew kernels were selling for as little as $2 per kilogram for W320 with an average retail cost of $10.80 per

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kilogram. These exceptionally low prices could simply be a result of the 2006 export market crash, but their 2007 prices were extremely competitive compared with their neighbors such as the Gambia ($20.37) and Senegal ($18.60) (Boillereau, Adam, & Cock 2007: 14). Therefore, Guinea-Bissau is a competitive supplier to both Senegal and the Gambia. The continued lack of effective border controls and poor road and port conditions, however, continue to constrain these exploitable regional markets.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was written with several objectives in mind. First, the characteristics of the cashew were discussed, particularly as an income-generating crop for the rural population of Guinea-Bissau. Second, cashew production in Guinea-Bissau was explored in order to analyze the costs and benefits to local producers. Third, as a byproduct of the rapidly expanding cashew sector, the cultural and health related implications for the use and abuse of cashew spirits in Guinea-Bissau were considered. The fourth section looked at the effects of the national, regional, and global political economies on the cashew market. The fifth section explored attempts at maximizing profitability, both economic and cultural, for this new commodity by local inhabitants.

At its most basic level, this chapter has added the missing southern perspective to the plethora of cashew discourse coming out of Guinea-Bissau. Cashew agriculture has a strong grip on the south of the country. Even when the price paid for raw cashew nuts in Guinea-Bissau bottomed out as they did in 2006 and 2007, the commodity still made up more than six percent of the annual income for Kassumba residents. Kassumba is an extremely isolated village with

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the option to invest valuable resources in other commodities such as fish, palm oil, and rice when cashews become less cost effective. In fact, many Kassumba inhabitants did shift their household economic strategies in 2007 away from a high reliance on cashews in favor of other economic endeavors; although once prices rebound, I anticipate a quick return to cashew manufacture since cashews are lucrative and easy to grow compared with the alternatives. As I have described above, the national reliance on cashews is even greater than in Kassumba; cashews make up a majority of the country's exports, agricultural sector, and GDP. Therefore, the national economic reaction time is somewhat slower than the community under consideration with the detrimental effects being compounded. Even on a national scale, though, some economic flexibility is present to help stabilize internal markets although the state is still relying on international aid organizations to bail them out.

Carlos Lopes and Lars Rudebeck once acknowledged the agency of Guinea-Bissau's civil society by describing it as *poder popular*, literally, "the power of the people" (1988: 24). They defined this concept as "power exercised in close connection with the working people and being legitimised by the fact of meeting concrete and fundamental interests of the people, as experienced by themselves" (1988: 24; See also, Galli 1989: 375). This pragmatic view places the development of household livelihood strategies squarely in the hands of the rural population although influenced by the social, economic, and political contexts in which they find themselves. As Galli explains, "state-peasant relations exist in a particular social context which influences the character of the relationship. . . the social context includes groups from outside the country that actively intervene in the political economy" (1989: 375).

Many Guinea-Bissauans were overheard expressing the sentiment, "We like to eat rice but it's easy to grow cashews" (IRIN 2007a). According to the United Nations news agency,

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> Most farmers in Guinea Bissau rely on cashews for the first half of the year then grow rice when the rains come in the second half. . . Despite the current problems in rice production, agricultural experts say the country has the capacity to diversify and produce more sweet potatoes, maize and sorghum. The problem is that Guinea Bissauans prefer to eat rice" (IRIN 2007e).

According to my own data and observations, this UN report is quite right. They continue,

> In the long run, Guinea Bissau farmers need to diversify what they grow so they do not only depend on cashews for cash – and consumers need to eat more sweet potatoes and other roots which are readily available. On 20 February [2008] FAO signed a $1.5 million project with the government to help diversify production, but it is unlikely to do much to reduce potential food shortages" (IRIN 2008).

My research, including both quantitative and qualitative assessments of complex economic patterns and processes among the small holders of Guinea-Bissau, found that the residents of Kassumba were fully aware of alternate food sources and economic activities available to them. They chose to trade cashews for rice because it was the most economical and appealing option for them in the twenty-first century. As the price of cashews crashed in 2006, however, many returned to the rice paddies where they began to invest larger amounts of time, energy, and economic resources into re-establishing local rice production. As the above quotes suggest, diversity is key (IRIN 2006c); not simply agricultural diversity, but a diversity of economic outlets including fishing, rice, cashew, and palm oil production, tourism, traditional healing, and other agricultural and gathering activities.

In a heavily invested cashew economy such as Guinea-Bissau, however, diversification is only one such recourse for poor prices. Others include investing in processing, holding nuts until prices rebound, participating in "parallel systems"[224] (Azarya & Chazan 1984: 11-15) such as selling produce regionally, and enticing newly developing consumers to their shores. Although

[224] "Parallel systems are alternative outlets for needs that remain unfulfilled by official channels and they reduce dependence on these channels. Typical examples include blackmarkets, smuggling, corruption and the use of alternative justice methods. The parallel networks may or may not utilize the state apparatus or draw on its resources, but basically they override its purposes and skirt its laws: They are attempts to beat the system" (Azarya & Chazan 1984: 11).

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the 2007 cashew contracts with China fell through, this may be an option in the future as China's share of global demand increases. Investment in Guinea-Bissau's cashew production and processing is a good bet although it needs to be done cautiously in conjunction with infrastructural improvements in the county. Finally, as new countries such as Nigeria and Vietnam invest in cashews production, Guinea-Bissau's global competition increases. However, the international demand for raw cashew nuts is still high (Deaton 1999). Guinea-Bissau should continue exporting raw cashew nuts while the expanding processing sector finds advantageous regional outlets such as Senegal and the Gambia.[225] As export costs decrease, further expansion into the Atlantic World will naturally develop. To a small degree, this is already underway with the construction of a large port at Buba, which, when completed, is thought to rival Dakar's port in Senegal.

This research was limited to a single village and a single year of investigation. Therefore, conclusions were drawn by using historical and contemporary sources as well as my own ethnographic data. This chapter is intended as a first step in expressing avenues of potential growth for the cashew sector in Guinea-Bissau beyond the typical playbook of international development agencies (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 2006).

Based on my own observations of the cashew sector in Guinea-Bissau, I have the following recommendations. Again, these recommendations are advanced as a gesture of goodwill, not arrogance. As someone with training in needs assessment and ethnographic data collection techniques, I feel that my particular expertise allows me to apply what I have learned in a unique way. As in other parts of this study and on the basis of my observations and readings, I would like to suggest the following initiatives although I was not asked to do so by

[225] For a discussion of the need for regional integration, See Sallah (1990).

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any government or international development agencies or programs. These recommendations are intended for the community in which this study was conducted and as a model that may be applicable by the government to other similar areas undergoing comparable circumstances throughout the countryside.

First, the Guinea-Bissauan small holders must remain diversified in their economic activities. Second, as global competition increases, Guinea-Bissau's processing capacity must be increased both at the local level and in larger industrial factories. Third, regional outlets for processed cashew kernels must be taken advantage of and wholesale buyers outside of India must be attracted. Fourth, care must be taken by the farmers to avoid overplanting and the possible spreading of cashew related diseases and pests. Fifth, secondary by-products such as cashew spirits should continue to be processed locally and eventually even marketed regionally; however, local regulations in relation to consumption practices must be more strongly enforced to prevent the inflation of alcoholism among the populace. Most importantly, control of household livelihood strategies must remain firmly in the hands of the small holders so that locals can quickly respond to global pressures and shifting market circumstances.

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Chapter Six

THE EBBING OF ARTISANAL FISHING

The Problem

The multi-stranded economic matrix of global fisheries ensnares the livelihoods of the local producers and entangles those charged with protecting aquatic resources in a web of financial contributions, partnership agreements, and promises of poverty reduction and growth. For example, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and liberalization policies begun in 1983 by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have had a negative impact on Guinea-Bissau's fishery sectors in a number of ways including overfishing, lack of investment in domestic production, and lack of oversight, regulation, and environmental protection (IRIN 2007).[226] The cost of fresh and dried fish continues to increase in the domestic markets while the local fisherpersons' profits decrease. Intermediaries benefit from price fluctuations, or these increased prices simply reflect the decrease in product availability due to overfishing. Simultaneously, the prices paid for fish in foreign countries such as Senegal and Guinea Conakry remain higher than in Guinea-Bissau leading to increased exports of marine produce. Since independence, more than seven different development agencies have worked to increase the quality, freshness, and quantity of fish available in the markets of Guinea-Bissau, however, fish remain expensive and scarce.

[226] Inger Tvedten illustrates these failures when he writes, "In general, the price of fish to the consumer in the large markets in Guinea-Bissau had also increased. In Gabu, a 200-300% increase in the price of dried and smoked fish was registered in the last two years, and in Bissau, fresh fish were sold at prices 150-200% higher than two years previous" (1991: 75).

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Development initiatives leading to access agreements with foreign fishing fleets continue to impact Guinea-Bissau's socio-economic state of affairs negatively. Kaczynski and Fluharty (2002) argue that fishing access agreements to Guinea-Bissau's 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), particularly those with the European Union, cause detrimental economic and social repercussions including unemployment, conflict with immigrants, threatened food security, and environmental degradation (Aljazeera.net 2008; Hogan 2003).[227] Their recommendations for improving fishery policies by both stressing further investment by foreigners as well as more responsible conservation of the marine living resources, in my opinion as an ethnographer and community advocate, does not go far enough. The government of Guinea-Bissau should revisit and rework their fishery development plans for both the artisanal and industrial sectors taking into account the inherent pitfalls of international development programs.[228] But, where should such a revisionist agenda begin? What should it look like?

Tvedten concludes, the more than two-thousand women in 1991 responsible for the processing and marketing of fish as intermediaries between fishermen and local markets have the most immediate potential for growth in the artisanal fishery sector of Guinea-Bissau (Tvedten 1991; See also, Fernandes 1996: 307; Randall 1985).[229] Local fisherpersons, processors, and marketers must continue to strengthen their internal markets in the hopes of bolstering the working-class economy (IDAF 1990: 14). As internal markets expand, so should the benefits to the domestic fishery's sector. As everyone knows and evidence supports, "people are more

[227] Estimates put total catches in African waters by foreign fleets at 40% (Klein 1999; See also, Tvedten & Hersoug 1992).

[228] For a comprehensive overview of Guinea-Bissau's development initiatives and legal policies for the fishery sectors, See Government of Guinea Bissau (2000: 48-50, 153).

[229] For further discussions of women and fishing, See Ninsin (1991: 101-102); Randall (1985); Robertson (1976); Thompson (1985); Vercruijsse (1983).

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likely to act on what they themselves have freely decided upon than on what somebody else, whatever his or her experience, has convinced them to do" (Van der Meeren 1986: 7).

For the least developed countries such as Guinea-Bissau, international development strategies funded by Western nations axiomatically promote the "underdevelopment" of these nations in order to continue to exploit valuable resources (Havnevik 1987; Tvedten 1991). Labels describing this exploitative relationship include the "politics of dependence" (Gibbs 1984: 80) or "primary commodities dilemma" (Wohlmuth, et al. 2006). For example, over the last three decades, overfishing by foreign fleets as a major environmental and economic concern continues to greatly impact the peoples of Guinea-Bissau. Both scientific and journalistic investigations alike reach the same conclusions; the weak government fails to negotiate equitable fishing partnerships with other nations, and unsuccessfully protects its EEZ from overfishing and poaching by foreign fleets (Afrol 2001a; Amorim et al. 2004; Gibbs 1984; IRIN 2007g; Kenety 2001; Lafraniere 2008; Plage 2001; Rosenthal 2008; Underhill & Dieng 2002).[230]

And yet, a 2007 working paper by the World Bank concluded, "the fishing sector in Guinea-Bissau is underdeveloped" (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 70), which conveyed a message of the potential for further exploitation of the precarious marine resources by Western initiatives, instead of the actual need for improvements to domestic infrastructure and management efforts. In this same report, the authors suggest that the

> fishing sector . . . provides a good entry point to address the interplay between government policy at the macro level (for example, what role is played by different actors – private sector, license-holders, *including donors*, other government ministries, and so forth), as well as implications for livelihoods at the microlevel. (2007: 70, italics mine)

[230] For example, Rosemary E. Galli writes, "It [Guinea-Bissau] is also a primary producer of wood and fish for export, both of which are considered to have the potential to be the main sources of wealth in the short- and medium-term. The problem is that Guinea does not yet have a capacity to exploit these resources rationally and is dependent upon foreign investors and fishermen who, at present, mine these resources irrationally" (1990: 56).

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This chapter will start to untangle the "development agenda" and multi-stranded economic matrix of global fisheries[231] in order to illustrate the need for alternative fishery policies that promote national economic expansion and local livelihood strategies.[232]

The Approach

Campredon and Cuq state, "Fishermen and their communities, being the main users of coastal resources, should also play a major role in the design and implementation of any fishing management actions" (2001: 91). When it comes to the fishing sector, a bottom-up ethnographic approach can inform policy-makers about the impact of particular initiatives as well as necessary adjustments to these initiatives in order to protect, promote, and expand the local industry (Galli 1987; Richards 1985). In an attempt to describe this approach, Denis Goulet put forward an "alternative development strategy" rejecting development strategies which improved a nations overall GNP without "meeting basic needs, fostering self-reliance, and building from within local values" (1977: 2). In this chapter, I expand on his theory by providing a contextual assessment of how local people meet basic needs, foster self-reliance, and rely on local values on a daily basis. I also demonstrate how my assessment could lead to, and influence rural civil society's interactions with the socio-economic agendas of the state and international development organizations. What strategies do local populations employ to meet basic economic needs and affect change in fishery policies in order to begin to see long-term

[231] For a discussion of "The Fishing Culture of the World," See the edited volumes by Gunda (1984).

[232] For a broader perspective on fishery concerns throughout West Africa, See the edited work by Chauveau, Jul-Larsen, & Chaboud (2000).

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environmental protection and economic progress for their households, villages, and their nation-state that is marginalized on the international stage?

The importance of examining the fishing sector from the local perspective stems from a need to understand a range of activities often outside formal data gathering channels.[233] Bruce Epler opens his working paper by expressing, "To date little or at best partial information has been collected and made available concerning the fisheries of Guinea-Bissau" (1983: 1).[234] Available fisheries data is classified as either artisanal or industrial. I define these terms in the same fashion as Axel Klein who writes,

> Industrial fisheries are capital-intensive, use imported technology, are market-oriented and subject to government regulation. Artisanal fisheries, by contrast, fit the definition of informal sector enterprises, in that they are labour intensive, make use of indigenous technology and operate outside the supervision of government agencies. (1999: 556)

He continues, "the evidence derived from fishing suggests that, far from maintaining detached disinterest, the agencies of the state are deeply involved as players in the very set of processes they are supposed to be regulating" (567). Therefore, as a study of a small isolated fishing

[233] Economic activities beyond state sanctioned control were often referred to in the anthropological, economic, and development literature as the "informal sector" (Ferguson 2006; Hart 1973; Portes & Haller 2005).

[234] The primary institutions carrying out fishery research and data collection in Guinea-Bissau include the *Centro de Investigação Pesquiera Aplicada* (CIPA, Guinea-Bissau) and the *Instituto de Investigação das Pescas e do Mar* (IPIMAR, Portugal). "Criada em 1990 e actualmente uma estrutura em processo de autonomia financeira, jurídica e patrimonial, como é o caso das outras estruturas de investigação, o CIPA é a entidade responsável pelos estudos e pela avaliação dos recursos haliêuticas da ZEE a fim de determinar os níveis acessíveis de exploração, propor medidas de protecção de recursos, como a delimitação de áreas protegidas, o tamanho mínimo das espécies e o contingente das capturas e a produção de dados científicos necessários a implementação de um sistema de gestão durável de recursos marinhos. Este centro é constituído pelas seguintes divisões: Divisão de avaliação e gestão e recursos vivos; Divisão de tecnologias de pesca, acolhimento de navios, técnicas e engenhos de pesca e Divisão de estatística. Este centro desenvolveu no passado os seguintes estudos: (1) Projecto de gestão integrada dos recursos haliêuticos que incluiu: inventario sócio-económico de pescadores, parque de pirogas e esforço de pesca nos Bijagós; Localização e caracterização de zonas de pesca e estudo de espécies como a tilápia, os tubarões; estudo da maturação sexual das taínhas... (2) Projecto de desenvolvimento durável da pesca artesanal no Rio Grande de Buba. (3) Campanhas oceanográficas na ZEE da Guiné-Bissau, nomeadamente com navios da URSS, ORSTOM de França, INIP de Portugal e com a China Popular. Encontram-se em execução: (1) Estudos sobre a transformação tradicional de produtos de pesca; (2) Estudo bioló gicos sobre as espécies costeiras de tubarões; (3) Estudos de espécies haliêuticas das águas continentais (água doce); (4) Estudos da pesca artesanal nos Bijagós e em Cacine" (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000: 40).

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community, this chapter primarily describes artisanal fishing although in so doing, I must also consider the larger national and international context of industrial fishing. "From this perspective, the border [between these types of fishing], far from being . . . functionally stable, can be understood as a site of on-going negotiation between society and the state – a space always 'under construction'" (Chalfin 2001: 202).

The rural population of Guinea-Bissau continues to rely on an integrated economic approach in which fishing plays an important role in a household livelihood strategy that also incorporates agriculture, gathering, hunting, and a variety of other complementary activities.[235] Nationally, as part of their agenda since independence from Portugal in 1974, Guinea-Bissau's government continues to promote their fishing sector as an important economic initiative. For example, as early as 1979 when in President Luís Cabral's opening speech to the People's National Assembly in Bissau, he expressed, "Fishing means development since it is one of our country's most important resources. So we must improve and further our country's fishing potential" (16-17). Either as part of the country's fishery agenda, or in spite of it, however, foreign vessels continue to ply the waters off the coast of Guinea-Bissau sometimes legally, often illegally (Greenpeace 2006); so far, little economic growth or social benefits have resulted (Alder & Sumaila 2004).

I propose that Guinea-Bissau serves as an ideal setting for examining the local effects of the multi-stranded economic matrix of global fisheries since its coastal waters are fished by an

[235] "*A pesca é normalmante levada a cabo em combinação com outras fontes de subsistência e de receitas, entre elas a agricultura arável (desbaste e queimada para o cultivo de arroz, amendoim, mandioca, feijão), a extracção de produtos da palmeira-do-azeite (vinho de palma, óleo de palma, coconote), o pequeno comércio e, nalguma medida, a produção pastoril, o trabalho assalariado e o artesanato*" (Tvedten 1991: 71). Joanna Casey reiterated these sentiments when she summarily stated about the ecology of food production in West Africa, "Most of the fishing peoples along the river also grow crops or engaged in trading relationships with farmers and herders, but some of the more remote peoples get their subsistence entirely from the river. Their lives revolve around the rise and fall of the river and the breeding and mobility schedule of the fish" (1998: 36).

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international amalgam; at the same time, the domestic population relies on their aquatic resources for both their lifeways and livelihoods.

Other supporting evidence for why Guinea-Bissau is an ideal setting for research into the affects of globalization on the fishery sector is as follows: First, the small, weak government lacks the ability to patrol some of the largest and richest fishing grounds in West Africa (Zubiria 1996: 45-49).[236] Therefore, civil society and the government must cooperate in an attempt to develop creative institutions able to cope with the regulation of the fishing sector in the face of strong international pressures. Otherwise, the country's primary resource will quickly dry up affecting both national revenues and local livelihoods. Second, as donor fatigue sets in as a result of failed initiatives, a 1998 armed struggle, and disinterest, Guinea-Bissau must reorient their national economic activities inward toward their civil society. For example, the decline in worldwide cashew prices and overfishing has left the country with few international enticements. Third, Guinea-Bissau has a unique history of non-alignment and socialist tendencies among its rural peasantry; civil society becomes an alternative resource able to help revise the failed development goals of liberalization and democratization. Finally, Guinea-Bissau relies on industrial fishing to supply itself with almost half of its GDP while, simultaneously, artisanal fishing supplies the country's dietary needs with important protein on a regular basis.

In the following chapter, I demonstrate that the people of this village practice an integrative approach to their household livelihood strategy with a strong reliance on fishing and fishing related activities. In the first section, I discuss how international fishery contracts with Guinea-Bissau promise development as leverage in the exploitation of their marine resources.[237]

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[236] "Due to the civil, political and military conflicts that have shaken the country for many years, evaluation and assessment efforts have been discontinued and have only succeeded in gathering partial data" (Binet 2008: 23).

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In the second section, I describe the artisanal fisherpersons of Kassumba. I then examine the local processing and marketing of the ocean's bounty. Fourth, I describe how the locals view national fishing policies and practices. I conclude by defining a potential plan of action designed to re-invent the global fisheries matrix by giving voice to local perspectives.

It is important to note here that the domestic market does not have the economic power to buy up production and, at the same time, the government would be unable to pay additional civil servants. Therefore, I am not proposing that exports and fishery agreements with foreign nations be discontinued. I recognize that the fishery sector is bringing in needed foreign capital. What I am advocating is transparency in the government, a reconsideration of international fishing quotas once more accurate data is available, and further investment in the domestic fishery sector to improve the standard of living for the rural civil society. All of these issues will be dicussed in greater detail throughout this chapter. I do not wish to oversimplify such a complicated problem.

Geography

The country of Guinea-Bissau has a coastline measuring approximately 280 to 350 kilometers (America's Development Foundation 1983: 47; Barry & Gacitua-Mario 2006: 73; CIA 2008; Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 19; Kapetsky 1981).[238] It also has a group of eighty islands off its shore, twenty of which are inhabited. Rivers spread throughout Guinea-Bissau's surface

[237] "There are three main fisheries in the region [CECAF]: the pelagic, the demersal and the cephalopods. . . Pelagic is fish caught in the water column and not near the bottom. The demersal fisheries is [*sic.*] fish living on or near the bottom. Cephalopods are marine mollusks. . . In addition, shrimp and other crustacea are a valuable resource in several estuarine areas of Senegal and the continental shelves of Guinea-Bissau" (Zubiria 1996: 5).

[238] Epler writes, "While the straight coastline measures only about 350 kilometers, the total coastal contour, including indentations, may well exceed 1,000 kilometers" (1983: 1). Baran and Tous give a second figure for the length of the coastline at 275 kilometers (2000: 3).

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area as part of the *ria*, or sunken coastal lowlands, inlets, and estuaries, thus enabling water to flood up to two-hundred kilometers inland at high tide (Epler 1993: 1); the *ria* influences sixty-five percent (23,500 km^2) of the country's surface area (Baran & Tous 2000: 3).[239] Water permanently covers more than twenty-two percent of Guinea-Bissau's territory allowing for approximately four-hundred and sixty ports or points of departure for fisherpersons to disembark from along the coast and rivers (Fernandes 1996: 307). The country also has a continental shelf with an area of 45,000 km^2,[240] larger in size than the country's actual total area (America's Development Foundation 1983: 47; Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 19; FAO 2008).[241] In addition, Guinea-Bissau claims an EEZ of 86,670 km^2,[242] about one percent of the 14.2 million km^2 Eastern Central Atlantic Region[243] of which it is a part (Earthtrends 2003).[244]

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[239] Walter Rodney describes, "The whole coast is flat. Low level plains adjoin the rivers, and away from the immediate river banks the ground seldom rises more than 30 or 40 metres above sea level. A single belt of flat littoral plains can thus be distinguished, the width of the coastal belt being determined mainly by the tides. . . These powerful tides, along with the sunken ria character of the coastline, account for the penetration of the sea for considerable distances inland, and the silt deposited in the process helped to build up the alluvial coastal plain. The penetration by the sea also accounts for the presence of salt marshes and permits the widespread germination of essentially littoral flora, such as mangrove [*tarrafe*] and palm" (1970: 2-3).

[240] Epler lists the size of Guinea-Bissau's continental shelf at 53,000 km^2 (1983: 1; See also, Barry & Gacitua-Mario 2006: 73) while Amorim, et al gives a figure of 40,816 km^2 located between 11° and 12°30'N although a second figure of 40,186 km^2 is also provided by these same authors (2004: 95-96).

[241] "The continental shelf is exceptionally wide (less than 20 m deep as far as 180km out to sea. This creates strong tidal waves (tidal range reaching 6m) and turbulent coastal hydrodynamics; the water is turbid to very turbid along the coast (Diop, 1990). This coast is bordered by an important mangrove and is brackish from July to October (Berrit, 1966). Upwelling (a phenomenon of cold and biologically rich waters brought to the surface) occurs during January-February (Rossignol and Meyrueis, 1964)" (Baran & Tous 2000: 4).

[242] Epler (1983: 1) lists the area of Guinea-Bissau's EEZ at 70,000 km^2 while Zubiria (1996: 5) gives 71,000 km^2.

[243] The Eastern Central Atlantic is a regional term for the waters off the coast of West Africa known as area 34 by the FAO.

[244] Joshua B. Forrest estimates the offshore fishing zone at about 69,930 km^2, which is slightly smaller than the estimate provided here (1992: 100).

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Extensive mangroves take up 248,000 hectares[245] of land or about seven percent of Guinea-Bissau's land mass. These mangroves thrive on the high concentrations of suspended sediment and organic matter churned up in the strong tides when the Canary Current System and the southern equatorial Gulf of Guinea System meet (Brooks 2006: 103).[246] Cool waters from the north arrive off Guinea-Bissau's coast in January; by May and the start of the rainy season, the currents shift and warm, less salty water moves to the northern border of Guinea-Bissau (America's Development Foundation 1983: 7).[247]

In an attempt to protect this unique coastal ecosystem, the government of Guinea-Bissau in unison with UNESCO classified the Bijagos Archipelago as a Biosphere Reserve in 1996 and has also created two national parks, Orango Island and João Viera /Poilão in 1999 and 2001, respectively. These wildlife sanctuaries prohibit industrial fishing and act as important nesting grounds for a variety of animal species (Campredon & Cuq 2001: 93-94; Dodman & Sá 2005).[248]

Guinea-Bissau belongs to several international organizations aimed at preserving their offshore resources. Established in 1967, twenty independent developing coastal countries with nearly 100,000 kilometers of coastline established the Eastern Central Atlantic Region (Kaczynski 1989: 4). These member states of the Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries (CECAF), an organization within the United Nations Food and Agricultural

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[245] Kapetsky gives approximate figures of 2,300 km^2 of mangrove coverage and 2,408 km^2 of estuaries in Guinea-Bissau (1981).

[246] Binet reiterates the need to protect CSRP countries exceptional climatic and ecological conditions that include, "Upwelling, the presences of canyons that enhance its effect, large continental plateau with rich rocky habitats, numerous estuaries and mangroves that provide natural refuges and spawning grounds, etc." (2008: 20).

[247] Water surface temperatures range from 22 to more than 26° C throughout the year. Waters over the coastal self of Guinea-Bissau are relatively stable (America's Development Foundation 1983: 7-11).

[248] For an in-depth analysis of government policy in relation to protected marine zones in West Africa, See the edited volume by Weigel, Féral, & Cazalet (2007).

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Organization (FAO) (Kapetsky 1981; UNDP 1980),[249] administer fishery resources estimated to exceed three million metric tons per year, most of which come from the Northern Zone of West Africa including Guinea-Bissau. CECAF provides reliable data on the region, trains local technicians, and helps gather national statistics from its member states (Zubiria 1996: 4). In addition to CECAF, the intergovernmental sub-regional fisheries commission (CSRP), established on March 29 1985 between the seven member states of Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, also help to regulate and protect their member state's offshore resources (Binet 2008: 20-25).

According to EarthTrends Country Profiles, ninety-five percent of Guinea-Bissau's population lives within one-hundred kilometers of the coast compared to thirty-nine percent worldwide (2003). To illustrate, the approximately ten-thousand Nalú of Guinea-Bissau "inhabit the islands and floodplains in coastal regions of the area between the Cacine and Nunez rivers" (Havik 2004: 118; See also, Hanquez Passavant 2000; Mello Machado 1972). Nalú youth of Kassumba explained,

> The ocean makes Kassumba a better place to live than elsewhere. We have fresh air blowing off the ocean keeping the temperature lower than inland. Fish are plentiful and easy to catch when necessary. Since our village is small and isolated, whites might not like it here in Kassumba. But, our environment provides valuable resources. The second best beach in all of Guinea-Bissau is located here. If this beach were in Europe, we would have hotels and other businesses here. Kassumba, as the primary village for all the Nalú of the world, allows us to take advantage of these abundant resources. The Nalú keep their secrets here in the *baloba*.[250] All the Nalú came to our sacred forest first after the

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[249] "CECAF was created in 1967 as a subsidiary body of the FAO (under Article VI of the FAO Constitution), to promote the optimum utilization of the living aquatic resources by the proper management and development of the fisheries and fishing operations, and the improvement of related processing and marketing activities in conformity with the objectives of it's members. Since then, it has played an important role in research and development support for the many developing coastal States in the region" (http://www.intfish.net/orgs/fisheries/cecaf.htm).

[250] The nature spirit of the Nalú's *boloba* in Kassumba is powerful because of the sacred forests nearness to the ocean. The spirit is of/from the ocean. The Nalú have a deep respect for water. Their ancestors were known as

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> war for independence to ask for forgiveness. There are also two other sacred places nearby, the sacred forest near Kadabu, and another near Mamadu's *bolanha* [rice paddy]. Whenever the Nalú need to assemble, they do it here. Even the Nalú from Guinea Conakry come to Kassumba. Every year they perform a ceremony here. (04/17/07)

Kassumba's residents view their environment as particularly rich. The inhabitants consistently and proudly expressed to me their good fortune at having abundant access to the mangroves, ocean, oil palm trees, and rice paddies.

For example, I shared a household with a single mother, Dede, who had come to Kassumba to raise her daughter and make a living by helping her kin exploit the natural resources found in Kassumba. Access to abundant fisheries made Kassumba particularly appealing to village residents and foreigners alike. This natural advantage for Kassumba, however, seemed to wane in 2007. In early May, I attended a wedding in the town of Cacine with two women from my household. The groom's family provided certain staples for the two day celebration. We arrived in Iraque carting a large grass matt (*mampufa*) woven by an elderly Nalú of Kassebesse and bought for 1,000 XOF, two brooms made from palm fronds by the women of our household, and two chickens that we had purchased along the way. We gave these gifts to the bride (*noiba*). She used the chickens in her ceremonial first meal for her husband as his new wife. The family had expected us to bring fish, not chickens, from Kassumba for the bride. This year, however, the availability of fish had declined considerably. Households were now relying more heavily on the production of palm oil for income compared to years past.

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palm gatherers and fisherpersons. Almost all Nalú communities were, and continue to be, located along the rivers and Atlantic Ocean of Guinea Conakry and Guinea-Bissau (Fields 1999).

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In 1999-2000, figures placed consumption estimates for Guinea-Bissauans at two to three kilograms of fish and fishery products per person per year.[251] Sub-Saharan Africans ate an average of eight kilograms of fish per capita while worldwide estimates were at sixteen kilograms per person per year (Earthtrends 2003; FAO 2008). These deflated figures for Guinea-Bissau may reflect inaccurate data for the country as well as differences between coastal and forest regions.[252] I will demonstrate below that at least for the research site of Kassumba, Guinea-Bissauans consume on average similar or higher quantities of fish and other marine products compared with the rest of the world. A World Bank report edited by Barry and Gacitua-Mario gives a more accurate picture for Guinea-Bissau with an annual estimate of between twenty-five and twenty-eight kilograms per capita of marine produce consumed (2006: 73).

Further domestic investment in fisheries is needed since the population of Guinea-Bissau relies heavily on the protein-rich sea-life located in and around its waters (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000: 4).[253] Therefore, the government of Guinea-Bissau must reexamine the current negotiated quotas with foreign fishing fleets, instead giving priority to the domestic market and taking into consideration fishing practices outside the purview of officialdom.

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[251] Low estimates for 1982 listed per capita consumption of fish at approximately 4.4 kilograms (Epler 1983: 38-39). Pollnac cites a figure of 5.1 kilograms of fish consumed per year by Guinea-Bissauns accounting for 22% of their animal protein in 1984 (1985: 3) while America's Development Foundation gave a per capita figure of 7.4 kilograms of fish consumed by Guinea-Bissauans in 1983 (66). In 2001, estimates put the kilograms/capita/year of Guinea-Bissau at 2.1, the lowest of the CSRP countries (Binet 2008: 81). Binet writes, "The fisheries sector in CSRP countries has not contributed as much as it should have to poverty alleviation. The fisheries supply chain in largely geared towards the overseas market and the export of raw fish" (2008: 82).

[252] The Guinea Agricultural Sector Assessment (GASA) Final Report of 2004 comments on the lack of data in West Africa; "This lack of precise information makes it very difficult to actually assess the national fish consumption. It also makes it hard to assess the absorptive capacity of the domestic market, particularly for rural areas (Thomas, et al. 2004: 69). This report goes on to estimate national consumption of fishery produce in Guinea Conakry determined from data on fisheries lending and fish imports at 13.5 kilograms per capita per year (2004: 69), a figure I believe to be more representative of neighboring Guinea-Bissau as well.

[253] "Fish provides on [*sic.*] average of 34% of animal protein in the diet across the whole region [West Africa], reaching over 60% in some countries" (Binet 2008: 49).

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THE GUISE OF THE *DJILA DI TERA BRANKU*:[254] DEVELOPMENT LEVERAGING AND FISHING (CON)TRACTS

Locals and foreigners recognize the rich fisheries of Guinea-Bissau; they are one of the country's most valuable renewable resources. Many feel (Gacitua-Mario, et al. 2007: 70-73) that in order to fully exploit this potential resource, Guinea-Bissau must rely on foreign fleets to extract the fish and pay the government of Guinea-Bissau license fees and export taxes for the privilege of fishing in their waters. These arguments sometimes advance disembarking catches at the Bissau port before exportation, which should lead to proper management and distribution of fishery provisions for the domestic population. The story goes that eventually, with proper investment of these industrial fishery sector funds, a domestic fishing fleet will emerge in addition to a variety of smaller projects aimed at growing the artisanal sector and local availability of fish for auto-subsistence getting funded from these programs. The argument continues by contending that joint-ventures with foreign fishing fleets will help develop the processing and conservation capabilities inside the country (Cristy, et al. 1983; Fortes 1996). Using this theory, Olívio Fortes reports on the industrial fishery sector of Guinea-Bissau. He summarizes that for these development initiatives to succeed, they must take into account five critical points: (1) the protection of the natural environment, (2) the sustainable development of a domestic workforce, (3), the establishment of a regulatory governmental body able to

[254] This translates as traveling merchants from the land of the whites. A *djila* is a traveling merchant, trader, or small shop owner from Guinea-Conakry who lives and works in Guinea-Bissau as a trader-in-residence (Davidson 2006: 63).

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successfully further the fishery sector, (4) the improvement of the physical infrastructure of the country, and (5) the promotion of regional partnerships (1996: 278-281).[255]

I believe that what is truly being advanced is nothing more than an enclave arrangement, in which foreign employees and equipment are exporting fish to their home countries to be processed and sold. These types of operations have little positive impact on local economies although they are often touted as beneficial to locals. Other examples include mining operations in developing countries (Gibbs 1984) and petroleum exploitation in Nigeria (Falola & Heaton 2008). These enclave arrangements often do have a great impact on the structure of society, which becomes obvious when looking at the makeup of the international bourgeoisie.

Therefore, Guinea-Bissau must reduce its dependence on foreign fishing as soon as possible. At the same time, the presence of foreign competition over access to their waters due to extensive overfishing elsewhere, places the Guinea-Bissauan Government in a descent bargaining position with the developed world. David Gibbs suggests,

> The discussion has shown that many African countries may benefit from their fishery resources, provided that these resources are not destroyed by overfishing. International circumstances favor African countries and may enable them to obtain greater concessions from foreign fishermen. (1984: 90)

Much of this advantage disappears, however, without the proper capabilities to police their own waters (Gibbs 1984: 87).

[255] The Government of Guinea-Bissau expressed their lack of infrastrucutre and oversight for the artisanal sector in the national poverty reduction strategy (DENARP) report, "O sector das pescas sofre da fraca estruturação e do fraco rendimento da pesca artesanal, assim como da prática de concessão sem discriminação de licenças, o que favorece uma exploração mal controlada dos recursos haliêuticos e constitui uma ameaça para os ecossistemas marinhos" (2005 18).

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The Demand

By the close of the colonial era, a high demand for marine resources existed worldwide; this demand led to a need for regulation and protection of these resources. As the global population continues to rise, so does the demand for fish. For example, consumption rates of fish stocks in the European Union (EU) increased from 8 to 9.5 million metric tons between 1984 and 1992. In reaction to pressures on marine resources, EU nations signed a number of international agreements and held conferences to combat the depletion of marine stocks including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), 1984 and 1989 ACP-EEC Lomé Conventions, the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the 1992/1996 Convention on Biodiversity, and the 2005 FAO Regional Workshop on the Elaboration of National Plans of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing – West African Subregion (FAO 2006; Zubiria 1996: 16-24). In addition, countries continue to periodically negotiate and sign Bilateral Fishing Agreements for conditional access to fisheries. Illegal fishing, over-fishing, environmental degradation, fleet over-capitalization, and increasing competition continue to plague coastal waters due to ineffective measures put in place by these country agreements.

Total world fishery production has steadily increased over the last decade from 124,536,090 metric tons of live weight in 1995 to 155,214,930 in 2004, a twenty percent increase in production over nine years (Eurostat 2006: 12). The Eastern Central Atlantic fishing area, of which Guinea-Bissau belongs, supplied 2.7 percent of the overall world production in 1995. By 2004, their contribution had decreased to only 2.2 percent. Many countries such as Guinea-

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Bissau are experiencing decreased production in large part due to overfishing. Demand for fishery products grows yearly alongside expanding populations.

People overcome these fishery resource limitations by exploiting new fishing grounds; farm-raising new stocks; seeking alternative, previously unexploited species; developing new technologies and techniques to limit wasted byproducts; and increasing fishery regulations and management in order to allow previously overfished areas or species to rebound. The complex nature of fishery exploitation reaches far beyond simple economic considerations of supply, demand, and resource limits. Mark Kurlansky writes of these social, political, and economic pressures put upon the global fishing industry in his book, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*. He explains,

> Within the European Union, fishing issues are settled by a much disliked bureaucracy of the Common Fishing Policy. In each country, each boat has a set quota on each species in each area of ocean each month. It is widely agreed that this system has failed to stop the decline of cod and other commercially valuable species. Politics and nationalism often play far greater roles than conservation in the decision-making process. For many years, scientists and European ministers agreed that hake was so menaced that the quotas had to be reduced by 40 percent. But at each annual meeting of European fishing ministers, the Spanish, for whom hake is a basic food, lobby to maintain the catch, and the reduction is never agreed on. (1997: 210)

This "tragedy of the commons" wreaks havoc on the world's fish supplies. Underdeveloped countries unable to effectively manage their EEZs suffer most in this global "arms race" (Atta-Mills 2004).

According to the 2007 United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Global Environment Outlook 4 (GEO-4),

> Almost half the jobs worldwide depend on fisheries, forests or agriculture. Non-sustainable use of natural resources, including land, water, forests and fisheries, can threaten individual livelihoods as well as local, national and international economies. . . Fish is an important protein source, especially in the developing world, providing more than 2.6 billion people with at least 20 per cent of their

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> average per capita animal protein intake. The world's population growth outpaced that of total fish supply and FAO projections indicate that a global shortage is expected. (4, 17)

Much of the world's population, therefore, relies on fisheries for employment and sustenance. For example, fisheries make up the second largest industry in Guinea-Bissau; approximately sixty-five percent of the population relies on the ocean's bounty for meeting basic subsistence needs (afrol 2001a). Additionally, the sale of fishing licenses, many purchased by foreign vessels, makes up forty percent of the government's income (FAO 2008; Plage 2001). In 2000, the government of Guinea-Bissau sold one-hundred and sixty-seven industrial fishing licenses. By 2003, the number of licenses sold increased to two-hundred and eighty-two, most going to Western European countries (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 42). By April of 2008, fishing licenses earned 100 million XOF for Guinea-Bissau in only four months (APA News 2008).

Today, EU, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Chinese, and other West African fleets find their way into Guinea-Bissauan waters in search of fish species overexploited elsewhere. On July 9, 2007, I wrote, "On a regular basis, I can hear the hum of large ships off in the distance. Occasionally, I can even see them on the horizon. Local fishermen explained that these vessels were Koreans who had come to take the fish from the river." With little ability to monitor their fish stocks, Guinea-Bissauans arrange lopsided deals for access to their waters with many foreign nations, a common problem for underdeveloped countries. In fact, estimates indicate, "more than half of the fish that reaches European dinner plates comes from foreign waters" (Underhill & Dieng 2002).

The FAO has recently suggested that more than sixty percent of the world's fish are overfished (Kenety 2001). At the same time, many developed countries provide subsidies to their fishing fleets to encourage them to fish in foreign waters (Zubiria 1996: 41-43). For

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example, in 2001 the EU negotiated fishing rights agreements with twenty-six countries, seventeen (65%) with underdeveloped nations. Artisanal and domestic fisherpersons such as those in Guinea-Bissau now find themselves in competition with foreign vessels, leading to decreased catches and a lowered quality of life for locals.

The Deal

Foreigners utilized waters and associated aquatic resources off the coast of Guinea-Bissau since at least the fifteenth century when Europeans first began to arrive along coastal West Africa. In one account, early Portuguese colonial administrators in the region had to trade their "miserable monthly allowance of Tobacco, Rum, and other articles suitable to barter with the natives for Yams, Rice and *Fish*" (Ashmun 1827: 74, italics mine). However, the first official treaty regulating the use of coastal waters began in 1843 with the Portuguese Colonial Government. By 1960, Russian and Japanese vessels also fished off Guinea-Bissau's coast (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 38-39). The Portuguese Colonial Government had passed fishing legislation aimed at regulating sport fishing,[256] cooperatives, and access to land for fishery storage and processing in 1971. By 1972, the Portuguese had hoped to increase fish production to 12,000 metric tons (Epler 1983: 8).

[256] Sport fishing is left out this study since I observed almost no fishing tourism. Also, sport fishing was rarely discussed by the local inhabitants. There were four small dwellings being constructed by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Kassumba Nalú; this project was referred to as a hotel. The rainy season began before the tin roofs were put in place, however, and one of the four dwellings collapsed. I am unsure how successful this project will be and it is doubtful that this hotel will draw any sport fishers, domestic or international. Only one incident of note in relation to sport fishing was observed during my time in Kassumba. On April 22, 2007, eight military personnel from Portugal who were stationed in Bissau arrived and set up a camp on the beach. They had meant to go to Kampeana and fish, but they had made a wrong turn and ended up in Kassumba. The tide was out when they arrived. The men never did get the opportunity to fish before returning to the capital city.

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Long before that, Lieutenant Avelino Teixeira da Mota of Portuguese Guinea often discussed the potential of the fishery sector both as an industrial endeavor and indigenous food source (1947: 67-68; 1954: 190-191). For example, he wrote, "With a rising colonial population alongside the vast indigenous population, fish could be contributing important protein that is lacking" (1954: 191, translation mine).[257] More than fifty years later, fish remain underutilized by the indigenous population since they often cannot compete with foreign vessels. During the colonial era, only one private fishing company known as Paralta was operating in Guinea-Bissau (Epler 1983: 19).

After independence in 1974, Guinea-Bissau did not sign any direct cooperative agreements with Portugal to fish off its coast again until 1993. The newly established government, nonetheless, did sign post-independence Fishery Agreements with the Soviet Union's Fisheries Ministry, Sovrybflot, which came into force on April 11, 1975 creating Estrela do Mar (Epler 1983: 10). This agreement lasted ten years with tacit extensions every five years thereafter.[258] Jointly signed with the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the agreement contained ten articles in which Guinea-Bissau received economic and technical assistance for the development of their fishing sector aimed at increasing both the domestic supply of fish and exports. For example, Guinea-Bissau received five medium-tonnage fishing vessels and leased four more in exchange for "systematic exploitation of fish stocks in the coastal waters" (Soviet Union 1976: 332). By 1979, the Soviet Union contributed 5.8 percent of Guinea-Bissau's international economic assistance. These countries renewed their Estrela do Mar partnership in 1982; it remained the primary fishing enterprise in the country and increased

[257] "*O peixe está fazendo muita falta, tanto à crescente população civilizada como à vasta população indígena, à qual poderá trazer um importante contributo em proteínas, cuja carência tanto se faz sentir*."

[258] The contract with the Soviet Union was renegotiated in 1986 after several years of underpayment for an additional five years (Forrest 1992: 100).

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the number of fishing vessels to fourteen between 175 and 811 gross registered tonnages (GRT) (Epler 1983: 10; Galli & Jones 1987: 122-123). Over these same years, 1975 to 1982, fishery production in Guinea-Bissau increased from 1,271 to 4,176 metric tons (Epler 1983: 11).

Next, Guinea-Bissau established two fishing ventures, Semapesca and Guialp, with a private French firm and the Algerian government respectively. Semapesca emerged in December 1975 as a joint-venture with Adripeche. It began operations in 1979 and went out of business by 1981. The Algerian and Guinea-Bissauan governments established Guialp in September 1975, but it never became fully operational (Epler 1983: 16-19).[259] After the liberalization of the economy in 1992 when the Fishing Ministry of Guinea-Bissau revoked many privileges previously afforded to national ventures in fishing under the November 1988 policy, the launching of several private industrial fishing enterprises quickly followed suit including Navipesca, Praiamar, Guipal, Guiné-Pesca, Globo Mar, and Navipesca (Fortes 1996: 286). More recently, however, the extensive agreements reached with the European Economic Community have overshadowed these private enterprises.

The most long-term and extensive partnership with Guinea-Bissau over rights to its EEZ began in 1980 when they authorized an Agreement and Protocol on fishing with the European Economic Community. Since 1980, officials consistently renew these contracts with some revisions to the allowable catch quotas every few years (See Figure 15). Most recently, they arranged a four-year Agreement and Protocol for the period from June 16, 2007 to June 15, 2011 (Fishupdate.com 2008). The new protocol maintains the extraction of shrimp (4,400 GRT), fish and cephalopods (4,400 GRT), and tuna (23 tuna seiners and surface long liners and 14 pole and

[259] In June 1987, a five-year fishery contract was signed between Algeria and Guinea-Bissau at which time they established the Guialp joint-venture (Forrest 1992: 100).

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Figure 15: EU Fishing Quotas in Guinea-Bissau's EEZ

Year	Total Potential Fish Quantity (GRT)[260]	Total Cost[261]	Avg. Cost per GRT
2007-2008	11,150	EUR 11,268,192.50	EUR 1,010.60
2006-2007	13,000	EUR 11,422,390	EUR 878.65
2005-2006	13,000	EUR 11,422,390	EUR 878.65
2004-2005	13,000	EUR 11,422,390	EUR 878.65
2003-2004	16,720	EUR 13,767,240	EUR 823.40
2002-2003	16,720	EUR 13,767,240	EUR 823.40
2001-2002	16,720	EUR 13,767,240	EUR 823.40
2000-2001	16,970	ECU[262] 14,105,685	ECU 831.21
1999-2000	16,970	ECU 14,105,685	ECU 831.21
1998-1999[263]	16,970	ECU 14,105,685	ECU 831.21
1997-1998	16,970	ECU 14,105,685	ECU 831.21
1996-1997	14,990	ECU 10,159,490	ECU 677.75
1995-1996	14,990	ECU 10,159,490	ECU 677.75
1994-1995	16,800	ECU 10,783,000	ECU 641.85
1993-1994	16,800	ECU 10,783,000	ECU 641.85
1990-1991	19,125	ECU 8,558,625	ECU 447.51
1989-1990	19,125	ECU 8,558,625	ECU 447.51
1988-1989	12,750	ECU 4,380,400	ECU 343.56
1987-1988	12,750	ECU 4,380,400	ECU 343.56
1986-1987	12,750	ECU 4,380,400	ECU 343.56
1985-1986	8,500	ECU 2,560,200	ECU 301.20
1984-1985	8,500	ECU 2,560,200	ECU 301.20
1983-1984	8,500	ECU 2,560,200	ECU 301.20

SOURCE: EU (1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008). (See Appendix II).

[260] Includes shrimp, fin-fish, cephalopods, and tuna.

[261] Includes: (1) annual financial contribution, (2) additional amounts for sanitation, monitoring and surveillance, research and development, etc., (3) observer fees, (4) one month of practical vocational training of Guinea-Bissauan nationals, (5), license fees, and (6) 5% license processing fees.

[262] The Euro (EUR) was introduced to world financial markets as an accounting currency in 1999 and launched as physical coins and banknotes on January 1, 2002. It replaced the former European Currency Unit (ECU) at a ratio of 1:1.

[263] Fishing activities were suspended between June 1998 and April 1999 due to an outbreak of armed conflict in Guinea-Bissau. The EU withheld the 6.5 million euro contribution for this period. Once peace returned to the country, this money was donated to Guinea-Bissau to help restore fishing sector facilities damaged in the conflict (Afrol 2001b).

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line vessels). Quotas remain the same as those negotiated in 2001 except that the number of licenses for tuna vessels declined from seventy to thirty-seven. Under the terms of the contract, the EU will contribute seven million Euros annually, thirty-five percent earmarked for the development of Guinea-Bissau's industrial fishing sector. In addition, a yearly contribution of 500,000 Euros goes toward helping to defray the costs associated with improving the sanitation of the processing industry and regulating the fishery sector and fishing territory. The contract also contains provisions specifying license fees, the payment of observer salaries, and the training of Guinea-Bissauan fisherpersons. The EU ships entering Guinea-Bissauan waters come from Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Portugal.

In addition to the EU and Soviet Union Fishery Agreements, Guinea-Bissau has also signed over partial fishing rights to its EEZ waters to China beginning in 1984 and Senegal starting in 1993. Chinese/Guinea-Bissau fishery relations began to take shape in 1974. They suspended their relations in 1990 and renewed them in 1998. Guinea-Bissau fashioned official protocols in 2002 and 2005 with the China International Fisheries Cooperation (CONAPEMAC). Over five years (2000-2005), China purchased 127 licenses to fish in Guinea-Bissau's Economic Zone granting them access to extract up to 23,569 metric tons of fishery produce. These licenses netted Guinea-Bissau more than 8.7 million dollars (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 65). Japanese, Korean, Canadian, and other West African vessels also ply the coast of Guinea-Bissau for fish either by purchasing individual licenses or by fishing illegally. News agencies regularly report on the subverting of national and international fishery laws in Guinea-Bissau's EEZ. For example, the APA news revealed,

> Most of the Asian vessels and pirogues from the sub-region fish in Guinea-Bissau waters without permission, according to a representative of the authorities. This illegally caught fish is then landed and sold in other countries, losing Guinea-Bissau the opportunity of imposing export taxes. 'It is estimated that between 300

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> and 400 South Korean vessels and pirogues from the sub-region are coming fishing in our waters without authorisation. Most of the vessels have licenses delivered by Guinea-Conakry'. (APA news 2008)[264]

Villagers of Kassumba expressed similar sentiments during my discussions with them. For example, during a focus group with several male Nalú youths on April 13, 2007, they agreed,

> The Koreans come here [to Kassumba] and buy a lot of fish. They station themselves in Guinea Conakry, but they come here to buy our fish. They set up an ice chest on the beach to store fish. We put our catch in the large wooden boxes after they fill them with ice. They operate in Kassumba, Kadiko, and Cacine. They only want the fish named *bobo*. They buy our fish and then transport them to their large ships. They bring nets, hooks, and sinkers, everything the local fishermen need to catch these fish every year. They come back during the rainy season each year. They start buying in Guinea Conakry, but they need more, so they come here to buy fish too. Their project is really based out of Guinea Conakry. They come and catch the fish and then take them all back to Europe. Many Korean projects buy up fish. One ship is called "Tenomuna", but I can't think of the others. When they come, they post markers and warnings in the water all around. They take our fish to Europe, Asia, Australia, everywhere. If you agree to sell your catch, they will buy them. You only make money, however, if you have the proper nets that catch *bobo*. Some people have these types of nets, but they don't share. We have the nets that catch big fish like *korbina*, *kaudu*, *djoto*, etc. These fish we can catch well. But *bobo*, they are little fish.

Bobo, a type of croaker indigenous to West Africa, resides in coastal waters above mud ocean floors. They live in estuaries and coastal lagoons although *bobo* move farther offshore to about one-hundred meters for spawning during the rainy season from September to December (Fishbase 2007). The fishers of Guinea-Bissau successfully catch adult *bobo* at the start of the rainy season. Then, as the offspring hatch and return to coastal inlets for protection, the fishers again catch large quantities of smaller, immature *bobo* from December to February. During this

[264] A 2004 report on Guinea Conakry states, "The artisanal sector's vitality is also an asset: for example, the recent emergence of an integrated artisanal sub-sector (fishing, packaging, and export) on the "*boboé*" with a market share that is growing at the expense of Korean industrial fisheries" (Thomas, et al. 2004: 69). This is surely one reason why the Koreans are now seen illegally plying the waters off the shores of Guinea-Bissau and even arranging contracts with local fisherpersons there.

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period, Korean vessels ply the shores of Guinea-Bissau arranging the purchase of these fish from local fisherpersons.

Residents of Kassumba refer to *bobo* as "nose fish" or *pis di branku* (white person's fish) because foreigners buy it. These fish lack appeal by locals due to their high concentration of small bones. Although I never actually witnessed Korean vessels stopping at the Kassumba Port to purchase fish, locals repeatedly assured me that the large green wooden ice chests along the Kassumba shore were left there by the Korean fishermen. Korean fishermen also distributed fishing gear through Carlos, the local Balanta president of the rural community. If a fisherperson took Korean equipment from Carlos, they owed these foreigners a debt payable in fish.

According to one of the most successful and respected fishermen of Kassumba, the Koreans regularly distributed fishing equipment through Carlos. After every ten kilograms of *bobo* caught and sold to the Koreans, they discounted one kilogram's worth of fish from the cost of the supplies until the debt was re-paid and the fisherperson owned the equipment. However, the fishing gear often wore out before the fisherman repaid the debt; this created a situation of debt bondage to the Koreans (05/08/07). While the coastal people of Kassumba acquired scarce fishing gear through these fishing arrangements, foreign vessels operating out of Guinea Conakry arranging localized deals robbed the Guinea-Bissauan State of much needed licensing fees.

The sale of fishing licenses to foreign fleets should be worth as much as $300 million annually, a tenth of what the government currently receives (afrol 2001a). For example, in 1993, the sale of fishing licenses netted the Government only $12.6 million (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000: 8). In the 1980s, Galli and Jones noted that the Ministry of Planning and Development calculated potential yields of fish, oysters, shrimp and other seafood at 150,000 to

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200,000 tons or more per year with an international monetary value of at least $180 million (1987: 130; Forrest 1992: 100; Fortes 1996: 277). At the same time, the World Bank released a figure that increased this potential yield to 300,000 tons per year (1982: 14).

Epler attributes the fifty percent increase in potential sustainable yield from Guinea-Bissau to the explosion of the triggerfish population (1983: 3). A pre-investment study on the processing and marketing of triggerfish (*Balistes Capriscus*) by America's Development Foundation for USAID estimated a fishing potential of between 250,000 and 300,000 tons of annual catch with approximately 125,000 tons being Balistes (1983: 47, 66). Triggerfish, however, are unappetizing to the local population. Specialists credit the increased triggerfish biomass of the early 1980s to the overfishing of other more desirable fish stocks, which allowed triggerfish to exploit more territory. Triggerfish stocks flourish off the shores of Guinea-Bissau and international development should take advantage of their increased biomass in the future since the local population is uninterested. However, based on the current infrastructure and state of the fishery sector of Guinea-Bissau, a more general approach focused on strengthening programs already underway such as indigenous private enterprises may be more appropriate at the present time (America's Development Foundation 1983: 66-67).

The World Bank report of 1982 indicated the difficulty Guinea-Bissau had in protecting its offshore resources. Rough estimates given by the World Bank and reiterated by Galli and Jones suggest that while Guinea-Bissau produced 7,400 tons of fish in 1979, foreign vessels culled an additional 90,000 tons of fishery produce (1987: 130). The most recent estimates of Guinea-Bissau's potential fishery yields have decreased since the World Bank estimates of the 1980s; studies now show between 72,000 and 120,000 tons divided among fish (77,000 tons),

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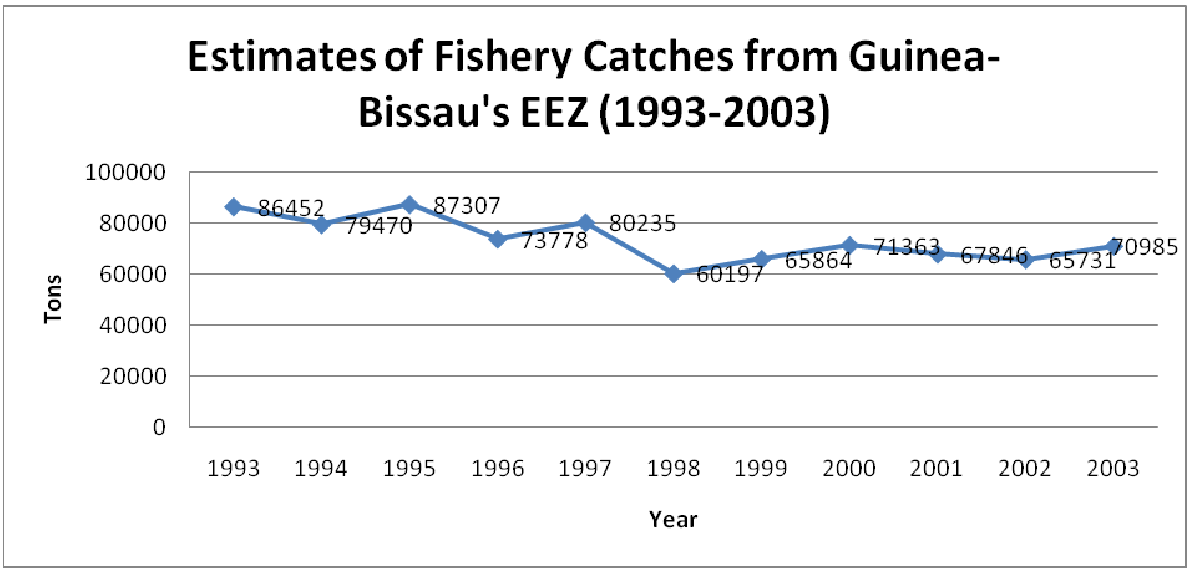
crustaceans (3,025 tons), cephalopods (5,300 tons), rays (5,400 tons), and sharks (5,000 tons) living off the coast of Guinea-Bissau (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 38).[265]

Figure 16.



SOURCE: Ndiaye & Diouf (2007: 47).[266]

The total yearly fishery agreements and licensing of Guinea-Bissauan fishery resources regularly exceeds safe yield sizes for several species. For example, the EU's most recent Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Guinea-Bissau covering the fishing seasons of June 16, 2007 through June 15, 2011 gives their vessels permission to extract 4,400 GRT of shrimp, 4,400 GRT of fin-fish and cephalopods, and 110 metric tons of tuna. In 2008, the FAO estimated that

[265] Vlad M. Kaczynski estimates the potential annual catch of marine living resources in the Guinea-Bissau 200-mile EEZ at approximately 280,000 tons, 100,000 of which is the unappealing triggerfish. This leaves about 180-190,000 tons/year of commercially valuable produce with an estimated value of $85.5 million. Once the 15% license fees are added to this figure, Guinea-Bissau has a commercial potential from the fishery sector of $12.8 million per year. Estimates suggest, however, that Guinea-Bissau received only 16% of these direct yearly fees from foreign fleets fishing within their EEZ (1989: 7-8, 10).

[266] INEC/CIPA figures are slightly different from those provided above. They estimate the yearly catch size at 77.738 metric tons in 1997, 57.162 metric tons in 2000, and 54.990 in 2001 (INEC 20008).

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Guinea-Bissau's fishing zone could support the extraction of 2,800 to 3,000 tons of shrimp. According to this same report, fishers were currently exploiting shrimp, but the population should recover due to their reproduction cycle. At the same time, sandy- and rocky- bottom species of shrimp from the Senegambian-Guinean continental shelf were being heavily- and over-exploited, respectively.[267] The FAO estimated cephalopods potential yields from Guinea-Bissauan waters at 5,500 to 8,000 tons while annual estimates for small pelagic fish were listed at 100,000 tons (FAO 2008).[268] This suggests that any catches above the contractual limits as well as undocumented artisanal fishing and illegal foreign poaching has the strong possibility of pushing the amount of aquatic production above acceptable losses.

In an example of just how closes Guinea-Bissau has come to going beyond acceptable sustainable limits of extracted biomass, Fortes cites the Department of Statistics for the Ministry of Fishing over a three year period. According to this data, in 1990, 96,382 metric tons of fish were caught along with 2,443 metric tons of shrimp, and 14,574 metric tons of cephalopods. The year 1991 saw 77,132 metric tons of fish, 4,356 metric tons of shrimp, and 10,942 metric tons of cephalopods. By 1993, the amount of fish extracted from Guinea-Bissauan waters had been reduced to 66,850 metric tons, while the shrimp catch had dramatically increased to 10,626 metric tons. Cephalopods captured amounted to 10,350 metric tons in that same year. Domestic fisherpersons took only ten percent of these industrial catches. From 1990 to 1993, the average yearly value of the fish landed was $2.7 million. According to this same data, 1990 saw 315 additional licenses going to 208 vessels, 1991 had 315 licenses granted to 213 vessels (valued at

[267] Potential yields for sandy bottom species are estimated at between 5,000 to 8,000 tons annually. Potential yields for rocky bottom species are estimated at between 5,000 to 20,000 tons annually (FAO 2008).

[268] Binet states that, "the potential of Guinea-Bissau's EEZ is estimated at several thousand tonnes for prawns, between 15,000 and 30,000 tonnes for demersal production and over 100,000 tonnes for small pelagics" (2008: 23).

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approximately $13.5 million), and 1992 saw a total 242 fishing licenses granted to 162 vessels (Fortes 1996: 282-283, 287).

Demonstrated over these three years, the annual yields ran dangerously close to acceptable limits for Guinea-Bissau's fisheries given above. It becomes obvious that a lack of accurate data when it comes to the fishing sector could be extremely detrimental to long-term management and growth potential. It may be in the country's best interests to underestimate their potential yields and adjust the Foreign Fishery Agreements, quotas, and licences accordingly until more accurate data is available to help determine the fishery policies for Guinea-Bissau's EEZ. Lacking alternative foreign capital revenue for the government, however; this is unlikely.

In a report for the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Fisheries Policies Division, Thomas Binet estimated that twenty to twenty-five percent of Guinea-Bissau's estimated potential 300,000 metric tons of aquatic resources were exploited in 2008, however, these yield estimates may be set too high since accurate fishery data is poor (2008: 51) Binet states that the major trend observed is "over-exploitation, mostly by foreign fishing" and that the challenges Guinea-Bissau faces are to "improve resource assessment and better quantify the foreign fleet's fishing effort" (2008: 51).[269]

The overfishing of the waters off the coast of Guinea-Bissau severely impacts the aquaculture of the Eastern Central Atlantic because its coast with numerous islands, inlets, and mangrove swamps act as a breeding ground, nursery, and sanctuary for a number of fish species

[269] Epler, writing in the early 1980s, broke down the available resources from Guinea-Bissauan waters as, "Pelagic species compose 75% of the high seas resource, 16% are demersal, 5% are in the tuna family and the remainder are primarily shrimp. Ten percent of the potential yield is found in coastal waters. Approximately 95% of the coastal stocks are Fin fish and 5% are shrimp" (1983: 3).

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(Fortes 1996: 277). Therefore, poorly regulated fishing and environmental policies have compounded the detrimental effects on the fisheries.[270]

Figure 17. Aquatic species caught/exported from Guinea-Bissau's EEZ

Year	Aquatic Production[271]/Exports (metric ton)	Year	Aquatic Production/Exports (metric tons)
1980	4,166 / 897	1994	6,000 / 1,630
1981	3,643 / 2,595	1995	6,328 / 1,483
1982	3,977 / 1,232	1996	7,000 / 1,891
1983	2,671 / 610	1997	7,200 / 2,317
1984	2,751 / 2,103	1998	6,700 / 1,948
1985	3,743 / 2,432	1999	6,200 / 1,661
1986	3,700 / 788	2000	6,315 / 3,454
1987	4,100 / 370	2001	6,848 / 6,155
1988	4,690 / 625	2002	7,324 / NA
1989	5,400 / 860	2003	6,153 / NA
1990	5,400 / 1,884	2004	6,200 / NA
1991	5,000 / 2,550	2005	6,200 / NA
1992	5,200 / 530	2006	6,200 / NA
1993	5,350 / 1,230	2007	NA / NA

SOURCE: FAO (2008); Smith-Morris & George (2007: 590).

The Detriment

Fishery Agreements and Protocols such as those negotiated with foreign agents including the EU have detrimental implications for peripheral nations such as Guinea-Bissau; these

[270] According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), "Both Senegal and Guinea Bissau are important mangrove habitats. Mangroves are one of the most vital, yet threatened of coastal ecosystems. They recycle nutrients and give protection – their destruction leaves coastal areas exposed to erosion, storm damage, increases salt intrusion and alters natural drainage. . . 'Mangrove loss is linked to decline in fish stocks. They ofter [*sic.*] a critical haven for fish, acting like a nursery. Large predators are unable to enter the mangroves, allowing fish to safely spawn, and young fish to mature'" (Eshelby 2007).

[271] Obviously, these figures by the FAO are extremely low, based on the sparse official records available. For example, Epler summarizes that in 1982, 153,000 metric tons of fish were harvested from Guinea-Bissau's waters, 96.7% of which were caught by offshore foreign fleets (1983: 52). For that same year, the FAO gives a figure of 3,977 metric tons of aquatic production, only 2.6% of Epler's estimation (2008).

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concerns, however, are often obscured by seemingly altruistic initiatives of development and bilateral cooperation. Upon initial examination, these contracts promote development agendas designed by progressive groups and nations. For example, the EU agreed to provide Guinea-Bissau with the financial resources to develop their domestic fishing industry through direct contributions (1) to improve health and plant-health conditions of fishery products, (2) for fisheries monitoring, control, and surveillance, and (3) for improved scientific cooperation. At the same time, these "contributions" give the EU bargaining leverage to maximize their quotas taken from Guinea-Bissau's waters (Zubiria 1996: 30-32). Therefore, by the time Guinea-Bissau can develop a domestic industrial sector, overfishing will have taken a severe toll on potential yields thus limiting future production from their EEZ.

In 2007, a large percentage of the domestic industrial fleet remained under the control of foreign companies that made agreements to fish in Guinea-Bissau's water under its flag. These foreign companies claim that this arrangement benefits the local markets by providing cheap fish produce to the indigenous people. As much as eighty percent of the catch from these ships, however, ends up disembarking at foreign ports such as Dakar (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 72).

At the same time, questions of transparency in the national government abound. Limited governmental checks and balances provide little accountability for these incoming foreign investments. Bribes and corruption of the few officials in place to regulate the fishing sector of Guinea-Bissau are commonplace. For example, over a ten year period from 1998 to 2007, the EU paid approximately EUR 129 million for the opportunity to fish in Guinea-Bissauan waters with a large proportion of this money directly earmarked for investment in fishery infrastructure and management. A sum this large should have led to dramatic improvements in the ports and

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domestic fishing fleet. In that same ten year span, however, inspectors documented almost no improvements to the fishery infrastructure and aquaculture. Joshua B. Forrest writes,

> This focus is made especially clear by the fact that the government has shared almost none of the earnings from these contracts with the country's own fishermen, many of whom do not have access to motorized canoes or even possess fishnets. Thus, this extraction-oriented policy has meant that approximately 100,000 tons of fish are hauled from Guinea-Bissau's waters annually by foreign mass trawlers and sold abroad (the profits of which are accrued by fishing companies and the Guinean government), but local fishermen are only able to pull in a few thousand tons of fish per year. (1994: 101)

Whether from mismanagement of funds or corruption, the lack of improvements in the domestic fishery sector actually benefit the foreign fishing fleets such as those of the EU since Guinea-Bissau must continue to rely on them to exploit their EEZ.

With the continued underdevelopment of the domestic fishing sector, Guinea-Bissau remains dependent on these foreign fishing fleets, which consistently work to undermine, exploit, or sidestep existing regulatory policies. For example, an outside fishing boat pays license fees,

> According to its grt and the number of days that [it] spends fishing, notwithstanding the amount of fish that it catches. . . The license fee system is what makes the agreements unfair, and provokes over-exploitation. This system is an incentive to over-fish by using faster and lighter boats that are able to catch more fish in less time. (Zubiria 1996: 28-29)

Another failing fishery policy involves allowances for Guinea-Bissauan observers appointed by the Ministry in order to document proper fishing operations such as noting the fishing gear used, verifying the catch data for Guinea-Bissau waters recorded in the logbook, confirming the percentages of by-catches, and estimating discarded catches. At the same time, according to the wording of the 2007 Guinea-Bissau/EU Protocol,

> Shipowners shall bear the cost of accommodating observers in the same conditions as the officers on the vessel, within the confines of the structure of the vessel. As contribution to the costs arising from the presence of the observer on

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> board, together with the license fee the shipowner shall pay the Guinea-Bissau authorities the sum of EUR 12 per GRT per year *pro rata temporis* for each vessel fishing in Guinea-Bissau waters. The salary and social contribution of the observer shall be borne by the Ministry.

In other words, the Ministry pays the ship observer from funds coming directly from the shipowner; these funds compensate the observer's expenses on board. Therefore, the observer, in charge of documenting the fishing practices of the vessel under his/her watch, receives payment, albeit secondhand, from the ship owners themselves creating a conflict of interest (Kaczynski 1989: 14-15).[272] It seems, then, that industrial fishing in Guinea-Bissau remains firmly in the hands of foreign fishing fleets and their catches rarely make their way into the hands of Guinea-Bissauans. The FAO confirms,

> About 90 percent of the fishermen are from Guinea producing 44 percent of the total catch and 9 percent are foreigners, producing 56 percent. This difference is mainly due to two factors: the lack of fishing materials and the lower efficiency of the Guinea-Bissau fishermen. (2008)

The more than eighty percent of fish landed by industrial fleets from Guinea-Bissauan waters that end up in foreign ports do so in part because of the lack of fish processing infrastructure in the country (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 72). In addition, a weak demand for industrially caught species inside Guinea-Bissau keeps the prices paid at local markets lower than in neighboring countries. Finally, the wording of Agreement provisions does not help when it comes to landing industrial catches at domestic ports. Zubiria notes, "There is no obligation to land catch in local ports and the wording 'whenever possible' [in the EU fishery Agreement and Protocol] makes this good intent meaningless" (1996: 29). As a result, artisanal fisherpersons working much closer to Guinea-Bissau's shores supply much of the fish available for purchase in the markets of Bissau and throughout the country.

[272] "Guinea-Bissau lacks the means to measure catches truly made by licensed ships, or to inspect illegal catches" (Binet 2008: 23).

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A majority of the catches in Guinea-Bissau's EEZ by artisanal, or small-scale, fisherpersons, however, also find their way into more lucrative foreign markets.[273] According to a report published by the World Bank,

> Currently about 3,500 artisanal fishers are reported to be operating in the country, of which at least half are from Senegal and Guinea-Conakry.[274] Their number may have been almost halved since the war, when it is thought that many of the foreign artisanal fishers abandoned Guinea-Bissau. Yet most of the artisanal catch is still taken by foreign artisanal fishers and likely transported to neighboring countries. Only about 10 percent or so is reported to be taken by domestic fishers. . . A second reason for the small share of the artisanal catch accounted for by nationals is that declining catches in Senegal, Guinea-Conakry, and Ghana have caused a substantial migration of fishers from these countries into Guinea-Bissau waters. The net benefits for Guinea-Bissau from this migration are likely to be modest and even probably negative – these fishermen sell most of their catch back to their own countries, and pay nominal license fees or fish illegally – while the costs, in terms of additional fishing efforts on already heavily exploited stocks may well be substantial. As a result, although foreign fishermen have been fishing in local waters for decades, reports of clashes between local and foreign artisanal fishers appear to be increasing. (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 71)

I witnessed the exportation of several species of fish from the villages of Kassumba and Kadiko both located in the southern border zone of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry on a regular basis. For example, I spoke with a Fula trader on March 3, 2007; he attempted to buy one-thousand kilograms of dried premiere-class fish to export to Dakar. He transported the fish over land in large sacks by bicycle. He collected a few fish per day, until he had enough to bring back to Dakar by public transportation. He informed me that he made the trip five times per year with a small profit margin. Traders such as him easily crossed the border between the

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[273] "*Embora as cifreas mencionadas ocultem diferenças regionais e de classe, o extenso mercado paralelo e o comércio ilegal com os vizinhos Senegal e Guiné-Conacri e a importância das actividades de subsistência, particularmente nas áreas rurais, o quadro geral de pobreza e desequilíbrios económicos básicos, é pertinente*" (Tvedten 1991: 69).

[274] Based on a 1991 census, Fernandes places the number of foreign artisanal fisherpersons from neighboring countries such as Senegal and Guinea Conakry operating inside Guinea-Bissau at 1,500 (1996: 308). Epler states, "Nhiomincas, professional fishermen who migrate seasonally from Senegal and The Gambia, are responsible for a large portion of the artisanal landings" (1983: 21).

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neighboring countries; he simply paid the Guinea-Bissauan police 1,000 XOF ($2) and they allowed him to pass with his cargo.

A second *djila* trader, Ibrahama Djallow, resided in Kadiko for part of the year. He originated in Guinea Conakry. Ibrahama made two trips per year with five-hundred kilograms of dried and crushed *djafal* using a transit visa to get between the two countries. This year, however, Ibrahama decided to trade his *djafal* at the Gabu market in Guinea-Bissau and then take the more valuable *skalada*[275] to Senegal where he could make more money. He paid the local fishermen 200 XOF per kilogram of dried *djafal* using his own scale to measure their catch. He had only a few belongings in his temporary residence; he returned to Guinea Conakry at the start of the rainy season. Ibrahama asked me to help him learn English so that he could also begin to trade in the Gambia where the demand for fish exceeded that of his homeland due to the booming tourist industry located there. These porous borders between Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry[276] sometimes work against the local artisanal fisherpersons since the larger and

[275] On average, salt-dried fillets termed *skalada* were purchased from local fisherperson at 500 XOF per kilogram and then resold elsewhere for approximately 1,250 XOF ($2.50).

[276] Peoples of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry have complex relations; they share more than geography and trade. During independence, the Guinea-Bissauan freedom fighters operated out of Guinea Conakry. In addition, almost all of the ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau claim origins in the Futa Jalon region of Guinea Conakry. Today, the border towns such as Kassumba in Guinea-Bissau and Konfuk in Guinea Conakry on the other side of the Cacine River share resources, families, and rites of passage such as the Balanta *finadu*, or male circumcision ceremony. In fact, in 2007, Konfuk, a large fishing community of more than 300 houses, welcomed Balanta youths from throughout the region to take part in one of the largest *finadu* of that year regardless of their nationality.

Locals regularly traversed the border by canoe for a variety of reasons including medical emergencies, to visit their families and girlfriends, to buy gasoline and other hard to find goods in the local markets, and to trade goods and services. For example, in June of 2007, Fatu took her youngest son Do to the hospital in Guinea Conakry for a hernia operation. If one left by canoe from the port of Cassaka and arrived in Katufri in Guinea Conakry, the canoe would cost 2-3,000 XOF depending on the amount of cargo one had.

It was not until July 16, 2007 that I made my first trip across the border. I went to Kashek with three Balanta youths, Tchoca, Bingaté, and his older brother Ampa. We left at 8:30 AM. It took us two hours and fifteen minutes to get there and three and a half hours to get back because we went by small canoe with oars. We spent less than an hour in Kashek because the tide was on its way out and if we had waited any longer, the canoe would have been beached and we would have had to have spent the night. Our reason for the trip was to buy gasoline, which was currently unavailable in Guinea-Bissau due to the closing of the borders between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. We passed a pirogue with a motor headed in the opposite direction shuttling people back to Guinea-Bissau including Fatu, her husband Nyambi, and their son Do who had just gotten out of the hospital. Kashek was a large convoluted

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technologically superior population of Guinea Conakry often impinges on their neighbor's livelihood (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2000: 34).

Guinea-Bissau continues to bleed fish from both the industrial sector unable to negotiate fair and balanced contracts, and from the artisanal sector that finds its way around regulatory checkpoints. Therefore, "Guinea-Bissau thus has in effect no way to determine the volume and value of the fish caught in its waters, and has no economic basis to assess the fair value of fishing licenses" (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 72). The strongest illustration of Guinea-Bissau's lack of control over their fishery resources was the simple fact that Kayanki, a fishing village between Kassumba and Iraque from 1988 and 1991, ran out of fish and eventually disappeared. Most of the fishermen that resided there have since moved to Iraque; they have had to find new lines of work in order to support their families.

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTISANAL FISHERPERSON

The Artisanal Fishery

Small-scale fishers of the West African region total around 2,700,000 people of which approximately 500,000 fish full-time, 400,000 fish part-time, and 1,800,000 work in the secondary sectors of fish processing, marketing, and distribution (Zubiria 1996: 7). As previously noted, artisanal and industrial sectors share the fisheries of Guinea-Bissau.[277] The

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fishing settlement that continued to grow as a lucrative fishing spot where national boundaries were indistinguishable and therefore, consistently crossed while following the fish.

[277] The importance of these two types of fishing in Guinea-Bissau is explicitly stated in a 1998 natural and social science textbook developed by the Ministry of Education. It reads, "*Na nossa terra praticam-se dois tipos de pesca. A pesca artesanal faz-se nos rios e no mar, peto da costa. É praticada por homens e mulheres. Saem de canoas a remo ou a motor, também fazem a pesca a pé. Utilizam redes redondas, derivantes, n'pandé, gamboa, lança, linha e*

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industrial sector provides the country with much needed foreign exchange through joint ventures and fishing agreements. The lack of employment opportunities in the industrial sector, however, needs to be rectified.

Although over 7,000 Guinea-Bissauan nationals have officially registered as industrial fishers and deckhands, less than four-hundred of them are employed at any given time. Some estimates go as high as 2,100 fisherpersons being employed with an additional 13,000 people in supportive roles in fishery services and industries (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 72). Binet gives a generous figure of about 15,000 people employed in Guinea-Bissau's processing and marketing sector. In addition, he lists 1,232 small-scale fishers operating in the country[278] along with fifty domestic industrial fishers (2008: 86). These figures, however, amount to only one percent of Guinea-Bissau's entire population being employed directly by foreign and domestic fishing, which contributes almost half of the country's governmental revenues (Binet 2008: 49). The artisanal fishing sector alone provides significant household economic security and employment for citizens and foreigners throughout the country while the industrial sector is currently better able to provide foreign capital for national works such as port repair and the construction of fish processing plants.

Estimates for the artisanal sector of the Tombali Region in southern Guinea-Bissau list 644 domestic fishers, 400 foreign fishers, 300 canoes without motors, and 45 canoes with motors

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armadi-lha. Nos últimos anos foram feitos acordos de pesca com alguns países. Eles pagam para ter o direito de pescar no nosso mar. Esta pesca industrial faz-se com barcos grandes chamados atuneiros. Utilizam redes enormes chamados de arrastões, de fundo de tresmalho, de cerco e de arrasto para camarão. As redes granes e finas têm desvantagem porque apanham peixes pequenos. Como esses peixes não são aproveitados para o consumo, eles devem ser deixados para crescerem. A maioria dos peixes e mariscos são exportados para outros países. As receitas têm uma grande importância para a economia do nosso país. Os produtos do mar também são vendi-dos nos nossos mercados. Existem algumas empresas de pesca e são elas a Etrela-do-Mar, a Pescarte, a Semapesca e a Praia-Mar" (15).

[278] The Government of Guinea-Bissau gives a figure of 8,000 artisanal fishers operating in the country, 2,000 of which are foreigners (2000: 32).

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in 1991 (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 45). The artisanal sector made up of both immigrant and indigenous fisherpersons has a greater effect on subsistence and household economic strategies than the industrial sector in this area. In the late 1980s, Inger Tvedten, working alongside the Fishing Ministry (i.e., PESCARTE), determined that approximately forty percent of Guinea-Bissau's population lived along the Atlantic Coast or riverbanks. This suggests that the importance of fishing is high although data on these unofficial activities remains scarce. He estimates 6,000 artisanal fisherpersons operating inside the country along with an additional 2,000 part-time women practicing cast-net fishing in the streams and inlets (1991: 71). His figures, however, fail to acknowledge the part-timers who participate in artisanal fishing without identifying themselves as fisherpersons.

By independence in 1974, the newly established Government of Guinea-Bissau had already recognized the potential for economic growth tied to the artisanal sector prompting them to experiment with several types of development projects aimed at expanding and improving small-scale fisheries such as the Bijagos Project funded by the Swedish International Development Agency. Another, the Cacheu Fishery Project (June 1981 to July 1982) was funded by the government of Guinea-Bissau and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This project attempted to increase the amount of fish available for local consumers and to promote and expand the Fisheries Secretariat. By the end of the thirteen month experiment, however, this project passed to the European Economic Community and ceased operations.

A third project from The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and funded by the Directorate of Development and Cooperation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation attempted to advance sustainable development of artisanal fishing in the

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Rio Grande de Buba. This project, carried out between 1992 and 1998, responded to "a wish to develop an artisanal fisheries project to show what sustainable management of fisheries resources could be within the context of Guinea-Bissau" (Baran & Tous 2000: 1). It had modest success by implementing biological, fishery, and socio-economic studies; literacy programs; credit systems and technical training; judicial and surveillance support; and fisherperson/trader groups. This endeavor congratulated "itself for being one of the first to have demonstrated the possibility of using a concerted approach towards a fishery resource in order to reasonably develop its exploitation within the framework of sustainable management" (Baran & Tous 2000: 38). These and a number of other short-lived fisheries projects in Guinea-Bissau were minimally effective; this fact suggests a need for developing new alternatives to advance the artisanal fishing sector in the country.

In recognition of the lack of accurate information on the artisanal fisheries sector in Guinea-Bissau, the following section provides a description of an artisanal fishing community. According to much of the literature discussing this topic, the littoral populations of the country had, and continue to have, no robust fishing tradition, opting instead to concentrate on other economic activities such as agriculture (Baran & Tous 2000; Bouju 2000: 251; Paulme 1957: 273).[279] Most people fish, however, at least part-time.[280] Barry and Gacitua-Mario write,

[279] "Although open to the sea, Guinea-Bissau is essentially an agricultural country, in which traditional farmers in coastal areas merely supplement incomes and consumption, especially in the dry season and difficult years, by fishing for subsistence" (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 70-71).

[280] For example, while writing of Papel subsistence, Jónína Einarsdóttir expresses how some of the men she observed fished with large nets from canoes in the ocean and rivers. She goes on to state how the wives of these fishermen are in charge of processing and marketing the fish that are caught (2004: 42-43). Robert Baum had the following to say about fishers from the Casamance, "The Diola's prime source of protein were the fish and shellfish that were taken from these waters. The oldest fishing techniques were bow and arrow, spear, and various types of fish traps. Rights to specific sites to erect reed fish traps, capable of snaring several bushels of fish each day, were individually owned and could be lent or sold. Serer strangers introduced net and rod fishing, which enabled Esulalu fishermen to exploit the deeper waters of the estuaries and the Casamance River. Most fish and shellfish were sold for rice (though there is an increasing preference for money); some were dried for future use or for sale outside Esulalu" (1999: 32). He continues, "Koonjaen fishermen limited their activities to constructing fish traps along the

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> During times of poor harvests, or during the regular hunger season, fishing also serves as an important coping strategy for those communities based along the coast and many rivers. . . Despite the vast fishery potential in Guinea-Bissau, only 10% of fish caught annually is by domestic artisanal fishers. Indeed, fishing in Guinea-Bissau has traditionally been a marginal activity, mainly to complement agricultural activities. For those households where fishing is one of the livelihood strategies, fishing is on average practiced some 4-6 days a month, over 8-10 months, for a total of less than 50 days a year. According to the FAO Fishery Country Profile (2001), in 1996 fishing was the main activity only of approximately 18% of those that engage in fishing, while agriculture was the main activity for 78%. (Barry & Gacitua-Mario 2006: 47)

D.H. Reader, in his survey of economic activities in West Africa, listed fishing as one of the primary subsistence strategies for Senegambians (1964: 41).[281] I also contradictorily noted similar trends in southern Guinea-Bissau.

Artisanal Fishing

The village of Kassumba relies on fishing, agriculture, and gathering for its inhabitants' subsistence depending on which of these activities benefits the population most at any given time.[282] This section demonstrates that for the residents of Kassumba, particularly the Nalú (Rutz 1959; Silva 1956), fishing does more than simply supplement agricultural activities. In fact, the Nalú do have a strong fishing tradition.[283] Fishing and the layout of the rivers

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estuaries and gathering shellfish in the shallows. The Koonjaen may have depended on the Floup newcomers for the construction of canoes and may also have purchased fish from them" (68).

[281] George E. Brooks suggested that much of Cape Verde's inhabitants' fishery knowledge was a direct import from the coastal mainland. "Many male and female captives had fished in rivers, creeks, and lagoons, along the western African littoral, and some men had been seafarers and traders engaged in riverine and coastwise commerce (2006: 112).

[282] Brainerd summarizes this implicit cost-benefit analysis when he writes, "If a fisherman's earnings are higher than his opportunity cost, then competitive labor market forces will induce movement of labor into artisanal fishing. In Cacheu, the next best alternative employment is subsistence farming during certain periods in the year (Hochet 1979)" (1984: 18).

[283] Jean-Pierre Chauveau, et al. identify the Nalú in their "Bibliography on the Fishing Communities in West Africa" (1989: 79-80), which suggests that they are considered a "fishing community." In a 2007 report on the fisheries of

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throughout the country helped determine the population's settlement patterns.[284] Fishing techniques among the Nalú continue to be passed down through the generations. Seafood was, and remains, one of the Nalú's primary sources of protein. In addition, fishing provides both the Nalú and Balanta residents of Kassumba with important household income. In fact, in his discussion of coastal Guinea-Bissau, Cláudio C. Maretti classified both the lands south of Tombali and the Cacine-Cubucaré-northern Catió region, where the Nalú primarily reside, as "important activity" fishing areas for both men and women (1994: 45). These territories continue to support most of the Nalú of Guinea-Bissau.

My field site village of Kassumba is located along the mouth of the Cacine River and acts as a nursery for many ocean-dwelling fish. Tributaries of this river allow for effective trap and net fishing. Artisanal fishing and aquatic gathering techniques practiced in this area are numerous and varied. For example, Nalú fishers once trapped fish ensnared in their rice paddies. They placed long, conical baskets woven of palm fronds underwater imbedded in the mud wall between dikes. The fish, trying to pass through the opening, were caught in the basket. This type of trap is referred to as a *kamboa* in the Krioulu language of Guinea-Bissau. Although the Nalú have stopped trapping in this manner, the Balanta of Kassumba still practice this fishing method.

Guinea-Bissau, it was suggested that "artisanal fishing is an ancient tradition for groups [such as the Nalú] who survived by hunting and gathering" (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 59, translation mine).

[284] During an interview on September 4, 2007 with an elder of Kassebesse, Jakin Kamara, I learned that according to Nalú history, it was the elders understanding of the nature spirits that eventually helped them fend off attacks by Fula invaders. The Nalú elders used their powers and as a result, one of their spirits appearing in the form of a giant cobra cut the Kadiko River into the landscape with its movements. The Fula arrived at the edge of the river and could not see the land where the Nalú were lying in wait on the other side of the river. The Fula could not pass and eventually their chief was captured. I was also told how the first Nalú fished in the rivers with nets similar to the Balanta women of today except that they could be closed like a purse. These ancestors were communal in nature, evenly distributing the days catch between all the families of a particular locale.

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Residents of Kassumba rely on many other fishing techniques today such as women and young girls collecting mollusks, bivalves, and other bottom-dwelling sea creatures by hand with the aid of small hammers and the action of the Atlantic tides.

The waters surrounding the village are rich in oceanic and riverine life as is evidenced by the many temporary and semi-permanent fishing camps surrounding Kassumba. These inhabitants rely on this Atlantic bounty to a high degree as evidenced below. For example, according to my 2007 household survey data, 9.66 percent of Kassumba residents' annual income came from fishery production as well as more than two-thirds of their daily protein intake. During an outing to map and acquaint myself with the nearby fishing community of Kadiko on March 24, 2007, I arrived to observe an EU funded, INEP sanctioned, survey designed to understand local fisher techniques, activities, and needs. I later wrote,

> Daniel Rodrigues, trained in the U.S. and a citizen of Guinea-Bissau, coordinated the EU project designed to examine trade and environmental impacts on fishing in the indigenous communities of West Africa and Asia. He worked in conjunction with Bissau's national research institute, INEP. I sat in on his meeting where I learned a number of facts about lifeways in this semi-permanent fishing settlement known as Kadiko. For example, I learned that passage from here to Guinea Conakry cost an individual 1,500-2,000 XOF and took approximately three hours by canoe or one and a half hours if the canoe had a motor. The Kadiko fishermen could fish from their canoes about sixteen days per month based on the actions of the tides. Kadiko residents owned two canoes with motors and fifty canoes with oars. A canoe here generally lasted two to three years. A canoe of approximately seven to eight meters cost 15,000 XOF. When they went out on a fishing trip, fishermen brought with them a knife, ten liters of fresh drinking water, fishing nets, plastic basins, a stick to bludgeon the fish, rum, and candles or a flashlight. Since Kadiko had no reliable well, the fishermen (in addition to other people residing there) purchased their fresh water from wells located in other towns at a rate of 100 XOF per five liters. Girls walked the entire distance with large basins or jugs of fresh water on their heads to make a little extra money.

Fishing activities occurred year round with increased activity at specific times of the year. Nalú and Balanta, men and women, young and old, all fished or collect marine resources in

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conjunction with a number of other economic activities making it difficult to classify Kassumba residents according to their professed line of work. Therefore, the fact that thirteen people still listed their primary occupation as fisherperson (2 females, 11 males; 4 Nalú, 9 Balanta; average age 38; average yearly income $1,668, compared to the Kassumba per capita average of $511) revealed something about the importance of fishing in this area. To illustrate, I met three young adult Balanta who went out fishing in their canoe almost every day spending nearly eight hours cleaning, checking, and repairing their *skalada* drift nets. They informed me that they took at least fifty kilograms of salt-dried *skalada* to Dakar twice per year for sale. The fillets sold at 1,500 XOF per kilogram, a three-hundred percent mark-up from Kassumba. These same men also bought *skalada* from other local fishermen for 500 XOF per kilogram, which they resold. These endeavors earned them more than 150,000 XOF ($300) per year. Interestingly, when asked about their primary profession, these three young men identified themselves as "agriculturalists."

After the cashew harvest and planting of the rice fields, the residents of this small southern village devoted much time and energy to fishing. Balanta men often left Kassumba for days or weeks at a time in order to fish. On one occasion, I witnessed ten men climb into a canoe in the port of Kassumba headed for *Ilha di Mel* (Honey Island). This island contained several fishing camps. The trip took three hours since they had to paddle there under their own power without the aid of a motor. Therefore, although many Kassumba residents did not self-identify as fisherpersons, their livelihood relied to a high degree on this economic activity. Changes in the fisheries' ecosystems dramatically affect their survival strategies and how they go about making a living. In fact, when I asked the people of this port village about how their

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economic situation could improve, they consistently cited a desire to advance their fishing sector (See Appendix I).

I have included a copy of a fishing cooperative project started by Moussa Keita in Appendix One to illustrate this las point. Moussa Keita is a respected community member, rice farmer, and fisherman in Kassumba. He read me all the articles to his proposed project and asked me to make myself a copy to bring back to the US in order to seek out potential funders. The project was originally financed by an organization from the Netherlands until the 1998 war started and they backed out. It has been sitting dormant ever since. The organization's objective was to develop a fishing co-op for the Nalú residents of Quitáfine. I also include a copy of this project to demonstrate that while I was not asked by government or international organizations for assistance in developing economic programs, the community saw me as a potential collaborator in a number of development initiatives and as a valuable liason with foreign investors.

The Calendar

Kassumba residents fish year round with spurts of intensity at specific times throughout the year when other economic activities slow or when fish abound. Artisanal fishing in Guinea-Bissau increases during two peak periods of the year. The first, April and May, coincides with the end of the dry season when most of their rice supplies disappear. They refer to these months as the hungry or lean season (*tempu di fomi*). The second fishing season goes from October to January or February and can account for as much as forty percent or more of the annual catch (Epler 1983: 37; Fernandes 1987: 70-90; Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 71). A

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fisherman of Kassumba told me that in October, November, December, and into January, everyone becomes a fisherman. He said that they catch so many fish during these months that women have to meet them at the port to help carry their catches back to the village for processing. These seasons reflect agricultural priorities and the extensive knowledge of fish patterns in the rivers of Guinea-Bissau.

Labor intensive rice cultivation starts with the rainy season beginning around June and lasting through October. This period coincides with the breeding season for many species of fish.[285] As these exhausted fish return to their ocean home after spawning in the Cacine River, many Balanta and Nalú males set out in their dugout canoes to cast nets close to shore. The mature fish are abundant and have already bred a new generation that will continue the fish cycle in subsequent years.

Without larger boats or motors, fishing from dugout canoes generally remains an activity conducted close to shore or in the numerous rivers and inlets of Guinea-Bissau according to tide cycles in conjunction with the position of the moon. A six to seven day cycle occurs every two weeks allowing fisherpersons the opportunity to fish up to fifteen days every month (Brainerd 1984: 16; Vincent 1982). For example, according to a report by Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, and Wodon for the World Bank, domestic fishers only catch about ten percent of the entire artisanal haul.

> This small proportion is attributed to the fact that fishing in Guinea-Bissau has traditionally been a marginal activity – mainly to complement agricultural activities, or as a coping strategy – practiced some 4-6 days a month, over 8-10 months, for a total of less than 50 days a year. According to data from the FAO, in 1996 fishing was the main activity of approximately 18 percent of the total

[285] "Rainy season fishing is considerably reduced to approximately 50 percent of dry season fishing time because of unfavourable weather conditions, rice growing activities, physical fatigue in the case of the non-motorized boat, and social activities which fishermen engage in" (Brainerd 1984: 16; See also, Hochet 1979).

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> numbers of fishers while agriculture occupied 78 percent. These fishers typically use small, traditional canoes, and hand lines or small gillnets. (2007: 71)

Otherwise, the rough waters and larger waves tangle drift nets and quickly flood short-sided dugout canoes. Kassumba fishermen explained the cyclical nature of the river to me as,

> Fishing is complicated around here and depends on the moon. When the moon is new (*lua novo*), the water is calm; you can fish in the rivers by canoe. This lasts approximately twelve days. Then, at the quarter moon (*quarta minguante*), the waters become rougher, but you can continue to fish for another ten days. This means that for about two-thirds of a month, fishermen can work. At the crescent moon (*crescent*), the ocean is much stronger. This lasts about five or six days. Fishing drops off at this point. In the last seven days of the month when the moon is full (*lua cheio*), no fishing occurs because the water is too rough. (03/13/07)

Fishermen spend these periods of rough water on other economic pursuits or by readying and mending their fishing gear for subsequent outings.

During the rainy season, fishermen have greater success since many species of fish enter the rivers and tributaries to spawn. In addition, people walking along the shore regularly happen upon large first- and second-class fish lying dead on the beach. If noticed right away, these fish are salvageable. These finds are salt dried and sold or eaten in the afternoon meal. I witnessed young boys of my household bring back these types of catches on two separate occasions.

The Catch

Estimates for the West African region put marine production by artisanal fisherpersons at around 930,000 tons per year (Zubiria 1996: 7). The FAO advises that these small-scale fisheries (i.e., artisanal) account for eighty to ninety percent of the total catch in West Africa. These hauls mainly consist of small pelagics such as bonga shad (Jallow 1994: ch. 1). According to this report, these small pelagic fish contribute significantly to the promotion of food self-

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sufficiency in the sub-region. To illustrate, the FAO calculated that these small fish made up fifty-seven percent (2,000/3,500 tons) of Guinea-Bissau's total catch in 1989. By the year 2000, the Government of Guinea-Bissau "estimated the capture from the sub-sector at around 50,000 metric tons per year with the majority being used to sustain the internal markets. Actual consumption estimates were about 12 kilograms per capita per year" (2000: 32, translation mine).

Writing in 1992, Forrest indicated that local fisherpersons caught and sold about 4,000 tons of fish products per year in Guinea-Bissau (96). By 1997, the FAO estimated this figure at 5,400 tons, an increase of thirty-five percent in only five years. The fishing industry divides these catches into four classes according to the value of the species. For example, bonga shad rank in the fourth-class among those fish with the least amount of marketable value. Only about thirty-five percent of these fish landed by Guinea-Bissau's artisanal fisherpersons were classified as first- and second-class fish of high quality. Those fishing without canoes including women and children made up an additional four percent (216 tons) of this catch extracted from continental waters, which were never of the first- or second-class variety (FAO 2008).

Evaluators estimated that one-hundred kilograms of fish per day were able to be caught from non-motorized pirogues (canoes) operating in Guinea-Bissau (Brainerd 1984: 17; Epler 1983; Hochet 1979; Vincent 1982). This figure, however, varies greatly depending on the location, year, canoe size, and equipment being employed. For example, on March 16, 2007, I went to see the catch from three canoes making their way to shore. They had two catfish, three stingrays, one premiere fish, and five fourth-class fish. These totaled no more than twenty or thirty kilograms.

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These same researchers projected that fishing from non-motorized boats in the town of Cacheu in the early 1980s earned 17,605 pesos ($463.29)[286] per month based on fifteen fishing days and an average take of one-hundred kilograms (Brainerd 1984). A second estimation given in 1991 suggested that traditional artisanal fisherpersons working from a one or two meter craft averaged approximately eight-hundred kilograms of fish per month while motorized pirogues of fifteen to twenty meters hauled in average catches of two-thousand kilograms per month (Tvedten 1991: 69-70). Finally, Amorim, et al. counted 7,775 fishers operating in Guinea-Bissau with an estimated catch of 2,148 kilograms per fisher per year (2004: 105). All of the above estimates outstrip the observed catch sizes from Kassumba in 2007 by a significant margin. I can explain this because most fishing done in Kassumba was not intensive and full time. Instead, residents opted for subsistence fishing instead. Additionally, the available marine life in 2007 had probably been affected by overfishing.

In October 2001, the FAO expected yields of 12,562 metric tons of fish landed at the main concrete port of Cacine. This figure did not include the smaller port villages of the Quitáfine sector such as Kassumba. If we use the estimates given above, then Kassumba residents with twenty-nine canoes could catch up to 43,500 kilograms of fish per month or 522,000 kilograms of fish in a single year. Only 13 of the 689 residents of this village, however, consider themselves full time fishermen. Therefore, actual yields were much lower. My survey for 2006 showed that Kassumba residents sold 14,744 kilograms of fresh and salt-dried first- and second-class fish fillets and 22,978 fresh and smoke-dried third- and fourth-class fish. In total, local inhabitants sold 37,722 kilograms of mostly processed fish in 2006, a significant figure since only thirteen residents fished full-time and the processing of fish reduced its overall weight substantially. These figures excluded fish caught and immediately consumed. If I consider my

[286] This report estimates 38 Guinea-Bissauan Pesos = $1 (Brainerd 1984: 22).

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estimates for a single household taken from below, then approximately nineteen people consumed one kilogram of fish per day or 52.6 grams of fish per person per day. This means that the 689 people of Kassumba probably consumed at least an additional 13,236 kilograms of fish in 2006 beyond what they caught for sale.

In a visit to Kassumba Nalú in 1995, Gérald Gaillard identified fishing as a primary characteristic of this village. He wrote,

> Daily fishing plays an important role in the livelihood of Kassumba Nalú residents including the exporting of shark fins to China. Approximately four sharks provide one kilogram of fins (valued at 1 million pesos?). The return of the fish to the breeding grounds brings earnings of approximately 1,200,000 pesos for four fishermen (fishing depends mainly on the season). (1995: 77; translation mine)

According to my 2007 survey data, the residents of Kassumba sold 39,550 kilograms of marine resources[287] totaling 17,010,000 XOF ($34,020 or $49.38 per capita). This amounted to approximately ten percent of Kassumba residents' annual income. The 362 people belonging to households with access to canoes accounted for approximately sixty-one percent (10,412,500 CFA; $20,825) of these fishery sales, which averaged $57.53 per person per year or more than eleven percent of their overall income in 2006.

[287] The marine resources sold from Kassumba, and accounted for in the survey, included salt-dried and fresh primary and secondary fish fillets, smoked and fresh third and fourth class fish, oysters, fiddler crabs, arks, mangrove oysters, dried air bladders, and dried shark fins.

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Figure 18. Marine Resources sold from Kassumba in 2006

Item	Amount (kg.)	Avg. Unit Price per kg. (XOF)	Total (XOF)	Total ($)
1st & 2nd Class Fillets (*skalada*)	14,744	516.62	7,617,000	15,234
3rd & 4th Class Fish	22,978	107.58	2,472,000	4,944
Oysters (*ostra*)	738	500	369,000	738
Fiddler Crabs (*kakri*)	518	239.38	124,000	248
Arks (*kombe*)	25	500	12,500	25
Shark Fins (*lemi*)	19.5	21,666.67	422,500	845
Swim-Bladders (*folgu*)[288]	527.5	11,361.14[289]	5,993,000	11,986

SOURCE: 2007 Household Survey

Kassumba residents demonstrated the value they placed on marine resources in a number of ways during my fieldwork in 2007. For example, on July 10, the Nankabi family of Kassumba Balanta had just completed the construction of a zinc roof for the head of household's residence (only 6 houses in Kassumba had zinc roofs). The *morança* celebrated their success by killing a pig. The money for this roof had primarily come from the sale of *skalada*.

I ascertained a second estimate for the amount of fish coming from this region by examining the nearby fishing settlement of Kadiko. The following information came from an EU survey being conducted in this settlement with the fishermen there on March 24, 2007. They stated,

> If a canoe was fishing with *djafal* nets, the fisherman could expect to catch between one and ten plastic basins full of fish per day per canoe. About thirty-two fresh *djafal* equals one kilogram. They were paid about 1,500 XOF per basin that contained about 100 *djafal*, which is equivalent to 3.125 kilograms of fresh

[288] Isinglass is a substance obtained from the swimbladders of fish and is used mainly for the clarification of wine, beer, glue, and jellies; it is a form of collagen or semitransparent whitish very pure gelatin (Cheke & Ward 1998).

[289] *Folgu*, or the one swimbladder of premium fish is usually bought at a rate of 7,500 XOF per kilogram in Kassumba and resold in other markets for as much as 15,000 XOF per kilogram ($30).

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> fish or about 500 XOF per kilogram. If a fisherman could catch five basins full of *djafal* in a single week, it paid for his household needs once the fish were dried and sold at the local *lumu*. It also took about one basin of fresh *djafal* to meet the consumption needs of that same household. Therefore, anything caught above six basins full of *djafal* was considered profit for the fisherman, which he was able to put toward purchasing new gear. They estimated that out of 1,000 *djafal*, 300 worth should be saved to pay for materials (i.e., reinvested). If a fisherman did not own his own canoe, then there was a four day cycle in which all the fish caught went to the canoe owner on the first two days. On the third day, the fisherman got to keep his catch. On the fourth day, they split the catch evenly. However, this arrangement was only valid when the fisherman caught at least five basins of fish. Otherwise, the catch went to the owner of the canoe. If there were more than one fisherman, they divided up the workers portion between them. If a fisherman went after *bagri*, he could expect to catch about two to five basins per day. Between two and five *bagri* were sold for 500 XOF to the local women processors depending on the size. If the fishermen were catching first- and second-class fish, they received about 250 XOF per kilogram for fresh fillets. With these nets, a fisherman could expect to catch about 10 to 50 fish per day or 100 to 500 kilograms of fish per week.

According to these figures[290] then, a *djafal* fisherperson could expect to average approximately three-thousand kilograms of fish per canoe per year. If all fifty-two canoes from Kadiko fished for *djafal*, the yearly estimate could reach one-hundred and fifty-six metric tons of fresh fish worth 78 million XOF ($156,000). If these fisherpersons opted to go after first- and second-class fish exclusively, then a single canoe could expect to haul in 15,600 kilograms of fresh fish per year. Again, operating at full capacity, the Kadiko fleet could potentially catch 811,200 kilograms of fresh *skalada* worth 202,800,000 XOF ($811,200). This figure, however, does not take into account the fact that middlemen purchase only the fillets, not the entire fish, a fact considerably reducing weight estimates. At the same time, the swim-bladders *(folgu*) taken from these fish inflate the net worth of the potential catch.

When considering catch sizes of fish from Kassumba and the surrounding areas, one must note that many of the fish being caught by artisanal fisherpersons end up spoiling before

[290] I calculated these figures using the 16-day fishing cycle per month, an average haul of 5 plastic basins, an average of 100 *djafal* per basin, and an average 32 *djafal* per kilogram.

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consumption, processing, or sale. If a fish dies from being entangled in a net, after twenty-four hours its gills turn grey in color and the meat spoils. The only thing of value that remains on the fish at that point is the swim-bladder of a premiere-class fish. Otherwise, the fisherman discards it. In addition, if improperly processed such as not smoking the meat thoroughly, the fillet will spoil. Bacteria and insects infest fillets poorly stored or not covered completely during processing. Without refrigeration or other means of prolonging the shelf-life of these fish, many potentially valuable resources, both financially and nutritionally, rot between the moment of capture and the food bowl, which greatly decreases the potential yields from this region. In fact, I regularly documented more than fifty percent spoilage within a single catch. Both fixed and gill nets required the fisherperson to leave the net in the water for an extended period of time, at least overnight, in order for the fish to entangle themselves by the action of the tides. Net owners regularly left their nets unchecked for one or two days at a time.

I would check nets with Kassumba residents quite regularly. On most occasions, at least one-quarter of the fish had spoiled or were partially consummed by birds and other animals by the time of our arrival. Nets were checked more frequently at the times of the year when the fish were more plentiful. When the value of fish decreased either due to a lack of demand or oversupply, either fish were left in the nets for longer periods or the nets were pulled altogether and saved for a time when the value of the fish increased.

When the locals caught a particularly large batch of fourth-class fish without the hope of selling them all to neighbors or at the local markets, they made a local delicacy known as *konfrubut*. *Konfrubut*, or whole fish soup, involved boiling water, bouillon, lemon, malgueta, and onions together with a number of fish. Kassumba residents consumed large quantities of the fish and broth when available, joking about how, if unaccustomed, visitors from the urban areas

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who consumed this delicacy would end the meal with an upset stomach. The soup kept for more than a day; therefore, residents often ate it over several meals. Women and girls of Kassumba had a second use for excess fish; they occasionally made and sold a local delicacy known as a *sandi*, or sandwiches. Sold for 200 XOF per sandwich, the recipe consisted of mixing bouillon, malgueta, tomato paste, tomatoes, dried fish, lemon, and salt. Women spread this mixture on half of a locally baked bread roll. One local producer of these sandwiches told me that she earned as much as 4,500 XOF ($9) per week selling *sandi*, mostly to Balanta laborers.

Women dependably take advantage of the fishery resources and aquaculture of Kassumba. For example, they collect a number of different mollusks (e.g., *gandin, kombe, kakri, karangees*) for food and sale (Fernandes 1996: 310) and also fish with nets along the shores, tributaries, and inlets. Males rarely gathered mollusks or crabs during my time in the village. To illustrate, in March of 2007, two girls aged twelve and fourteen harvested two large plastic buckets full of sea snails, arks, cockles, and small crabs that inhabited the mud and sand floor of the Cacine River. A young boy and girl spent the afternoon cracking open the various shells using two well worn rocks. These mollusks regularly substituted as the protein in the midday meal.

A second instance occurred on July 5, 2007, when I went gathering (*buska*) *kombe*, a type of native clam. Several girls from my household had had much success the previous day, filling two plastic buckets full of large clams. On our excursion, we amassed three buckets, returning around 6:30 PM with our haul. Locating these clams in the riverbed proved difficult for a novice. Gatherers had to either locate the slightly gaping intake in the sand, spot the dark brown color that blended with the surroundings, or feel the hard shell with their bare feet under the saturated sand. It took patience and practice to recognize *kombe*, proving difficult for all except

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the women and young girls who gathered these clams on a regular basis. According to local collectors, the *kombe* season arrived at the start of the rainy season when they grew larger and could be located easier. Further into the season, however, collecting mollusks became extremely difficult due to the large puddles of standing water even at low tide. Besides consumption, the residents of Kassumba utilized *kombe* shells as mosaic tiles that they set into the packed earth floors of bedrooms and gazebos.

Of all the oceanic/riverine bounty being collected in the region, oysters proved most economically promising for the females of the village. On March 15, 2007, I went oyster (*ostra*) gathering with five girls from the neighborhood of Kassumba Nalú. These gathering parties often swelled to fifteen or more when the demand, and subsequently, money available, for dried oysters increased. On one particular occasion, I wrote,

> Today I accompanied five girls (ages 16, 15, 14, 13, 10) to gather oysters. We left the household at approximately 10:00 AM, after the tide had receded. We proceeded to the large oyster field about one-half mile out onto the riverbed along an invisible path of packed sand. At our destination, the oysters clung to the rocks where they bred. These oysters were small in size, between one to five inches in length, and grew on top of one another. The girls informed me of a second location further away from the village where they went to collect as well. Balanta rarely frequented these oyster fields, opting to collect oysters clinging to the roots of the mangroves in the river inlets instead while on fishing expeditions. We collected oysters until 2:30 PM, when the tide began to return.[291] I often heard from a number of Kassumba residents that boys did not gather oysters. If a boy wanted to make additional money, he had to go and cut palm kernels. The majority of the oysters accumulated were smoked over a small, open fire on top of a woven palm mat (*kirintin*) for several hours. One of the girls living next door to my household, Salimatu, the daughter of Betty and Mamadú Keita, collected mollusks on a regular basis. She would smoke her day's catch in front of her house nightly. Bifass from Kassebesse[292] and Nyima who resided in the Kamara household of Kassumba both bought up dried oysters for transport to Bissau.[293]

[291] Oyster gathering outings generally lasted between four and six hours depending on the season and strength of the tides on a particular day.

[292] As a middleman dealing mainly in mollusks, Bifass, a Beafada, has done quite well financially. He owns a motorcycle, generator, television, and three homes, one in Kassebesse, one in Bissau, and one in Kownipu.

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> Other traders also bought up these shellfish for sale at different times of the year. For example, in July I counted seven traders buying up dried oysters in Kassumba. Although the girls did not have written contracts, cash advances to the oyster harvester guaranteed that their stockpile would go to the trader fronting the money. Traders paid 500 XOF ($1) per liter (measured by heaping the oysters into a large plastic cup).[294] The smoked oysters weighed much less than the fresh ones due to the removal of the moisture content. In this particular instance, the girls gathered almost six liters of dried oysters or about one liter per girl. Variable rates were explainable due to the harvester's age, experience, and motivation, as well as other environmental factors such as tides, oyster breeding and growth cycles, and weather. Mostly a factor of the tides however, the amount gathered in a single session varied little between girls. On an exceptional outing, an experienced girl could collect up to two liters or a little more. As an inexperienced gather, I collected approximately one-half liter in the same four and a half hour session.[295] The work was hard; harvesters were bent over for the entire session in direct sunlight. These girls, when not attending school or helping with other household activities, could gather oysters year round, however, it was much more difficult during the rainy season (June-October) when the hard rain flooded the oyster beds making the circumstances tenuous out on the exposed riverbed. Traders send their take to Bissau where the dried oysters were resold for 1,000 XOF per liter (a 100% markup) in the markets, the hotels, and the restaurants located there. Three tools, other than a hat and water, neither of which the girls brought along, were needed for gathering oysters: (1) shoes or sandals since the shells and rocks were extremely sharp (although many girls walked around the oyster fields barefoot), (2) some type of bowl or plate to put the gathered oysters into, and (3) the actual shilling tool known as a *konkador* in Krioulu or *woofana* in Susu.

As this entry suggests, the oysters of Kassumba continue to play an important role in household consumption and economics; this practice has remained largely unchanged for generations, easily deduced from the large number of shell middens scattered throughout the village and outlying region. In fact, I observed both Balanta and Nalú women and girls from Kadiko

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[293] Middlemen often sell their goods to warehouses (*armazen di povo*) in the capital of Bissau at fixed prices. These *armazen* owners, previously the state although today many are private enterprises, sell to restaurants, hotels, or other interested parties from as far away as Europe.

[294] Bifass traveled to Kassumba Nalú almost weekly by bicycle or motorcycle leaving money with girls who had previously shown that they were good producers of oysters or clams. He returned a week later to collect the mollusks and leave more money. He could collect upwards of 50 kilograms of dried oysters in a single day, which netted him 25,000 CFA ($50).

[295] I was later informed that the oysters I had collected were spoiled and had to be discarded only later to deduce that the girl who was going to smoke them for me had added them to her days catch and sold them.

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kampamão, Kassumba, Kassebesse, and the other surrounding settlements hammering at the oyster fields near Kassumba's port on a regular basis.

Oysters provided important income for the young girls of the region; these shellfish allowed them financial independence from their respective households. As a young girl, Fatu collected oysters and sold them to the Balanta after boiling as a local foodstuff. She said, however, that they earned very little money from oysters twenty years ago so she and her cohort often turned to other economic activities. By 2007, girls collected oysters much more frequently because the value had increased considerably due to a newfound demand in the capital city of Bissau. I also noticed that the frequency of oyster gathering, and the number of girls going out to collect them, increased during the month of April. Increased production did not result from higher demand by local buyers, an influx of money to buy oysters, or environmental factors. Instead, local girls wanted money for the upcoming First of May celebration at the Kassumba beach that took place yearly. At this festival, traders from throughout the region descended on the village with a number of goods typically unavailable in the local markets during the rest of the year.

Although oyster gathering promoted financial independence for young girls, this financial outlet also raised negative consequences such as the one described in Chapter Three when a fight (*barrulio*) occurred at the De Barros Keita household. Mamata, a girl of fourteen who lived with De Barros as an adopted relative, went to the local oyster buyer, Nyima, in the middle of the night. She lied that her older cousin Landa had told her to visit Nyima and collect the money owed for the oysters she had recently collected. Nyima handed over the 2,000 XOF to Mamata that evening. The following day, Landa discovered that Mamata had taken her money. Mamata spent all the money on bread, cigarettes, and other goods at Barry's store. De Barros insisted

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that Mamata repay all of the money to Landa as soon as possible. De Barros severely punished Mamata with a stick as well for stealing (07/30/08).

In addition to oysters, women and girls collected fiddler crabs and other mollusks for sale from the fertile Cacine river bottom as well. They rarely trade these mollusks beyond the local markets and households due to a lack of refrigeration and transportation; this food source represents the richness of Kassumba's environment and a future potential as a valuable export. For example, locals did export the hard foot/cap (*chapeu*) of the sea snail (*gandin*) on a small scale when demand was available. This inedible protective cap sells for up to 1,500 XOF per kilogram in Kassumba and is used in foreign manufacture although the actual use of these hard shells was not known locally.

Figure 19. Fish and Mollusks of Kassumba

English	Port.	Krioulu	Scientific	Class	Fresh Price (XOF/kilo or fish)	Dried Price (XOF/kilo or piece)
Guinean Sea catfish	Bagre	Bagri	*Arius parkii, heudolotii,* or *latiscutatus*	3	37-250	83-137
Cobia	Bacalhau	Bakalhau	*Rachycentron canadum*	?	?	?
Guinean Tonguesole	Linguada	Banda	*Cynoglossus monodi* (or *Solea solea*)	?	?	?
Guinean Barracuda	Becuda	Barakuda	*Sphyraena sphyraena* or *afra*	2	125	250
Common Eagle Ray	Peixe-Areia	Baranku (or Pis-Reia)	*Myliobatis Aquila*	3	67-137	250
Barbel	Esquilão	Barbu*	*Barbus barbus*	1	250	500
Lesser African Threadfin	Barbo (or Barbinho)	Pis di Koru (?) or Blandi	*Galeoides decadactylus* (or *Polynemidae*)	3	67-137	250
Sea Bream	Bentana	Bentana	*Pagrus africanus, auriga,* or *caeruleostictus* (or *Dentex, Sparus, Diplodus, Lithognargus,* or *Puntazzo*)	3	37-250	83-137
Bobo Croaker	Rainha-Bobo	Bobo	*Johnius* or *Pseudotolithus elongates* or *brachygnatus*	3	37-250	83-137
Bonga Shad	Bonga	Bonga	*Ethmalosa fimbriata*	4	10-13	17-26
West African Ilisha	Djafal	Djafal**	*Ilisha Africana*	4	5-15	200
Land Crab	Caranguejo de Terra	Djapuf/Djappo	*Cardisoma guanhumi*	-	-	-
Law Croaker	Djoto	Djoto	*Pseudotolithus senegallus*	1	250	500

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Sea Snail	Búzio	Gandin	*Murex bolinus brandans[aris]*	-	-	-
Grooved Mullet	Cacandja	Kakandja	*Liza dumerili*	4	5-15	200
Fiddler Crab	Cacre (Cancro)	Kakri	*Uca tangeri* (or *Gelasimus tangeri, cimatodus,* or *perlatus*)	-	?	-
Crab	Caranguejo	Karangees	*Cancer, Carcinus,* or *Callinectes*	-	-	-
Common Guitarfish	Cassapai	Kasapai	*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*	3	37-250	83-137
Nurse Shark	Caúdo	Kaudu	*Ginglymostoma cirratum*	2	125	250
Ark (or Common Cockle)	Berbigão (or Combé)	Kombe	*Anadara (Senilia) senilis* or *granosa* (or *Cerastoderma edule[is]*)	-	-	500
?	?	Kontxervedja	*?*	-	-	-
Meagre (or Croaker)	Corvina	Korbina	*Argyrosomus regius* (or *Umbrina canariensis* or *cirrosa*, or *Pseudotolithus* Types)	1	250	500
Sompat (or Pigsnout Grunt)	Cor-Cor	Kor-Kor	*Pomadasys jubelini* or *rogerii*	2	125	250
?	?	Mbofu	*?*	1	250	500
Mangrove (wild) Oyster	Ostra	Ostra	*Crassostrea gasar* (or O*strea tulipa*)	-	250	500
Daisy, Bluntnose, Brown, or Undulate Stingray (or Biscuit Skate)	Peixe-Areia	Pis-Reia	*Dasyatis margarita* or *say, Raja miraletus* or *undulata* (or Raja straeleni)	3	67-137	250
Senegal Jack (or Jack Crevalle/Pompano)	Sareia (or Xareu)	Saraha/Serreha (or Koru)	*Caranx senegallus* (or *Brama, Lichia, Trachinotus,* or *Chloroscombrus chrisurus*)	2	125	250
Thinlip Mullet	Taínha	Teinha (or Kuli - Susu)	*Liza ramado[a]* (or *Mugil capurrii*)	4	10-13	17-26

Figure 19. Fish and Mollusks of Kassumba (continued from previous page)

*Misattributed by Scantamburlo (2003: 108).
**Scantamburlo labels *djafal* as *Ethnalosa fimbriata* (2003: 184).

SOURCE: Amorim, et al. 2004: 97-98; Fishbase 2007; 2007 Household Survey.

The Cost

The littoral populations of West Africa relied on the canoe[296] as an important indigenous innovation (Campbell 1987; Gulbrandsen 1985; Smith 1970). Numerous European explorers,

[296] "A canoe is normally defined as a boat which is pointed at both ends and propelled by paddles. The stern is usually wider than the bows, and a properly trimmed canoe has its bows slightly higher out of the water than the stern" (Smith 1970: 515).

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merchants, and missionaries commented on this ideally adapted vessel over centuries of contact. The canoe has been used for a number of activities throughout West Africa including transportation, warfare, commerce, and fishing. For example, Jesuit Father Manuel Álvares commenting on the ferocity of the Bijagos people living on the Bissagos Archipelago around 1615 in the last early Portuguese text on Guinea wrote,

> Whatever they come upon at sea they grab, even if it belongs to their own people; and so, once they get into their canoes, they plunder the Biafares, the Falupos, the Papels or Burames, the Balantas and the Nalus. To sum up, those not aboard the Bijagos fleet cannot escape their claws. (1990[c.1615]: chap. 9:2)[297]

Dugout canoes remain the primary vessels for domestic artisanal fisherpersons of Guinea-Bissau, little altered throughout the centuries[298]. People propel these vessels by wooden paddle, home-made sail, or outboard motor.[299] Getting his data from a 1990, UN-sponsored Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa, Forrest noted 700 to 800 functioning dugout canoes in Guinea-Bissau in the early 1990s, of which only 150 had motors (1992: 96). Fernandes, citing a 1991 census, put this figure at 1,760 boats dedicated to artisanal fishing, 340 of which sported motors. He also stated that canoe owners in Guinea-Bissau numbered 3,028, 39.3 percent between the ages of 36 and 50 years old. Of these boat owners, thirty-one percent identified themselves solely as fisherpersons while sixty-seven percent listed their primary economic occupation as agriculturalist (1996: 307). More recently, Binet gives a figure of 107 small-scale

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[297] While referencing these same early sources, James Olson reiterated, "[The Bijagos] have traditionally made their living by farming, fishing, and raiding the settlements of coastal peoples in Guinea-Bissau. They were among the most notorious slave traders in the country, primarily because of their legendary large, ocean-going canoes that were capable of holding up to seventy people" (1996: 96).

[298] "After felling and shaping, the trunk is excavated by an adze-like iron tool. . . Excavation is usually completed by burning out the interior, using dry grass as fuel. This operation serves to disinfect and preserve the fabric of the boat (since a tar-like substance is produced by the heating of the wood) and to drive out insects and other parasites" (Smith 1970: 520).

[299] Estimates suggest that about 10% of artisanal fishing crafts are motorized (Ndiaye & Diouf 2007: 59).

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fishing vessels,[300] twenty-nine percent motorized and 170 industrial vessels, ninety percent being foreign bringing in catches of 26,000 metric tons and 40,000 metric tons of fishery production respectively (2008: 63). The Government of Guinea-Bissau estimated 2,000 artisanal vessels operating domestically in 2000, 255 of which had motors (2000: 32).

A single trunk of the silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) makes up most canoes that hold anywhere from one to more than fifty people.[301] Some of these fishing canoes in West Africa stretch up to twenty meters in length with an average crew size of fourteen (Jallow 1994: ch. 3). In Guinea-Bissau, canoes average two to three meters in length and accommodate one to four fisherpersons (Tvedten 1991: 71). These canoes generally last up to seven years[302] and had an average cost of $158 in 1984 (Brainerd 1984: 17). The local artisanal fisherpersons of Kassumba rely almost exclusively on these dugout canoes.

Kassumba inhabitants owned twenty-nine dugout canoes with an average cost of 65,655 XOF ($131.31) in 2006. The range of cost per canoe went from 24,000 XOF to 600,000 XOF.[303] One household owned four, the most held by a single family. On average, fishermen moored fifteen canoes in the Kassumba port; others docked their vessels in the Chibo River (*rio*), a tributary of the Cacine River. On one side of the *Rio* Chibo sits Kassumba and the mud and

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[300] Several international projects have been in operation in Guinea-Bissau in an attempt to improve the boat-building capacities of Guinea-Bissau. Most of these projects are based on the Bissagos Archipelago including a Swedish project in Bubaque; the Iles de Paix, a Belgian NGO funded by the FAO; and an Italian FAI/Pescarte fisheries project on the island of Bolama (Coackley1989: 12-13).

[301] "As canoas 'tradicionais' Bidjogos empregues na pesca de subsistência ao longo das coastas, são feitas de troncos de certas árvores (Pau de Bitchu – Chlorofora excelsa, Pólon – Ceiba Petandra, Bíssilon – Khaya Senegalensis), e são conduzidas a remos" (Fernandes 1987: 59).

[302] Robert Smith suggests that, "the life of a lagoon canoe is reckoned at only some 2-3 years, but the more costly and carefully made canoes for sea fishing, when properly treated and 'patched', are used for up to 15 years" (1970: 520).

[303] A canoe could be purchased from local artisans for between 30,000 and 100,000 XOF depending on its size (03/04/2008).

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mangrove port of Komentesh. On the other side of the river rests the fishing camp of Fambendon. Otherwise, canoes were anchored at the nearby point of Kamanimba to avoid being beached at low tide.

Locals valued these vessels since fishing provided a lucrative economic outlet for residents. Villagers shared canoes due to their scarcity and value. For example, Brahma Kamara of Kassumba Nalú used Dr. Miguel's canoe without needing to ask permission in June in order to transport his roof thatch from Kadiko to Kassumba along the shoreline. He went with his younger brother Mister who later complained that he ended up rowing the entire way by himself. Brahma left the canoe in the Kassumba port instead of returning it to the Chibo River where he borrowed it from earlier in the day. Dr. Miguel, a Balanta, missed a day of fishing since the vessel sat beached on the riverbed at low tide. Dr. Miguel threatened Brahma to return the canoe to its proper resting place by the following day.

During my stay in Kassumba, I met two people who made canoes and I heard about a third boat builder living in the area. Two of these artisans lived in the nearby fishing settlement of Kadiko while the third, currently retired from boatbuilding, resided in Kassumba. The boat builder living in the semi-permanent fishing camp of Kadiko haled from Senegal. It took him and three others a total of three days to make a single canoe using simple hand tools such as machetes, axes, and adzes.[304] Kadiko maintained two canoes with motors and fifty canoes with two or three oars. The boat builder sold canoes of approximately seven or eight meters for 15,000 XOF. A larger canoe with a motor cost a fisherman upwards of 250,000 XOF ($500).

[304] "Depois do abate que dura um dia ou dois e que pode ser feito por duas ou três pessoas munidas de machado, seguem-se as fases de maior cooperação. O transporte do tronco, que pode levar entre vinte e trinta homens, o desbravamento realiza-se durante quinze dias por cerca de dez homens equipados de machado e a moldagem do fundo e das paredes da canoa efectua-se durante sete dias por sete homens equipados de 'inçon'. Esta última fase é mais delicada e a utilização do 'inçon' exige mais experiência que a do machado. A moldagem exige, assim, mais 'especialização' que o desbravamento" (Fernandes (1987: 61-62).

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The fishers of southern Guinea-Bissau recommend painting any canoe twice per year at a total cost of 60,000 XOF. At the time of the survey, four women owned canoes in Kadiko and paid workers by sharing the catches from their vessels with them. Additionally, the retired boat builder of Kassumba explained how, many years ago, he could carve eight canoes in four months living alone in the forest (*matu*). Once finished making a canoe, he needed help getting it to the water, calling upon friends, family, and the new owner for help. The biggest single-log dugout canoe he ever carved could hold up to sixty people. Local fishers regularly patched their canoes with any available materials including wood fill, tar, tree resin, and wooden plugs.

Several larger pirogues built for the open ocean from long wooden planks occasionally passed through the local ports. These vessels arrived from Guinea Conakry, Cacine, and Cassaka. Often acting as motorized fishing vessels, they sometimes doubled as conveyances for people traveling between towns and crossing borders. These pirogues, which could seat more than fifty people at once, shuttled people between Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry, hauled thatch for roofs, transported large amounts of fish out of Guinea-Bissau, and, of course, served as bases of operation for fishing expeditions lasting several days. The First of May festival of Kassumba brought two such pirogues to the port from the neighboring town of Cassaka filled to capacity with revelers intent on camping on the beach for two days and nights. On a separate occasion, a female pirogue owner arrived from Guinea Conakry in order to visit the Nalú *baloba*. While moored at the Kassumba port, her canoe sprang a leak and the motor quite functioning. She became a guest of Kassumba Nalú for more than a week while awaiting the materials from Guinea Conakry necessary to fix her boat. Kassumba residents borrowed this woman's supplies to patch their own smaller canoes in the meantime.

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The fishing gear (e.g., *bóias, redes, cordas, chumbos,* etc.) of Guinea-Bissau have an estimated work-life of three years (Fernandes 1987: 58). Fishermen weave their own fishing nets in Kassumba although some manufactured foreign nets also find their way into this community. In general, local artisanal fisherpersons use four types of fishing nets (*ridia*): (1) scoop nets used by women to catch small river fish (Carreira 1947: 65; Copley 1930: plate 7), (2) cast nets along the shoreline and tributaries, (3) standing nets set across smaller channels trapping fish by the actions of the tides,[305] and (4) drift or gill nets placed into the rivers and tributaries by canoe and left to float in mid-water (Copley 1930: plate 9; Epler 1983: 21; Lourido 1980: 26). The people of Quitáfine utilize and maintain each of these nets in specific contexts to varying degrees. For example, Mamadú Keita maintained standing nets on the Cacine riverbed close to his village.

> Mamadú visited the Cacine River mud flats that emptied of water during low tide. The moon remained, barely lighting his way through the thick fog. He crossed the flat sandy-mud riverbed walking along the narrow hard-packed path ingrained in his memory from years of use. He no longer thought about his careful footsteps that instinctually avoided sharp shells, rocks, and slippery mud. The ocean floor undulated, changing from sand, to mud, to shallow water, and then back again. He eventually crossed over three small embankments, listening to the haunting voices of other local fishermen somewhere in the distance. Finally, after walking for 30 minutes, he arrived at his two fixed fishing nets, staked upright in the soft mud and stretched across the ocean riverbed. Mamadú cleared the debris that had gathered in the net from the action of the tides over the previous night. He found two large fish also trapped in the nets. He could sell the larger premiere class fish for 500 XOF per kilogram while the smaller second-class fish was worth 250 XOF per kilogram. His disappointment was apparent. His fixed nets no long caught as many fish as the previous year's rainy season when he consistently found as much as 7,500 XOF worth of fish waiting for him. He walked back along a path that avoided the center of the village so that his friends and relatives were unaware of his spoils. As soon as he returned to the village, Mamadú began to process his fish. He had already removed the guts on the

[305] Standing nets work similarly to the tidal fish-traps of South Africa described by Graham Avery, "Situated within the intertidal zone, . . . The traps operate on the principle that fish will swim over the walls at . . . high tides in order to feed and that as the water recedes the fish do not attempt to swim back until it is too late, and are trapped within the confines of the enclosure. It is then an easy matter to remove the fish from the almost dry trap at low tide" (1975: 105). For a description of other types of fish traps employed in West Africa, See Gruvel (1912).

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> Cacine riverbed lightening his load considerably. He center-packed the *korbina* and *kor kor* with sea salt, covered the fish with a burlap cloth to prevent flies from infesting his catch, and then left them for five days to dry. Mamadú usually sold his fish to Fula traders who came from Kaboshank to buy up the fish of Quitáfine at the Iraque *lumu*. These traders transported their purchases to the capital city of Bissau. Mamadú also removed the swim-bladder (*folgu*) from the premiere class fish since it was worth about 1,500 XOF per kilogram. (03/08/07)

The Nalú and Balanta had these types of fixed *ridia* anchored throughout the Cacine riverbed along the small channels bringing the high tides almost a mile inland. Due to the loam and other floating debris riding on these tides, net owners needed to clean them daily if they were to catch fish. A number of wooden stakes dotted the desolate mud landscape of the riverbed where nets had once stood. In addition, if left unchecked after the tides receded, the proprietor inevitably faced theft from passersby, spoilage in the hot sun, or fish loss from scavengers. For example, after a particularly intensive day of labor, one Nalú man secretly shared local rum and fish stew with friends in his bedroom. These fish came from a Balanta's fixed net. He noticed the fish caught in the net at low tide early in the morning on his way to his rice fields.[306] He took a few and brought them back to the village later that afternoon. Minor fish theft was fairly common in Kassumba. Local residents held little value for these small fish since they regularly ended up spoiling or being eaten by animals before the net owner arrived to collect his catch. The people of Kassumba, on the other hand, forbade the stealing of prized first- and second-class fish.

The Balanta women of Kassumba often used scoop nets to catch small riverine fish.[307]

> Three Balanta women of Billymat Nacode's household – his first wife, his second wife Quinta and her infant daughter, and the daughter of his first wife – left on their fishing expedition at 8:00 AM. They walked barefoot through the *bolanha* near Kadiko until reaching a small inlet known as Kabuff, which wound through

[306] According to Curtis and Sarro, "Both the Baga and the Nalu are rice cultivators, but they also depend on fishing and forest-based economic activities" (1997: 125).

[307] Similarly, Eric Gable observed this type of fishing in Guinea-Bissau among the Manjaco. He light-heartedly conveyed, "Once, when I accompanied the women to meander where they were going to fish, the women warned me not to photograph the 'arseholes' when they bent over to scoop at the water with their fishing baskets and accused me of planning to sell their images in the form of postcards on the streets of Dakar" (2003: 104).

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> mud swamps and mangroves. The women carried circular nets framed with flexible, half-inch diameter branches (*poe*). The circular net had a diameter slightly larger than their arm span. They fished by wading into the muddy stream. One person stood above the other in the slow moving current and disturbed the water and mud. The fish (*bantana di rio*), a bottom dwelling variety similar to the catfish of the U.S., jumped when disturbed, sometimes completely out of the water. They grabbed the fish from their mud dwellings on the riverbed, corralled them into their waiting nets, or caught them with their nets as they sprung from the water. Quinta carried her baby wrapped on her back the entire time, while their dog trotted along the muddy shoreline. Many sharp oyster shells lined the inlet. These women regularly cut their legs and feet on the shells, sometimes quite severely, but, over the years, their calloused feet held up quite well while fishing. After they arrived at a particular bend in the river where the mangrove thickened, they stopped fishing for the day. Billymat's first wife and their dog returned to the village with their catch amounting to one-half of a large plastic basin full in under an hour of work including crabs, oysters, and *bantana*. The other two women remained behind to collect oysters clinging to the submerged roots of the mangroves. Their catch size varied per trip. Usually they filled at least one entire large plastic basin, if not more. (06/08/07)

This type of fishing was yet another example of an activity that I could not participate in since my feet were not calloused enough. The Nalú women of Kassumba explained to me how their ancestors had fished in the small tributaries in a similar manner to that of the Balanta. No Nalú women in the village, however, still practiced this fishing technique. According to these women, the Nalú had circular nets framed in flexible branches as well. Their nets varied slightly from their Balanta counterparts, however; Nalú nets could close at the mouth once the fish entered, similar to a coin purse. Nalú fisherwomen of the past also caught fish by using two large woven baskets. One woman tossed water, hopefully containing fish, into the basket of the second woman, which she held above the waterline. This defunct technique still remained in the Nalú's social memory.

Other than collecting mollusks, the only type of fishing Nalú women still participated in was known as *djunta ridia* or collecting the net. *Djunta ridia* is when two or more people take a fixed net anchored by two wooden stakes at each end into the river as the tide rises. Often held

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over slightly deeper channels, two people slowly close the net-posts by walking the two poles together as the rush of water carries fish into the waiting net. Anyone can aid in this type of fishing by quickly pulling the trapped fish from the gill net and then placing them into a waiting sack or floating plastic basin. Fisherpersons repeat this process several times closer and closer to the shoreline as the tide continues to rise and reach further inland. With a well mended net, a group of several people can fill one or even two large plastic basins with a variety of third- and fourth-class fish in a short period of time. The size and quality of the net often determines the number of fish caught. For example, using an old borrowed net with a number of gaping holes, a Balanta from the capital of Bissau, a Fula shopkeeper from Guinea Conakry, a Nalú student, and myself tried our hand at *djunta ridia*. As inexperienced fishermen, we still came away with one *bagri* and twenty *djafal*. Anyone using this technique divided their catch in half with one portion going to the owner of the fishing net and the other half being divided between the fisherpersons. This same technique is also done near the shore from a canoe in which two fishermen let out their nets in conjunction with the action of the tide. With the canoe firmly anchored in place, they then pull in their net, dislodging any fish or crabs as they go. Balanta boys used this method to gather up fish quickly for their households to consume.

A third net type infrequently used in Kassumba was the cast net. Cast nets are circular, unframed nets slightly larger than the scoop nets. The caster weights the outside edge with slightly heavier rope extending longer lines periodically stretching from the nets edge, similar in look to a parachute. The fisherman, either standing along the shore or directly in an inlet or tributary casts out the net allowing it to fully open before hitting the water and slowly sinking. The caster, still holding the lines connected to the net, slowly draws in the ropes, ideally trapping fish inside. Fishermen perform this technique at the mouth of small inlets as the tide, and

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subsequently fish, rush back up the channel. I knew of only one Nalú adult male from Kassumba who occasionally practiced this fishing technique. "Sena brought back a catch of *bantana* from the Kabuff Inlet near Kadiko. He caught all of these fish by himself using a cast net. The plastic basin he shouldered contained fifteen fish and was half full. These fish provided his household's midday meal" (07/11/07).

A fourth type of net utilized in Kassumba was the drift or gill nets. An EU survey conducted in Kadiko evaluated the cost of these nets.

> Third- and fourth-class drift nets reach about 500 meters per net. A fishing canoe usually contains 1-15 nets. The nylon *pis-reia* and *djafal* nets costs about 75,000 XOF and only last a few months before falling apart. The cord framing the upper and lower parts of these nets alone costs 3,500 XOF. Buoys cost an additional 100 to 200 XOF a piece. For 100 meters of a *pis-reia* net, a fisherman needs 45 buoys and about 125 sinkers (*txumba*). The sinkers cost 1,500 to 3,000 XOF to outfit an entire net. These nets last about one year. Fishermen expect to catch about 2,000-5,000 *djafal* during the life of the net. Kadiko fishers purchase 1,800 meter nets designed to catch *pis-reia* for 45,000 XOF. The standard nets of Kadiko run about 300 meters in length and 3 meters deep although one *balata* or net designed to catch larger first- and second-class fish is 160 meters in length. Generally, a fisherman lays eight to ten *balata* at a time from a single canoe. The cord with a thickness #6 or #8 costs 2,500 to 10,000 XOF per roll of 200 meters.[308] It also costs about 750 XOF per buoy of which about one per meter is needed. In addition, between 25 and 45 *txumba* are needed for a single *balata* sold by weight, one kilogram costs 1,000 XOF. A complete *balata* costs about 60,000 XOF. A fisherman can expect to catch about 10-50 fish per day or 100 to 500 kilograms of fish per week. (03/24/07)

These drift or gill nets average one to two meters in width/depth (*fundura*) and between fifty to one-hundred meters in length. They generally have thirty squares per width with buoys being placed about every ten meters along the top line of the net. A buoy costs 300-350 XOF a piece. Weights (*txumba*) or rocks (*pedra*) can cost up to 1,000 XOF per kilogram. Net menders string

[308] On a separate occasion, fishermen informed me that they used as many as seven different types of nets based on a number that represents the thickness of the string, size of the hole, and strength of the net. These include: (1) 18 (for 1st class fish) – 1,000-1,250 XOF for 100 meters, (2) 36 (for 2nd class fish) – 1,000-1,250 XOF for 100 meters, (3) 24 (for 3rd class fish – 1,250 XOF for 100 meters, (4) Djafal (for 4th class fish) – 1,500 XOF for 100 meters, (5) 8 – 1,000-1,250 XOF for 100 meters, (6) 7– 1,000-1,250 XOF for 100 meters, and (7) 9– 1,000-1,250 XOF for 100 meters (03/25/07).

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them along the bottom line at about ten to fifteen meter intervals. Additional lines run from the four corners of the net and are anchored to four weights holding the entire net in place on the bottom of the river. Sulimani and 2Pac, two teenage boys from Kassumba Nalú, often repaired *skalada* nets. On one occasion, they mended eight nets for a single fisherman. These two youths received 10,000 XOF for repairing the two most damaged nets. It took them three full days per net (07/11/07). An entire net could be constructed with ten packs of cord (1,000 XOF per pack or 10,000 XOF total). This did not, however, include the upper and lower rope framing the net, buoys, or sinkers. Or, one could buy two complete nets for between 35-40,000 XOF ($70-$80). Local Nalú fishermen stated that they refused to by new nets with real buoys and sinkers, however, because it inevitably disappeared right out of the water, stolen for its value. Instead, they tied old sandals and rocks to their nets to act as homemade versions of buoys and weights.

If a fisherperson caught *bagri*, hooks and lines substituted for a gill net (Lourido 1980: 34-38). Approximately 66 to 330 large hooks (*ansole*) lined 100 to 500 meters of rope. Hooks cost 7,000 XOF for a pack of 100. Fishermen anchored their bagri lines and added buoys at a spacing of approximately every ten meters. The fishing lines hung from the main line, reaching the river floor where the *bagri* resided and fed.

Local Consumption

In a 1982 study of the fisheries sectors of Guinea-Bissau, Martin J. Vincent estimated that only thirty percent of the fish landed in that country found their way into the local markets (Vincent 1982). According to a 2007 World Bank report,

> The local market for fish in Guinea-Bissau is not well developed yet and prices are generally low; virtually no export-oriented processing and marketing facilities

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> exist that could offer higher prices . . . Local demand for high-value fish is limited as purchasing power is declining. Few incentives exist for foreign fishers to land fish locally. (Gacitua-Mario, Nordang, & Wodon 2007: 71)

I made similar observations in Kassumba. Locals sold the best fish (i.e., first- and second-class) while the smaller-sized, lower quality, and less valuable marine resources were marketed and consumed locally.

According to the forty-two household surveys administered in 2007 encompassing all 689 residents of Kassumba, the village purchased a total of 24,200 kilograms of marine resources exchanged at an average rate of 264 XOF ($.53) per kilogram. This meant that the average amount of marine foodstuffs purchased per Kassumba resident in a single year averaged 35.12 kilograms. The locals exported and re-sold some of this produce while the rest was consumed. Therefore, previous estimates of 2 to 5.1 kilograms of seafood consumed per capita per year for Guinea-Bissauans seems low. Although my data is from a village located on the mouth of a major river that serves as the breeding ground for several species of fish and other marine life, almost the entire population of Guinea-Bissau lives within one-hundred kilometers of the coast. This helps minimize aquatic consumption limitations found in other parts of West Africa such as transportation, access, and long term storage difficulties for fishery produce.

A food journal that I kept over seventy-three days informs a second marine life consumption estimate for the residents of Kassumba. This journal documented the daily meals of a Nalú household made up of seven adults (18 years of age or older including myself) and twelve kids (2 under the age of 5). Daily, they prepared four kilograms of rice and 250 XOF worth of fish (about 1 kilogram). This amount of fish equaled approximately twelve 85-gram fish. The average amount of protein per fish of this size is 23.02 grams.[309] Therefore, the

[309] The estimate of 23.02 grams of protein per fish was calculated as the average of 32 listed fish products in the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17 (2004) for standard three ounce portion sizes.

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household consumed 276.24 grams of fish per day. The average amount available per person per day totaled 14.54 grams of protein. Additionally, other gathered, gifted, or caught marine life added to the daily intake including oysters, crabs, sea snails, and arks.

Taking into account these additional seafood sources as well as my position as an outsider receiving customary hospitality, I averaged 27.86 grams of protein per day over the same seventy-three day period.[310] I did not consume any marine produce on six out of the seventy-three days (8%). I received at least forty grams of protein from seafood on 19 of the 73 days or twenty-six percent of the time. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that an average adult should consume fifty grams of protein per day.[311] On 12 out of 73 days or sixteen percent of the time, I exceeded the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) of protein from seafood alone. In addition, Kassumba residents regularly acquired additional protein from other sources including animals, beans, peanuts, and cashews.

For example, according to the 2007 household survey data for Kassumba, the inhabitants of this village owned 396 cattle (19.8 million XOF), 700 pigs (24.5 million XOF), 1,268 chickens (634,000 XOF), 158 ducks (158,000 XOF), 167 goats (2,505,000 XOF), and 22 wild fowl (11,000 XOF) with an estimated value of 47,608,000 XOF or $95,216. According to this same food journal, I ate animal protein thirteen times or in eighteen percent of the documented

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[310] This figure resulted from calculating my daily consumption of seafood based on the following: (1) 1 standard fish portion = 23.02 g (calculated as the average of 32 listed fish products in the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17, for a 3 oz. portion), (2) 1 medium fish or fish chunks = 15.35 g (2 oz. portion based on the standard fish calculations), (3) 1 small fish = 7.67 g (1 oz. portion based on the standard fish calculations), (4) bits of fish or dried oysters = 3.29 g (.5 oz portion based on the standard fish/crustacean average), (5) oysters, *kakri*, *kombe*, or *gandin* = 16.5 g (calculated as the average of 9 listed crustacean products in the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17, for a 3 oz. portion), and (6) canned sardines = 20.94 g (3 oz.).

[311] The Daily Reference Value (DRV) for protein applies only to adults and children over 4; they are based on a 2,000 calorie a day diet.

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meals. Additional instances of consuming beans, peanuts, and other protein-rich foodstuffs, particularly cashews (See Chapter Five), were also recorded.

When the households of Kassumba Nalú received visitors, custom maintained hospitality for their guests in two important ways. First, Kassumba residents gave up their beds for their guests to sleep. Second, they fed their guests; meals usually consisted of rice and fish. When fish were unavailable, locals expressed embarrassment for their inability to meet hospitality obligations. Especially when the waters were rough, and therefore, fish were less available, the residents of Kassumba Nalú collected mollusks, *djunta ridia*, utilized dried fish, or relied on their neighbors to supply them with this protein. In addition, Nalú rarely denied requests for fish from their kin and neighbors since they might have a similar need in the future. For example, in Chapter Three I noted how in early August, Fatu had collected quite a bit of fish to sell. In that same week, however, her family had requested fish from her on two separate occasions to help feed their field laborers. Fatu had purchased 4,000 XOF worth of fish from local fishermen, but only had *pis-reia* left to sell at the *lumu* (08/03/07).

Fish is also used in local traditional medicines. To illustrate, I had had an ear infection for several weeks. When the local Nalú healer heard of my malady, he found discarded fish bones, burned them, mixed the ashes with a little water, and squeezed the mixture through a t-shirt into my ear. This mixture was supposed to clear up ear infections in only a few days. I received this treatment simultaneously with another man who had similar symptoms. The second person's ear infection cleared up while mine worsened.

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LOCAL PROCESSING AND MARKETING

Salt, Sun, and Smoke

In much of West Africa, the lack of fishery infrastructure limits the processing capabilities within countries. Therefore, local processors, marketers, and distributors (mainly women)[312] rely on the traditional processing techniques of (1) smoking (Ward 2003), (2) salting, and (3) drying (America's Development Foundation 1983; Essuman 1992; Njai 2000).[313] In a technical report for the FAO, Essuman (1992) noted how hot smoking remains the main method of fish processing with nearly seventy percent of the total fish supply being marketed in either the smoked or dried forms. Primitive forms of processing continue for three main reasons: (1) landing sites, fishing camps, and isolated villages remain too far from markets, (2) dried fish have an equivalent weight price compared to fresh fish, and (3) export to neighboring countries that are often quite far away earn the fisherperson or intermediary higher prices (Epler 1983: 36).

Southern Guinea-Bissauans often rely on the red mangroves (*Rhizophora racemosa*) as firewood due to their abundance near most of the fishing ports along the oceans and inlets to smoke fish although little preference beyond convenience is generally shown toward fuel-wood used in smoke-curing. An FAO report breaks down the effects of preserving fish by smoke-curing.

[312] See Pollnac (1984).

[313] "Basically, there are three types of fish processing: (a) smoked (mainly in the South of the country); (b) salted (fermentation before dried, in the north) and (c) dried. The market is quite well supplied. The exportation [from Guinea-Bissau] for the neighbor countries (Guinea-Conakry, Senegal, Ghana, Sierra-Leone and Mali) is not registered because there are no available means to do it" (FAO 2008).

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First, heat from the fire extracts moisture from the fish. This slows potential spoilage. Second, the smoke, which contains natural preservatives, such as phenols, helps kill potentially harmful bacteria. Finally, the high temperature also helps kill harmful bacteria and enzymes (Jallow 1994: ch. 6.3). In Kassumba, most of the smoke-curing took place on barrel ovens. Producers removed the tops and bottoms of fifty-gallon steel drums (Jallow 1994: 6.3.1). Then they placed the remaining barrel atop three stones and built a fire underneath. This makeshift oven distributed heat evenly and allowed for easy control of the fire underneath. On the top of the oven rested a *kirintin* or lattice made of palm leaves that allowed the smoke to easily pass and saturate the fish above. The processor then covered the fish with old sacks or cloth to hold in the smoke. It generally took a few hours or even several sessions of a few hours each to completely dry a fish depending on the type and size. Smoking began immediately to avoid spoilage. Randall notes, "This system wastes wood, produces only small quantities of fish at a time and is a hardship for the women since the smoke is largely uncontrolled" (1985). At the household level, this type of oven is functional, but as a community begins to rely on fish processing to a higher degree, new smoking techniques become necessary. For example, open-air *banda* ovens operate in the semi-permanent fishing camp of Kadiko nearby (Jallow 1994: ch. 6.3.2).

The open-air *banda* oven is a large table-like frame made of wooden stakes often covered by *kirintin* or wire fencing. Processors stack small fish such as *bonga* or *djafal* on the top of these *banda* ovens; they arrange the fish side-by-side in rows, belly- and head-down at slight angles. Although not always specifically distinguished, processors either fresh- or hard-dry the fish according to experience, preference, and shelf-life needs. Generally, if the fish has lost between twenty-five and forty-five percent of its moisture content, it is considered fresh-dried. If it has lost between sixty-two and eighty-four percent, the fish is hard-dried (Jallow 1994: ch.

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6.3.2). Fresh-drying generally takes six hours divided between two sessions with the fish lasting a maximum of four days. Hard-dried fish remain viable for up to six months after almost three days of slow smoking. Banda ovens are also inefficient when compared to other techniques but can smoke-cure large quantities of fish simultaneously. These types of ovens are notorious for causing fires that destroy the ovens, fish, and proximal dwellings. In addition to the simplified open *banda* ovens, processors use more efficient closed ovens made of adobe block walls around a fireplace with a metal grating on top in more industrial fishing centers such as Cacine (Jallow 1994: ch. 6.3.3).

The following is a typical illustration of a single Nalú household as they bought, processed, and sold fish over a one week period.

> Today, Fatu bought 20 baby milk sharks (*kaudu*) for 1,500 XOF and 21 smaller ones for 2,500 XOF. She sells the *lemi* or dorsal fins from these sharks to Asian market exporters; the fins are worth up to 13,000 XOF per kilogram. Fatu also acquired 19 additional fish including three bottom feeding *bagri* for only 50 XOF. She purchased 40 *djafal* at a rate 50 XOF per 10 fish or a total of 200 XOF. The other fish consisted of *barbu* with long whiskers, and *bobo*, also called *pis di branku* because it is popular with Koreans who buy them from the local fisherpersons. The people of Kassumba rarely eat *bobo* because this species of fish is thought to contain lots of small bones. Otherwise, inhabitants refer to *bobo* as "nose fish." Fatu kept twenty of the *djafal* and two of the *bagri* for the household to consume over the following two days. She spent 2,500 XOF on all the fish except the *kaudu*, which meant that her total cost was 6,500 XOF ($13).
>
> Ruki, the younger sister of Fatu's husband, prepared the *kaudu* by first removing the guts, then trimming off the dorsal fins, and finally, splaying them. They smoke dried the sharks on a barrel over an open fire. Stray cats and vultures swooped in to clean up the viscera discarded just beyond the kitchen area. As the sharks began to get brown in color after a few hours in the direct smoke, the women of the household flipped the shark pieces over and then recovered them with cloth to hold in the smoke and keep flies and other insects and bacteria away.
>
> The following day Fatu, Ruki, and Dede transported the dried fish to the local Friday market (*lumu*) leaving the village at 4:30 AM. They arrived in the nearby town of Iraque at 5:30 AM at which time Fatu and Dede went to *raça* (pray) at the local mosque. By 6:30 AM, the day started to lighten and the market town began to stir. Fatu, Ruki, and Dede organized their fish into equivalent piles (6 pieces for 500 XOF) and sold out in less than 30 minutes. Two market women

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from Gabu (or Quebu) purchased a majority. They would resell these fish at the Gabu market for 1,000 XOF per six pieces, which was a 100 percent markup.

On Saturday, three more fresh fish appeared in the kitchen, two of which were large *bagri*. In total, the women smoked six more *bagri* and ten *pis-reia* for sale. That afternoon, Fatu bought two more large fish from the fishers harboring in the Kassumba port. Later she traveled to the nearby point of Kamanimba looking to purchase more. Afterward, she headed to the port of Kamentesh on the other side of the river Txibo across from the fishing camp of Fambindon by struggling her way through the mangrove near Kassumba Nalú rice fields. While Fatu waited for fishermen to appear in their canoes, a pirogue from Guinea Conakry arrived to embark passengers returning from a funeral in the town of Kampeana. The boat had a homemade sail,[314] but no motor, which made the trip to neighboring Guinea Conakry approximately two hours in duration. Nine people and their luggage comfortably fit in the pirogue. While Fatu waited for fishermen to arrive with their day's catch, I asked her about the competition between Fula fish buyers from outside Kassumba and local buyers and sellers. Fatu said that among the residents of Kassumba, family had priority. Fula traders, however, bought up all the first- and second-class fish while market women such as Fatu delt solely with the less lucrative third- and fourth-class fish. Fatu generally paid out 1,000 to 2,500 XOF for a day's catch depending on the size and quality of the fish landed.

At this last port of the day located next to the small river inlet, a Balanta woman waited along the shore; since she arrived first, this woman had the priority in purchasing any fish landed here. Three canoes with Balanta fishermen finally arrived with just enough fish to satisfy the demand of the Balanta fish seller; she purchased 28 fish including 3 *pis-reia*. The following day, Fatu returned to Komentesh where she acquired 500 XOF worth of fish including 4 *pis-reia*, 2 *banda*, 8 *djoto*, and 1 *djoto di rio*, all of which were eventually smoked and sold for 1,250 XOF at the *lumu* for a profit of 750 XOF. (03/09/07)

Following the Fish

Tvedten estimated that in the early 1990s approximately 1,500 immigrant fisherpersons mainly from Guinea-Conakry and Senegal lived and operated in Guinea-Bissau, many of whom settled in the provinces of Tombali and Cacheu (1991: 72). These fisherpersons often had better equipment and skills than their indigenous counterparts; they illegally exported the majority of

[314] For a discussion of artisanal sail-making in West Africa, See Akester (1986).

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their catches back to their homelands (Binet 2008: 23).[315] As well, numerous traders-in-residence from the outside continued to live among the fisherpersons in the permanent and semi-permanent fishing communities. These traders bought up and processed catches for export. Nua Keita and Ali Bangura, two foreign fishermen living and working in the semi-permanent fishing camp of Kadiko, described the contemporary make-up of this village near Kassumba.

> Ali Bangura settled first in the fishing camp (*kampamão*) of Kadiko along with his age-mate Amara, and two elders, Mamadou Balli and Brahma Surri beginning in 1990. Others eventually joined these four from the village (*tabanka*) of Kadiko. The police from Cassaka gave these settlers from Guinea Conakry permission to remain on the land.
>
> Ali fished in Katufri in Guinea Conakry with hook and line before moving to Kadiko. He could not afford proper nets. Ali faced stiff competition in Katufri, so he moved to a fishing village on Mel Island. After a while, Ali began to have trouble with his eyesight so his older brother took him to the village of Kadiko in neighboring Guinea-Bissau. A Nalú traditional healer residing there cured Ali. He stayed in the village and began to fish with great success. This led to Ali's decision to stay. In 2007, he had only one child left in Guinea-Bissau. His other three children resided with his parents in a village in Guinea Conakry. Ali also had four wives. Two of them had no children, one had one, and the other one had three. Two of his wives lived at the *kampamão* with him, one resided in Bissau, and the fourth returned to her family in Guinea Conakry.
>
> Nua, another resident and fisherman of Kadiko was a student in Cacoca in 1990 when the semi-permanent fishing camp was founded; he returned home to the village of Kadiko only to find his mother and father living at the *kampamão*. As far as Nua could remember, even before people began living along the shore in the numerous and haphazardly placed houses of Kadiko built of woven thatch and palm sitting atop deep yellow sand, this location was a good fishing spot and natural port. The year 1990, however, was the first time anyone had constructed dwellings on the beach instead of choosing to reside in the village proper.
>
> People had lived in the lush village of Kadiko since before anyone could remember. Villagers from this ancient village settled Tamakeni, Kassumba, and Katunigh as well as eventually helping to settle the *kampamão* fishing settlement beside the mouth of the Cacine River. By 2007, no elders or healers remained in the village. The primary reason for this decline in population directly resulted

[315] According to an FAO report, "Guinea-Bissau produces whole smoked bonga in its southern region, around Cacine. A very small quantity is sold in local markets like Qebo, Bafata, Kabou, and other eastern markets. Most of the produce is collected for transport to the Kamsar (Guinea) market. Vehicles and a 25 t capacity cargo canoe collect the smoked bonga from the Cacine and Cantede area for the Guinean markets every week. In Canamine some middlemen live among the processors, and they collect and transport consignments to Guinea [Conakry] every week. Apparently the smoked bonga industry in southern Guinea-Bissau is sustained by the Guinean market" (Jallow 1994: ch. 7.3).

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from the 15 year armed struggle for independence. At that time, the residents of Kadiko fled the country and went to stay with their relatives across the border in Guinea Conakry, many of which never returned. Today, only two dwellings remain in the original village while the nearby fishing settlement of the same name had rapidly expanded to more than 60 houses, a number of smoke ovens, and woven grass sheds used to store fishing supplies.

Almost no infrastructure was found in the fishing encampment of Kadiko. Several wooden open-air ovens used to smoke fish were mixed in among the dwellings. A single well located near the permanent village supplied the local population with water for bathing and washing clothes although the water was no longer potable. Instead, residents imported water from wells located in the neighboring villages of Kassumba or Konfef at quite an expense. The *kampamão* had a single well on the outskirts of the settlement that only contained water during the rainy season. In general, the residents did not get their drinking water from Kassumba because they said that the water from their well did not taste as good as the water from Konfef.

Umaru Kamara, the fishing settlement's chief, maintained a list of all the people residing in Kadiko. Umaru's list was constantly revised because people constantly came and went. Two Fula boutiques sold a few necessities. Ethnically, Nalú, Fula, Susu, Temne, and Baga from Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone,[316] Guinea-Bissau and beyond resided in Kadiko. Balanta, on the other hand, lived in the Kadiko village instead in order to both fish and harvest rice and other crops. Fishers used both nets and hooks. They regularly caught *korbina*, *barbu*, *djoto*, *kor kor*, *bagri*, *kasapai*, *teinha*, *djafal*, etc. Nobody had a functioning motor,[317] so they fished in the Cacine River without venturing into the open ocean.

The fishermen of this village worked for eight day periods before the wind and water became too strong for small canoes. Residents fished over twenty-four days in a month and waited out the strong weather during the remaining six. This meant that they fished eight days, waited two, fished eight more, waited two, and then fished eight more followed by an additional two days of rest used to mend equipment or process and market fish.[318]

Many locals believe fishing was the most lucrative activity in all of Guinea-Bissau today, more lucrative than planting cashews or growing rice. For example, Nua had a *bolanha*, but it had remained fallow for more than ten years. He said that his children would start growing rice there along with his older and younger brothers. Nua chose to fish though because, if the water was sweet, like it is during the rainy season, a fisherman with proper equipment could earn as much as 100,000 XOF ($200) in a single day. Nua continued, if someone fished for *djoto*, he could catch as many as 60 to 70 per day. Additionally, the air

[316] For a study on Sierra Leonean fishermen's migrations, See Wagner (1990).

[317] This information is different from what the fishermen told the EU surveyors in March when two canoes with motors were said to make port in Kadiko.

[318] These figures are slightly different than those above in which others reported that only 16 days per month could be fished from a canoe.

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bladders (*folgu*) and shark fins (*lemi*) were also extremely valuable. Third-class fish such as *bagri* could be sold locally or regionally. *Djilas* (traders from Guinea Conakry) purchased the marine resources directly from the village, eliminating export costs and time. These fish were then brought by the *Djilas* to the markets of Djowbé or Bissau while *bagri*, *teinha*, and *djafal* ended up at the local market (*lumu*). The Djowbé and Bissau markets were reached by large trucks, sometimes taking 24 hours or more. Therefore, getting fresh fish to these markets from southern Guinea-Bissau remained an impossibility. More than 30 buyers currently resided in Kadiko. Some came from Senegal or Bissau looking for fish. Others resided permanently in the nearby villages as traders-in-residence and came to Kadiko throughout the year looking to buy fish stores.

Finding proper materials remained the biggest obstacle for Kadiko fishers. In 2007, no fishing projects remained in this region. The village had no well. There was no school. There was no hospital. If someone got sick in Kadiko, they had to bring them to Cassaka or Cacine for treatment. According to the fishers of Kadiko, Bissau was the only place they could go to buy fishing material. Guinea Conakry only had supplies used to catch smaller fish such as *djafal*. The bigger ships off the coast exhausted the fish and ruined their fishing nets by entering into the rivers where locals had them anchored. The motors of the foreign vessels regularly cut or tangled their nets.

In 1990, residents caught many fish. Few boats with motors entered their river. A lot of fish remained in the Cacine to feed and spawn making them easy to catch. Today, the boats with motors coming from Guinea Conakry were thought to scare the fish away. Local fishermen believed that the fish no longer entered the river like they used to because they are afraid. They go to other better protected areas. The fish used to enter the river where it was calm and shallow to give birth. Then, in September, October, and November, the mature fish went back out into the ocean at which time adult fish were abundant and exhausted.

Since the Cacine River is deep enough (20 meters) for ships to enter, today, the local artisanal fishermen can count as many as 100 large canoes (i.e., pirogues) working the waters in, and around, Kassumba and Kadiko at the mouth of the river. They catch their fish and then take them back to Guinea Conakry. They enter the river all the way until Kadiko. Government regulation is poor.

The patrol from Cacine negotiates with all the fishermen, if bribed with money or fish; he allows illegal fishing to continue unchecked. Pescarta of Cacine and the police each have one boat to help regulate the fishing on the river, but two boats are not enough. The local fishermen must buy a yearly license that costs 40,000 XOF. They also pay 27,500 XOF to Pescarta for a total of 67,500 XOF per year per canoe.[319] If the local fisherperson does not have a license, then these patrols confiscate the fisherman's materials, everything except the canoe. According to the law, only local fisherpersons can purchase fishing licenses for these waters. And, if someone takes fish from here to Guinea Conakry, they must pay customs (*alfandiga*). The fishermen from Guinea Conakry, however, opt to

[319] According to a study by Ndiaye & Diouf, license fees for national artisanal fishers was 30,000 XOF per canoe without a motor while foreigners paid 100,000 XOF for a fishing license for a canoe without a motor (2007: 103-104).

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> pay bribes when they get caught, otherwise; they do not buy licenses or pay customs. (08/14/07)

I rarely observed motorboat patrols from Cacine. The patrol worked for the government as a fishing sector regulator for the Cacine River. Most locals of Kassumba and the surrounding villages called the patrol a pirate largely due to incidences in which they confiscated local artisanal fisherpersons' catches and gear since locals rarely bothered to purchase licenses and could not afford bribes.

When local or foreign fishers landed their catches in Kassumba, the women processed and marketed the third- and fourth-class fish. First, they brought their wares door to door among the neighborhoods of Kassumba. Nalú visited Balanta neighborhoods when they had fish to sell and the reverse also took place. These fresh fish remained largely inexpensive. This type of marketing served several purposes. First, it distributed the fish evenly between the residents. It limited fish spoilage, particularly on the days when no markets took place. It also provided the seller with enough capital to purchase fish for their own households when the need arose.

To illustrate, Quinta, a young Balanta woman from a neighboring *morança* appeared at the Kamara kitchen with three eggs and three piles (*muntos*) of tiny silver fish to sell. She charged a mere 100 XOF for ten fish and 50 XOF per egg (05/14/07). This type of exchange between households, neighborhoods, and ethnicities was extremely common. The prices paid for local sales remained low and stable. The objectives of this type of marketing recouped money paid to local fisherpersons for their catch as well as built social collateral in the village so that when particular households had no fish for their noonday meals, those families with fish reciprocated by selling them at the same low rates. Otherwise, the daily catches were processed and brought to market where the prices paid increased slightly.

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Although a fair trade between households took place, regular competition between local women buyers over available catches was also observed. Fisherpersons caught, salt-dried, and sold their valuable first- and second-class fish directly to *djila* middlemen at fixed prices. Women negotiated with the fishermen for their remaining third- and fourth-class catches along with other interested *djila* traders. Traders held the advantage of expendable capital while local buyers had insider information and often shared kinship, ethnic, and neighborly ties with the artisanal fishermen.

For example, Fatu regularly waited several hours in the hot sun for canoes to return to the port in the hopes of buying their catches. In many instances, she provided financial advances to fishermen in order to gain an upper hand with her competition. Besides money, I saw Fatu exchange donuts, mangoes, and other items that immediately appealed to the fishermen after a hard day of work in the hot sun. On one occasion, Fatu gave her fourteen year old son, Babu, 1,000 XOF and a bunch of mangoes to go to the port of Kamanimba as her representative to buy fish. Babu, however, ate most of the mangoes before the fishermen returned. After several hours, when the two canoes finally docked, they carried *skalada*, which they refused to sell. After the long walk back to shore, Babu received a single small fish for carrying the fishers' homemade sail (*bela*) back to shore on his head. These fishermen saved their few third- and fourth-class fish for their own female head of household instead of selling them to Babu. Fatu met us at the shore where she recognized these fishermen and realized that they rarely parted with their catches. She asked them if the "kaminho ka sta bom?" (Was the fishing not good today?); Fatu hoped to open a dialogue with these Balanta fishermen in order to gain their confidence and preference in future transactions (05/29/07).

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A consistent profit from processing and selling fish at the local market persisted for women dealing in fish. Both local consumption and further regional distribution into more distant markets with less access to sea life kept demand high. Occasionally, however, local production outstripped demand leaving the women of Kassumba lowering their rates since they could not save their products for a more favorable day. To illustrate, Fatu, the most successful local fish trader in Kassumba traveled to the Iraque *lumu* in March. Fish from Kadiko and Kampeana glutted the market. She only earned 500 XOF profit on more than 2,000 XOF worth of fish (03/31/07). One month later, Fatu's sister-in-law Ruki earned 1,000 XOF at the local *lumu*. She purchased her fish at a rate of 100 XOF for ten from local fishermen. She bought 150 fish for 1,500 XOF. On this occasion, Ruki sold her fish at a rate of six fish for 100 XOF; normally, 100 XOF only bought five smoke-dried fish. She sold all the fish for 2,500 XOF; therefore, she lost 500 XOF profit since the market had so many fish that day (04/14/07).

Regional fish traders often found their way to Kassumba to buy fish from the local producers. Local women too bought up fish for household consumption or processed them for sale at the local markets. A Fula trader-in-residence, however, was the primary purchaser of fish in Kassumba. He and his family bought dried *skalada* and *folgu* for many years. As a boutique owner, he advanced store credit, often repaid in fish. The son of the boutique owner, Ousmané Barry, showed me a long list of locals, Nalú and Balanta, who owed him money.[320] He said that if they did not repay their debt, he would collect in *skalada* during the rainy season.

By August of 2007, Ousmané had been planning a trip to Djowbé, a large market town in the north where traders from Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, and Senegal came together to do

[320] Ousmané's father had a list of debtors much larger than his own totaling 600,000 XOF. The only other Fula trader-in-residence located in Kassumba, a young male of fifteen operating a boutique under the auspices of his older brother in Iraque, purchased a total of 10 kilograms of folgu and 75 kilograms of skalada from local fishermen in 2006 for resale. He also had a list of debtors that totaled 55,000 XOF.

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business. He planned to take a large truck full of salt-dried *skalada*, *folgu*, *ostra*, and *azeite*. These items were the most lucrative resources in Kassumba, three-fourths of which came from the fishery sector.

Local women as well as traders-in-residence and foreign buyers paid very little to fisherpersons for their catches with an entire day's haul of third- and fourth-class fish from a single canoe selling for between 500 and 2,500 XOF depending on the size and quality with an average of 5 to 250 XOF per kilogram. Fatu took dried and smoked fish to market. She had purchased these fish from Balanta fishermen of Kassumba for 2,250 XOF. This price exceeded the local average, but the few fish were scarce and rather large. She expected to earn 100 XOF for two pieces of dried fish if competition at the local market was low. Otherwise, she planned to sell three pieces for 100 XOF. Fatu had also purchased a huge *kaudu* from these same fishermen separately for 2,500 XOF. She cut up this shark and smoked the pieces for sale. Fatu expected an additional profit from the sale of the *lemi*. By the time she processed these fish by smoking and carried them on her head the fifteen kilometers to the local market, the average mark-up became two to three times the original price paid (05/26/07).

The demand for fish, locally, regionally, and internationally kept the supply chain starting with local artisanal fishermen all the way through to the end-buyer a lucrative endeavor. Often, these fish from Kassumba and the surrounding villages, passed through an average of three persons before consumption although four or more purchasers of a single fish was not uncommon with an average one-hundred percent mark-up at each step in the supply chain implying an extremely low initial purchasing price and fairly high consumer cost, whether that consumer was in the capital of Bissau, or a dinner table in Europe.

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CONCLUSION: PLAN-OF-ACTION FOR FISHERIES RENEWAL

Tvedten forwards five reasons why catches by local artisanal fisherpersons in Guinea-Bissau remains low. These reasons also inhibit further growth in the artisanal sector. First, most fisherpersons rely on intermediaries for the marketing of fish due to market distance and poor transportation infrastructure. Second, the most productive fishing camps are fairly isolated such as those in southern Guinea-Bissau. Access to these areas usually requires technologies such as motors currently unavailable to most indigenous fisherpersons or semi-permanent residents. Third, fishing involves a great deal of risk because it requires a great deal of capital investment up front with a high degree of uncertainty. Fishing fluctuates based on the season and equipment used with increasing competition at all levels of production. In addition, canoes, nets, and other valuable equipment are easily lost, destroyed, or stolen. Finally, socio-cultural obligations can also limit fishing productivity. This labor-intensive occupation requires long hours and a strong commitment to a particular way of life. However, certain rites of passage and other ceremonies require young men to participate in cultural obligations. The cultural milieu, historical precedents, and environmental factors lead to a reliance on supplemental economic activities deemed more necessary at certain times of the year such as rice cultivation, the herding of cattle, or cashew harvesting; these activities limit the amount of time available for fishing (Tvedten 1991: 72-73). Therefore, what does the way forward look like for local and foreign fishers of Guinea-Bissau?

Campredon and Cuq put forward five lessons about the relationship between artisanal fishing and coastal conservation taken from West African experiences. First, migrant fishermen often fish more aggressively using better equipment, which is more detrimental to the

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aquaculture compared to their residential counterparts. Therefore, the Government of Guinea-Bissau should grant indigenous fisherpersons special privileges such as expanded rights of access, particularly in protected areas as long as these domestic fishermen continue to utilize lower impact forms of fishing although the issues of enforcement and lack of resources still present themselves. Second, nursery and other high risk ecosystems need closer monitoring and restrictions preventing illegal fishing and the further degradation of the aquaculture. Third, encouragement of the integrated economic approach utilized by much of the littoral populations of Guinea-Bissau should continue to prevent an over-reliance on oceanic resources. Fourth, the vigilant preservation of marine protected areas (MPAs) promoting sustainable management will help combat over-fishing. Finally, Campredon and Cuq agree,

> Because they are permanent dwellers on the coastal strip and because they know the area inside out, subsistence fishermen are key persons. They should be considered as the primary managers of coastal ecosystems and their resources, and it is only by working with them and helping to address their concerns that we will be able to manage the coastal zone better and safeguard the interests of fishermen and conservation alike. (2001: 98)

The conclusions drawn herein reflect their insights into local artisanal fishing.

In addition to the artisanal sector, the industrial fishing industry of Guinea-Bissau cannot be overlooked when determining fishery policies. One scholar proposes a multi-step strategy for revising the industrial fishing sector of Guinea-Bissau. These include, (1) improving the port, refrigeration, and coastal guard infrastructure, (2) increasing the amount of credit available in the sector, and (3) overhauling the financial system to more accurately and quickly make necessary adjustments to capture levels; domestic fish availability, quality, and cost; imports and exports of fishery production; conservation and scientific investigations; and suppression of illegal fishing (Fortes 1996: 288-289). In addition, less lopsided partnerships with foreign investors must also be negotiated for these improvements to come to fruition although this remains hard given the

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weak nature of the state. Finally, the leadership, long suspected of widespread corruption, must start to legislate with the best interests of civil society in mind. The arrangements must shift from donor-recipient nation agreements to a national government collaborating with its civil society toward the improvement of domestic infrastructure leading to real control over the industrial fishing sector, which is currently firmly in the hands of foreign fishing fleets. According to the country's own government,

> Fishery sector improvements need: (1) State transparency in fishery sector practices and policies and (2) the expansion of professionals in the fishing sector. In order for this to occur, the government must (1) develop local financial and research offices, (2) raise the professional level of the service staff embarking on fishing vessels as servicemen, financial agents, and regulatory observers, (3) increase advancement opportunities for captains, foremen, and mechanics, particularly for the staff of national industrial vessels equipped with cold storage and processing, and (4) develop alternative positions, scientific staff, administration, privatized fishery sector companies, and specialists in naval repairs. (2005:41, translation mine)[321]

These initiatives remain theoretical in nature, however, due to a lack of will and resources.

Amadou Tall puts forward several major obstacles to trade expansion in West Africa's fisheries. These include: (1) lack of infrastructure, (2) lack of cargo vessels, (3) lack of information, (4) political and civil unrest, (5) weak economic situation, ineffective national and regional policies, (6) tariff barriers, (7) corruption, and (8) quality assurance problems (Zakhia 2000). These concerns are found at all stages including catching, handling, processing, distributing, and marketing of marine resources (2000: 5-7).

[321] "*As estratégias para a valorização da pesca, implicam: (i) uma reforma para clarificação do papel do Estado e das atribuições e competências dos intervenientes no sector das pescas; (ii) o reforço de capacidade dos recursos humanos afim de criar uma massa crítica de profissionais em cada sector de intervenção. Trata-se de (i) implantar estruturas locais de formação no sector da fiscalização e da pesquisa; (ii) elevar o nível profissional dos efectivos em serviço, articularmente dos marinheiros pescadores embarcados nos barcos de pesca, dos trabalhadores das oficinas de reparação naval, dos agentes de fiscalização e dos observadores de pesca; (iii) aumentar o nível dos quadros para a promoção profissional nas funções de comando (capitão, contramestre e mecânico), particularmente do pessoal afecto aos navios de pesca industrial com pavilhão guineense, e as indústrias de tratamento de pescado (sector de frio) e de transformação; (iv) formar quadros especializados, pessoal científico, quadros da administração, de gestão de empresas do sector e, especialistas em reparação naval*" (Government of Guinea-Bissau 2005: 41).

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Richard B. Pollnac summarizes some of the benefits to promoting small-scale fishery development. These include: creating employment, using modest local investment, working with decentralized villages, utilizing simple technology, exploiting abundant coastal resources, producing high quality fresh fish, providing products for local markets, consuming little energy, causing little pollution, and affecting beneficial social habits (1985: 19). This plethora of benefits suggests the further need for the concentration of available resources into local hands such as what is currently found in Kassumba and the surrounding villages.

I suggest that with little chance of strong government intervention, fishery development will only come about through small-scale programs aimed at educating and training fishingpersons in order to help them contribute in significant ways to civil society by incrementally gaining resources back from foreign control. Eventually, these modest investments should provide for locals and expand their produce into regional and international markets.

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Chapter Seven

A RETURN TO RICE

Rice, whether imported from Uruguay, which was the major external source for rice during the research period, or locally grown, is a staple foodstuff in Guinea-Bissau. This literally means that the demand for rice there is constant. According to most Guinea-Bissauans, deprivation is not having enough rice to eat. Several months after I left the field to go back to the US, I received a phone call from a friend and cultural consultant in Kassumba. When I asked her how things were going, she answered by stating that the price of rice had gone up by 100 XOF ($.20) per kilogram. The average person in the household where I lived in Kassumba consumed approximately one-fifth to one-half of a kilogram of clean, uncooked rice per day, which was equivalent to between two and five cups of cooked rice.[322] For this household then, a small increase in the cost of rice had a dramatic effect. This price increase meant that more than twenty percent of their total yearly household income was now dedicated solely to buying rice. This importance placed on rice in Guinea-Bissau crosses all socio-cultural and geographic boundaries. During an interview, a Balanta elder expressed to me his economic destitution by simply stating, "I have to beg for rice" (04/24/07).[323]

Over a mid-day meal, Gérald Gaillard, a French ethnographer working in Guinea-Bissau, discussed an observation he had made while living and working among the Biafada and

[322] This figure was calculated based on a household size of 20 people with an average daily consumption of 4 kilograms of clean, uncooked rice. A typical serving size for rice is one-quarter cup (45 grams) of uncooked rice, which is equivalent to one-half cup of cooked rice.

[323] For a discussion of the "rice crisis" in Guinea-Bissau, See IRIN (2008a, 2008b, 2007a, 2006a, 2006d, 2006e).

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Balanta.[324] The Balanta are rice-growers in the Upper Guinea Coast region where they cultivate more than eight different varieties of rice. When Gaillard asked them why they cultivated so many varieties, the typical response was, "in order not to have to eat the same thing every day." Apparently, Balanta palates (and Gaillard's!) were able to discern subtle differences between the many varieties of rice they grew. The types of rice under cultivation were usually of Asiatic stock (*Oryza sativa*), originally brought to West Africa by Arab or European traders.[325] What Gaillard did not see being grown, however, were the heartier, but less productive indigenous types such as the primitive *popa* (*Oryza globerrima*). He also informed me that the types of rice grown by the locals in a particular year were difficult to predict. Dietary shortcomings and the necessity to eat seed stocks during lean months seemed to be a natural part of the Balanta yearly cycle. The problem, however, Gaillard suggested, was not ecological. According to him, the underlying cause of food and seed shortage was largely socio-economic.[326]

In each Balanta village, large or small, a Fula or Mandinka trader frequently resided (Brooks 1993; Fields-Black 2008a: 43; Hawthorne 2003: 57-62). These entrepreneurs sold a variety of trade goods. Over time, a relationship developed between the trader-in-residence and the community members. Residency patterns for these traders were long-term in nature; they stayed. During the December rice harvest, an economic partnership between the local inhabitants and the trader-in-residence was forged. The Fula trader bought a percentage of the Balanta's rice harvest. A foreigner unknown to the village would never be permitted to

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[324] For a thorough history of agriculture and resistance among the Balanta-Bejaa, See Giesing (1993: 125-177).

[325] How this grain originally made its way to West Africa remains hotly debated (Fields-Black 2008: 31). According to Stanley Alpern, "Ethnobotanists seem to agree the Portuguese introduced *sativa* to the Guinea Coast, probably in the sixteenth century" (1992: 21).

[326] Gaillard was not the first to make this observation (Coffinières de Nordeck 1886: 295; Fields-Black 2008a: 169) although his interpretation is unique.

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accumulate rice in this way. It was only through establishing himself as both an outsider and an insider that the trader-in-residence had access to the limited supply of rice produced by the community.

Gaillard's interest was piqued when he witnessed these same locals going hungry during the lean months after having observed them selling their potentially life-saving stores. The same villagers who sold their rice to the trader-in-residence later experienced a rice deficit before the next harvest. This lack of stored foodstuffs meant that they had to purchase necessary staples from, of course, the trader-in-residence; otherwise, the family would experience acute deprivation. The rice farmer received money to purchase goods such as clothing, radios, and soap while refusing to wait and see if there would be a surplus from the harvest. According to Gaillard, one reason for this ideology of "immediate gratification" was due to an ongoing socio-economic arms race.

When family members, friends, and neighbors ran out of food, they began visiting each other much more frequently, often arriving just before dinnertime. A Balanta could not deny the obligation of hospitality (Brooks 1993). Therefore, community members did not ration there harvest because if they had, they would then have to watch their carefully saved morsels be consumed by others. What resulted was a balancing act between planting and harvesting just enough rice to survive the year, purchasing necessary goods from the trader-in-residence, and running out of rice supplies just before your neighbor. Although plenty of arable land was available for agriculture in Guinea-Bissau, it went uncultivated because of this carefully controlled equilibrium as well as a lack of adequate labor.[327] A small miscalculation, however, and a family or entire village could starve.

[327] "Although as many as 1 million hectares of land are arable in 1991, only approximately 400,000 hectares are actually being cultivated, largely because of labor shortages in some parts of the country" (Forrest 1992: 82).

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Another observation made by Gaillard was the fact that an ethnic Balanta could not fill the role of trader-in-residence, even if he was from another village. It was socially unacceptable for a Balanta to deny his wares to others of the same group. Foreigners, on the other hand, were permitted to be selfish. The expectations and obligations of hospitality between relatives inhibited the accumulation of wealth. Under these types of circumstances, it is not unusual to see mechanisms of social control such as witchcraft accusations arise, which, accordingly, were quite common among the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau (Personal Communication 02/18/07). After Gaillard's recounting, however, I still had many unanswered questions about rice and rice production in this country.

How was rice grown in this difficult environment?[328] How much rice was initially purchased from the community? How much rice was eventually purchased back again? Did the trader-in-residence extend credit to the farmers? If so, did this lead to a type of debt bondage? How did the community view the trader-in-residence? Where did the rice initially purchased during the harvest end up? Where did the rice sold in the village during the lean months come from? These are just a few of the questions that I take up in this chapter based on months of fieldwork in the southernmost village of Kassumba among both the Balanta and the Nalú communities residing there.

[328] For the Balanta classification schema of the various rice-producing ecosystems found in Guinea-Bissau, See Keita (2002: 51-69).

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BACKGROUND

On August 18, 2007, I interviewed a Nalú elder, Alfonseca Kamara of Tamakeni. He stated that upon the arrival of the Balanta in Quitáfine for the first time around 1940,[329] his grandfather, the local leader headquartered in Kampeana, arranged for the immigrants to receive five kilograms of seed rice from every Nalú neighborhood in the area so that they could begin planting. Also during this interview, Alfonseca insisted that the earliest Nalú ancestors in Quitáfine did not know about rice. He said that his earliest ancestors saw the Baga and Fula growing rice and the Nalú eventually did the same. These Baga and Fula came from Guinea as refugees from the fighting there (brought about by the formation and expansion of the Mali Empire beginning in the eleventh century) and brought their ideas with them. They saw the *lala* (forests) and began planting upland rice. Later, Alfonseca narrated that the Balanta Nhacra brought the idea of growing rice in the *trafi* (mangroves)[330] from the north, thus initiating paddy rice cultivation in Quitáfine (Mello Machado 1972: 18). This coastal, tidal rice farming in transformed swampland (*bolanha*)[331] had a lot of early success in the southern coastal areas of Guinea-Bissau. Finally, Alfonseca noted, that there were only a few people in the south at that time, so the rice harvests were much smaller than they are today since the Balanta arrived.

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[329] "Originally settled in the north-central Nhacra district, the Balantas started migrating about a hundred years ago, particularly toward the South and along the large rivers where they could grow their rice the way their ancestors had done for generations" (Sarrazin & Gjerstad 1978: 18). According to Galli and Jones, the Balanta "kept moving south, eventually into the relatively unpopulated Catió and Cacine areas. The Balanatas worked out a *modus vivendi* not only with the *ponteiros* but also with the native Nalus. They soon became the dominant group and the rice they produced gave rise to an export trade" (1987: 43).

[330] For a detailed look into the dynamics and usages of the mangrove environments of the Upper Guinea-Coast, See the edited volume by Marie-Christine Cormier-Salem (1994).

[331] It has been suggested that the term *bolanha*, a Guinean Krioulu word meaning paddy rice fields of the coastal mangroves, is derived from the Mande term *bulon*, which is found in almost all the languages of the Upper Guinea Coast (Hawthorne 2001: 10; Lopes 1999: 154-55; Rodney 1970: 16-20).

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Caluthé Nangbwadé, a Balanta elder of Kasheklang reiterated Alfoneca's comments when he suggested that rice production was already going on in Quitáfine when the Balanta arrived (04/24/07). As these two oral histories demonstrate, much is remembered, and much is forgotten about the history of rice cultivation in West Africa. In addition, the accuracy of oral histories such as these is difficult to ascertain and many questions are left unanswered. For example, when the Balanta arrived in Quitáfine, did they bring the rice knowledge system with them or were the local Nalú inhabitants already growing rice? If the Nalú did cultivate rice, was it the upland- or paddy-rice? Where did this rice cultivation originate? How did it evolve?

Much has already been written about the history of rice cultivation along the Upper Guinea Coast. Some of these histories fit neatly together, others contradict or talk past one another. In this section, I intend to briefly acknowledge some of these histories. Throughout the rest of the chapter then, I will add my own ethnographic data on paddy rice production among the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba to this growing story.

Most recently, through ethnographic fieldwork and the comparative method of historical linguistics, historian Edda L. Fields-Black (1999, 2001, 2004, 2008a, 2008b) traces the pre-historic origins and development of tidal rice production along West Africa's Rice Coast, particularly in the Rio Nunez region of coastal Guinea.[332] She also briefly explores its transfer to the New World during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Based on scant linguistic and archaeological evidence along with extant historical records, she concludes that proto-coastal first-comers, Nalú and Baga ancestors,[333] developed specialized knowledge and adaptive strategies about their coastal micro-environments including fishing, salt-extraction, and hunting

[332] For a good overview of contemporary rice production in Guinea, See Thomas, et al. (2004: 39-45).

[333] The Nalú and Baga had sufficiently mastered paddy rice production in the Nunez River region of Guinea to be exchanging surplus rice with Portuguese traders by the sixteenth century (Rodney 1970: 21).

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and gathering of wild foodstuffs. By c. 500 to 1000 C.E., newcomers to the coast originating in the interior Guinea highlands arrived with specialized knowledge about upland rice cultivation. In collaboration, they developed a coastal rice knowledge system that changed the land-use strategies along the coast.

Fields-Black builds on Judith A. Carney's ground-breaking work, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas.* Carney demonstrates through an exhaustive exploration into the historical and botanical records that the African rice knowledge system diffused across the Atlantic shaping the cultures of the Americas beginning as early as the sixteenth century. Her book "investigates not only food and cultural identity but issues of indigenous knowledge and epistemology, human agency and social structure, seed transfers and the diffusion of cropping systems, agricultural innovation, and the power relations that shape agrarian practices" (2001: 6).

Examining the more recent history of rice production in Guinea-Bissau through Balanta oral narratives and written sources, Walter Hawthorne (1998, 2001, 2003a, 2003b) views the adoption and modification of paddy-rice production as significant for the Balanta during their tumultuous history of warfare and slavery. Through mastery over the coastal swamplands, the Balanta traded surplus rice for iron that they used to make agricultural tools and weapons.[334] As a result, the Balanta developed formidable defenses and engaged with the Atlantic World by selling captives into slavery.

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[334] "Archeological evidence suggests that early inhabitants of the Lower Casamance were using iron implements to cultivate rice before the middle of the first millennium AD. The cultivation of swamp rice is mentioned by the earliest European reports, in the mid-fifteenth century. . . These low-lying wetlands are the most fertile land for growing wet rice. More iron implements would consequently have resulted in greatly increased crop yields" (Mark 1985:28-30).

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These three authors rely on a number of earlier investigations into West African agriculture (Bigman 1993; Hochet 1983; Paulini 1984) and riziculture including the edited volume by Buddenhagen & Presley (1978). Joseph Lauer's (1969) thesis contributes to the discussion as well as crucial contributions by Olga Linares (1970, 1971, 1981, 1992, 2002), Denise Paulme (1957), Paul Pélissier (1958), and Roland Portères (1950, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1962, 1965a, 1965b, 1966, 1976). Finally, one would be remiss if he did not acknowledge the comprehensive agricultural study undertaken by Amílcar Cabral (1988). In addition to the above mentioned research, this chapter also builds upon the rural survey work conducted by Gérald Gaillard in the Tombali Region in southern Guinea-Bissau for the French Minister of Cooperation (1995, 1997).

RICE TIME

Rainy Season and Sickness

The severe geography of West Africa's coastal rice zone promotes cooperation between the mixed populations located there. For example, Wim van Binsbergen writes,

> Irrigated rice cultivation requires the concerted efforts of a much larger community even than the neighbourhood, not so much for the actual preparation, planting and harvesting at the individual paddy-fields, but for the maintenance of the complex irrigation systems. (1984: 34)

The contemporary inhabitants' ancestors were most likely displaced peoples or refugees seeking a safe haven from invaders. Organized labor, hard work, and centuries of reliance on the natural surroundings have transformed this once inhospitable environment into the breadbasket of

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Guinea-Bissau.[335] The southern coastal geography of Guinea-Bissau is now made up of what Peter Mark calls *marigots*. These are meandering tidal waterways and mangrove-lined wetlands,

> Reclaimed from the saltwater by systems of dikes which provide the most fertile land for the cultivation of wet rice, the staple crop of the region. . . The lower Casamance, in fact forms the northern limit of a geographical zone well-suited to rice farming, that extends far south along the Atlantic coast. . . These ecological features are a determinant factor in the economy and agriculture of the peoples who inhabit the Lower Casamance and the adjacent areas of coastal Bissau. The different groups all maintain similar agricultural techniques. (Mark 1985: 4, 6)

Adaptation, cooperation, and innovation have all been necessary for the populace inhabiting this lowland flood zone, which becomes even more isolated during the rainy season.[336]

The rainy season makes up half of the yearly cycle starting around June or July and lasting through November or December. On May 30, 2007, I wrote, "Last night it rained lightly for the fourth time. However, everything is still dry and no one seems to be in too big a hurry to start planting or finishing construction on their houses." When the residents of Kassumba told me that they waited until the third rain to begin planting, I took this comment literally. May or even June was generally too soon to begin the planting of rice, however. What the locals waited for was a sign that the ground was wet, the rice fields were filling with fresh rainwater, and the rains were likely to continue. By June 10, the rains fell more frequently and with much greater intensity.

> Sulimani chose to travel through Tamakeni and Nantung on our way back to Kassumba Nalú from the market town of Iraque. It was at that moment that the rain hit with such force that it knocked me off my bicycle and my pedal broke. We sought refuge on a Balanta family's veranda in Lafmedi. I was carrying a bundle of 25 gallon plastic *bidons* for Sulimani's mother on the back of my

[335] "The southern region of Tombali alone produces 70 percent of the country's rice" (Forrest 1992: 82).

[336] George E. Brooks reiterates these sentiments when he writes, "During the rainy season, there is considerable erosion along the banks of rivers and their tributaries, which carry large quantities of soil in solution. Silt is deposited along the lower reaches of rivers and streams by the ebb and flow of tidal action, some to be reclaimed for agricultural use by diking to enclose rice paddies. The inhabitants of the Upper Guinea Coast are some of the world's most skillful rice cultivators. Their principal method is to dike floodplains, swamps, and land along rivers, streams, and marigots in order to utilize alluvial soils deposited by tidal action" (Brooks 2003: 12)

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> bicycle making it catch the gusts of wind like a sail. My pedal was broken, my drenched hat kept flipping over my eyes, my glasses kept steaming up, it was still raining hard, and the path was filled with water and mud.

Hard rain in Kassumba was a way of life during this season. By the end of June, the rains arrived in earnest. The shortest path to Iraque through the rice fields was now flooded and no longer passable. Many of the men in the village began to check their fields on a daily basis to see if they were ready to begin planting.

Illness came to Kassumba as well with the start of the rains. On August 4, 2007, I wrote, "Everyone is sick and tired today. People are constantly asking me if I have medicine. Adonis, 2Pac, Mamadou, de Barros, and I all took the day off from working in the rice fields because our bodies are just not accustomed to the hard work yet." By August 8, my housemate was sick with malaria (*palidismo*). Malaria symptoms were prevalent during this time of the year. Almost every resident of Kassumba Nalú became ill during the month of August. The paddy-rice field labor was at its peak and mosquitoes increased in number due to all the standing water. At the same time, another of my housemates, Maria, a fifteen year old girl, became bedridden for more than a week with symptoms of yellow fever. During my eight months in the field, I documented ten deaths occurring in the research area. Four of these deaths were Nalú and six were Balanta. Causes included childbirth, yellow fever, stomach illness, old age, and unknown "sickness" (*duensa*).

The Calendar

As described earlier in this thesis, most economic activities taking place in Kassumba had designated seasons, or *kampanha*. Rice production is no different. Generally speaking, the rice

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campaign was from July through December. This period, however, was specific to the actual growing of the rice. Field and tool maintenance along with regulating the water levels and repairing dikes made rice production a year round activity. The yearly rice production cycle will be discussed in greater detail below. The seasonality of the activities is as follows. February is the month generally reserved for building back up the mud dikes or walls dividing fields, regulating the flow of water, and holding back the onslaught of salt water from the neighboring Cacine River and Atlantic Ocean (*Labanta Oriki*). March and April is when farmers burn the old dried stocks remaining behind in the fields (*Fogo*). April and May is when uncasked seed rice is distributed and germinated (*Preparativa*). In June and July, a small portion of the rice fields are prepared as a nursery for the germinated seeds or a moist, protected area in the forest is selected to plant the seeds (*Waga / Simintera / Kapoti*). Once the seeds have been planted, the remainder of July and August are spent preparing the fields by turning the soil and building up the plant rows (*Labra – Findi / Kobri*). September and October is for gathering up the immature plants from the nursery and transplanting them to the waiting fields (*Rinka / Planta*). November is spent regulating water levels and scaring the rice eating birds away *(Sirka Ave*). In December, the residents of Kassumba harvest their rice (*Korta*). By January, much of this rice is brought back to the village for storage and consumption (*Karga Para Kaza*).

Figure 20. Seasonality of Rice Production

Jan.	**Feb.**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug.**	**Sept.**	**Oct.**	**Nov.**	**Dec.**
Karga	*Oriki*	*Fogo*	*Prep.*	*Waga*	*Simin-terra*	*Labra*	*Labra*	*Rinka*	*Planta*	*Sirka*	*Korta*

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RICE CULTURE

Masculine/Feminine

Rice is an integral part of cultural and religious identity among the Nalú and Balanta as will be demonstrated below (Baum 1999: 28). It is offered to the familial and nature spirits, paid to the oracles and other religious specialists, gifted to friends and neighbors at important milestones in their lives, and is exchanged for other needs. In addition, rice has come to be seen as "a giver of life in that it nourishes people" (Baum 1999: 28).

The masculine and feminine are universal symbols of fertility often associated with agriculture. Religious rituals and magical practices surround the growth and development of staple foodstuffs, particularly in unstable conditions. The inhabitants of coastal Guinea-Bissau have grown rice in a difficult environment for more than one thousand years. Walter Rodney's summarized these environmental limitations when he writes,

> The heavy rainfall and resultant flooding for many months of the year automatically eliminated certain crops which might have been desired. Indeed, inundated rice was virtually the only possibility, and it was to this that the Africans turned to achieve agricultural mastery of the marshlands. (1970: 20)

Over this millennium, rice farmers have relied increasingly on the supernatural to help control unexplainable environmental fluctuations that sometimes lead to the devastation of entire harvests.

The village of Kassumba and the surrounding settlements are thought to be founded by the Nalú who in collaboration with later immigrants from the interior were the progenitors of the tidal rice knowledge system between 500 and 1000 C.E. (Fields-Black 2008a). Nalú origins

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remain a mystery;[337] some scholars and local historians have speculated that these first-comers arrived from Mali, the Futa Jalon in Guinea, Mecca, or from a nearby coastal locale. For example, citing linguistic evidence, Edda Fields-Black suggests, "Because Nalu dialects extend north along the coast into present-day Guinea-Bissau, Nalu may possibly have diverged from proto-Coastal as a result of north-south movement of its speech communities along the coast, not east-west movement between the interior and the coast" (2008a: 59). After hearing the oral traditions among the Nalú of Kassumba about their ancestors' beginnings as great fishers and collectors of palm, I tend to agree with Fields-Black's interpretation that the Nalú origins are near to the coast.

One Kassumba resident described to me that the Nalú share the same exact traditions with an ethnic group known as the Baga who are concentrated around Conakry, the capital of Guinea. According to him, the only difference is that Baga represent the female while the Nalu represent the male (de Barros 09/07/07). He never elaborated on this comment. I speculate that this was in reference to an ancestral partnership between these groups possibly referring to the masculine/feminine divisions found within their *baloba* and associated secret societies and/or as a comment on the *Matshol* and *Nimba* spirits viewed as representative of the masculine and feminine respectively.[338]

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[337] Interestingly, "nalu" in Maninka, a subgroup of the Mande located in present day Guinea and Mali, means "my mothers" (Charry 2000: 284). Although purely speculative, this linguistic clue may suggest, at least symbolically, the antiquity of the Nalú since this group of people may have been described as "mother" by the speech community that eventually founded the powerful Mali Empire. An alternative explanation for the "nalu" word origin has also been suggested elsewhere (Frazão 1999: 57; Havik 2004: 118).

[338] Other spiritual masquerades among the Nalú of Kassumba include *Nyando,* a feminine spirit (*irán*) representing the family, *Mbilikit* also for females, and the newest trickster/teacher spirit for young female initiates, the *Pende pende* (Lamp 2004: 78). *Banda* is a benevolent spirit mask combining features of man, forest animals, and sea creatures. It is used by the men's secret society at funerals, initiations, and harvest celebrations (Lamp 2004; Sieber & Walker 1987: 16). The serpent *Mantsho-ña-Tshol* is also danced among the Nalú. Additionally, the shrine piece *Rim* (*Tönköngba*) is found on the male side of the *boloba* among the Nalú. This spirit was thought to be omniscient (Lamp 2000: 20-21).

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The Nalú share many spiritual masquerades with the Baga. It was Nimba that ensured "the fertility of women and the fecundity of the rice fields" and "also presided over the rice harvest" (Fields-Black 2008a: 129; See also, Bangoura 1972: 372). The origins of these spiritual traditions have been debated quite extensively (Curtis 1996; Curtis & Sarró 1997; Lamp 1991, 1996; Sarró-Maluquer 1999). What is not debated is that these figures often accentuate feminine beauty (e.g., a braided hair crest and a long, straight neck) and motherhood (e.g., long, flat breasts) or masculine features such as horns. To illustrate, the Matshol (*Ninte-Kamatshol* in Nalú) spirit presides over male initiations and judicial matters. The human features such as the crests of hair are combined with a long beak symbolic of the water birds found in the coastal mangroves. The horn-like nose and beaked mouth are suggestively phallic in nature. The cylindrical bases of these masks, often detachable, contain magical elements within including horns, shells, plant materials, and other magical objects.

The origins and purpose of these spiritual dwellings are hotly contested by art historians and social scientists. For example, Frederick Lamp suggests,

> The most beloved of all Baga female masquerades D'mba, known to collectors as Nimba (Figs. 1, 16), is said to have been 'invented' after the arrival on the coast to express notions of the ideal woman, to give form to Baga aspirations, and to bring happiness to the Baga, so recently displaced from their homeland in the mountains (1996: 30).

Although this is an interesting theory, it is more likely that first-comers "forged relationships with ancestral spirits to ensure productivity of the land and social harmony of the villages" (Fields-Black 2008a: 130-131).

I would like to suggest that these spiritual contracts came about in conjunction with the development of paddy-rice production along the littoral. However, the evidence is scant. First, the masquerades found among the coastal first-comers such as the Baga and the Nalú are unique

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in form and function. Linguistic evidence, however, possibly links these objects with the peoples of the interior; for example, A-tsol among the Temne means "medicine" (Lamp 1996: 20). If these masks had diffused from the interior, instead of appearing among the coastal peoples, however, surely shared forms would remain. The littoral populations are linguistically, culturally, and geographically different from their interior neighbors. A simple linguistic label, modified *in situ* is quite frankly more suggestive of innovation and adaptation among coastal dwellers diffused to them over time through trade and contact with the interior.

Second, as the reliance on agricultural production increased along the coast in conjunction with the associated risks and uncertainty, it is most definite that these early agriculturalists would have looked to the supernatural world to ensure their success. The Nalú in Guinea-Bissau continue to be described by other ethnic groups as powerful traditional healers and spiritists even after more than fifty years of Islamic conversion (Havik 2004: 119). Third, these masquerades, with their distinctly masculine and feminine features, symbolize an obvious expression of sympathetic magic, which was likely directed at the fertility of the agricultural fields. Fourth, as the spiritual advisors for both male and female initiations into particular age-grades, these ready-made work groups were able to help transform the landscape through sheer brute force among these acephalous peoples. Finally, the sacred forests of the Nalú in and around Kassumba show no signs of agricultural activity although most of the accompanying landscape has been transformed into paddy-rice fields. These forests have great potential as arable agricultural land, and yet, they have remained pristine. As can be seen from aerial views (See Figure 3), current and ancient rice fields are easily observable. At the same time, the sacred forests housing the spiritual protectors and granters of agricultural success remain distinct.

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The appearance of these masquerades among coastal peoples, whether originating among the Nalú or Baga, suggests of an agricultural past. Therefore, paddy-rice production was, and is, an important household livelihood strategy for the inhabitants of Kassumba and the surrounding areas, one that increases and decreases in intensity depending on the contextual circumstances, but an activity that will not disappear or fade from the social and natural geography anytime soon.

Land Ownership and Use[339]

The Nalú are considered the patrimonial soil generation of the land (*tcon*) from Tombali north of the Cacine River in Guinea-Bissau to the Nunez River in Guinea (Mello Machado 1972: 14-16). Evidence of their ownership can be found in the toponyms of the areas where they have settled, which help legitimate the Nalú histories (Frazão-Moreira 2000). The Kassumba landscape and accompanying surroundings have been named in great detail by the Nalú ancestors including specific trees, groves, households, villages, agricultural fields, ports, inlets, and many other geographic features. I believe these names, many of which are beginning to be forgotten by the uninitiated, were used as markers by the Nalú who roamed this region in search of game and wild plants. More recently, agricultural intensification has increased Nalú settlements in frequency and size. The first inhabitants to populate a particular area were known as the "soil generation" (*dona di tcon*). These families were granted authority over those who arrived afterward through an initial exchange with the supernatural agencies that were found

[339] "In the historical territory of present Guinea-Bissau, land tenure systems have generally been communal because of an abundance of land and a scarcity of labour. Guineans perceive land as a gift from their ancestors. It is considered sacred and cannot be sold" (Lopes, 1983). Officially, rights to land have been restricted to usufruct rights. Indigenous authorities manage the land and protect it by performing culturally prescribed rituals" (Funk 1988: 35).

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there. In fact, political control was determined by occupation and the ability to re-contextualize one's history directly into the landscape with the help of linguistic toponyms and supernatural contracts. [340]

Land use and land ownership are separate concerns in Quitáfine. Beginning in the 1940s, Balanta immigrants from the north arrived in search of lands for settlement and agricultural production. The Nalú granted these immigrants permission to set up villages and establish rice fields in unused locales. Land rights, however, remain firmly in the hands of the soil generation as long as their contracts are maintained with the spiritual landlords. The Balanta then, are simply permanent guests in Quitáfine. Once the Balanta residents work the land, it is under their control indefinitely unless left fallow for several years; once this occurs, the lease and control over this parcel returns to the Nalú proprietors.[341]

Collaboration between these two ethnic groups in Kassumba is not without tension. First, during the fifteen year struggle for independence against the Portuguese, most Nalú of this region left their villages and escaped to Guinea where they had friends and family. The Balanta, however, remained. They spent years living and hiding in the rice paddies often only able to plant and eat at night. These Balanta in southern Guinea-Bissau worked hard to support the independence movement by supplying much needed rice to the fighters. It was only after independence in 1975 that many Nalú returned to their homeland only to discover that some of

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[340] "Because migrant communities depended on the ability of the first-comers to ritualize territorial and ancestral spirits for their survival, they forged respectful relationships with the region's earliest inhabitants. Though first-comers were often incorporated into the communities of newcomers, they continued to be remembered and revered for 'owning the land' and for possessing an intimate relationship with the spirits inhabiting it" (Fields Black 2008a: 61). "When there is more than one ethnic group in an area, the representatives of the ethnic group that first installed itself in the area make or influence the land tenure decisions and retain a moral and very often religious authority over the territory" (Funk 1988: 39).

[341] "The one who has received the authorization to clear virgin territory will be the recognized 'holder' of the field at least until it is left fallow" (Funk 1988: 39).

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the territory was still under Balanta cultivation and settlement. Contributions to, and ethnic relations during, and after the independence struggle in Guinea-Bissau is a complex issue and deserves to explored in greater detail elsewhere. Guinea-Bissauan filmaker Flora Gomes touches on these issues in his films *Mortu Nega* (Defying Death) and *Udju Azul di Yonta* (The Blue Eyes of Yonta).

Today, the Balanta population is larger than that of the Nalú in southern Guinea-Bissau. For example, as mentioned above, in 2007 Kassumba had a population of 134 Nalú, 542 Balanta, and 13 inhabitants from other ethnic groups. Second, since their first encounter, Nalú have been suspicious of their Balanta neighbors, often accusing them of theft. On several occasions I was warned about Balanta thievery. A Nalú elder of Kassumba told me that his family had been rich before the arrival of the Balanta. Through collaboration with the Portuguese of Cacine, his father had been granted land concessions over the entire Kassumba port. In addition, his family had kept many cattle. Today, his family had no cattle left. They had all been stolen by Balanta youth as part of their initiation rituals. The only cows left roaming the Kassumba beach today belonged to Balanta families.

In addition, the Balanta in Kassumba grew more than double the amount of rice compared to the Nalú. The Balanta were also able to buy less and sell more rice on average than their Nalú counterparts, which meant that they generally profited from rice production more than the Nalú. For example, the average Nalu bought 104 kilograms of rice per year while the average Balanta bought only 93.22 kilograms of rice in 2007. Additionally, the average Nalú in Kassumba sold 5.68 kilograms of rice in a single year while a Balanta sold 13.68 kilograms. Therefore, the average Balanta had a rice deficit of 19,885 XOF ($39.77) in a single year while

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an average Nalú inhabitant of Kassumba had a rice deficit of 24,580 XOF ($49.16).[342] At the same time, the average Nalu resident grew 165.95 kilograms of rice in 2007 while the average Balanta only netted 87.29 kilograms of rice in that same year. Therefore, it is obvious that the Nalú of Kassumba consumed more rice, and relied more heavily on rice production than the Balanta. On many occasions during my time in the field I witnessed Nalú traveling to Balanta households in order to buy rice surpluses when they ran out.

Since the Balanta population of Kassumba and throughout the region is larger, Nalú often have to rely on Balanta labor in their rice fields as well. For example, on September 1, 2007, Mamadou Keita told me that he had paid Balanta workers 50,000 XOF ($100) to build a dike last year in his *bolanha* to hold back the saltwater. In a single day, however, the waves were excessively strong and saltwater entered his field. He was subsequently unable to sow the field. On August 16, 2007, Nyambi ran out of land to plant his rice. He still had plenty of rice left in the nursery, but his few fields had already been planted. Nyambi belongs to the family of the first inhabitants to Kassumba and is therefore a rightful landlord. However, Nyambi had to borrow an additional twelve furrows (*regua*) in Mamadou Keita's *bolanha* because he had allowed most of his fields to become inundated with saltwater over the last two years, which made them unable to be planted.

That same day, I discovered that the two Kassumba households maintained by the sons of the oldest living Nalú of Quitáfine had to borrow land from Mamadou as well. Many of the ancient fields that had belonged to them had also been left vacant for many years and the salt

[342] There is a rice deficit on the national level as well. According to a World Bank document, "Rice accounts for 62 percent of the national cereal production and 75 percent of actual cereal consumption equivalent to 130,000 tons per year or 130 kg per capita/year. Yet domestic paddy rice production is at 77,000 tons of milled rice only. This means that the country has faced a chronic rice production shortage of 45,000-60,000 tons in recent years. The gap is filled by rice imports, which have represented about 25 percent, or US$13.4 million, of the trade account deficit in recent years" (2006a: 74).

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levels were too high. The importance of rice was obviously increasing once again in Kassumba because of the increased size of the labor force as well as new attempts to reclaim dormant fields over the next several years. In fact, on August 8, 2007, I was present for a conversation between de Barros and Nyambi about constructing a large dike in November or December after the harvest so that they would have again have large fields, which would be accessible year round since two feeder streams of fresh water emptied into their prospective site. Nyambi had already planned to acquire this land by next year and had invested 15,000 XOF ($30) in a Balanta workgroup to begin construction of the dike. De Barros' father would carve the two necessary valves similar to large wooden canoes to control the water flow into and out of the fields.

Finally, after planting his fields in Kamentens and then borrowing some additional space from Mamadou, Nyambi still had rice left over in his nursery that needed to be planted. By August 13, 2007, which was fairly late in the planting season, he had to take a bicycle to Kassenten to ask a Balanta youth residing there if he could borrow an adjacent plot in Kamentens that had previously been worked by this Balanta.

This illustration demonstrates that the issue of land ownership and land use in Kassumba is complex. The founding families own the land primarily as a result of authority stemming from supernatural agencies. As these supernatural contracts become less and less recognized as a result of religious conversion, however, what will happen to land rights? Additionally, as the Balanta population continues to increase in southern Guinea-Bissau how might the Nalú demonstrate and enforce their patrimony? It is already apparent that the Nalú are reliant on the Balanta for additional labor and supplying the necessary rice surpluses that these inhabitants are accustomed.

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Tools

The tools of rice production in Kassumba are quite simple. The primary apparatus is known as a *radi*, which is literally translated as "plow." In addition, Kassumba residents utilize short handled hoes, machetes, sticks, baskets, mortar and pestle, and a wooden planting device during rice production. These simple accoutrements were responsible for the harvest of 71,060 kilograms of rice in 2007 in Kassumba.

A fourth grade natural and social sciences textbook of Guinea-Bissau credits the *radi* (*kebinde* in Balanta) with being a traditional Balanta instrument (Casimiro, et al. 1998: 3) although this "fulcrum shovel" has been found throughout the West African Rice Coast for hundreds of years among many different ethnic groups (Fields-Black 2008a: 121-125). In Kassumba, two types of *radi* were used, a small one for repairing and building up dikes and a larger one for preparing the nurseries and rice fields. "The slight concave of the shovel's body and its rounded edge were specially designed and sculpted to facilitate separating, turning, and packing heavy water-logged soils and thick vegetation" (Fields-Black 2008a: 121). *Radi* are tipped with iron making them more effective at cutting through the mud and roots of the vegetation left to flourish after the harvest.

Carlos Keita of Katunigh is the local blacksmith for the field site area. He has several tools including various tongs and hammers, an anvil, and a hand generated furnace. He charges 5,000 XOF ($10) or five days of labor in his *bolanha* for a single iron tip (*fero*). He also accepts trades such as animals or rice of equivalent value. He learned the trade from his father, but several locals say that he is still a novice blacksmith. The iron for his *radi* tips come from a large construction beam. He cuts away a thin cross section and then begins to heat and work the

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metal into a sharp and somewhat rounded tip with a grooved design that fits onto the wooden head of the *radi*. It is attached by metal tabs that are bent onto the wood to snuggly affix the iron head. Additionally, a piece of cloth is often wedged between the iron and wood to ensure a tighter fit. Before use, the *radi* is always soaked in water so that the wood expands and cements the tip in place while being used. I was informed that the *fero* imported from Guinea was more durable and cheaper than those produced by Carlos. Throughout my time in the field, however, I never witnessed a trader come through with *fero* for sale. In 2007, Carlos made forty-five *fero di radi* each of which was expected to last the user five years before needing to be replaced. Iron tips to the fulcrum shovel have been standard for rice production over the last several hundred years in this region. Some evidence suggests that *radi* are able to be used without these tips although much less effectively. In these rare instances, the end of the *radi* would be burned to make it harder and more durable (Fields-Black 2008a: 123; Hawthorne 2003: 45-45).

Hard, flexible wood is necessary for an effective *radi* as well. In Kassumba, *poe di sangi* (blood wood) is the most sought after for making fulcrum shovels although these trees can no longer be found in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the wood is now imported from the interior of Guinea-Bissau. I also witnessed one Balanta youth carving a *radi* from mango wood, which I was told is also a good choice although it will deteriorate or break much quicker. Typically, a *radi* will wear out in less than three planting seasons, often lasting only a single season or less before breaking depending on the terrain, amount being planted, and the person using it. The *radi* head is mounted on a long, flexible wooden pole about the length of the owner's height. The pole should be about two inches in diameter so that it remains flexible. In Kassumba, these poles are cut from the local mangroves. One end of the pole is tapered and flattened opposite the neck of the *radi*. These ends are then joined by tightly winding plastic

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cord around the juncture numerous times and then tying it off. Wooden wedges are then inserted between the plastic cord and wood, which stretches the cord and tightly secures the handle to the head.

Short handled hoes, a technological innovation most likely coming from the interior Futa Jalon, are sometimes used to prepare the soil for nurseries in drier areas or are used to build up mounds instead of long furrows for rice planting. Approximately three foot long handles are affixed to flat perpendicular pieces of iron by an iron loop. These iron heads are attached with resin, burning, or splaying of the wood handle end with a wedge to hold them in place. On July 27, 2007, I noted, Mamadou started planting rice today. He was the first in Kassumba to begin planting a nursery. Mamadou was not going to germinate the rice seeds in water first because there was good rainfall. He covered the rice with earth so the birds could not eat it. He planted in a drier area next to his rice paddy using his five hoes. On August 21, 2007, I described how large groups of both men and women Balanta from Nantung were working in their rice fields. The men turned the soil using a *radi* while the women dug up mounds with short handled hoes.

A third rice tool was used during planting. This wooden handle made from a Y in a small branch had a long slender neck about five inches in length with a groove on the end used to implant the roots of the maturing rice plants from the nursery into the fields. Kassumba residents insisted that this was a Balanta innovation that the Nalú rarely used. Instead, Nalú preferred to plant using their fingers although if the soil was sandy or hard, the planting tool made the work much simpler and saved wear and tear on the fingers.

The remaining implements were used in the harvesting and processing of rice. Machetes were used to cut the mature rice shafts. These were then piled up and eventually beaten with sticks to separate the rice from the shaft. Next, the rice was pounded using a large wooden pestle

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and mortar. Finally a large, flat woven palm frond basket (*balé de faque arroz*) was used to winnow the skin away from the cleaned rice.

Rice Preparation and Mealtimes

During my fieldwork, I speculated about the seemingly poor diet of the Kassumba Nalú.[343] The children of Kassumba seemed small for their age although I did not collect any biometric data. The local environment was naturally rich with fruit, fish, wild game and edible plants, and a variety of other domesticated plant species being grown on a small-scale. The seemingly poor diet could have resulted from people becoming accustomed to eating in a particular way (e.g., rice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner). In fact, similar to Pélissier's observations among the Diola (1966: 709; Baum 1999: 28), if the Nalú and Balanta did not eat rice, they would not consider it a true meal. Also, the amount of food available at different times of the year was variable. For example, rice was sometimes harder to acquire during the lean months from August through December before the rice harvest.

I resided with the Kamara family who prepared four kilograms of rice and 200 XOF worth of fish in palm oil almost every day. This amount changed little although the number of people eating during a given meal fluctuated from between fifteen and twenty-five over my residency period. According to my survey data, the average person in Kassumba grew 103.13 kilograms of rice per year, sold 13.04 kilograms of rice, and purchased 95.25 kilograms. This means that the average person in Kassumba consumed approximately 150.69 kilograms of clean rice in a single year. This figure reaches 188.77 kilograms if the 139 children ages five and

[343] Observers in the Upper Guinea Coast have often noted the poor diet of many of the residents consisting almost entirely of rice and peppers (Rodney 1970: 36).

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under are removed from the estimates. These figures are close to those given by Walter Hawthorne (2003: 154), 125 kilograms of rice per year per adult, and Robert Baum (1999: 197) who suggested a figure of 180 kilograms per person per year. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) figures, the standards of consumption in Guinea-Bissau are 130 kg/habitant (2005: 4). The Kamara family was already purchasing foreign rice when I arrived in February.

As an aside, I would like to note that my presence in the village of Kassumba, particularly for the Kamara family, had an impact on the economics of their household. I gave them money for food, medicine, clothes, and other gifts from time to time to show my appreciation for their hospitality and help with my project. For the most part, however, I believe that my impact was not as great as some may suspect since it was a common occurrence to board foreigners. In addition, I gave most of my gifts away at the end of my stay in order to avoid modifying the situation too severely. Researcher biases make their way into all research carried out among humans, and ethnographic fieldwork is no different. I have tried to note my presence in, and affect on, the research community throughout this thesis.

By March 14, 2007, I documented Mamadou Keita, the neighbor of the Kamara family, bringing a full sack (50 kilograms) of dirty (i.e., un-husked) rice back from his *bolanha*. Five months before the planting season and nine long months before the next harvest, Mamadou was the only Nalú in Kassumba left with rice grown in his fields.

Once the rice was husked, residents told me that there was very little difference between the domestic and foreign varieties except for *aninia*, which was smaller in size and when cooked, was softer, and had a good smell. Their least preferred variety of rice was known as *enkonto*. *Enkonto* had a poor flavor and quickly became hard once cooked. According to Fields-Black,

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today, West Africans prefer Asiatic rice stocks since they yield more and are more easily cleaned without breaking. "The grains of many African rice species are dark red, black, or smoky in color and tend to shatter when milled mechanically" (2008a: 31; See also, Carney 1996: 26-29). The hardier African variety has not completely disappeared from production however, since it grows better in the marginal coastal soils with higher salinity and acidity (Fields-Black 2008a: 31) although I witnessed little to no indigenous rice varieties under cultivation.

The milling or removing of the outer husk or skin from the individual rice grains is a task generally performed by women in Guinea-Bissau. Dirty rice is put into a large wooden *pilon* or mortar and pounded with a wooden pestle. Sometimes sand is added to help grind off the outer skin. Once the rice has been pounded for quite some time, it is then winnowed, which leaves behind the cleaned white rice grains. A merchant in the neighboring village of Kassebesse Nalú owned a gas operated rice husking machine. Many Kassumba residents brought their rice there to be processed since the removal of the rice husk was extremely labor intensive. For example, on April 18, 2007, Mamadou instructed his son to transport seventy four kilograms of dirty rice to Kassebesse for processing. For every ten kilograms of rice run through the machine, the owner asked for one kilogram as payment. Therefore, Mamadou Keita, Jr. left 7.5 kilograms of rice behind.

The inhabitants of Guinea-Bissau cook rice in a similar fashion to that found throughout the world. Once stripped of the outer husk and cleaned, rice is put into a large metal pot in a ratio of one part rice to two parts water. Salt is sometimes added to the water. The pot is then covered. In Kassumba, this was done by putting a plastic sheet over the mixture before affixing a lid. That way, a seal was created, which steamed the rice inside. The pot was placed onto three cooking stones above a hot fire. It usually took approximately twenty minutes to cook

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unless an extremely large amount was being prepared. In those instances, a bit more time was necessary.

The primary meal eaten by Kassumba residents is around midday, anywhere between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM depending on how long it takes for meal preparation. The Nalú are polygamous. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the wife currently sleeping in the same bed as her husband to prepare the day's meal for the entire household. If available, food is consumed in the morning. This meal usually consists of whatever is left from the previous day's meal. Sometimes it is reheated; otherwise, it is eaten cold. Evening meals also consist of the reheated midday meal. Occasionally, a separate smaller meal is prepared for the evening. Snacking throughout the day is encouraged as long as food is available including rice porridge, fried doughnuts, cashew nuts, mangos, and dried oysters. Rice is the primary starch at almost every meal.[344]

Rice in Kassumba was sometimes consumed raw. I witnessed this one day in the *baloba* when the afternoon meal being prepared for the congregants was running late. Rice grains were soaked in water for a short period of time and then the rice was removed and eaten. Another important type of foodstuff made from rice in Quitáfine was known as *moni*. This was a type of rice porridge made from rice flour. The rice flour was slightly wetted and then rolled in a large bowl filled with dry flour, which was simply pulverized rice. As the beads were rolled, they collected more and more flour. These balls were rewetted until they had collected enough flour and size. These small, round balls, about the size of puffed rice, where then added to a mixture of water, sugar, and rice flour to make a hot, thickened porridge. Women or young girls trying to earn extra money would regularly make a batch and sell it door to door in the neighborhood in

[344] "In these wetter areas rice is the only suitable starch crop. Approximately thirty percent of the total cultivated acreage in Guinea-Bissau is devoted to rice farming" (Lobban & Mendy 1997: 288).

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the morning, particularly during the planting season. *Moni* was sold for 100 XOF ($.20) per bowl (*tijela*). A typical batch served twenty. In addition, Kassumba residents almost always ate *moni* to break their daily fast during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan (*Jun jun*).

In Kassumba Nalú, rice that is soaked in water, dried, and then husked is called *bara bara*. This makes the rice larger in size. If it is not fermented first, it is called *kosa*. When palm oil is put into the rice before it is brought to the rice paddies for the workers so that it does not stick together, it is known as *mput* in Susu and *amingbent* in Nalú. *Mbahan* is what the Nalú call the rice stuck to the sides of the pot after cooking. This delicacy is eaten by the women and children who prepare the meals. In Susu it is known as *Kamadu*. I was also told that when rice is unavailable, the residents of Kassumba consume *fijong de trafi* (mangrove beans). For example, people used to eat this foodstuff when rice was scarce during the fight for independence although I was informed that it was difficult to prepare and did not taste very good.[345]

As an important part of Nalú life and livelihood, rice also finds its way into their rituals, ceremonies, and special occasions. During weddings and baptisms among the Nalú of Quitáfine, rice flour mixed with sugar and water is served along with a piece of a kola nut. It has the consistency of dough and is used as a sweet treat for the guests. It also serves a symbolic function. The rice is pounded by female family members during the ceremony to promote household success. The sound of the *pilon* in West Africa is representative of a successful household. It is also customary for Nalú to bring uncooked rice to a family of a deceased person along with money and other ingredients necessary for the daily meal.

[345] For a more detailed discussion of white mangroves, See Fields-Black (2008a: 67). For a Nalú wordlist, See Fields-Black (2008a: Appendix 2).

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At the *baloba* in Kassumba, it was not unusual to find rice incorporated into this spiritual setting as well. For example, on May 14, 2007, a woman from Guinea came to repay her debt to the spirits after giving birth to a healthy son. She was having trouble conceiving, and had previously come to the *baloba* to ask the spirits to grant her a child. Upon her first visit, the oracle instructed her to grind rice flour, mix it with the powerful water from the *baloba*, and then eat the mixture. Since she had born a son, she had returned with an offering of rice and a goat as payment to the oracle and spirits.

Finally, during the conclusion of the initiation of young women into the *Nyando* secret society in Kassebesse, I witnessed the leaders of this organization prepare a meal for everyone in attendance. These elders then gave speeches at which time each woman representing a particular family was given money for offering prayers for people who had died the previous year. The seven initiates were symbolized in the rice pot by seven sticks placed upright before it was consumed by the community (06/01/07).

Rice as Currency

Rice is often used in lieu of money by Kassumba residents. Robert Baum noted this as well among the Diola of the Casamance region. He observed, rice "was also used as a medium of exchange. One volume of unmilled rice could buy an equal volume of palm wine or half its volume in palm oil. Various measures of rice were used to buy pottery, fish, and even cattle" (1999: 28). According to a 2007 World Bank report, "as a result of the relative isolation of many communities [in southern Guinea-Bissau], the local economy is mainly based on bartering and exchange, with rice serving as a common currency" (Gacitua-Mario, et al. 2007: 62). Many

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things can be valued in kilograms of rice instead of the local currency in Guinea-Bissau as well including fish, palm oil, and cloth as well as religious offerings, signs of respect, and gifts to friends and family. In 2007, throughout Guinea-Bissau one kilogram of rice cost 250 XOF ($.50) while one kilogram of aromatic rice cost 275 XOF ($.55). The price remained fixed when purchasing bulk rice in 50 kilogram plastic sacks, 12,500 XOF for regular rice and 13,750 XOF for a sack of aromatic rice during the period of fieldwork partially in response adequate supplies and government price fixing. These monetary equivalents served to help standardize exchanges being carried out in rice or other commodities although they were not dictated by it.

Figure 21. Rice Prices[346]

Year	Average Price - World ($/metric ton)	Average Price - West Africa ($/metric ton)*
1998	304.00	540.29
1999	248.00	421.15
2000	202.40	396.11
2001	172.80	410.08
2002	191.90	426.52
2003		447.37
2004		477.62
2005		499.36
2006		515.85

SOURCE: CountryWatch (2006: 48); *FAOSTAT (2009).

The village of Kassumba grew 71,060 kilograms of rice valued at 17,765,000 XOF ($35,530) in 2006 of which they sold 8,982.5 kilograms. The remaining 62,077.5 kilograms were consumed locally. In that same year, the Kassumba residents bought an additional 65,624 kilograms of rice for 16,406,000 XOF ($32,812).

[346] In 2007, Guinea-Bissau residents paid $500 per metric ton of rice.

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During my time in the field, there were many instances when I witnessed payment in rice. For example, the local women's group of Kassumba Nalú known as Largé used rice to purchase a large pot used by the group to cook rice for male work groups in the field. They would charge these groups 2,500 XOF to prepare their midday meals above the cost of the ingredients. They also purchased a large wooden drum for three *latas* (45 kilograms) of rice, which could be used during celebrations. As mentioned above, the local blacksmith would also accept payment in rice or labor in his rice fields. In addition, when I left the field for the last time, de Barros purchased my laptop computer for a combination of money, rice, and credit at his store. Finally, a local work group building up the infrastructure in Kassumba Nalú was paid by a local NGO known as Nimba in daily rice rations. Whoever labored on a given day was allowed to consume lunch with the rest of the group. The female household heads of the neighborhood were given ten kilograms of rice and palm oil on a rotating basis to prepare these meals. When it was a given household's turn to make the food, they were allowed to eat it as well.

Lastly, as mentioned above, when Kassumba Nalú residents attended funerals (*smala*), they contributed rice to the family of the deceased such as on May 28, 2007 when Kassumba Nalú collectively gifted a family who had recently lost a loved one in Kassebesse 5,000 XOF and twenty kilograms of rice.

Bedtime

Rice even had a role to play during bedtime in Kassumba. The imported plastic rice sacks were regularly sewn together to make mattresses. These mattresses were then stuffed with

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the dried shafts of the rice (*padja*) once the grain was removed. I paid 1,400 XOF ($2.80) for the eight rice sacks used to make my mattress.

THE RICE CAMPAIGN[347]

The Work Group

Work groups are necessary to supply needed labor during the yearly rice campaign in Guinea-Bissau (Hawthorne 2003: 38). George E. Brooks remarks, "Rice growing in *bolons* (swamp paddies) is highly productive, but the techniques employed are arduous and require much cooperation for diking to enclose land, besides planting, cultivating, and harvesting (2003: 12). In Kassumba, work groups are organized according to kinship, households, neighborhoods, age-grades, or villages. The rate to pay a work group from the outside to prepare fields for planting in 2007 was approximately 15,000 XOF ($30) per day depending on the size of the group. On average, a group of 20 males could prepare three to four *prigu* in a single day. A *prigu* is a field enclosed by approximately two meter high mud dikes and is about a half hectare in area (50 meters x 50 meters). This means that a group of twenty men can prepare approximately two hectares of land (5 acres) in a given day. As mentioned above, women also organize work groups for planting or cooking. Their rates are much lower (about 2,500 XOF per day).

[347] Similar descriptions of rice production are available elsewhere among the Diola of the Basse Casamance (Mark 1985: 6-7), farmers of the Rio Nunez Region of Guinea(Fields-Black 2008a: 36-46), and Balanta of Guinea-Bissau (Hawthorne 2003: 159-166).

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The entire area of Kassumba is approximately ten square miles in size, no more than two of which was planted by the Nalú in 2007. The remaining eight square miles is made up of mangrove swamps, infertile sand, cashew and mangrove orchards, households and neighborhoods, Balanta rice paddies, and old fields that are no longer able to be planted due to high levels of acidity and salt in the soil or due to excessive traffic and damage by cattle.

Work groups for hire in Quitáfine usually consist of Balanta age-grades. There are too few Nalú to prepare their fields and then have time to work for payment as well. The Kassumba Nalú work group got together five times in 2007 with approximately twenty workers each time. It was the responsibility of the field's proprietor to turn over the first layer of plants growing atop the *regua* or long rows of mud mounds before the work group arrived. The group would then come along and place a second clump of mud onto the turned earth to build up the new *regua* for planting. The turned plant material acts as a natural fertilizer. On August 26, 2007, the Nalú work group completed 3 *prigu*, starting work at 9:00 AM and leaving the field at 2:00 PM. Their midday meal arrived at 9:30 AM with the workers sitting around five large bowls of *bianda* made up of rice, palm oil, manioc, and fish according to their ages. Although no payment exchanged hands since the labor was reciprocated among the Kassumba Nalú neighbors, it was still the responsibility of the host to provide the midday meal and a small token of appreciation to the workers such as cigarettes and candy after the meal.

On July 9, 2007, Inusa Keita of Kassumba Nalú organized a neighborhood meeting to discuss the work group before the start of the planting season. He expressed his disappointment over the lack of initiative by community members over the last two years during which their work groups sometimes had less than five people. His disappointment toward the previous year's work groups was not, I believe, being expressed for my benefit. This meeting would have

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taken place whether I had been present or not. It is more likely that his tone was in reaction to the necessity of growing local rice once again in Kassumba due the difficult circumstances that the community was finding itself embroiled including less fish and poor cashew prices. The following is a brief excerpt from this hour long meeting.

> We are all a community here in Kassumba Nalú. We need a strategy for planting rice because the work is hard. This plan must be ready to implement quickly when the rains come in earnest. Everyone must work this year despite your age or other distractions. We cannot waste time on other things and miss the planting window. If you suffer and start working right away, in the long term it will work out better for us all. If you do not decide to work, you will go hungry. Last year we started planting on the 13th or 15th of July, but this year we can start tomorrow. The men will turn the soil and the women will plant. We are a small community, so everyone must help. If we help each other, we can be finished planting in twenty days. It concerns me that many of you do not have your *radi* yet. If you just go out and cut forty palm fruit bunches and have the women of your household make oil, you will have the 2,500 XOF necessary to purchase the *fero*. You can make five liters of palm oil quickly. Other years, people like Marras went fishing instead of helping plant. This year, do not go out fishing when someone is asking for the group. Fishing does not have a particular season, but planting does. We have to hold off on fishing until the rice work is complete. If we wait until September to plant, we will have a poor harvest. I am only asking for two months of your time, July and August. After that, you can fish until the harvest in December. Over the past two years we have not grown much rice and we have all ended up having to buy it instead. Planting must take priority over everything, even getting married. Last year everyone worked individually in their own fields and nothing got accomplished. If you are too exhausted to continue working at some point in the season, only take one or two days to rest, not an entire week like some have done in the past. Since we live here in Kassumba Nalú, foreigners are always arriving to see our beach or visit our *baloba*. This is a big problem because these people need to be fed. Kids, you must help your fathers and brothers. This is disciplined work. You cannot arrive in the fields at 10:00 AM with the excuse that you needed to wait for breakfast to be prepared or you will never get the fields ready. Suffer and work hard. Respect your elders.

Rice Distribution

The amount of rice being planted in Kassumba varies considerably based on the availability of seed rice, size of the household (i.e., available labor), and size of the prepared rice

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fields. In addition, yields fluctuate depending on the environmental conditions from one kilogram planted yielding three kilograms at harvest time to one kilogram yielding as many as twenty kilograms in a single season. Based on the household survey data supplied for 2006 and the above yield estimates by Kassumba residents then, the average person in Kassumba planted between five and thirty-four kilograms of rice. Anecdotally for 2007, Nyambi planted four *lata* (60 kilograms), De Barros planted four *lata* (60 kilograms), Mamadou planted twelve *lata* (180 kilograms), and Dr. Miguel, a Balanta, planted eight and a half *lata* (127.5 kilograms).

Figure 22. Guinea-Bissau Rice Production

Year	**Amount (Metric Tons)**
1997	137,880
1998	124,000
1999	138,700
2000	80,270
2001	88,430
2002	87,860
2003	88, 380
2004	89,190
2005	98,330
2006	106,000
2007	88,700*

SOURCE: INEC (2007); *FAOSTAT (2009).

Seed rice must be kept in its husk and dry from year to year. However, drought, political instability, poor household management, and other environmental hazards such as locusts, birds, and rats sometimes inhibit the careful preservation of these seeds in Guinea-Bissau. In these instances, Kassumba residents must rely on government intervention and international donors to replenish seed stocks. On July 21, 2007, the NGO ADEC distributed three and a half sacks of seed rice (175 kilograms) to the fifteen members of Largé in Kassumba Nalú. In order to receive this seed rice from ADEC, these women had to agree to return double the amount of rice they

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borrowed at harvest time. This rice would then be redistributed the following year. Each member of Largé[348] received three *fete* worth of rice. A *fete* is a unit of measure based on a large metal pot of the same name that holds approximately three and three quarter's kilograms of rice. Next year there should be seven sacks of rice to be planted.

To illustrate a typical harvest, I will discuss the household for which I was a member in 2007.[349] Nyambi Kamara saved four *lata* (60 kilograms) of seed rice from last year. Added to this he had the additional six *fete* because both his wife, Fatu Kamara, and his mother, Lulu Kamara, were members of Largé and each received three *fete* from ADEC. Therefore, Nyambi had 82.5 kilograms of seed rice. By the close of 2007, he expected to harvest between 247.5 kilograms and 1,650 kilograms of rice. I previously established that his household consumes 1,460 kilograms of rice per year. In ideal conditions, Nyambi could potentially grow enough rice to feed his family for the year. If circumstances were poor, however, his rice supply would only last 62 days. What is more likely, according to Mamadou Keita, is that a rice farmer could expect to see a return of ten to one. Therefore, Nyambi could realistically hope to harvest 825 kilograms lasting his family 206 days. Additionally, I must factor in husking, because the family calculated their consumption rate of four kilograms per day based on clean rice. I was told that thirteen kilograms of dirty rice is equivalent to eight kilograms of clean rice. Using this same ratio then, the Kamara family's 825 kilogram harvest would diminish to approximately 508

[348] The members of Largé were: (1) Lulu Kamara, (2) Maimuna Kamara, (3) Salé Silla, (4) Aisata Djallow, (5) Sadjadim Biai, (6) Beti Silla, (7) Fatu Kamara, (8) Howa Kamara, (9) Binti Kamara, (10) Kunda Kamara, (11) Salimatu Kamara, (12) Maene Keita, (13) Adama Ture, (14) Awa Silla, and (15) Amiso Keita.

[349] My findings can be compared with those of Olga Linares (1970:211; 1981: 579) among the Diola and Walter Hawthorne's (2003: 154) estimates from working with the Balanta. Hawthorne summarizes, "Examining Diola paddy rice farming practices, Olga Linares estimates that a hectare of land produces about 2,000 to 2,500 kilograms of unmilled rice. After milling, the yield would be about 1,500 to 2,100 kilograms. A household composed of a man and a woman can farm about 1.5 to 2 hectares of paddies per season, yielding between 3,000 and 5,000 kilograms. On average, an adult consumes 125 kilograms of rice per year and a child 75 kilograms. Using similar farming techniques, Balanta obtain even higher yields since their paddies receive more annual rainfall" (2003: 154).

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kilograms of clean rice. This would last their household only 127 days. He would then spend an additional 238,000 XOF ($476) to purchase imported rice over the remaining 238 days of 2008.

These figures seem accurate enough because in 2006, Nyambi responded that he had harvested approximately 750 kilograms of rice. This is consistent with Walter Hawthorne's estimates of one hectare of mangrove paddy yielding 1-3 metric tons of rice since Nyambi's field was three quarters of a hectare in size his harvest was 750 kilograms (2003: 38).[350] Of this, he saved sixty kilograms to plant the following year. This left Nyambi 425 kilograms of clean rice in 2007, the year of my fieldwork. This amount should have lasted his household 106 days. When I began residing with him in March of 2007, approximately 90 days after his harvest, his family's stores were gone. This can be explained by several factors. First, he was providing rice to his two brothers' households as well because they grew very little rice between the two of them the previous year. Second, he may have sold some of his surplus to purchase other commodities. Third, Nyambi's harvest estimates may not have been completely accurate from the year before. Finally, in this harsh climate, storage problems abound such as rodents and possible spoilage.

Figure 23. Paddy Rice Harvest for 2006

	Amount Harvested (kg.)	**Population**	**kg/person**
Guinea-Bissau	106,000,000*	1,389,497*	76.29
Kassumba	71,060	689	103.13
-Nalú	22,735	137	165.95
-Balanta	47,575	545	87.29

SOURCE: *INEC (2007); 2007 Household Survey.

[350] Mamadou Jao of Guinea-Bissau's *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa* (INEP) cited production estimates for 1990-1991. For the southern Tombali Region, he noted an average of 1,900 kilograms/hectare of *pam-pam* or upland rice, 1,930 kilograms/hectare of sweet water rice, and 1,856 kilograms/hectare for salt water rice (1999: 111). These production rates are higher than those found for Kassumba during the 2006-2007 agricultural season.

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Varieties

Kassumba Nalú residents were able to list twelve varieties of rice (See Figure 2) although they insisted that there were many more.[351] In 2007, they planted only four, *Kowlaka*, *Berunduku*, *Aninia*, and *Kataku*. The *kataku* seed rice was supplied by ADEC. The Nalú preferred to eat smaller grained rice with lots of flavor. This suggests a preference for the indigenous *O. glaberimma*[352] varieties instead of the larger, whiter, and blander Asiatic *O. sativa*.[353] The least preferred rice variety among both the Nalú and Balanta of Kassumba, however, is an indigenous variety known as *n'kontu*. Although disliked, this variety is kept in the planting repertoire because of its early maturation, hardiness, and thick foliage able to be used as animal fodder (04/08/07; Hawthorne 2003: 157-159).

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[351] Walther Hawthorne lists several early varieties of *Oryza glaberrima* being grown by the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau including *n'contu*, *yaka*, *sila*, *thom*, and *eatanhã* (2003: 157).

[352] The indigenous African varieties possibly originated in the middle Niger delta and then diffused to the Gambia river region and Guinea highlands before reaching Guinea-Bissau (Hawthorne 2003: 36-37) where it was modified to suit the coastal paddy-fields (Fields-Black 2008a).

[353] "Today in Guinea-Bissau many farmers plant indigenous rice for their own consumption, preferring its stronger flavor to that of the bland *O. sativa*. Further, varieties of *O. glaberrima* continue to be planted because they reach maturity more quickly than varieties of *O. sativa*. This ensures that stomachs will not go empty in October, when rice stores from the previous growing season may be running low. Finally, *O. glaberrima* varieties have broad canopies, which tend to suppress weed growth. Emphasizing many of these points, Nambatcha explained: 'The first type of rice that Balanta knew was *n'contu*" (Hawthorne 2003: 158).

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Figure 24. Rice Varieties of Kassumba.

Name	Origin	Type	Characteristics
1. *Aninia*		*O. sativa* (?)	White, small grain, short plant, matures late.
2. *Kowlaka*	Balanta	?	White, medium-sized plant (larger than *kataku*), large grain.
3. *Kataku*		*O. glaberrima* (?)	Red, medium-sized plant, large volume grain.
4. *N'kontu*	Balanta*	*O. glaberrima*	Dark red or black, matures early, good foliage, salt resistant, poor taste, yellow grains.
5. *Ginékobi*		*O. sativa*	White, very tall plant.
6. *N'yembering*		*O. sativa* (?)	White, grows well with *kataku*.
7. *Fom / Thom**	Balanta	*O. glaberrima*	Black.
8. *Tandja Manjaco*	Manjaco	?	White.
9. *Berunduku*	Balanta	?	White.
10. *Samba*			
11. *Kisiduku*			
12. *Guinea Kobi*	Guinea (?)	*O glaberrima* (?)	

SOURCE: *Hawthorne (2003: 157-159); Lundy (2007).

Labanta Oriki

Labanta oriki means to erect a dike. *Oriki* are mud dikes built alongside sources of freshwater to regulate water depth in the rice fields, as security against encroaching saltwater harmful to the rice crops,[354] to trap rainfall, and to divide *prigu*, which are approximately one-half hectare rice paddies. Primary *oriki* are built to a height of almost three meters and are also approximately three meters in thickness at the base while secondary dikes stand about one meter high. Heavy clay is used to construct an *oriki* to prevent the leaching of salt into the rice paddies (*bolanha*). When a new field is being developed, these primary and secondary *oriki* must be painstakingly built-up over several years, often by hand or with the use of a short *radi*, which is wielded like a shovel. In addition, *oriki* often need yearly repairs due to crab burrows (*kagre*),

[354] "If one farmer neglects his dikes and sea water enters the soil, the surrounding fields will also suffer and the rice plants will be 'burnt'" (Bigman 1993: 34).

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human traffic, weed infestation, and natural erosion. The primary *oriki* of Kassumba contain wooden valves that regulate the intake and expulsion of water. Secondary *oriki* also have at least two openings for controlling water levels although these are usually simple mud ditches which are opened and closed by adding or removing mud when necessary.

The construction of *oriki* is extremely labor intensive. Therefore, work groups are necessary. As mentioned above, Balanta work groups are often able to be rented for a daily fee in Kassumba. Repairs to dikes may only take several days, while rebuilding or constructing a new primary dike could take several weeks, hundreds of man hours, and cost thousands of dollars. Individual farmers or members of a household will often spend many days in the field, usually just before the planting season or just after the harvest, repairing their dikes while the ground is still saturated and soft and the mud is plentiful. By February, this type of activity is usually suspended as the ground begins to dry out.

When discussing his rice fields Mamadou Keita regretfully declared that he had inherited several large *bolanha* from his family, but he did not have a large enough household to maintain them. He had loaned out many of his fields piece by piece to a number of neighboring Balanta. Others, he watched get reclaimed by saltwater as the dikes slowly eroded away. By May 11, 2007, I had persuaded Mamadou to allow me to accompany him to his field where he was going to repair a section of *oriki*. We left early in the morning and returned to the village by midday. With his *radi*, Mamadou slung shovelfuls of mud approximately six feet onto the sides and upper portions of the dike using only his knee for support and leverage. He worked for twenty minutes and then let me give it a try. I worked for three five-minute intervals and almost collapsed from exhaustion. I went through two liters of water and my entire body ached. Later that afternoon, I walked to a nearby Balanta household to conduct one of my surveys. Upon arrival, I learned that

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the men were also out in the fields repairing dikes before the rains came in earnest and it was time to plant.

Kassumba residents continued to repair their dikes throughout the rainy season. On July 24, 2007, Nyambi and I went to inspect his fields. We walked about two miles, much of which was atop mud slicked dikes that were used as paths into and out of the fields. Nyambi closed his secondary dikes with mud in two places where water had been passing between the *prigu*, while his eldest son Dgibi opened the dikes in two other locales to let the collected rainwater escape into the drier fields. Nyambi removed a few destructive plants from the dike walls as well. He insisted that the fields were wet enough to start planting.

Regulating the water in the rice paddies of Kassumba was a necessary task throughout the planting season to maintain the proper levels of "sweet" water without drying out or flooding the rice plants. Too much water in the fields also made preparing them extremely difficult. Inlets had to be closed when tides were high to prevent the intake of saltwater. When tides were low, the valves were opened to decrease the fresh water levels inside the *prigu*.

Fogo

By March and April much of the plant life remaining in the *bolanha* had dried up. It was during these months that controlled fires were set in the fields to burn off weeds and infuse the soil with needed nutrients. Fires were set during these months throughout the Quitáfine region in all types of shifting agricultural fields. During this period, driving into Kassumba sometimes felt like one was entering an inferno with flames licking the sides of the vehicle from both sides. Dark clouds of smoke could be seen for miles in the distance. Kassumba, however, was slightly

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behind the agricultural cycle in much of the interior of Guinea-Bissau due to their coastal micro-environment. In 2007, Mamadou Keita waited until June 6 to set fire to his fields.

Preparativa

Depending on the rains, April, May, and June were months reserved for preparing to plant. During this time, dikes were repaired, seed rice was collected, *radi* were reassembled, salt water was flushed from the fields, water levels were closely monitored, and seed rice was soaked in fresh water and then left to germinate. By the end of June, Mamadou Keita was already traveling to his fields every few days to monitor the water levels. By the beginning of July, school had ended for the remainder of the year so that students from Bissau, Buba, and Iraque could return to their households to help with the rice preparations.

As mentioned above, by the beginning of July 2007, Kassumba Nalú had organized a community meeting to develop a plan for the upcoming rice season. It was also in July that I acquired my *radi* by trading three liters of gasoline that was used to run a generator for a sound system for a local Balanta man so that he could host a celebration in honor of his father. The local blacksmith also started making the iron tips for residents' fulcrum shovels. On July 21, 2007, the seed rice from ADEC had arrived and was being distributed to the local Nalú women to supplement their household seed supplies. ADEC, receiving much of its funding from external sources such as the FAO, worked hard in the southern part of the country to improve the livelihoods of women. They worked closely with the Nalú women's organization, Largé, on a number of projects including distributing seed rice, paying for meals for school children, and offering micro-credit to those with some type of collateral and business plan.

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By July 23, 2007, several Nalú men from Kassumba traveled into the *trafi* (mangroves) to cut long, straight branches with machetes. These wooden poles were used as *radi* handles and posts for cooking shelters (*baraka*) during the rainy season. The shelters were erected in both the outdoor kitchens and *bolanha*. On the same day, Nyambi put the long handle onto my *radi*. Several Nalú youth demonstrated how a *radi* was used for my benefit. The back hand supplied the forward momentum while the front hand pushed down on the handle for leverage and to control the depth that the *radi* sunk into the mud. Then, with an inverted motorcycle-like grip, the handle was turned and the earth was flipped. The knee was used as a fulcrum for this large lever. By the 27th of July, Nyambi had submerged several burlap sacks of rice seed into the stagnant fresh water pond behind his house. He let the seed soak for two days before transferring them into a cool, damp room inside his house where he carefully spread them between two layers of banana leaves where they were left to germinate for another two days.

Waga

Planting rice in a nursery in Kassumba is known as *waga*; the planting season is June through August. Kassumba rice farmers *waga* rice in two distinct ways. First, dry rice seed can be planted directly into an *n'pampam* nursery. These nurseries are prepared using short handled hoes. The saturated soil is tilled and then the seeds are distributed into shallow holes and then covered with earth. This type of nursery has three advantages. First, one does not have to wait for the rice to germinate before planting. Second, the prepared furrows do not have to be re-made before planting. Third, it is much more difficult for birds to eat the seed since it is not scattered on the surface.

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In the second type of nursery, a small section of field must be prepared (see below). For example, Nyambi prepared one half of a *prigu* (25 meters x 25 meters) or about fifty *regua* for four *lata* (60 kilograms) of seed rice. These seeds were germinated for approximately four days before being planted. Once the roots began to sprout, these seeds were spread fairly heavily atop the prepared *regua*. Often women and young girls would help till up the mud on top of the furrows with their bare hands after the seed had been spread.

Each day for the following week, it would be the responsibility of young children (ages 8-16) to guard the nursery against birds (*katcu*) that could consume the entire crop. These children would spend the entire day in a small shelter erected atop an *oriki* where they would scare away these predators with slingshots, noisemakers, and song. They would leave for the field before dawn and return at dusk. The midday meal would be brought out to them in the *bolanha*. After seven days, the plants were mature enough that the birds would lose interest.

This type of nursery has several advantages as well. First, initial plant success is probably slightly better than in the *n'pampam*. Second, less land is needed for planting since the nursery is reused once the plants begin to mature. Third, it is somewhat easier to clean the roots when transferring the rice plants from this type of nursery since the soil is saturated and soft and there is plenty of water nearby to clean the roots.

Labra – Findi / Kobri / Kapoti

Field preparation in Guinea-Bissau is generally men's work. Once the salt water has been drained from the fields and the soil leeched of salt after filling and emptying the field with fresh rain water several times, then the drains are plugged and the rainwater is allowed to fill the

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field to a depth of approximately one meter. When the fields contain only "sweet" (*doce*) water, they are ready to be prepared for planting. This usually takes place in July and August. Men carry their *radi* into the fields as far as several miles away from their house.

As mentioned above, first the top layer of the *regua*, or long mud ridges slightly less than one meter in height, are turned (*findi*) along with any remaining plants growing out of the top. This is done by carefully carving off one side of the ridge, one foot at a time, at an angle and then flipping it into the sluices. A field laborer walks up the waterlogged lane alternately turning the *regua* on the left and then the right before moving on. As he progresses to the next small canal and repeats this process, what is left is a mud peak where the previous year's *regua* once stood. If the plant matter left behind was particularly thick, someone often had to go back and tuck whatever weeds remained under the mud so that they didn't begin to grow again and choke out the rice plants.

Kobri is a similar process in which the new *regua* is built up where the sluices were the previous year. The laborer walks behind the leftover mud ridge and carves off chunks of mud, to the left and then to the right, placing this mud on top of the previously turned earth. Each *radi* full of mud builds half of the *regua*. The second half is supplied by the mud from the following ridge. Generally, the entire rice field would be *findi*, and then laborers would go back to *kobri*. The reason is that the first turned layer of earth containing the plants needs several days to decompose so that when the rice is later planted on top of the newly formed *regua*, this internal plant matter acts as a natural fertilizer.

Finally, *kapoti* is a less precise field preparation technique often done by women. *Kopote* is when a woman uses a short handled hoe to build up a small mound inside a *bolanha* reaching just above the fresh water's surface. This technique often needs less fresh water although not as

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much rice can be planted. It is often a strategy employed when extra seed rice remains or when the planting season is waning and the male members of the household are unable to prepare the fields fast enough.

Among the Nalú of Kassumba, *findi* is usually a household activity while it was acceptable to ask the community work group to come out to help *kobri* so that the rice could be planted at the proper time. I went and helped work in the fields more than fifteen times during my stay in Kassumba. On September 12, 2007, most of the fields had already been planted. On that day, I went to the rice fields for the last time with Nyambi and his cousin Sena Mappa to an area of Mamadou Keita's *bolanha*. They were building up a new *prigu* to transfer their remaining rice plants to from their nursery. Since this plot of land was being cultivated for the first time, it was choked with weeds. Sena Mappa and Nyambi continued to turn the large amounts of weeds while Nyambi's sons, Dgibi and Babu, tucked the weeds under the turned earth. I started to *kobri*, but it was slow going with deep water and lots of mangrove roots impeding my progress. By the time we left at 3:00 PM, I had only covered 3 *regua*. I found that I worked at the rate of a novice; I finished one *regua* in the amount of time it took an average adult male to complete three. Therefore, I was unable to compete in the races taking place among the workgroups.

Working in the fields is not an easy task. It takes years of training and a lifetime of specialized knowledge to properly manage the *bolanha*. This information is passed along from father to son, generation to generation. When locals heard I owned my own *radi*, they laughed with amusement. When they saw me walking out into the fields with the other men of my household, they would often stop me and ask if I was really helping to prepare the fields. They would forcefully say, "Show me your hands." Once they found the calluses and blisters, they

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knew I was trying in earnest to learn how to "properly" cultivate rice. In August, on the day my toenail fell off, the female head of my household turned to me and said, "Now you are a true paddy-rice farmer."

Rinka / Planta

It is necessary to replant rice after it has matured enough to move from the nursery. Otherwise, the plants grow too close together and greatly decrease potential yields. The earliest household in Kassumba Nalú to begin transferring rice plants to the paddy in 2007 was De Barros Keita. His household began to *rinka*, or pull up the maturing rice plants, on August 28. These plants were bundled and left to float on the surface of the paddy water. By September 3, Dede, Fatu, and I went to Nyambi's nursery to begin the transfer of maturing plants to the prepared fields as well.

We arrived in the late morning bringing our midday meal with us. We met up with Lulu, Fatu Jr., Nkono, and Ruki who had begun work earlier that morning. Pulling up and bundling the rice plants was not labor intensive, but the day was spent bent over at the waist. The women pulled up a small clump of plants (about ten) at the base and then smacked the roots into the water to remove the clinging mud. When they had a sizeable bunch (approximately 50 plants), they took three or four strands and wrapped them around the entire group at the midpoint, tucking them underneath to hold the bundle together. The women then left the bundle floating on the water's surface and continued pulling up plants further along the *regua*.

The plants could not remain out of the ground for more than two days. To begin the transfer, a planter would place five to ten plants into the beginning end of a *regua*. They would

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then place another five to ten plants beside the first on the other side at a distance of approximately one to two feet. Afterward, the planter moved approximately two feet down the *regua* and placed another small bunch in the center of the *regua*. This was repeated down the entire length of the mud ridge, two bunches side by side, then a single bunch, then two more, et cetera.

On September 5, 2007, a large group headed into Nyambi's *bolanha* to begin planting. It was the night after a big rainstorm, so the group waited until about 10:30 AM before walking to the field. On the way, they passed a number of fields that had already been planted. Because of the hard rain the night before, many of these plants had been knocked down or uprooted. The group contained fourteen people including three males, myself, Nyambi's youngest son, and my research assistant and friend, Tchoca. I planted with my wooden planting device placing five to ten plants in a single space at a depth of two to four inches. I was instructed to place the grooved end of my planting stick onto the roots so that I would not break the stock and kill the plant. Others preferred planting by hand; they used their fingers to force the roots into a whole. Two of the women continued pulling up the maturing plants in the nursery while the rest of us planted. We completed six *prigu* in a single day. More than half of the nursery (27.5 *regua*), however, was left unplanted because of a lack of prepared land. We left the *bolanha* at 3:30 PM after planting some of the rice on the sides of the *oriki*, which was a fairly common practice although it did cause some erosion of the mud walls.

In mid-September, I returned to Kamentens to check on the rice we had planted in Nyambi's *bolanha*. For the most part, it was growing quite well. The middle section of one whole *prigu*, however, had died because of low water depth. We had not received enough hard rain in several days to maintain the water levels in the fields. That section had to be replanted.

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Once planted, if rice plants get too much sun, they start to turn reddish in color and will produce very little rice. If the soil dries out, the immature plants will die.

***Sirka Ave* (E.g., *Katcu*)**

As the rice ripens beginning in late-October through early-January, birds, monkeys, and other rice eating animals become a nuisance to the Kassumba agriculturalists once again (Rodney 1970: 23-24). It generally takes rice ninety to one hundred days to fully mature depending on the conditions and rice type (Mark 1985: 7). Many strategies are employed to deter the theft of this grain. Scarecrows are often erected in the fields to keep away birds. I witnessed the use of cassette tape tied high above the maturing rice. As the wind blew through this tape, it made a noise that also scared birds. String was used in a similar fashion; it was webbed above the fields with implements that would make noise when the breeze blew through. Slingshots, guns, and children (aged 8-16) were all used to keep predators away from the rice until it was time to harvest. The weeding of unwanted plant matter also took place at this time. In many of the well-established fields of Kassumba, however, this step was largely unnecessary.

Korta

Paddy rice is harvested from November to February as the various varieties mature. Harvesters cut the tall rice stalks halfway down the stem (culm) with a curved machete. They then transport their bundles to a clearing, often located in the fields. Over the next several months, men thresh the rice to dislodge the rice grains from the stem. I observed, and

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participated in, the threshing of rice once it had been bundled and piled in the clean, earth-packed threshing area. At the end of March, Mamadou Keita gathered up a group of Nalú men, women, and children to help him thresh the remainder of his rice. He had left large piles of his cut rice stalks in his *bolanha*. These had been covered by old stocks to prevent birds from eating his stores. Since most Kassumba residents had consumed their provisions by this point in the year, and the rains were imminent in April or May, Mamadou had made the decision to finish threshing his rice so that he could guard it in his home to avoid theft or spoilage.

Twelve people helped Mamadou thresh his rice. Two elderly men began the process by each taking up a rice bunch laden with grain. They beat these stocks against the backside of a wooden *pilon*, knocking off much of the loose grain onto the packed floor below. Next, these rice stocks were piled up in a cleared space, approximately ten to twenty bundles at a time. Six men surrounded this pile holding long wooden poles. Upon the proper signal (*un kai*, "let's go" in Susu), they began to beat (*sulta*) the heap in unison. As they smacked down, grain was dislodged from the stem. The wooden poles would often catch some of these stocks and fling them into the air before being beaten down once again. At the same time, the men would move outward and inward, making the circle of men around the grain pile larger and smaller. They would also vary the speed at which they pounded, taking verbal cues from the group's leader. This progression stirred up the stocks quite well and dislodged a majority of the remaining rice grain.

The pile was then set aside and the group of men would begin working on the next pile. The final step in threshing was a solo task. The discarded batch of rice stalks was once again beaten with a stick by a single person to remove any stubborn grains. This individual was often a novice who, if placed in the threshing group, would disrupt the rhythm or hit someone with

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their stick. I performed this task. Once beaten, the stems were inspected by hand and then piled up in a separate area reserved for the dried, empty hay. Once the entire pile of harvested rice stocks had been threshed and removed from the processing area, the remaining rice grains strewn about the floor were carefully swept up, placed into awaiting baskets, and carried back to the house for storage or further processing.

Karga Para Kaza

Once the rice is brought to the house, it is placed into containers for storage. These containers are often large clay pots such as those made by the Balanta, or 50-kilogram imported plastic or burlap sacks. Some of this rice, still in its husk, is put aside for planting the following year. The rest is processed by the women of the household as needed or brought to a local milling machine (see above).

CONCLUSION: SWEET WATER / SALT WATER

The opening to this chapter discussed the sale of rice to a Fula middleman or trader-in-residence, usually at the expense of yearly food security. It was explained as a careful cost-benefit analysis on the part of the rice farmer of Guinea-Bissau where the heads of households attempted to have rice stores hold out as long as their neighbors. If the rice was used up too quickly, the family would have to start purchasing local surpluses and foreign imports as well as relying on the kindness of others. If the rice lasted too long, the household felt obligated to share their remaining supply with friends and neighbors based on a local idea of "hospitality" found

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among much of the civil society of Guinea-Bissau, which quite possibly evolved as a survival strategy in challenging environments.

In Kassumba, however, less than 13 percent (8,982.5 kg.) of 2007's harvest was sold. With a rice deficit in this village of more than 65,000 kilograms, it is not surprising that much of the locally grown rice in that year was consumed. In fact, according to Rosemary E. Galli, "Since the 1980s, there has been a rice deficit in all areas of the country and hunger in many parts" (1987a: 70). Kassumba residents expressed dissatisfaction with their rice harvests in the two years prior to my fieldwork. The main reason these harvest were so poor is that in 2005, floods ruined as much as 85 percent of the country's rice paddies when high tides spilled ocean water over the dikes (IRIN 2006g, 2007a).[355]

Therefore, during my fieldwork, rice production was just starting to get back to "business as usual" although much work was still needed to be done to re-build damaged fields. In addition, labor-intensive rice production was decreasing as people throughout the country started relying more heavily on growing cashew nuts. Before 2006, one kilogram of cashew nuts could be exchanged for one kilogram of rice. Today, this ratio is three kilograms of nuts for one kilogram of rice. Once cashew middlemen stopped buying nuts in Guinea-Bissau (See Chapter Five), a return to rice production began in earnest.

The rural population of Guinea-Bissau continues to strive for self-reliance in the face of external pressures such as fluctuating agricultural prices, international donor apathy, and regional instability and national political unrest (UN-OCHA 2005). The trader-in-residence is an integral part of the household livelihood strategy adopted to face food security challenges in Kassumba. For example, the trader-in-residence there buys and sells local rice at the same price. It is not

[355] "WFP [United Nation's World Food Programme] attributes this [food insecurity] to a number of factors, including destruction of rice paddies by floods in August 2005 followed by low rainfall in September 2005, insect invasions and structural problems in Guinea-Bissau's economy" (IRIN 2006e).

until foreign rice is imported into the community that he earns a small profit. What takes place is a type of savings and central distribution in which surpluses are given over to the trader-in-residence so that those who need rice will not go without. When one's household is in need of rice, the trader-in-residence makes it available whether he has to go asking door to door throughout the village or has to import foreign rice once the communities store are all used up. Therefore, the trader-in-residence serves an important function in the community, one that no insider could perform due to the limitations of the unwritten rules of hospitality. The Fula trader-in-residence of Kassumba has resided in this community for more than twenty years and does not plan on returning to live in Guinea Conakry.

The rice purchased by the trader-in-residence is almost always sold locally. When there is a particularly good harvest, much of the excess rice is transported to the interior of the country where those producing other agricultural products such as cashews, peanuts, manioc, and fruit can exchange these goods for rice. In years such as 2007 when the rice harvest is poor, most of the rice remains in the community. It is distributed through the Fula trader-in-residence who acts as a central distribution point until a majority of the households run out of stores simultaneously. Then, after satisfying this important community function, he is able to make a small profit for himself by selling less expensive imported rice. This trader also extends credit to those households in need. This debt is then repaid from the following year's harvest or by providing him with other commodities such as cashew nuts, fish, or palm oil for resale.

Agriculture throughout West Africa is a highly flexible and adaptable form of production that continually reinvents itself with new crops, techniques, labor organizations, and seed varieties when applicable (Galli 1987: 77). Although this is not a policy paper, I wish to conclude with a few recommendations toward the re-agrarianization of Kassumba's rice sector,

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some advanced by others, and some taken from my months of fieldwork. Before I begin though, there is one assumption I wish to note about rural livelihoods: "Crop diversification is the norm – dictated by the necessity to reduce risks in order to ensure food security" (Gacitua-Mario, et al. 2007: 60). I am not advocating that crop diversification change; instead, at the micro-level, I wish to promote incremental improvements for each agricultural endeavor. What follows are those possible improvements for the rice sector.

First, I believe that an interventionist strategy when it comes to land distribution and ownership may cause unnecessary hostility on the part of the outnumbered Nalú landlords. It also has the potential to increase ethnic tension in the area between groups that have been successfully collaborating and adjudicating amongst themselves since the 1940s. Forrest recognized the explosive nature of government interference in local affairs in Guinea-Bissau by revisiting two failed initiatives already observed by Gali and Jones (1987): the Rice Production Project in Bafatá and the Integrated Rural Development Program in Cacheu, Biombo, and Oio. The problems experienced by these initiatives were in large part due to a failure to consider the nature of land tenure relationships and land-use systems already in place. The populace cannot be denied access to their traditional lands and the existing village power structures must be acknowledged (Forrest 1992: 85).

After a close examination of the current land tenure system in place for the village of Kassumba, I propose the continuation of the current land-tenure/land-use system with a few caveats. First, the Nalú must establish a local regulatory council of elders to manage the land and interface with the national government. This comprehensive council must include members from every Nalú household in the community. This council should also have an advisory board of Balanta and other active farmers within the community based on their seniority, age, and

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status within the community. As land is left fallow, or the size of arable land is increased as the dike system is refurbished and expanded, the council must re-distribute this land. Both a local and national waiting list for agricultural lands should be established to expand the size of the labor force in the south with the local list getting priority. Land not under cultivation should be returned to the council after two years. Finally, a nominal fee, for example one sack of rice per hectare, should be given over to the council by the non-Nalú producers, which can be used by this regulatory body for infrastructural improvements to the rice fields. In order for this to work, the council may need to include non-Nalú members of the community.

Second, the national government must create a sliding import tax on all rice. During peak production periods (i.e., November-February), these taxes should be higher than during the lean months when more imported rice is needed by the domestic populace. In addition, all rice donations from international development organizations must be regulated through the Ministry of Rural Development. These donations should not be allowed to just flood the local markets to the detriment of local producers. Imports should always be sold at slightly more than domestic prices with the necessary subsidies to maintain these price-fixes being paid for directly from the import taxes and through the sale of donated rice to the local population. This should promote local rice production. Subsidies paid to local producers should be in the form of PVC pipe (Gaillard 1995: 120) able to be used to drain fields or as durable posts making up the internal support structures of primary dikes.[356]

Third, a database and stores of rice varieties must be maintained at both the local and national levels. These stores will be maintained and increased in a similar fashion to a savings and loan bank. Farmers will borrow the appropriate seeds for their particular fields and

[356] This plastic would replace the use of mangrove wood that was used for its density and durability (Hawthorne 2003: 162).

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microenvironments from the local council of elders charged with maintaining the stores of seed rice. Then, at harvest time, the rice farmer will repay twice the seed they borrowed.

Only four years after independence, President Cabral (1979a: 46-47) expressed his concerns to the State Bodies at Region and Sector levels about getting back seed rice at the end of each agricultural campaign from the producers. Cabral was uncertain how to ensure that seed rice was viewed as a loan without depriving those farmers of seeds after a bad harvest in which the loan could not be repaid.

I suggest that in order to deter the risk of nonpayment, farmers unable to repay the previous year's seed rice would still be allowed to borrow seed the next year, but after the second year's harvest they would have to repay the entire amount borrowed over the two years. A third year of credit would also be extended. If after three years, the farmer was still unable to repay their borrowed seed, the debt would be expunged, however, the unsuccessful farmer's land would be returned to the council for redistribution. The national database and store would work in a similar manner. If local councils defaulted on repayment of seed, they would be given an extra two years to repay the entire amount borrowed times two. After three years of defaults, the national database and seed rice storage would expunge the debt and end collaboration with that local community for a penalty period of two years after which time they would reach out once again to begin collaboration if the community wanted. In addition, it would be the responsibility of the national database and seed rice storage to collect new rice seed strains, promote global advances to the local bodies, and collect and distribute seed rice donations from international aid organizations. If successful, the older surpluses could be sold from both the national and local warehouses. These funds could then be used to supplement operating costs. Governmental subsidies would also help offset the associated operating costs.

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Third, infrastructural improvements are needed if agricultural surpluses are going to be brought to the population centers of the country. This necessity was recognized more than twenty-five years ago by the then president, Luís Cabral. He stated "that rural development is not possible if there are no means of transport, and if there are no links between the villages" (1979b: 19). These infrastructural improvements have still not come about. What may be needed are more immediate advances that could eventually lead to longer term initiatives such as improvements to the roadways. For example, the government should purchase several barges able to transport agricultural surpluses such as rice to the population centers along the numerous natural waterways throughout the country. In addition, although land distribution to retired military personal was not as successful as first thought, what may be possible is the establishment of a National Guard or corps of engineers made up of retired soldiers. They could help build necessary infrastructure and respond to national crises such as the invasion of seawater into rice fields because of failing primary dikes. This body could also help garner donated equipment such as tractors[357] and training from donor nations.

If successful, these proposed measures could possible stop some trends detrimental to rice production among the rural populations of Guinea-Bissau such as a population shift toward urban centers and the planting of cashews. Some additional concerns for the southern region advanced in a World Bank report included the lack of road and transport conditions hindering access to markets and promoting poor compensation for produce, the slow advance of saltwater in the lowland rice fields, and a lack of credit to repair aging dams and dikes (Gacitua-Mario, et al. 2007: 62). Again, the above proposals may begin to alleviate these pressing concerns for much of the southern rural population. As a household livelihood strategy for Kassumba

[357] In 1997, there were 19 tractors operating in Guinea-Bissau (EarthTrends 2003). I suspect this number is even lower today.

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residents, paddy rice production has had great success in this difficult environment for hundreds of years. Although tidal rice production is extremely labor intensive, this form of agriculture may promote further economic development internally instead of having to rely on international development initiatives with their own prejudices and agendas of self preservation. It has been suggested that Guinea-Bissau's total production capacity for rice could eventually exceed 2.2 million tons per year. "This would allow covering domestic needs and still potentially generate more than 2 million tons for exports" (World Bank 2006a: 75). Improvements in the agricultural sector would benefit the entire country since more than eighty percent of the population remains employed in the agricultural sector and more than half of the country's GDP is generated from agricultural activities.

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Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the dynamic nature of unfolding economic processes confined by local and global structures. For several reasons, Kassumba in southern Guinea-Bissau illustrates how rural civil society negotiates and fashions its livelihoods in ways that demonstrate a nuanced understanding of their numerous positions in a world-system. First, since the armed conflict in the 1990s, Guinea-Bissau has experienced an out-migration of transnational development initiatives along with a donor apathy that has continued up to the present day. Therefore, the rural civil society continues to be forced into a position of self-reliance particularly in the most isolated reaches of the country. Second, the national government is weak, again, forcing the rural populace to look to each other for socio-economic support. Third, a collectivist ideology remains as a legacy of Amílcar Cabral and the anti-colonial struggle. Fourth, although this community is semi-isolated, residents are being affected by a number of economic pressures coming from the outside such as price fluctuations in the cashew market and overfishing in their coastal waters by foreign vessels. Finally, a plethora of cultural identities demonstrates how social considerations play a significant role in how one goes about making a living beyond the natural environment and other structural forces in place.

Subsistence, market principles, cultural identity, and the physical environment all influence how Kassumba residents view their world. Many of these compounded elements have been discussed throughout this thesis such as the role of religion, ethnicity, political economy, and geography. Through the documentation of these complexities in all their messiness, an understanding of the means people use to limit vulnerabilities and successfully navigate their

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impoverished rural economy emerges. As the approaches to household livelihood strategies are better understood by those enacting them, nuanced shifts can occur in which these approaches are improved upon from the inside. It is these types of "development" that may in the long run prove most effective for those on the ground level.

Understanding economic processes unfolding in Kassumba necessitates coming to terms with their many histories, with how present social, economic, and political spheres relate to both the present and the past, and with the interrelationships between the local, national, regional, and global political economies. When considering cultural change, it is equally important to recognize cultural stability. It is necessary to demonstrate the precarious nature of life in Kassumba without getting caught up in the all too common ideology of Afro- pessimism. At the same time, downplaying difficulties or describing the socio-economic possibilities and potentials as overly promising is equally damning.

Kassumba is a cultural space full of ethnic groups, religions, landlords and immigrants, traditions and modernities, and producers and consumers. What results is integration, overlap, webs of commodity paths, and socio-cultural continua. While many researchers claim that the inevitable outcome of diverse cultural fields in Africa is conflict, this study has shown that in fact, what often results, is cooperation since village life is intimately and necessarily intertwined with virtually all spheres of economic activity.

COOPERATION VERSUS CONFLICT

This research has shown that socio-economic practices at all levels in Kassumba are complex and somewhat fluid in nature as demonstrated by their decision making criteria used to

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formulate survival strategies. Of course, as previously noted, these criteria are often implicit and multifaceted. Rural Kassumba residents survive through what they perceive as traditional activities. This, however, does not mean that they are opposed to new monetizing economic endeavors, techniques, initiatives, or modifications to their ways of doing things that are aimed at improving their daily lives. In addition, cultural identities and past and present successes and failures influence the decision making involved in household livelihood strategies. The limited nature of survival strategies in Kassumba, however, is also a force at work that is promoting a continued reliance on family, friends, neighbors, and strangers alike. Other factors promoting cooperation over conflict include limitations on accumulation and social attributes such as hospitality. In fact, even the traders-in-residence are limited by these forces leading to small economic gains and rapid, yet incomplete, incorporation into society.

The hindrance of long term security in Kassumba is partially overcome through investment in agricultural land, the keeping of livestock, maintaining a broad kinship network, and education to a somewhat lesser degree. These strategies are often employed along ethnic lines in Kassumba with various cultural groups meeting the risks and limitations associated with an agricultural lifestyle differently. All Kassumba residents, however, recognize that education, hard work, and petty enterprises are all paths to improving one's life. In fact, income is consistently used to purchase food, agricultural tools and labor inputs, modern possessions, and to pay school fees. In much of West Africa, it is the school fees that act as gatekeepers keeping girls from being educated. In Kassumba, the school fees were used to pay for the upkeep of the school and its equipment as well as paying for teacher salaries and administrative costs since money from the national government to pay civil workers was sporadic at best. Additionally, all of the households surveyed in Kassumba in 2007 participated in some form of direct economic

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enterprise. In other words, both autosubsistence and cash-cropping were taking place among the residents simultaneously.

Religio-ethnic differentiation was a common form of identification patterns in Kassumba. These differences affected work relations based on contracts and set compensation instead of reciprocity; land relations were defined in terms of production instead of ownership; niche-based economic activities, and stratified conceptions of self based on ethnicity, religious affiliation, economic strategies, household structure, and lifestyle were also divisive factors at work. These realities of differentiation, however, all contained elements of overlap and cooperation that integrated livelihoods instead of promoting ethnic conflict and tension. For example, the land-owning Nalú loaned out agricultural plots to Balanta immigrants,[358] which in turn increased the size of the labor force and available agricultural surplus. The Balanta paid no rent on this worked land. Balanta owned more animals, which were a transitory form of wealth and investment, while the Nalú were able to take advantage of this extra protein source through exchange and theft. Ethnic neighborhoods were differentiated while close proximity allowed for easy visitation, trade, and demonstrations of cultural respect. In addition, primary forms of economic activities often integrated ethnic groups. Balanta worked in Nalú cashew orchards in exchange for the fruit, maintained rice fields for financial compensation, and participated in joint fishing ventures. This integration helped the community thrive.

The residents of Kassumba do not simply envision their social landscape in terms of class, ethnic, and religious divisions. Most residents recognize the need to band together with their neighbors in this difficult terrain if they are going to continue their successful way of life. Interestingly, many of the foreign cultural elements and institutions making their way into

[358] I refer to the Balanta in Kassumba as immigrants since this is how my Nalú informants described them. Many of the Balanta families have been present in Kassumba since 1939. I suspect that they will remain "immigrants" indefinitely since the Nalú are considered the patrimonial and rightful landowners.

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Kassumba society have done so in unique and fairly unobtrusive ways. For example, the ability to read and write was recognized as a valuable skill by the Nalú who sent their children off to be educated by Muslim imams before Christian missionaries arrived in this remote village. The resulting religious conversion was accepted at all levels of society reducing inter-generational tension. Simultaneously, strong ties to the Nalú traditional religion are still apparent. Today, the Balanta immigrants also send their children to the local community school, which is taught by semi-educated Nalú. Both Nalú and Balanta youths, boys and girls, sit side by side in these classrooms. Sessions may be short, and lessons may be basic, but the social implications of cooperation and integration are quite significant.

For the Balanta, conspicuous consumption is an embarrassment except at the end of the life cycle when an elder is rewarded for a life of hard work through many animal sacrifices at his or her funeral. The Nalú also acknowledge the deceased by large funeral gatherings in which those left behind are economically aided by friends and family. Cooperation, generosity, and hospitality help to ensure that everyone has what is necessary for these cultural transitions. In this way, communities like Kassumba have much to teach us as exemplars of humanitarianism.

This does not mean that class, ethnic, and religions antagonisms are non-existent in Kassumba. Stories circulate about the aloofness and laziness of the Nalú perpetuated by the Balanta. The Balanta are stereotyped as thieves and interlopers. Fula are viewed by both the Nalú and Balanta as unscrupulous and selfish. A Nalú would never marry a Balanta for religious reasons. The Balanta of Kassumba are upset with the Nalú because what small infrastructural improvements have been made for the community are all taking place in the Nalú neighborhood. At the same time, these socio-cultural fissions are overshadowed by an economic need to cooperate, a strong nationalist sentiment, a shared language, and a sense of tolerance possibly

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stemming from a pre-historic past in which an amalgam of refugees were able to coexist on the margins of empires, nations, and a world-system. Ethnicity may be a component in differentiating criteria, but it is not the sole driving force, and may even divert attention from more fundamental processes affecting cooperation, such as economics.

HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

What I have attempted to do in this thesis is to build upon Frank Ellis' (1998, 2000) discussions of rural livelihoods, household stratification, and economic diversification. He proposes that the saving grace for Africa's rural populations is income diversification through experimentation with income generating activities. I believe diversification within the agricultural sector, or "re-agrarianization," may hold the key to positive advances for the beleaguered rural civil societies throughout West Africa. A return to those economic endeavors with a proven track record of success, some of which promote autosubsistence and others with marketable outlets on the national, regional, and global levels will in fact help promote a form of grassroots development from the inside instead of relying on agenda-laden initiatives and ideas from outside agencies often implemented from the top down. The "erosion of local peasant economies and social communities" (Bryceson 2002: 737) can be reversed by these very same local peasant economies and social communities.

In 2005, a noteworthy study was conducted by Caroline Kamau and Adam Rutland on socioeconomic status (SES) and the economics of African identity. What they found was that among high SES Kenyans, materialism and cynicism about Africa's economic future had a negative effect on their commitment level to the national economy and African identity. They

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suggest that these findings imply that anti-group economic behaviors such as corruption and worker exploitation are attributable to social mobility and global economic structures. I believe that if the inverse of this study is considered, then rural civil society is the ideal population for investment since this is where one would look to find African optimism, a commitment to the national economy, and a strong localized identity.

Deborah Bryceson logically, although I believe incorrectly, correlated the uncertainty of rural livelihoods in Africa with wasted energy resulting from trial-and-error between diverse income-earning initiatives. She believes that this wasted energy can be stemmed by "a more directional policy approach taking account of rural producers' pressing current aims and long-term occupational futures" (2002: 726). This position could be called, *plier le travail au capital* (subjugate the labor force to the capital). I, on the other hand, believe that as economic uncertainty increases, household livelihood diversity must as well. However, these economic activities are not selected by random experimentation resulting in wasted energy. Instead, strategies are chosen according to previously demonstrated successes or by carefully weighing available options and by considering known constraints. Therefore, what she calls directional policy is simply household strategies which are constantly negotiated and modified based on the best available information in a timely fashion whether this means daily, weekly, seasonally, or yearly at the individual, household, or community levels. One may read the current work as simply an advancement of this position.

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THE DEVELOPMENT QUESTION IN AFRICA

The concept of development is unwieldy and unpopular for the continent of Africa (Stevens 1978a, 1978c). In fact, the 2008 African Studies Association plenary session for their annual meeting was titled, "Development in Africa: What is the Cutting Edge in Thinking and Policy?' at which several discussants expressed the utter failure of development initiatives throughout Africa over the last fifty years. However, is this question fair, or is the development question in Africa more complicated than this? Most recently, a call for papers went out from the 2009 African Programme on Rethinking Development Economics (APORDE) supported by the Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa and the French Development Agency. This is the third such meeting to take place in as many years aimed at questioning the neoliberal domination in development policy making. This initiative recognizes that developing countries' governments and civil societies are weakly equipped to respond critically to external initiatives aimed at their development. This seminar allows talented academics, policy makers, and civil society representatives from Africa to gain access to alternatives to mainstream thinking on development issues and to be equipped in a way that will foster original thinking.

It is a proven fact that the gaps between rich and poor nations and rich and poor people within those nations are consistently widening (Seligson and Passé-Smith 2008). Therefore, the poor, rural civil society of Guinea-Bissau suffers from "double jeopardy" (Seligson 2008: 2). Most Kassumba residents have positive things to say about local NGOs usually funded from outside sources as well as aid agencies such as Africare that once had an office in Cacine. However, they also express the opinion that international aid and development agencies today rarely venture from the confines and comforts of the capital city of Bissau, leaving those in the

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countryside without needed assistance and resources. With increased communication, education, and travel, Kassumba residents are more aware than ever of alternate lifeways and disparities between themselves and outsiders. How they cope with, and use this knowledge will be an interesting development over the coming years. Will this increased familiarity with foreign agents leave them marginalized, alienated, and dissatisfied with their own positions in the global power structure as some have suggested (Milanovic 2008)? Or, will they find ways of coping as they always have? When considering this question, it is important to remember that it is not the first time these populations have faced globalizing pressures.

James Ferguson warns,

> That such people find other ways of getting by, that they concoct 'local' ways both of 'coping' and asserting global membership, often through a brilliantly inventive bricolage of scraps and leftovers, is a fact more likely to be celebrated by the cultural analyst than by the 'locals' themselves, who may see such practices more as signs of weakness than of strength. (2006: 21)

Residents of Kassumba suggested to me that the world is just easier for some. Ferguson is quite right; ingenuity does not make up for marginalization. Our ability to cope, adapt, and struggle for an improved lifeway, nonetheless, is fundamentally human. For Ferguson and myself then, Africanist researchers must understand the local mileu as situated in a global system and how these interactions help to perpetuate an unequal world order (Ferguson 2006: 49). Similarly, Andre Gunder Frank suggests, "To change their reality they must understand . . . the causes and eliminate the reality of their development of underdevelopment and their underdevelopment of development" (2008: 266-267).

So how do socio-economic researchers, policy-makers, development agencies, and those people at the ground level proceed? I and many others see the way forward in collaborative enterprises aimed at improving the lifeways and livelihoods of the majority.

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ALTERNATIVES – PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Fiscal Affairs Department has recently suggested that both economic growth and equity can come about by investing in human capital (2008). The importance of culture and how values, or equity, shape human progress has previously been taken up elsewhere (Harrison and Huntington 2000). The IMF proposes that equity-enhancing policies dedicated to advancing human capital interests should in the long run promote economic growth and alleviate poverty. For example, such policies could "boost social cohesion and reduce political conflict" (2008: 150). These types of initiatives, aimed at enhancing rural civil society, are where I see the most potential for improving lives and easing economic related stressors among the marginalized rural civil societies.

Jeffrey Cohen and Norbert Dannhaeuser (2002) have suggested that anthropology's role in development has either been in an applied capacity or as critics. According to Cohen and Dannhaeuser, what is needed is a syncretistic approach between the two, noting failures, deconstructing agendas, advancing alternatives, and implementing initiatives aimed at bettering the lives of those communities most in need of economic security. While living in the village of Kassumba, I discovered that development was not necessarily something *done* to someone, it was something done *by* someone. The literature refers to this type of approach as "participatory development,' in which development becomes a process "defined from below" (Woost 2002: 107). These forms of needs assessment in conjunction with community members and grass roots organizations have been the bedrock of participatory programs such as the U.S. Peace Corps since the 1960s. I believe that this type of collaborative effort and communalism among rural

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civil society in Guinea-Bissau has a deep-rooted potential to promote internal development for a large portion of the population. The first step is to explicitly and accurately document tried and trusted household livelihood strategies and more recent economic successes. From this position of knowledge, communities and outside collaborators can develop a plan of action that will incrementally improve several economic arenas over time. Small improvements shared among many for several diverse economic activities could result in compounding advantages for those on the ground level. These investments in human capital, education, and technology would reach into many levels of society while limiting detrimental socio-economic impacts associated with rapid industrialization, structural adjustments, and neoliberal policies.

It is with these aims in mind, both "deconstructing development" (Escobar 1995: 12-14) and advancing potential avenues for the practical implementation of small, collaborative initiatives resulting from ethnographic research, that I conclude this thesis with several recommendations for the village of Kassumba. These recommendations, although small in scale, could be large in scope. This project has attempted to collect grounded ethnographic knowledge from a local community, an approach that has been criticized by some (Ferguson 2006: 3) for lacking applicability beyond the site under investigation. I hope, however, that I have demonstrated the potential for inward looking and incremental advances for the rural civil societies of developing countries. First, I will acknowledge some limitations of this study.

LIMITATIONS

Even in-depth ethnographic analysis often fails to provide full understanding of socio-economic processes. This ethnography is limited to a single community and a single year.

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Attempts were made to utilize historical and contemporary records when they were available, however, this only partially fleshes out the story. In many ways, Kassumba is unique.

Ethnically, the Nalú are solely located in the southern Tombali region of Guinea-Bissau (and across the border in neighboring Guinea Conakry). The village's location makes it environmentally rich since it rests on a river with abundant aquaculture. At the same time, this environment supports a number of wild fruit trees, plants, and animal species. As I was told many times by the residents of this village, Kassumba is also home to the second best beach in all of Guinea-Bissau making it appealing to those in the country who can afford to take vacations. Kassumba is also a spiritual center for the Nalú traditional religion that is well regarded by several regional ethnic groups. This brings outsiders from throughout the region to visit their sacred forest. Kassumba is located along the border with Guinea Conakry as well, with families being divided by national borders separated by the Cacine River. For these and many other reasons, generalizations are limited without further long-term study and comparative data from other villages.

DISCUSSION – RECOMMENDATIONS

Weak governance and political instability are a way of life in Guinea-Bissau often blocking any attempts at economic development from the outside of the country (IRIN 2009c, 2009d). Additionally, Guinea-Bissau is now known as the new narco-state of West Africa serving as a transit point for cocaine moving from South America into Europe, which is also affecting potential development initiatives. For example, targeted sanctions were recently suggested as a means to staunch this growing international concern (IRIN 2008e). Schools in the

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country no longer have the necessary funds to operate and cholera and yellow fever are spreading among the population (IRIN 2008f, 2008g). Therefore, current development enterprises are extremely limited.

Development, then, must primarily rely on local resources, including people and ideas. This should work because of the community's detailed knowledge of their particular microenvironments and most immediate needs. Kassumba's collective memory has quite an extensive knowledge base about ongoing development initiatives throughout West Africa. For example, during a conversation I had with a community leader in Kassumba Nalú, I realized that education was not lacking when it came to healthcare. During our talk, he correctly explained how cholera and AIDS were transmitted, how to diagnose yellow fever and he had quite a bit of information about malaria and building latrines. Foreign development agencies had been visiting this community and holding workshops for much of his life. The necessary resources to implement lasting and beneficial community programs, however, were lacking. Future initiatives must take advantage of these knowledgeable insiders as trainers.

Projects should be coordinated among the various neighborhoods they are intended to benefit in order to prevent intensifying ethnic tensions. For example, all infrastructural improvements made in Kassumba have been centralized in Kassumba Nalú due to their continued control over the land and land development. This has alienated the much larger Balanta population located there.

Based on my converstations, observations, and readings, the following are my five highest priority recommendations for the village of Kassumba that should quickly begin to improve the standard of living for the residents. Again, I must note that I was not asked for my input on these matters. I will provide the community in which I studied and the National

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Research Institute with these recommendations. If they decide to act on any of these projects, I will offer my assistance. I ask that the Guinea-Bissauan experts engaged in promoting positive social programs consider that I am approaching these issues from a unique perspective, not as a technician, but as someone trained in the methods of cultural description and evaluation. It is my greatest hope that some, or all, of these suggestions prove useful, or at least spark further discussions about improvements in each of the economic sectors under consideration.

1. Two fishing co-ops should be developed for the village, one for the Balanta and a second for the Nalú. Many Kassumba residents expressed the high value they placed on fishing and the need to further development of the fishing sector. This organization would serve several purposes. First, it would be a formal body able to negotiate with transient traders for the best prices for local catches. It would also serve as a central location for women to purchase lower class fish for households and local markets. Communal equipment such as mud drying ovens and salt supplies could aid in the rapid preservation of valuable fish. Beyond these simple steps, the organization could aid in repairing and preserving nets, canoes, and other tools of the trade. Finally, communal dues could eventually lead to the purchasing of a vessel that could start to compete with some of the foreign pirogues from Guinea Conakry.
2. An initiative should be implemented toward planting additional African oil palm trees throughout the village since the use value and economic potential of these trees are quite extensive. Once new trees begin producing additional fruit for the village, households should invest in new metal containers so that larger batches of oil can be produced at one time. If outside resources become available, a community-wide press should be considered as a viable investment. The southern region must take full advantage of their

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reputation for producing the best quality and best tasting red palm oil in the country by marketing their oils in the capital of Bissau as such.

3. Dikes in the rice paddies must be built back up and not left to fall into further disrepair. This will only take place if the value of rice increases. In other words, the government must tax imports and subsidize locally produced rice. Improvements that could be made at the local level in the rice sector include organizing a formal body of local producers to maintain a diverse collection of seed rice that can be borrowed and then repaid at harvest. In addition, new paddy rice farming techniques such as building parallel canals where rainwater could be stored in case the rains in a given year are low should be diffused to any farmer who is interested in testing these and other new ideas (IRIN 2008h).
4. The cashew sector has great potential for the residents of Kassumba. Cashew trees, however, should not be allowed to choke out the diverse habitats in and around the village. Poor infrastructure makes it unlikely that southern villages such as Kassumba will have much luck with the sale of locally processed kernels. Collecting and selling raw cashew nuts should continue. The number of trees should be increased gradually in a more systematic fashion. Over time, I believe that the cashews will start to have a greater impact on socio-cultural practices. As we have seen, elements of this plant are already making their way into the medical repetoire, alcohol from the fruit is serving religious and social functions, and the nuts and fruit are starting to become an important seasonal dietary supplement.
5. Most importantly, economic diversity for all households must remain the primary focus for Kassumba residents in both the short and the long term. Fish, palm fruit, palm oil, palm kernel oil, black soap, cashew nuts, cashew juice, cashew wine, rum, rice, oysters,

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> spiritual healing, salt, mangoes, coconuts, peanuts, domesticated animals, malgueta peppers, wild plants and animals, donuts and other locally produced foodstuffs, kola nuts, manual labor, milk, sweet potatoes, crabs, palm wine, iron tools, calabaçeira, manioc, eggs, ash, mollusks and snails, pineapple, lemons, and much more are being consumed, produced, processed, and traded by almost every single household and resident in Kassumba. These diverse activities are helping to maintain food security and economic success.

I want the National Research Institute of Guinea-Bissau and the residents of Kassumba to be able to use my assessments to their advantage based on their own understanding of what is going on. If they decide to move forward on any of these initiatives, it would be my great pleasure to assist them in any way that I can. Ethnography is a powerful tool in social research, and the ethnographer is often able to see things that those rooted in the situation are not. I believe that this grounded approach makes me uniquely qualified to at least recognize some community needs in collaboration with the research community members.

The scarcity of professional opportunities is well understood by the residents of Kassumba. During a focus group with male Nalú youths, several expressed a willingness to traffic drugs if that was the only means to survival (04/13/07; IRIN 2008b). These same youths emphasized that Kassumba may be poor, but it had everything anyone could want. Many had aspirations for professions that were unavailable to them if they remained in Kassumba. At the same time, they could not see themselves living anywhere else. Small changes over time, such as those suggested above, should have a big impact for the standard of living for subsequent generations. From the nationalist ideals set forth by Amílcar Cabral, a humanistic legacy remains in Kassumba in which diversity is celebrated through respect and hospitality. This

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foundation of social unity strengthens and intertwines economic endeavors. In this way, the success of one household should strengthen the community. Successful communities may someday help salvage a government that was originally intended to hold ideals of cooperation and goodwill as its highest mandate.

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Appendix One

Fishing Project of the United Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine

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Tema da Renuião [Meeting Theme]

2.1 Apresentação da organização [Introduction of the organization]

A Guiné-Bissau, com a sua população de aproximadamente um milhao de habitantes e uma superficie de 36.125 km^2, possue uma quadro macroeconomico e socio-cultural complexo tem uma densidade populacional de pouco mais de 27 habitantes por km^2, albergando a cidade de Bissau, 20% dessa população. As taxas de crecimento urbano e'media Nacional, situam-se respectrovamente em 4,7% e 2,3% periodo de 1979/91/. 70% da população guineense vive no campo.

[Guinea-Bissau has a population of approximately one million inhabitants and a surface area of 36,125 km^2, with macroeconomic and sociocultural complexity and a population density of more than 27 people per km^2. About 20% of the population lives in the capital city of Bissau. The median national taxes were at 4.7% and 2.3% in 1979 and 1991 respectively. 70% of Guinea's population lives in the countryside.]

A Taxa de escolaridade entres as crianças com as idades compreendidas entre os setes e os doze anos é de apenas 55% (sendo 29% representada pelas meninas/. Pouco mais da metade da população fala exclusivamente a sua lingua materna e só 10,4% fala o idioma oficial portugues.

[Schooling is mandatory for children between the ages of seven and twelve years old although only 55% of those are actually in school (29% of which are girls). A little more than half of the population speaks their mother language while only 10.4% speak the official Portuguese language.]

O produto interno brito (PIB) per capita é de aproximadamente de 180 USD. A divida externa do pais é de três vezes e meio (3,5), o valor do produto interno bruto anual. O déficit da balança comercial superou em 1992 a cifra dos 75 milhós de USD, ou seja, corresponde a mais de 40%, do PIB. O indicador do desenvolvimento humano das nações unidas situa Guiné-Bissau na posição n° 164 sobre 173 paises em vias de desenvolvimento.

[The adjusted earned income (PIB) per capita is approximately $180. It divides the country's exports by the annual gross domestic product. The trade deficit surpassed $75 million in 1992, which is more than 40% of the PIB. The United Nations human development index ranks Guinea-Bissau as the 164 out of 173 poorest countries in the world.]

Da independência ocorrida em 1974 até 1986, a politica economcia seguida no pais foi a de economia centralizada dentro da qual o estado desempenhou um papel de primeiro relevo no quadro do exercicios das actividades economicas, inclusive na concretizção dos produtos pesqueiros. Todavia a politica economica do pais conheceu nós ultimos anos mudanças significativas.

[Independence took place in 1974 up to 1986, at which time the political economy no longer relied on the state as the major investor. It was during this period that economic market

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was liberalized including the fishing sector. Over the last few years, the political economy of the country has changed significantly.]

A pesca constitui um sector importante no seio da economia Nacional. As receitas provinientes das licenças da pesca, cobrem mais de 40% do orçamento geral do Estado.

[Fishing constitutes an important sector of the National economy. Granting fishing licenses to foreign vessels covers more than 40% of the State's annual budget.]

Em 1992 foram mais de 13 milhões de USD e juntamente com castanha de caju representam as duas receitas mais importantes derivadas dos recursor naturais.

[In 1992, more than $13 million was made through the sale of raw cashew nuts representing the country's most important natural resource.]

Em concordância com a nova filosofia politica reflectiva na economia guineense, se procederio também no inicio do segundo semestre de 1990 a liberalização do preço do pescado fresco proviniente da pesca artesanal. Esse processo de privatização, tem objectivo maior, o fastamento gradual do Estado da politica de actos comerciais.

[At the same time, a new political philosophy was reflected in Guinea's economy, at which time liberalization policies were pursued in 1990 opening the internal markets to foreign artisanal fishermen. The major objective of the State was to privatize quickly through commercialization.]

O Estado, no âmbito restrito da esfera de prgramma de ajustameno estruitural em que esta empenhado, necessita de um instrumento impulsionada das medidas que visam um desenvolvimento sustentável no sector da pescas. Eis pos o grande objectivo de insentivar os agrupamentos de base no dominio de pesca.

[The State, in its rush to implement the Structural Adjustment Program attempted to rapidly develop the Fishing Sector. In its haste, the State was insensitive to the domestic fishing sector that was previously in place.]

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Objectivos de Projecto de Pesca de Irmãos e Amigos Unidos de Quitafine em Kassumba

[The Objectives of the Fishing Project of the United Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine in Kassumba]

-Melhorar o nivel sócio-económico da área, deminundo a delinquência juvenil banditismo e a fuga dos jovens para cidades.

[To improve the socio-economic level of the area and to deter youth delinquency and immigration to urban centers.]

-O maixo aproveitamento dos recursos naturais assim como o incremento da oferta do pescado para população da zona.

[To better the natural environment and increase the fish population in the fishing zone.]

-Melhorar condições de vida dos associados e dos trabalhadores ligados a activadeade de pesca em especial as mulheres.

[To improve the conditions of life for the association members and workers and to reach out to others involved in the fishery sector, particularly women.]

Contribuição local – os jovens unidos de Quitafine irão contribuir com 4 (quatro) canõas tradicional e na construição de barracas de fumazemde peixe (fumeiros) ainda os custos de alojamento do fomador durante a formação serao suportados pela organização, iqualmente a futura construção da sede 50% ser da inteira responsabilidade da associação.

[Local contribution – the united Brothers and Youth of Quitáfine will contribute 4 traditional canoes and the construction of fish smoking huts as well as the land to build these huts and the organizations headquarters.]

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Nº	*Descrição*	*Quantidade*	*Preço unico em USD*	*Valor*	*Valor em CFA*
1	Canoa Traditional	4	700	2800	1.680.000
2	Barracas	6	200	1200	720.000
3	Fumeiros	6	150	900	540.000
4	Construção da sede avaliado em 7000 USD	50%	3500	3000	2.100.000
	TOTAL			8.400 USD	5.040.000

Nº	*Description*	*Quantity*	*Price per unit in $*	*Value*	*Value in XOF*
1	Traditional Canoes	4	700	2,800	1,680.000
2	Fish Smoking Huts	6	200	1,200	720.000
3	Furnaces	6	150	900	540.000
4	Construction of the headquaters ($7,000)	50%	3,500	3,000	2,100.000
	TOTAL			8$,400 USD	5,040.000

Sócio efectivo - 500 F. CFA

[Member Dues per Year - $1]

Sócio Honorio pagamento mensal dos gotas

[Honorary members payment]

Sócio Contrubuente quando há um Trabalho

[Payment can be made in kind through labor for the organization]

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TITULO DO PROJECTO: Projecto de Pesca de Irmaões e Amigos Unidos de Quitafine (Kassumba)

[PROJECT TITLE: Fishing Project of the United Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine (Kassumba)]

Objectivo desta Associação [Association Objectives]

-Evitar a fuga da maõ de obra rural para as cidades;
-Evitar a deliquência juvenil na zona rural;
-Melhorar as condições economicas dos jovens no campo;
-O maximo aproveitamento sustentavel dos recursos naturais assim como o incremento da oferta do pescado para população da zona;
-Melhorar o nivel de vida dos associados e a dieta alimentar da populaçãoda tabanca;
-Uma maior eficiencia na gestao e aumento da capacitaçaõ do pessoal;
-Melhoramento das condições de vida dos associados e dos trabalhadoros ligados a actividade de pesca em especial as mulheres;
-Manter e reforçar os laços de amizade e fraternidade entre os associados.

[To prevent the loss of the needed agricultural labor force to the cities;
To prevent the delinquency among the youth in the rural zones;
To improve the economic conditions of the youth in the countryside;
The maximize sustainable management over the natural resources as well as incrementally improving the fish population in the area;
To improve the standard of living for the associations members and augmenting the villages dietary needs;
To better the efficiency of the organization's management and improve the staff's training and qualifications;
To improvement the conditions of life for associated workers in the fishery sector, particularly women;
To maintain and strengthen the bonds of friendship and fraternity between the associates.]

Objectivos gerais [General Objectives]

Melhorar o nivel da vida dos associados evitar a fuga dos jovens para cidades banditismo e a deliquência juvenil;

[To improve the quality of live for associates and prevent youth emigrating to the cities and getting involved with gangs and becoming delinquents.]

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Objectivo especificos [Specific Objectives]

-Aumentar rendimento economico dos jovens associados;
-Aumentar a captura e qualidade de pescado;
-Melhorar a dieta alimentar da população da zona;
-Diminuir a fuga dos jovens do campo para cidades;
-Oferecer empregos a jovens do mundo rural;
-Aumentar a capacidade de gestao da associação;
-Comercializar a maior parte do excedente pescado;
-Facilitar o acesso a educação, saude e contribuir na diminição da deliquência juvenil;
-Introdução de alfabetização funcional;
-Encontrar alternativas e equelibrio permanente entre o Homem e meio ambiente.

[To increase economic income for the young associates;
To increase the amount and quality of fish;
To improve the diet of the population in the area;
To diminish the outmigration to urban centers by needed labor in the agricultural sector;
To offer jobs to young people in the agricultural sector;
To increase the capacity of management and the association;
To commercialize most of the surplus fish;
To facilitate access to education in order to deter delinquency;
To improve literacy;
To find alternatives and a permanent balance between Man and the environment.]

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REPUBLICA DA GUINE-BISSAU

PROJECTO DE PESCA DE IRMAOS E AMIGOS UNIDOS DE QUITAFINE

KASSUMBA (P.P.I.A.U.Q.)

LISTA NOMINAL DOS SOCIOS INSCRITOS

[Republic of Guinea-Bissau
Fishing Project of the United Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine
Kassumba (P.P.I.A.U.Q.)
Preliminary Members List]

1. Djibi Sillá
2. Ussumane Queita
3. Mussa Jeime Queita
4. P'sinaba Na Quidama
5. Adulai Apatche Sillá
6. Rui Da Silva
7. Mamadú Rodolfo Queita
8. Alia Camará
9. Seco Papa Camará
10. Djibi Queita
11. Mariato Camará
12. Bidantida Nambos
13. Bitchie Na N'tchama
14. Assata Camará
15. N'quequene Na Bican
16. Braima Trawale Camará
17. Iaia Camará
18. Braima Queita
19. Quisontcha Nancabi
20. Aua Sillá
21. Maria Na Inan
22. N'sande Na Ialmat
23. N'hin-na Na Woia
24. Inussa Queita
25. Aua Camará
26. Binte Camará
27. Braima Bari
28. Biotnan
29. Memuna Camará
30. Armando Nussa Queita
31. Salu Pele Camará
32. Ussuma Tcham Queita
33. Busna Na Waná

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34. Fatu Sanjao Camará
35. Braima Papai Camará
36. Bete Sillá
37. Fatu Kadiko Camará
38. Aliu Bá
39. Cunda Queita
40. Saiondi Biai
41. Funtile Nancabi
42. Pedro Piris Nancabi
43. Taibo Camará
44. Abdulai Camará
45. Memuna Cadab Queita
46. Paulino Bulnate Na Bana
47. Halamara Na Bana
48. Bidansata Na Cia
49. Dan na Bincanra
50. Cacine Na Bincanra
51. N'zas Na Caghaba
52. Camba Na Quidama
53. Salu Queita
54. Panssau Na Cuman
55. Braima Bené Camará
56. Alia Laminé Camará
57. Adulai Watcha Camará
58. Salifo Camará
59. Wue Camará
60. Abu Camará
61. Mamadú Camará
62. Sana Dote Queita
63. Nabi Baco Camará
64. Tamle Na Cadu
65. Binate Na Sambia
66. Aliu Dicsonario Camará
67. Assatu Camará
68. Ami Queita
69. Sale Camará
70. Assata Queita
71. Matu Camará
72. Tiane Queita
73. Inussa Queita
74. Cadi Dá Queita
75. Mamadú Camará
76. Mussa Camará
77. Inussa Seco Cadri Camará
78. Aliu Camará

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CAPITULO – I

DISPOSIÇOES GERAIS [General Statement]

Artigo 1º [Article 1]

Natureza [Nature]

O Projecto de pesca de Irmaões e Amigos Unidos de Quitafine ora em diante designado por P.P.I.A.U.Q. é uma Associação de direito privado regido pela presente estatutos e pela regulamento interno e demais leis goza de capacidade juridica para pratica de actos e contratação de obrigações.

[The Fishing Project of the United Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine, which for the remainder of the document will be referred to as P.P.I.A.U.Q., is a private association with the following contractual regulations and obligations agreed to by its members.]

Artigo 2º [Article 2]

Objectivo [Objective]

São objectivos de Associação [Objectives of the Association]

1. Melhorar condições de vida dos associados e dos trabalhadores ligados a actividade de pesca em especial as Mulheres; -

[Better standards of living for the associates and fishery sector workers, especially women;]

2. Melhorar o nivel sócio economico da ária, deminuindo a delinquência juvenil, banditismo e a fuga dos jovens para cidades; -

[Better socio-economic level for the region, prevention of juvenile delinquency, and gangs, and the prevention of urban emigration;]

3. O maximo aproveitamento dos recursos naturais assim como o incremento de oferta do pescado para população da zona.

[Better natural environment with incremental improvements in the number and quality of fish in the area.]

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Artigo 3º [Article 3]

Independencia [Independence]

O Projecto P.P.I.A.U.Q. é independente de qualquer organização politica ou religiosa.

[P.P.I.A.U.Q. is an independent organization and is not affiliated with any particular political party or religion.]

Artigo 4º [Article 4]

Sede [Headquarters]

A sede de Associação P.P.I.A.U.Q. encontra-se em Kassumba podendo ser transferido pela deliberação da Assambleia geral para outra tabanca.

[The headquarters of the P.P.I.A.U.Q. association is in the village of Kassumba and can only be moved to a new village upon agreement by the general assembly.]

Artigo 5º [Article 5]

Fundos [Funds]

São fundos de Associação [Funding of the Associaiton]

1. Quotização dos socios 500 F.CFA mensal cada sócio; -
2. Contrapartida dos seus serviçoes; -
3. Donativo que lhe forem feitos; -
4. Venda dos pescado; -
5. Outros bens que conseqiu no exercicio da sua função.

[1. Each member will pay monthly dues of $1;
2. Each member must also contribute a period of service to the organization;
3. Foreign donations will be accepted;
4. The sale of the fish will contribute financially to the running of the organization;
5. Other goods of value will also contribute to the running of the organization.]

Artigo 6º [Article 6]

Duração [Duration]

O projecto P.P.I.A.U.Q. é costituido por tempo de 4 anos.

[The P.P.I.A.U.Q. project has been planned to last for four years.]

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CAPITULO - II

DOS SÓCIOS [Members]

Artigo 7º [Article 7]

Admisão [Admission]

Podem associar-se a P.P.I.A.U.Q. todos pescadores ou individuos aptos a pratica de actividade pesqueira residentes em Kassumba ou povação vizinhas.

[P.P.I.A.U.Q. is open to all fishermen and individuals working in the fishing sector including Kassumba residents and its immediate neighbors.]

Artigo 8º [Article 8]

Direitos e deveres dos sócios [Rules of Membership]

1. São direitos dos sócios participar em todos actos que digam respeito a vida da Associação nos termos deste estatuto e demais regulamentos.
2. São deveres dos sócios contrubuir para fim da Associação nos termos deste e, cumprir as deliberaçãos estatuariamente tomadas.

[1. Members are allowed to participate in all project activities as long as they follow the published rules.
2. Members are responsible for contributing to the fulfillment of the associations objectives.]

Artigo 9º [Article 9]

Suspensão e exclusão dos sócios [Suspension of Membership]

1. A suspensão ou exclusão dos sócios é da compotência da Assambleia geral.
2. A suspensão não ultrapassara 6 meses. A asanção atenderá as circustancia de caso concreto.
3. A deliberação sobre suspensão exclusão não pode ser final equanto não fôr dado ao acusado a possibilidade de autodefender.

[1. The suspension or exclusion of of a member must be brought before the General Assembly.
2. The suspension cannot exceed 6 months. The circumstances of the case must be definitively evaluated.
3. The accussed has the right to defend themselves against any accusations.]

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CAPITULO – III

DOS ORGAOS [The Organization]

Artigo 10º [Article 10]

Numurus clausus [Additional Clauses]

1. O único orgao do P.P .I.A.U.Q. é Assembleia geral.

[P.P.I.A.U.Q. is organzied around a single General Assembly.]

Artigo 11º [Article 11]

Funcionamento [Function]

1. Assambleia geral, é composta por todos os sócios, que não estejam suspensos e que não tem atraso as suas quotas mais de três meses.
2. Assambleia geral rúne uma vez em cada 6 meses para aprovação de balança das actividades e difinição das orientações gerais, criação da comissões para gesta dos assuntos corentes.
3. A mesa da Assambleia geral é composta por:
    a. Um presidente, um vice-residente e um secretário eleitos por votação separada e por escrutineo secretara para madamento de um ano renovavel.
4. Ainda é da compotênciada assambleia geral A eleição e destituiçãodos seus orgaos a criação ou extinções das comissões avaliação e apreciação das actividades desenvolvidas, alteração dos estatutos e a sua extinção.
5. Assambleia geral criará obrigatoria furtuna, alem das comissões com vocação de gestao, uma comissão para fisicalização das actividades desenvolvidas pelas comissões de gestao.
6. Os dirigentes da Assambleia geral são representantes da Associação, podem ainda designar qualquer sócio para o representar.

[1. The General Assembly is composed of all the members who are not suspended and that do not have more than three months worth of outstanding dues.
2. The General Assembly meets once every 6 months to approve activities and other orders of business including the creations of commissions to act on these ongoing activities
3. The General Assembly is composed of:
    a. An elected president, vice-president, and a secretary serving a one-year, renewable term.
4. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to hold general elections and to form a commission to oversee these elections.
5. The General Assembly is responsible for creating a management team and financial commission
6. The controllers of the General Assembly represent the Association, although any member is a representative of the organization.]

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CAPITULO – IV

DISPOSIÇÕES FINAIS [Final Statements]

Artigo 12º [Article 12]

Assambleia geral a doptará um regulamento interno que vai regulamaentar todas as actividades da Associação.

[The General Assembly will develop an oversight commission to internally regulate the activities of the Association.]

Artigo 13º [Article 13]

Convénio [Meetings]

O P.P.I.A.U.Q. é livre de celebrar convénio, com qualquer entidade, desde que nao seja proibido pela lei.

[The P.P.I.A.U.Q. is free to meet with any other organizations it sees fit as long as it is not prevented from doing so according to the law.]

Artigo 14º [Article 14]

Destino dos bens [Product Destinations]

Em caso de extinção o património do P.P.I.A.U.Q. ficará a disposição dos seus financiadores (credores), ou é vendido e o preço é rateado a todos os sócios.

[Prices are agreed upon by P.P.I.A.U.Q., and any profits are divided among all the partners of the organization once the operation costs are subtracted.]

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AO
Direcção de Pescarte Cooperação Guiné-Bissau Japão

[Director of Fishing Cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and Japan]

- Bissau –

Assunto: Pedido de Factura proforma

[Subject: Invoice Request]

O Projecto de Pesca de Irmãos e Amigos Unidos de Quitáfine (Kassumba) apresenta lhe os seus melhores comprimentos e vem por este meio solicitar a vossa Direcção no sentido de mandar passar lhe a Fectura Proforma dos materieas listados na folha em anexo.
Confiânte de que este pedido merecerá especial atenção por esta Direcção.

[The Fishing Project of the Brothers and Friends of Quitáfine (Kassumba) request the following items that are included in the attached Appendix.
Confident that this request will receive special attention by the Director.]

Bissau, aos 18 de Agosto de 1997.

Atentamente

Projecto de pesca de Irmãos e Amigos Unidos de Quitáfine (Kassumba)

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Appendix Two

GUINEA-BISSAU FISHERY LEGISLATION

SOURCE: FAOLEX, http://www.fao.org/fisher/countrysector/FI-CP_GW/6/en; http://www.intfish.net/.

CECAF Member States (Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea, Cape Verde)

1996a Amendment of the Convention of 29 March 1985 on the creation of the Fisheries Sub-Regional Commission. Boletim Oficial da República de Cabo Verde (44), Supplement 6: 12-18.

—

1996b Resolution No. 38/V/96 approving the Convention regulating fishing activity within the waters of the Member States. Boletim Oficial da República de Cabo Verde (44), Supplement 6: 18-24.

—

1993a Convention sur la coopération sous-régionale dans l'exercice du droit de poursuite maritime. J.O. No. 5716. LOI no. 96-21 du 28 août 1996 autorisant le Président de la République à ratifier la Convention sur la Coopération sous-régionale dans l'exercice du droit de poursuite maritime, signée à Conakry, le 1er septembre 1993.

—

1993b Convention portant création d'une commission sous-régionale des pêches. Le texte de la Convention se trouve sous "mul25012.doc"; le texte mis à jour après les amendements du 14 juillet 1993 se trouve sous "25012.doc".

China

1987 China and Guinea-Bissau: Agreement on co-operation in fishing (with annexed contract of co-operation). Singed at Beijing on 28 August 1984. United Nations – Treaty Series 1463(I-24822): 138-141.

EU (European Union)

2008 Council Regulation (EC) No. 241/2008 on the conclusion of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Official Journal of the European Union L(75): 49-50.

—

2007a Council Decision 2007/854/EC concerning the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange o Letters on the provisional application of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2007 to 15 June 2011. Official Journal of the European Union L(342): 1-2.

—

2007b Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the provisional application of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2007 to 15 June 2011. Official Journal of the European Union L(342): 3-4.

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—
2007c Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2007 to 15 June 2011. Official Journal of the European Union L(342): 5-37.
—
2006 Council Decision of 11 July 2006 on the signing on behalf of the European Community and the provisional application of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters concerning the extension of the Protocol establishing the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2006 to 15 June 2007. Official Journal of the European Union L(200): 7-8.
—
2004 Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters concerning the provisional application of amendments to the Protocol establishing the fishing opportunities and the compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2001 to 15 June 2006 and in Decision 2001/179/EEC setting the terms for financial support to Guinea-Bissau in the fisheries sector. Official Journal of the European Union L(127): 27-30.
—
2002 Protocol establishing the fishing opportunities and the compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2001 to 15 June 2006. Official Journal of the European Union L(19): 35-46.
—
1998 Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters concerning the provisional application of the Protocol establishing the fishing possibilities and the financial compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on Fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 2001. Official Journal of the European Union L(342): 3.
—
1997a Council Regulation (EC) No. 2615/97 on the conclusion of the Protocol establishing the fishing possibilities and the financial compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 2001. Official Journal of the European Union L(353): 7.
—
1997b Protocol establishing the fishing possibilities and the financial compensation provided for in the agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 2001. Official Journal of the European Union L(342): 4-17.

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—
1995 Protocol establishing the fishing possibilities and the financial compensation provided for in the agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 1995 to 15 June 1997. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1995.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
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1993 Protocol establishing for the period 16 June 1993 to 15 June 1995 the fishing rights and financial compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1993.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
—
1989 Protocol establishing for the period 16 June 1989 to 15 June 1991 the fishing rights and financial compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1989.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
—
1986 Agreement amending for the second time the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1986.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
—
1983 Agreement amending the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1983.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
—
1982a Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters concerning a second interim extension of the Protocol annexed to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the European Economic Community on fishing off the coast of Guinea Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1982b.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.
—
1982b Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters concerning an interim extension of the Protocol annexed to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the European Economic Community on fishing off the coast of Guinea Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1982a.htm, accessed July 23, 2008.

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—
1980 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the European Economic Community on fishing off the coast of Guinea Bissau – Protocol between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau. Internet Guide to International Fisheries Law (IGIFL) Bilateral Treaties. Electronic document, http://www.intfish.net/treaties/bilaterals/texts/eu-gub/1980.htm, accessed July 20, 2008.

Guinea-Bissau
2000a Decree-Law No. 6-A/2000 establishing fishing resources exploitation and fishing rights. Boletim Oficial da República da Guiné-Bissau (34) Supplement 22: 1-12.
—
2000b Dispach No. 01/94 regulating fisheries in "Rio Grande de Buba" River. Boletim da República da Guiné-Bissau (34): 1-7.
—
1996a Decree No. 4/96 establishing the general principles of the exploitation policy for national fisheries resources. Boletim Oficial da República da Guiné-Bissau (36): 148-171.
—
1996b Decree No. 3/96 of the Council of Ministers regarding the Annual Fisheries Resources Management Plan for 1996. Boletim Oficial da República da Guiné-Bissau (24): 91-94.
—
1994 Décret-loi nº 4/94 portant approbation de la loi générale de pêche. Oficial da República da Guiné-Bissau (31), Supplement 2: 1-12.
—
1992 Dispositions Reglementaires Relatives a la Peche. Despacho No. 21/92 du 04/12/1992 regulamento dos direitos de pesca na zona Economica Exclusiva da Guiné-Bissau. GUIB 60-64.
—
1991a Decree-Law No. 10/86 regulating the General Fishing Act. Pp. 602-619. Rome: FAO Regional Compendium of Fisheries Legislation West Africa (CECAF Region).
—
1991b Decision No. 21/92 regulating fishing activity into Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Pp. 620-624. Rome: FAO Regional Compendium of Fisheries Legislation West Africa (CECAF Region).
—
1991c Decree No. 2/86 approving the General Fishing Act. Pp. 230-259. Rome: FAO Regional Compendium of Fisheries Legislation West Africa (CECAF Region).
—
1986 Decree-Law No. 2/86 regulating fishing activity. UNEP – Environmental Management in Africa Compendium.

Infopêche
1991 Accord, fait à Abidjan le 13 décembre 1991, portant création de l'Organisation intergouvernementale d'information et de coopération pour la commercialisation des produits de la pêche en Afrique (Infopêche). Bulletin official (5532): 7 juin 2007.

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Portugal
1993 Agreement between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal for cooperation in the fisheries sector. Diário da República (48/93), (I-A): 840-842.
—
1973 Decree No. 518/73 regulating Sport Fishing within the Overseas Provinces. Boletim Oficial de Moçambique (125), I-Series: 1193-1195.
—
1971a Decree-Law No. 513/71 establishing that fishing vessels performing their activity near to the coastal zone may use logistic facilities on land. Boletim Oficial (145), I-Series: 1729-1730.
—
1971b Order No. 462/71 regulating fishing co-operatives. Boletim Oficial (106), I-Series: 1364-1365.

Senegal
1995a Protocole d'application de la Convention en matière de pêche maritime. Protocole D'Application de la Convention entre la République de Guinée-Bissau et La République du Sénégal en Matière de Pêche Maritime Signé à Dakar le 22 Décembre 1978.
—
1995b Protocole d'accord ayant trait à l'Organisation et au fonctionnement de l'agence de gestion et de coopération. Entre la République du Sénégal et la République de Guinée Bissau, Instituée par l'Accord du 14 Octobre 1993.
—
1993 Accord de géstion et de coopération entre le gouvernement de la République du Sénégal et le gouvernement de la République de Guinée Bissau. Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, New York.

Soviet Union
1975 Agreement between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on Cooperation in Fishing. United Nations – Treaty Series 1024(I-15042): 332-334.

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Appendix Three

PHOTOS

Baloba

Photo 1. Palm Fetish, Men's Side. Kassumba.

Photo 2. Family *Pedra*, Men's Side. Kassumba.

Photo 3. Family *Pedra* Hut, Men's Side. Kassumba.

Photo 4. Libations, Women's Side. Kassumba.

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Nalú

Photo 5. Sulimani, Cultural Consultant. Kassumba.

Photo 6. Maria, Day after her Wedding Ceremony. Kassumba.

Photo 7. Abu Sylla and his Son Ousamané. Kassumba.

Photo 8. Ta Lulu Kamara at the *Baloba*. Kassumba.

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Balanta

Photo 9. New Initiate and His Family. Kassumba.

Photo 10. Balanta Age Set at a Funeral. Kassumba.

Photo 11. River Net Fishing. Kassumba.

Photo 12. Balanta *Tokador*. Kassumba.

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Cooperation

Photo 13. Nalú and Balanta Elders in the *Boloba*. Kassumba.

Photo 14. Rebuilding the Kassebesse/Kassumba Bridge.

Photo 15. Nalú and Balanta Celebration. Kassumba.

Photo 16. Dancing at my *Despidida*. Kassumba.

Photo 17. Balanta Fishermen in the Nalú *Baloba*. Kassumba.

Photo 18. NGO Meeting about Iraque Market. Iraque.

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Palm

Photo 19. Winnowing Palm Fruit. Kassumba.

Photo 20. Pressing Palm Fruit Pulp. Kassumba.

Photo 21. Separating Palm Fruit Bunches. Kassumba.

Photo 22. Bottling Palm Oil. Kassumba.

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Cashew

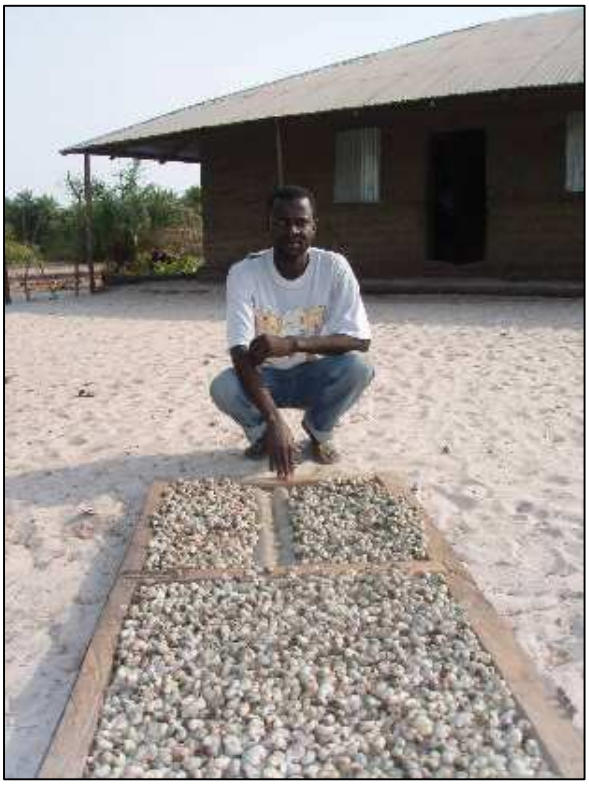

Photo 23. Sun Drying Raw Cashew Nuts. Katunigh.

Photo 24. Pressing the Cashew Apple. Katunigh.

Photo 25. Growing Cashews. Kassumba.

Photo 26. Bisected Raw Cashew Nut.

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Fishing

Photo 27. Docked in the Kassumba Port.

Photo 28. Repairing Fishing Nets. Kassumba.

Photo 29. *Kombé*. Kassumba.

Photo 30. Drying Fish. Kadico.

Photo 31. Harvesting Oysters. Kassumba.

Photo 32. Selling Dried Oysters. Kassumba.

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Rice

Photo 33. Seeding the Furrows. Kassumba.

Photo 34. Transplanting from the Nursery. Katunigh.

Photo 35. Building up the Furrows. Kassumba.

Photo 36. Germinating the Rice. Kassumba.

Photo 37. Kassumba Nalú Work Group.

Photo 38. Rice Nursery. Katunigh.

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Appendix Four

[HOUSEHOLD SURVEY]

SURVEY NUMBER _____

DATA? (Date?)

TABANCA? (Neighborhood?)

NOME DA PESSOA INQUIRIDA? (Name of respondant?)

NÚMERO DE CASAS? (Number of houses in the compound?)

1. LISTA NOMINAL DOS MEMBROS DO AGREGADO DOMÉSTICO: (Members of the Household:)
    a. NOME: (Name:)
    b. SEXO: (Sex:)
    c. IDADE: (Age:)
    d. LAÇO DE PARENTESCO: (Relationship to the Head of Household/Respondant:)
    e. RESIDENTE: (Residency Status:)
    f. ÚLTIMO NIVEL DE ENSINO: (Highest Level of Education:)
    g. SABE LER E ESCREVER UNA FRASE SIMPLES?: (Can read and write a simple phrase?:)
    h. QUAL FOI A SUA OCUPAÇÁO PRINCIPAL NOS 12 ÚLTIMOS MESES?: (What was your principal occupation in the last 12 months?:)
    i. DINHEIRO GANHA NA ÚLTIMO SEMANA: (Amount of Money Earned in the Last Week:)

2. DESCRIÇÃO DO ALOJAMENTO: (House Description:)
    a. HÁ QUANTO TEMPO ESTE AGREGADO HABITA ESTE ALOJAMENTO? (Amount of time residing in current house?)
    b. TIPO DE ALOJAMENTO? (Type of house?)
    c. QUAIS SÃO OS MATERIAS DAS PAREDES EXTERIORES? (Type of external walls?)
    d. QUAIS SÁO OS MATERIAIS DO TELHADO? (Type of roof?)
    e. QUAL É O TIPO SOALHO (PAVIMENTO)? (Type of floor?)
    f. QUAL É A SUA PRINCIPAL FONTE DE ABASTECIMENTO DA AGUA PRESENTEMENTE? (Principal location of potable water?)
    g. QUAL É A SUA PRINCIPAL FONTE DE ILUMINAÇÃO PRESENTEMENTE? (Primary way of lighting house?)
    h. QUAL É A SUA PRINCIPAL FONTE DE ENERGIA UTILIZADA NA COZINHA? (Principal cooking fuel?)
    i. VALOR DA CASA? (Value of the house?)

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3. TIPOS DE TERRA? (Type of land owned?)
    a. QUE PLANTAS VOCÊ CRESCE? (What is planted/grown/gathered/harvested?)
    b. QUANTO VOCÊ COLHE EM UM ANO? (MÉDIA) (How much of each is harvested in a single year? [on average])

4. EDUCAÇÃO: (Education:)
    a. PAGO O ANO PASSADO? (How much did the household pay for education last year?)

5. A RECREAÇÃO CUSTA NO MÊS PASSADO? (How much did the household pay out for recreational activities last month?)

6. CUSTO DE OBRIGAÇÕES RELIGIOSAS NO MÊS PASSADO? (What were the costs for religious obligations last month?)

7. TIPO E NÚMERO DE ANIMAIS QUE VOCÊ POSSUI ATUALMENTE? (Type and Number of animals that are currently being kept by members of the household?)

8. COMPRAS NOS ÚLTIMOS 7 DIAS? (What was purchased in the last 7 days?)
    a. QUANTIDADE? (How much?)
    b. CUSTO? (What did it cost?)

9. AS COISAS VENDERAM NOS ÚLTIMOS 12 MESES? (What types of things did the household sell over the last 12 months?)
    a. QUANTIDADE? (How much/many?)
    b. VENDA? (Sold for how much?)

10. BENS POSSEADOS O COMPRADOS? (Things owned by the household?)
    a. QUANTO TEM? (How many?)
    b. VALOR? (What is the value?)

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