



THE MEANING OF HERITAGE

The narratives of Timbuktu

ABSTRACT

What is heritage and who decides it should be preserved and for which reasons? Heritage is inevitably connected with culture and the identities who relate to it. But what if different identities value a heritage site in different ways?

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If you know your history, then you will know where you're coming from, and you wouldn't have to ask me who I think I am..

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Introduction: A Study of Heritage Narratives in Timbuktu

In 1972, UNESCO appropriated the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This convention established the World Heritage Committee, which in turn established the World Heritage List.¹ Under the lead of Modibo Kéita (the first president of the since 22 September 1960 independent Republic of Mali), the nation had already joined UNESCO on November 7th 1960. On the 5th of April 1977 the nation accepted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.² Eleven years later, Timbuktu was inscribed on the World Heritage List. In June 2012, however, parts of the ancient city of Timbuktu were destroyed, under the lead of Ansar Dine, one of the five main radical Islamist groups active in Mali.³

Mali is not the first nation to experience heritage destruction as a result of regional conflict. In 2001 the Buddhas of Bamiyan located in Afghanistan were destroyed by the Taliban with the argument that they were opposing the sharia.⁴ More recently, in 2013, Irina Bokova, General Director of UNESCO, expressed her anger about the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage in Syria. While promising to provide aid in the sense of expertise and networks to limit the damage, she furthermore claimed that *'the protection of heritage is inseparably connected to the protection of societies: heritage contains the values and identities in which people are anchored'*.⁵ This idea on the meaning of heritage, expressed by Bokova, reveals the symbolic meaning given to the notion of heritage by UNESCO, for it implicates that the destruction of heritage is perceived as an attack on- and rejection of the values and meaning of a different culture, thereby the destruction of heritage is also perceived to implicate the rejection of the principles and values of UNESCO.

UNESCO was initiated in 1945 as a reaction on the horrifying experiences of the Second World War.⁶ The organisation was found to provide protection for cultural and natural monuments throughout the world from, among other threats, political conflict. Furthermore the aim was, and still is, to create a better understanding among different cultures and a deeper appreciation of cultural differences.⁷ This ambition however contains the subjective assumption that heritage needs to be preserved and protected for future generations. Furthermore the establishment of an organ for the preservation of heritage simultaneously entails defining what is-, and what is not heritage. By creating international guidelines for the valuation of heritage UNESCO, and in addition the World Heritage List have created a dominant discourse on the concept of heritage and the meaning given to it. The meaning of a specific heritage site is culturally determined, simultaneously heritage is perceived as an artefact of a specific culture and in turn preserved for this very reason. This research questions the limits of the definition given to heritage, and aims to provide insight in the various stories and meanings associated with the Timbuktu heritage and the concept of

¹ Meskell 2013

² Titchen 1995

³ Solomon 2015

⁴ "Ten Years On – Remembering The Tragic Destruction Of The Giant Buddha Statues Of Bamiyan (Afghanistan)" 2017

⁵ "Bokova Roept Opnieuw Op De Vernietiging In Syrië Te Stoppen" 2017

⁶ Meskell 2013

⁷ Ibidem

heritage in general, by doing so it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the role of heritage sites in cultural conflicts. I argue that the discursive tradition on the notion of heritage has been reproduced in post-colonial Mali. This reproduction of dominant discourse on heritage in Mali has indirectly attributed to the recognition and exclusion of different cultural identities and their narratives in international society as well as in Mali. These statements form the foundation of the following study on the development and destruction of the Timbuktu heritage, and resulted in the following research question: ‘Which different meanings have been given to the Timbuktu heritage by the different interest groups, and how did this process of meaning giving influence the development of Timbuktu?’

Concepts and Theorisation

In this study on the development of the Timbuktu heritage, the aim is to create a deeper understanding of heritage destruction in a situation of cultural conflict and war. Therefore the research entails an analysis of the identities of different interest groups concerned with the development of the Timbuktu heritage, and the different meanings these interest groups have given to the Timbuktu heritage throughout time. The different interest groups studied in this research are perceived as communities, that produce, reproduce, or compete with, different discursive traditions on heritage and the role heritage plays in the creation of a collective identity. The following passage will be dedicated to the introduction of the concepts and theories relevant for this research and how they relate to the subject of analysis.

Heritage, as Lowenthal explains, refers to everything we suppose has been handed down to us from the past.⁸ However, heritage should not be confused with history. Heritage contains a more subjective and personal denotation that is linked to a sense of identity.⁹ Heritage in a way presents the history that we identify with, be that on local, regional, national, or international scale. This simultaneously means that heritage is always on the right side of history. Heritage presents the history that is in line with ‘our contemporary identity’, in other words heritage supports the narrative that contemporary societies identify with. Heritage is the artefact that provides the proof which turns ancient stories into history. This also means that heritage can be used to promote a certain story, and contribute to- or construct a feeling of identity. It should therefore come as no surprise that competing ideas on the true meaning of a heritage site exist. The existence of heritage as proof for a history, often entails the dismissal of another history. This can lead to a conflict, but more often heritage becomes a part of a conflict, symbolising the differences in histories.

The construction of identity concerns many aspects of the community. This research, however, will be focussing on the role heritage plays in identity construction, the way heritage is used in the experience of community and the different meaning that has been given to the heritage of Timbuktu throughout time. Questioning furthermore, to which extent this meaning given to the Timbuktu heritage can be interpreted as a result of, or an instrument for, narrative construction. This research, in doing so, questions the way in

⁸ Lowenthal 2005

⁹ Lowenthal 1998

which different communities, and to what extent have been competing, intersecting or working within the framework of identity established by the discursive traditions on heritage.

In order to provide a clear understanding of the observations studied in this research, the definition of identity, community, nation, and heritage first needs to be clarified. Secondly I will present a clarification of the working definition of each concept that was adopted in the analysis of the Timbuktu heritage. This simultaneously provides the opportunity to go in on the relevant interrelation between the different concepts. Altogether this forms the theoretical framework of the research on which the analysis is based.

Anderson (1983) defines 'nation' as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".¹⁰ While no individual would actually be able to connect to all of the other members of the community he/she is part of, somehow there exists a feeling of community in the minds of people, a feeling of belonging to- or being part of something bigger. Anderson explains this as the feeling of comradeship, no matter existing inequalities, the nation is perceived as a horizontal comradeship. Smith and Watherton (2010) while stressing the negative consequences of the use of 'community' in the heritage sector, are rather critical towards the concept. According to Smith and Watherton the popularity of Anderson's theory on imagined communities led to an uncritical use of the term 'community'.¹¹

Whereas I follow, and agree with their statements of the impunity of the concept in its use, especially in the heritage sector. I believe they have overlooked an important nuance in Anderson's definition, which proves 'community' to be a concept that attributes greatly to an understanding of the concept of 'heritage'. As Anderson states: "*Communities are not to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.*"¹² Studying the style in which communities are imagined, as well as the role 'heritage' plays in the experience of community, and defining who, and in what way have been giving meaning to 'heritage', helps us not only to gain better insight in the arbitrary meaning of heritage, but also challenges 'common sense' beliefs on heritage referring to the existence of dominant discursive traditions on heritage. Whether 'community' has been used with impunity, is not of as much relevance as the fact that the concept of 'imagined communities', as goes for 'heritage', and 'culture' for that matter is a fluid concept which reveals in its style, in the way the concept is defined and by who. The way in which the concept of community is used and experienced furthermore provides insight into which power/knowledge relations exist within the community that produces and reproduces the meaning given to the concept.

Smith (2006) opted for the term AHD, meaning Authorized Heritage Discourse, referring to a dominant discourse on heritage produced and reproduced by 'experts' as common sense. The production and reproduction of authorized heritage discourse, as Smith describes it, has major influence on the heritage sector, illegitimately including or excluding objects in the concept of heritage.¹³ Although Smith's theory on AHD connects to some extent to the arguments made in this research, Smith focusses merely on the role of the 'experts' in the field of heritage (academia, archaeologists), and puts little emphasis on this process of meaning making from the involved parties, nor does she emphasise on the different ways in which dominant

¹⁰ Anderson 1983

¹¹ Watherton and Smith 2010

¹² Anderson 1983

¹³ Smith and Watherton 2012

heritage discourse can be consciously reproduced by identities as a means to an end. Smith's definition of 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' does not suit this research. I therefore prefer to refer to dominant heritage discourse, when discussing the notion of heritage as produced by UNESCO.

Since this research focusses on the way in which the process of meaning making develops for the different interest groups, concerning the Timbuktu heritage, I will gladly adopt 'community' as defined by Anderson. In the wake of the decolonisation of Mali, it is popular to go in on the search for a national identity. However, as pointed out by Anderson as well, 'nation' is a concept that came to life in the era of Modernity and Enlightenment, and was spread around the different, by external forces created, nations.¹⁴ Communities, are not necessarily limited to the borders that geographically determine a nation-state. Communities can exist within the borders of a nation-state, or go beyond the borders of a nation-state.¹⁵ Therefore, in the analysis of the process of meaning giving in post-colonial Mali, the style in which communities are imagined, allows for a more in-depth analysis than the presumption of one national identity. Finally, the style in which community is imagined as well as the role it plays in self-determination, or the creation of identity, can be applied to both the Malian government, UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee, Timbuktu and the Kel Tamasheq.

All individuals create a story in which they use past events, both personal and collective, to make sense of their lives and to create an identity.¹⁶ This process of 'narration', is a process in which one structures memories into a seemingly coherent story. Memories are at first mostly fragmented episodes. Narration takes place when these series of events are implemented in the existing story, or in what one already accepted as his/her identity. Narration as the ongoing process of meaning giving, consequently is an important concept in studying the development of heritage sites and their role in different societies.

Narratives include both individual and collective memories, in the sense that peoples are to some extent aware of the collective past of their community. Confino provides a quite interesting and critical idea on the study of memory, claiming that within the field of memory studies, the tendency is to either reduce historical culture to ideologies and politics or to provide only a vague explanation of the concept of memory without placing it in a global, social or cultural context. He argues that a combination of the two ways of studying memory is necessary to adequately explore and use the concept.¹⁷

The study of World Heritage sites could help diminish the by Confino proposed gap in memory studies. Heritage is the embodiment of collective memory. The study of heritage calls for a deep understanding of socially constructed meaning and values, and how these determine ideas on the collective memory. Especially in the case of a former colony, as goes for Mali, this is a rather critical point. The period of foreign occupation and rule, has greatly interfered with the traditions and development of the territory, which inevitably left its mark on the collective and individual memory of the territory's inhabitants. As Harrison and Hughes (2010) point out, while stressing the relation between identity and heritage, identity became an important concern for the newly independent countries after decolonisation, simultaneously the

¹⁴ Anderson 1983

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ Zerubavel 2003

¹⁷ Confino 1997

concept of identity grew as a global issue, needing to be revisited in the light of a globalising world.¹⁸ Finally, the way in which heritage is acknowledged, and by whom also provides insight in the relations between contemporary regional, national, and global communities.

Cultural heritage can thus be seen as an instrument to create or preserve certain collective memories that are associated with a specific culture or community. Heritage finds its meaning in the way it is embedded in one's sense of identity. We can only perceive heritage as such depending on the extent that we can relate to it. Therefore heritage cannot be heritage in its own time, i.e. in the time where it was created. Heritage becomes a part of an international, national, social, cultural identity, from which the heritage lends its symbolic meaning which is possible to depend on the community by which the heritage is interpreted. Often this meaning, given to heritage, contributes to a form of continuity, in so far that the heritage becomes a tangible prove of the narrative of a community.

The narrative of a community as discussed above, evolves, to differing extent, around heritage sites, which in turn creates the possibility to refer to-, or connect with the narrative through heritage. Zerubavel argues that people use mnemonic bridges to create a connectedness with the past. One of these so called mnemonic bridges can be found in relics or memorabilia, or for that matter in heritage.

Heritage, in that sense, can be argued to be produced as such once it is used or accepted as a bridge to a personally or collectively recognised past.¹⁹ It is thus the urge to create some sort of historical continuity that contributes to the production and perception of heritage, and the different cultures it refers to. However, as will be shown in the Timbuktu case, different ideas on the history and continuity of the site's territory may compete.

Sources and methods

So far the notion of heritage and the relevant concepts related to it within the framework of this study have been briefly discussed. The following passage will be occupied with the methodological framework and concepts adopted in the analysis. In order to answer the research question qualitative methods will be applied, not only because the concepts that will be measured are too complex to reduce to numbers, but furthermore because the available sources ask for an extensive interpretation. This qualitative research strategy provides the possibility to systematically analyse archival materials, as well as it leaves room to gain a deeper understanding of the construction and meaning of heritage and national identity. The research will entail an analysis of a variety of sources concerning the Timbuktu heritage and important documents on UNESCO and Mali, to contextualise the development of the Timbuktu heritage. .

Primary sources form the foundation of historical research. By making use of primary sources, we have the possibility to interpret past events. I say interpretation because in the analysis of primary sources lies the challenge to recognise the extent to which the information presented by the source is a product of subjectivity. Furthermore, the researcher should try and be aware of his/her own bias towards the subject

¹⁸ Harrison and Hughes 2010

¹⁹ Frijhoff 2007

of analysis. Since the study of different identities and the way they give different meaning to heritage evolves, to a great extent, around the question of subjectivity concerning the value given to heritage, this research applies the method of context-related narrative analysis. By taking in account the spatiotemporal circumstances under which the narrative was produced, it becomes possible to interpret some of the bias of the narrative. 'Reading against the grain' is a research strategy that encourages the researcher to place the narrative in context, a context that refers to the social and temporal situation from which the source originates. This leads to a more inclusive understanding of the narrative.²⁰ The method of 'reading against the grain' requires the researcher to gain substantial knowledge of the spatiotemporal circumstances under which the narrative was produced.

As goes for all research some details of the envisioned research methods and conceivable challenges for these methods and the sources on which they will be applied, needs some further explanation. First of all there is a limited availability of primary sources, which calls for a smart and innovative use of the relevant available sources, in order to provide a valuable conclusion on the research question. Since primary sources are a challenge within the limits of this research the use of a variety of sources consisting of political documents from Mali, as well as official documents from UNESCO both concerning UNESCO's policy and Timbuktu is necessary. The thorough analysis of these documents entails not only focussing on what is written, but also what is not written, by making use of a context-related narrative analysis to interpret the development of the relation between the two and how this development can be explained. Apart from the annual reports of UNESCO that serve as primary sources to create an overview of UNESCO's main concerns towards the Timbuktu heritage throughout time as well as the relation between UNESCO and the Malian government, news articles from Al Jazeera and UNESCO help analyse the way in which the heritage destruction in 2012 was explained and perceived within the nation as well as in international society.

When studying culture, it is unrealistic to believe it can be done without any bias. However, awareness of the inevitability of bias in social and cultural science, can advance the research to a more egalitarian notion of reality. Although 'the truth' cannot be found, it is possible to present a more detailed understanding of a certain event or period in history. Reality should be considered fluid, not fixed, for it changes depending on the methodological angle that is used.²¹ A multidimensional and nuanced way of approaching the subject of study, that still relies on some of the criteria for valid research, could diminish some of this bias. Therefore, when applying the method of 'reading against the grain', the researcher not only needs to be aware of the temporal and spatial circumstances of the narrative, he/she also needs to take in account his/her own influence on the research.²²

Intersubjectivity refers to the way in which the researcher and the researched relate to each other. The power relations that exist between the researcher and the research subject, entail two forms of power that influence the outcome of the research: whereas the researcher, always 'interprets' the narrative, which is referred to as interpretative power, the subject of the research contains distributive power.²³ Distributive

²⁰ Willemse 2014

²¹ Saukko 2003

²² Willemse 2014

²³ Van Staple 2014

power entails the possibility for the subject of research, to leave out details or maybe even add false details to the story, for any kind of reasons. Self-reflexivity invites the researcher to be aware of his or her own bias when conducting an analysis. Self-reflexivity refers to the way in which the researcher is able to position him or herself in relation to the topic of analysis.²⁴ In other words the researcher tries to take in account, and diminish the level of the bias he/she brings to the analysis of the narrative.

Discursive traditions not only need to be taken in account by the researcher who aims to diminish the level of bias he/she brings to a narrative analysis. A focus on the dominant discourses relevant in the narrative or to the narrator, enhances the understanding of the contextual influence on the narrative produced. Discourse, as defined by Foucault, can be explained as an individualisable grouping of utterances or statements that are represented within a social context.²⁵ Simultaneously these statements are defined by that same social context, as well as they contribute to the way in which the social context continues to exist.²⁶ This definition of discourse, allows to detect certain structures in communication on a specific subject matter that are historically rooted or dominant in the spatiotemporal context of the narrative.

In turn analysing the position taken by the narrator related to the discourses relevant in the narration, leads to a better understanding of how he/she identifies him-/herself. By adopting self-reflexivity as a criterion for narrative analysis, it becomes possible to detect different constructions of agency, present in narration.

As mentioned earlier on, striving to find ‘the truth’, is no realistic goal within social studies.²⁷ Context-related narrative analysis, however, provides insight in the way that the presented validities in a narrative are product of constructed identities. Through narration we explain who we are and how we identify ourselves.²⁸ The extensive academic framework of identity, has not led to a more clear and definite understanding of the concept, or the way in which it is manifested. Identity, should therefore be seen as a concept with moving boundaries and many different layers that cannot be interpreted rigidly.²⁹

However multi-interpretable the concept may be, social identities are constructed and reconstructed throughout time by a conscious or unconscious definition/expression of values, norms, principles, and practices that to an extent are espoused from and continue discursive patterns. Just as social identity, national identity as we see it in practice through narration, is influenced by both historically rooted discursive patterns and contemporary discourses.³⁰ Within the framework of this research the focus lies on the different identities of interest groups related to the Timbuktu heritage. Taking into account the moral dominant discourses that were important during the time in which narratives on the Timbuktu heritage, the notion of heritage, and the collective memory and subcultures within Mali were produced, and developed, attributes to the understanding of the argumentation given in these narratives. Furthermore, this awareness of the socio-temporal dominant ideas and expressions helps interpret the possible construction of sub-dominant discourses, and how these intersect, compete or negotiate with the dominant discourse on heritage.

²⁴ Van Staple 2014

²⁵ Mills 1997

²⁶ Ibidem

²⁷ Saukko 2003

²⁸ Willemsse et al. 2009

²⁹ Alcoff 2003

³⁰ Ibidem

UNESCO was founded in 1945. The constitution of UNESCO is based on the principles of the 'Declaration of the right of man and the citizen' from 1789. Ever since the establishment of the organisation, UNESCO, and in addition the World Heritage List have been determining the dominant discourse on heritage. UNESCO as a global institute defines not only the selection of heritage but also determines the way we deal with heritage in general. UNESCO promotes the safekeeping of heritage for future generations, for it represents our diverse cultural history and thereby identity. Identity, however is not only a representation of the 'Self'; it is also a representation of the 'Other'. This representation works two ways, in so far that by differentiating the 'Self' from the 'Other', we define both our own identity, as well as those of others. Identifying ourselves, defines how we identify others. The way in which the differentiation between 'Self' and 'Other' is used to identify through narration, furthermore helps discover the subject's positioning within the contemporary dominant discourses.³¹ Although, identities are constructed through narrative and reveal dominant discursive traditions, there is room to manoeuvre within the frameworks of different identities.^{32 33}

People are thus able to construct and reconstruct their identities through narration. However in doing so, one is nonetheless influenced by the contemporary spatiotemporal context in which one narrates. In relation to heritage, the chances are likely that the narrative associated with the heritage site are in correspondence with a dominant sense of identity. In other words, heritage represents the history with which dominant believes can identify. Discursive patterns often (re)produce power- relations, as a result of large-scale belief systems. Said's introduction of 'Orientalism', focusses on how people construct their identity through narration, by positioning the 'Self' in relation to the 'Other'.³⁴

As an example, colonial discourse, contains dehumanising descriptions of colonial people, presented as objective statements and reproduced throughout time as though they were facts about the native people. The differentiation, (re)produced by the colonial discourse contributes to the idea of the 'Other'. By presenting the native inhabitants of colonised areas as if they live in a primitive way by referring to a different time, as well as the description of the colonised in a third person. In Mali the Kel-Tamasheq did not receive French education at the same time as the Malian people in the South, because it was ought to be of no use for their nomadic lifestyle. In these situations the narrator clearly does not identify him-/herself with the native people of the colonised land.

The argumentation(s) present in a narrative can refer to discourses dominant for the narrator, however the opinions given in the narrative also refer to the existence of counter-opinions.³⁵ Therefore, the argumentation expressed by the narrator, provides both insight in the dominant discourse relevant to the narrative as well as sub-dominant discourses; negotiations of the subject of narration. Furthermore, the way in which the narrator makes use of 'common sense' knowledge, defines how the narrator positions himself within the framework of the dominant discourse he/she is subject to in the narrative.

³¹ Stanski, 2009

³² Davids, 2011

³³ Willemsse 2009

³⁴ Mills 1997

³⁵ Billig, 1991

All primary sources will be interpreted by making use of the method of context-related narrative analysis. In general narrative analysis is focused on the interpretation of narratives, either produced by a group, society or individual. A context-related narrative analysis, includes a strong emphasis on perceiving the narrative ‘in context’, by making use of the analytical tool reading ‘against the grain’.³⁶ This method suits the focus of this research on the underlying meaning and values that exist in the texts, as it is concerned with both what is- and what is not written or said.

Distinguishing the discursive patterns in the sources used, as well as analysing how the narrators reproduce dominant or subdominant discourses and/or negotiate within the framework of the dominant discursive traditions of their socio-temporal context, enables us to construct/define the identity of the narrator more thoroughly. As already elaborated, ‘identity’ plays an important role in the way meaning is given to heritage. Therefore, it seems inevitable to define the dominant and subdominant discourses to which the interest groups (i.e. Malian government, Tuareg, and UNESCO) are subject and/or (re)produce. In order to be able to analyse and interpret the way in which both identities, in relation to each other would evolve later on, some basic understanding of the foundation of their relation is necessary.

The contextualisation of these documents is of great relevance, since it contributes to the interpretation of the narrative as a primary source. By taking in account the spatiotemporal circumstances under which the narrative was produced, it also becomes possible to interpret some of the bias of the narrative. The method of ‘reading against the grain’ strongly emphasises on the context of the source.

In doing so, we have the possibility to create a more inclusive understanding of the narrative. The method of ‘reading against the grain’, however, requires the researcher to gain substantial knowledge of the spatiotemporal circumstances under which the narrative was produced. Furthermore, in focussing on the importance of the context of the narrative, we are obliged to acknowledge the variety of contexts that can be (re)constructed to interpret the source.

Although, within this study, the analysis of the Timbuktu heritage is merely concerned with the period of its inscription until its destruction, the historical context and the historical socio-political events that have taken place before 1988 are of such importance that they cannot be left out, and are largely incorporated in the study to explain the more recent developments. Since the aim of this research is to provide insight in the way different identities, consciously or unconsciously, have been giving meaning to the Timbuktu heritage, it is not possible to start the analysis exactly at the point of inscription, ignoring the relevant historical context consisting of different narratives constructed by the involved communities. This research entails a re-visitation of Mali’s colonial and post-colonial past with a focus on communal identity construction by making use of narration. Therefore this text presents both the dominant- and subdominant discourse on Mali’s cultural history and Timbuktu’s heritage. This representation allows us to gain a better understanding of the conflict around Timbuktu’s heritage and answer the question ‘To what extent is the meaning given to the Timbuktu heritage determined by UNESCO?’

³⁶ Willemse 2014

Chapter 1 UNESCO, Mali, and the Kel Tamasheq:
Three Identities.

Key-words: *Constitution UNESCO, Declaration of Human Rights, Decolonisation, Modibo Keita, Kel Tamasheq*

Before continuing with the analysis of Timbuktu's heritage development, it is relevant to start by emphasizing on the historical background of the involved parties. Therefore this chapter consists of an analysis of two important documents, namely the constitution of UNESCO established in 1945 and an address given by Modibo Kéita, the first president of independent Mali in 1960, on Mali's positioning in the international politics. The first provides an image of the principles, norms and values on which UNESCO is based, as well as the organisation's objectives. The second, is concerned with the way in which Mali, for the first time positions itself, with respect to international affairs, after its independence from France and before Mali's membership at UNESCO. It is, therefore, an important document with regard to Mali's post-colonial identity, as it is a representation of the meaning and values that were espoused in the context of a newly constructed national identity and its government, relating itself to the international society. Studied as a representation of the beginning of Mali's positioning within the international society as an independent nation, the speech reveals information that attributes to the understanding of the relation between Mali and UNESCO.

Together these two documents help define the beginning of the relation between the Republic of Mali and UNESCO, and the principles and values the two parties publicly communicated before getting involved with one another. As, the objective is, among others, to analyse how UNESCO and the Malian government relate to each other, it seems inevitable to first analyse the historical context of the two parties. This chapter therefore consists of an analysis and interpretation of excerpts from the original constitution of UNESCO from 1945, explained from its historical background. In doing so the historical roots of the principles expressed in the constitution will be determined, as well as their meaning during, as well as their influence on the process of decolonisation. The chapter then continues, taking a step back in time again, while briefly discussing the history of Mali. The history of Mali, touched upon here, includes the territory's governmental state of affairs right before as well as during the French rule from 1890 – 1960. This historiography of Mali will be followed by an analysis of Modibo Kéita's speech 'The foreign policy of Mali' (1961). Finally, some conclusions on the identities of the two parties autonomously and in relation to one another will be made, to attribute to an understanding of the way in which the Timbuktu heritage has developed since its inclusion in the World Heritage List.

Since, the constitution of UNESCO stems from 1945, whereas Kéita's speech took place in 1961, it seems only fair to start by defining the principles, norms and values that can be extracted from the Constitution of UNESCO. This, combined with an historical analysis of Mali's colonial past provides the starting point for the analysis of Kéita's speech, as the aim is to find and interpret similarities and differences between the two parties' expressed values. At this point in time, 1961, it is realistic to believe that the ideas

communicated by UNESCO have already penetrated Mali's governmental discourse concerning certain topics, the opposite simply cannot be argued to be true, since the Malian government had not yet come into existence when UNESCO was established.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as we know it today was founded in 1945. As an organ of the United Nations, the purpose of the organisation was defined as: *“to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”*.³⁷ The constitution was signed by 37 countries on the 16th of november 1945. As stated by the International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO History Project, it was this constitution that compelled UNESCO to play an active role in the period of decolonization that followed the second world war.³⁸ On 14 December 1960, the United Nations General Assembly adopted ‘The Declaration of the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples’, which was accompanied by UNESCO’s General Conference adaption of a ‘Resolution on the role of UNESCO in the attainment of independence’. It was in the same year, that 16 African countries became member of the United Nations, among which Mali.³⁹

Whereas the focus first lay on the political and economic independence of former colonies, after 1969 UNESCO merely stressed the social and cultural independence. UNESCO strived to aid in the promotion of the national identity of the former colonies.⁴⁰ Although UNESCO seemed to be aware of the vital role the organisation could play in the international affairs, their formulated principles appeared to be challenging to put to practise, and policies concerned with the matter of decolonization were not always as efficient. The promotion of teaching in the native language, is an example of the projects that were initiated with the idea that it would contribute to a national identity. However, the implementation of this renewed education appeared far too costly to realise on such great scale and long-term.⁴¹

In 1972, UNESCO appropriated the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, this convention established the World Heritage Committee, which in turn created and maintained the World Heritage List.⁴² Under the lead of the first president of the independent Republic, Modibo Kéita, Mali had already joined UNESCO on November 7th 1960, on the 5th of April 1977 the nation, by then under the rule of Moussa Traoré, accepted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.⁴³ It would, however, take another eleven eventful years before Tímbuktu, as the first Malian heritage site, was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The UNESCO constitution is thus argued to have played a vital role in the process of decolonisation, due to the principles and values expressed in this constitution. However, these principles and values did not appear out of nowhere. UNESCO, as explained before, is an organ of the United Nations.

³⁷ UNESCO 1945

³⁸ “UNESCO AND ISSUES OF COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION” 2009

³⁹ Kay 1967

⁴⁰ “UNESCO AND ISSUES OF COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION” 2009

⁴¹ “UNESCO AND ISSUES OF COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION” 2009

⁴² Meskell 2013

⁴³ “Mali | United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization” 2017

Although the United Nations came into being on 1 January 1942, and the declaration contains some references to the principles and values expressed in the ‘Declaration of the rights of man and the citizen’ from 1789, the ‘Declaration of Human rights’ was only constructed after the constitution of UNESCO, namely in 1948.⁴⁴ Therefore, the constitution of UNESCO cannot be said to have been based upon the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The constitution of UNESCO (1946), as well as the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) draw upon principles and values that were adopted far earlier in European and American history: ‘The Modern era’.

On the 4th of July 1776, the ‘Declaration of Independence’, by the hand of Thomas Jefferson, was announced to the world.⁴⁵ Believes of a ‘natural law’ and ‘natural rights’, revived by the rational thinking that was celebrated by the Enlightenment philosophers, were the keystones of this document.⁴⁶ This revival of the natural law and rights of human beings in the ‘Declaration of Independence’, inspired General Lafayette in his establishment of the ‘Declaration of the right of man and of the citizen’, introduced in August 1789.⁴⁷ This modern understanding and interpretation of the equality and rights of mankind in turn stem from the Greek philosophers.⁴⁸ Therefore the discursive tradition on the rights of man, which is reproduced in the constitution of UNESCO, as well as in our contemporary ‘Declaration of human rights’ composed by the United Nations, finds its roots in ancient and modern Western believes.⁴⁹

However, as we are confronted with the paradox of the right to cultural diversity in contemporary society, in the 18th century there was already quite some controversy on the application of the French ‘Declaration of the rights of man and the citizen’, on France’s overseas colonies.⁵⁰ Whereas Denis Diderot explained the values adopted in the French ‘Declaration of the rights of man and the citizen’, as universal, and therefore entailed the recognition of the authenticity of different cultures, it comes as no surprise that many other political thinkers of the time practised reason to develop classifications of different ethnic groups that defined how Africans and Asians did not have the same rights of citizenship, or needed to be educated in the civilisation that Western-Europeans supposedly already acquired.⁵¹ Only in 1848, after many more revolutionary situations in European France and rebellions in its overseas colonies, would the remaining African slaves of the French empire, gain their definitive right to citizenship.⁵²

Enlightened reasoning did not stop the 19th century expansion of overseas territory. On the contrary, modern colonial empires were only about to rise. Technological development now allowed Western-European empires, as France, to infiltrate African territories more easily.⁵³ Leroy-Beaulieu’s 1874 ‘De la colonisation chez des peuples modernes’, continued modern reasoning to propagate the benefits of European presence in the overseas.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ United Nations 1942; United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration Of Human Rights*. United Nations.

⁴⁵ Berkelbach van der Sprenkel et al. 1952

⁴⁶ Ibidem

⁴⁷ Ibidem

⁴⁸ Hart 1955

⁴⁹ Pagden 2003

⁵⁰ Burbank and Cooper 2010

⁵¹ Ibidem

⁵² Ibidem

⁵³ Ibidem

⁵⁴ Ibidem

In 1893 the French conquered Mali, and the territory would stay under French command until 1960.⁵⁵

As West Africa was not touched upon by external influence of the Europeans or Asians before the overseas expeditions of the Portuguese around 1500, North Africa and the great city of Cairo brought civilisation to what would later become Mali.⁵⁶ The region always knew an Islamic tradition, which started far before the French invaded the territory. The first king of Mali was Barmandana, who ruled around 1050. He became a Muslim and went on pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1235, Sundiata (or Mari-Diata) founded the empire and ruled until 1260. It was Mansa Kankan Musa, who extended the empire from 1312 until 1337, during which he enclosed Timbuktu and Gao, among other territory around the Middle Niger. By that time the empire of Mali was impressing the rest of the West-Sudanese lands. Law and governing assured safe travel routes for merchants. Trading companies were not only helped by rule and governing, religion played an important role as well. Although Mansa Kankan Musa was, as the kings before him, a Muslim, he supported the religion of the Madinka people. During his rule different customs and ceremonies were allowed.⁵⁷

The ancient city of Timbuktu is located in the isolated north of modern day Mali. The city was established around A.D. 1106 by members of the Masufa Branch of the Sanhaja tribe⁵⁸. The nomadic population that travelled the Sahara with their covey of camels and sheeps. However, during the dry season they would locate themselves around the Niger to supply their herds with water and grass. When the desert would start flourishing again, an old Sanhanja woman, named Tin Abutut, would guard the heavy stock, as the nomads left off for the desert.⁵⁹ For two centuries Timbuktu served as a semi-permanent camp for the storage of goods. Due to its geographical location the city became an important trading centre and caravan stop for Sudanese Muslims on their way to Mecca.⁶⁰ By 1600 the Sanhaja territory and economy had been to great extent overtaken by Hassaniyya Arabs from Southern Morocco and Tuareg (or Kel Tamasheq) groups migrating from the north-east. However some of the Sanhaja people urbanised and in the sixteenth century, the two leading scholarly families of Timbuktu were from Sanhaja origins.⁶¹

The three large mosques of Timbuktu, the Djingareber Mosque, the Sidi Yahia Mosque, and the Sankore Mosque, were built during the fourteenth century. Throughout time they have been rebuilt and enlarged by different Imams. The Djingareyber Mosque, of which the initial construction dates back to Sultan Kankan Moussa, returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, was rebuilt and enlarged between 1570 and 1583 by the Imam Al Aqib, the Qadi of Timbuktu, who added all the southern part and the wall surrounding the cemetery located to the west. The Sankore Mosque was, like the Djingareyber Mosque, restored by the Imam Al Aqib between 1578 and 1582. He had the sanctuary demolished and rebuilt according to the dimensions of the Kaaba of the Mecca.

⁵⁵ Burbank and Cooper 2010

⁵⁶ Davidson 1998; Klein 1998

⁵⁷ Davidson 1998

⁵⁸ Haïdara 2013

⁵⁹ Ibidem; Mohamed 2013

⁶⁰ Ibidem

⁶¹ Ibidem

The Sidi Yahia Mosque, to the south of the Sankore Mosque, was built around 1400 by the marabout Sheik El Moktar Hamalla in anticipation of a holy man who appeared forty years later in the person of Cherif Sidi Yahia, who was then chosen as Imam. The mosque was restored in 1577-1578 by the Imam Al Aqib.⁶²

The fifteenth and sixteenth century are seen as the Golden Age of Timbuktu. The city flourished as Timbuktu attracted many African and non-African Islamic scholars, that came to the city to study the Islam.⁶³ However, in 1591 the victory of the Moroccan, who had invaded Timbuktu, resulted in an exodus of most of the Islamic scholars, and eventually diminished the city's academic position to a level from which it never completely recovered.⁶⁴ A year after the French entered Mali in 1893, the city of Timbuktu was concurred in 1894, Timbuktu had by then already experienced the domination of the Peulh, Kounta, and finally the Tuareg.⁶⁵

Ever since the French invaded Timbuktu, the Tuareg can be remembered to have strived for a separate homeland. When, in 1893, the French occupied Timbuktu, the Tuareg resisted French rule until 1917, after series of bloody defeats. As a result these Tuareg were included in the state of Mali. This development, for the Tuareg, also meant that French borders separated them from their kin located in other regions: Niger, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania. Anderson's theory on 'Imagined communities', helps explaining the importance of the communal identity of the Tuareg and their sense of belonging in this conflict. Tuareg society consists of small communities closely connected to each other. They know of each other's existence, particularities and location. The latter plays a vital role in the dynamics of their society. The Tuareg, being nomadic people, there is the necessity to be able to leave off to neighbouring territory in times of drought. In the Tuareg environment the awareness of similar communities and their relation to these other Tuareg communities is essential to survive.⁶⁶

The Tuareg, differentiated themselves from the Southern Malian people, in terms of their 'superior' nomadic lifestyle, as well the fact that they did not identify themselves as African, but Arab. Within the State of Mali negative stereotypes between the Tuareg and the southern citizens have always existed both ways. This attitude from the Tuareg people in the North, combined with other factors, which will be discussed more thoroughly later on, established several rebellions from 1963-1964, 1990-1996, 2006-2009, and since January 2012, by means to create a separate state of Azawad ever since the independence of the Malian state in 1960.

In most of Mali and on an international level, the 1963 rebellion is referred to as 'The first Tuareg rebellion'. Which is an appropriate reference, considering the manifestation of a second- and third rebellion in the following decades.⁶⁷ However, following the historical discourse of the Kel Adagh (a Tuareg alliance of Tamasheq living in the Adrar des Iforas Highlands of Mali), the 1963 rebellion is narrated in a way that emphasises the continuous resistance against 'external domination', and in addition the goal to obtain an

⁶² Doutreuwe et Salvaing 2013

⁶³ Haïdara, 2013

⁶⁴ Singleton 2004

⁶⁵ Haïdara 2013; Klein 1998

⁶⁶ Lecocq 2010

⁶⁷ Lecocq 2002

independent state.⁶⁸ It was Elledi Ag Albachir who led the 1963 rebellion against the Malian government, before him, his father Alia Ag Albachir, led the resistance against the French. ‘Egha’, is a concept that plays a key-role in the historical narration of Kel Tamasheq, and can be roughly translated to ‘revenge’. ‘Egha’, is however more complicated, due to its relation with two other concepts of Tamasheq society, namely: ‘eshik’, meaning honour, and ‘takaraket’, meaning shame⁶⁹. Following the history the Ag Albachir, these concepts create the continuity in the Tamasheq historical discourse around the rebellions, or acts of resistance. Elledi Ag Albachir was to avenge his father, who was humiliated by the French and continue his admired resistance against ‘foreign domination’.⁷⁰

The creation of independent Mali marks an important moment in dominant historical discourse on Mali. Simply put: before 1960 the French ruled the people of Mali, with the creation of the Independent Republic of Mali, foreign repression and exploitation ended. However this mark in time is valued differently in its historical context by Kel Tamasheq than it was by the ruling government of independent Mali. The following part of this chapter is dedicated to illustrate the different meaning given to independent Mali and the discursive traditions used by Modibo Kéita, and the Kel Tamasheq, that help understand the differences in this process of meaning giving to the process of decolonisation in Mali.

‘The Foreign Policy of Mali’ provides an interesting source to identify the first government of independent Mali. The speech was given at (and addressed to) the Chatham House in London.⁷¹ This speech attributes to the contextualisation of further primary sources central in this research as it is concerned with the way in which Mali, for the first time positions itself, with respect to international affairs, after their independence from France. It is, therefore, an important source with regard to Mali’s post-colonial identity, as it can be seen as a representation of the meaning and values that were espoused in the context of a newly constructed national identity, relating itself to the international society. Also, by representing the beginning of Mali’s positioning in the international society as an independent nation, it reveals information that attributes to the understanding of the relation between Mali and UNESCO, as well as the Malian government and Tamasheq society.

Without doubt, this speech reveals a coloured image of ‘truth’, since, although representing an entire nation, it is one man’s view on the matters discussed in the speech. Furthermore, the speech was addressed to the Chatham House, of which Kéita (the narrator) was aware. The Chatham House, also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, introduced the so-called Chatham House Rule: *‘When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.’*

This rule was introduced to encourage open discussion. The rule was not practised for Kéita’s speech, since the address was published in October 1961, in ‘International Affairs’, a journal of the Chatham House, with

⁶⁸ Lecocq 2002

⁶⁹ Bourgeot 1990; Lecocq 2002; Lecocq 2010

⁷⁰ Lecocq 2002

⁷¹ Chatham House 2016: ‘The Chatham House is a Anglo-American Institute of foreign affairs, founded in 1919, that studies international problems with a view to preventing future wars. In reaction to the changing post-war world, Chatham House embarked on a number of studies relating to Britain and the Commonwealth’s new political stature and the development of the Cold War. The Institute held a series of conference on European questions and Western defence in cooperation with the Centre d’études de politiques étrangères and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik.’ 07-03-2016

clear mention of the author. Be that as it may, the clear objective of the institute to create an environment in which people feel free to express themselves openly, should be taken in account as influential on Kéïta's formulation and choice of statements in the speech. Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the address was originally in French, and translated to English later on for the publication in 'International Affairs'. Although translations for research journals can be expected to be done with a high standard of quality, some expressions might not lend themselves for an equivalent in another language, that expresses the same meaning the original aims to express.

However, the discursive context of the time in which the speech was written, as well as the time which the speech is concerned with, asks for more attention. Although Mali had not yet become a member state of UNESCO by 1961, the republic had not long before Kéïta's speech joined the United Nations, which reproduced the same human rights discourse as adopted by UNESCO and expressed in the organisation's objectives. By 1961, Kéïta was familiar with the dominant human rights discourse and in his speech on Mali's International Policy, he refers to these principles in such a way that attributes to an understanding of Kéïta's negotiation within the framework of the dominant human rights discourse:

'There are certain principles which have arisen in Europe and have subsequently, and by reason of the process of development of these ideas, been transplanted to Africa. These principles are those which constitute intangible rights for all men (...) concerning the right of peoples to dispose of their own affairs, principles of equality between all men, between all peoples. Neither the peoples of Asia nor the peoples of Africa have discovered these principles, nor developed them, nor spread them around the world. This has been done by the peoples of Europe; and therefore, in the application of these ideas, when it comes to a question of Asiatic or African people, who have been deprived of their liberty by colonial conquest and who no longer have the right of self-determination, for whom individual liberty does not exist, it is essential that the Great Powers of Europe, who have given birth to these ideas and spread them around the world, should not, by reason of their alliances, be disloyal to these ideas in their integral meaning and in their application.' (Kéïta 1961)⁷²

At the time of Kéïta's speech, the decolonization of Africa was an ongoing process. Simultaneously, international politics were dominated by the division between communism and capitalism, that defined the Cold War struggles.⁷³ Precisely these struggles, combined with the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human rights appear to be the dominant subject matters in Kéïta's speech.⁷⁴ The following citation includes a reference to Congo, which illustrates quite clearly Kéïta's positioning in the international world.

*'Everyone would agree that the world is divided into two opposing blocs, that of the West and that of the East. This situation unfortunately causes international problems to be viewed from the ideological angle; this accentuates the cold war and is characterized by the struggle for spheres of influence. We need take only one recent and grievous example, one which in a general way concerns all Africans, one of which all Africans are well aware, namely the Congolese problem.'*⁷⁵

⁷² Keita 1961

⁷³ Pietz, 1988

⁷⁴ Keita 1961

⁷⁵ Keita 1961

The Congolese problem referred to is the execution of Lumumba.⁷⁶ The meaning given to this reference, can be explained by another citation from his speech:

*'When one tells a slave, even if secretly one wants to free him in order to subject him to another domination, when one tells him as he lies bound and struggling to be free, 'I will help you to win your liberty, I will help you to be yourself, to be a man', then the slave will not bother to ask himself what the future behaviour of his helper is likely to be. He will only see the immediate help that is being offered. This is the reality which must be taken into consideration, and which should cause the Great Powers of Europe and America to give more thought to their policy towards colonial peoples, who are struggling for their freedom from the foreign yoke.'*⁷⁷

Modibo Kéita, is making use of both the Cold War moral debate and the Human Rights discourse to position Mali within the international society. In doing so he is not opposing to the discursive traditions of that time, he is negotiating within the framework of the identities that are defined by these discourses. Arguing, in a sense that the Western society tends to be less accountable to their own principles than these nations might suggest or believe themselves. The aim of his speech, and the aim of this position seems to be the attraction of aid from the 'Western bloc', without being demanded or forced to deny the aid of Communist powers. Kéita here aims to position Mali as a neutral player in the international society, a player that is allowed to define its own position, without evoking the 'Great Powers' to define this position in terms of 'Communist vs. Capitalist'. He is in no way withstanding the principles and values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human rights which defines the human rights discourse. On the contrary, he is referring to them in a way that makes these principles the exact building blocks of his argumentation. This argumentation, however, does not aim to completely internalise the line of thinking and communicating, Kéita experiences, Western powers produce. As he states, the principles these Western powers once established and spread, are not always as consequently practised as they are preached. In order to underbuilt these statements he is making use of the contemporary moral debates around the Cold War as an example for the inconsequent behaviour of the Western Powers.

Altogether, this speech, reveals how Kéita relates to the international society, and more specifically to the dominant powers of that time as well as their institutions. In agreement with the values on which the UN and UNESCO was build, he makes use of his agency to give his interpretation of these values, in doing so he is taking a less submissive identity by making use of the opportunity to be critical towards the international society of which he is, as he admits, at the same time dependent on. Whereas the values of the discursive traditions on human rights in this speech serve as the building blocks of Kéita's argumentation on his position in the international society, Kéita's handling of the first Tuareg revolt from 1963 to 1964, suggests little to no care about these same values when it concerns Mali's domestic affairs.

⁷⁶ Lumumba, Patrice (Emergy) (1925–61) Congolese nationalist and politician.

He founded the influential MNC (Mouvement National Congolais) in 1958 to bring together radical nationalists. He was accused of instigating public violence and was gaoled by the Belgians, but was released to participate in the Brussels Conference (January 1960) on the Congo. He became Prime Minister and Minister of Defence when the Congo became independent in June 1960. Sections of the army mutinied, the Belgian troops returned, and Katanga province declared its independence. Lumumba appealed to the United Nations, which sent a peacekeeping force. President Kasavubu, his rival in power, dismissed him and shortly afterwards he was put under arrest by Colonel Mobutu. He escaped, but was recaptured and killed. (Kerr and Wright 2015)

⁷⁷ Kéita 1961

Modibo Kéita as the first president of independent Mali was well educated in the dominant Western principles and ideas of that time, which enabled him to make use of them to construct his argument. The first French school in the Azawad areas (where Timbuktu is located) was, however, only established in 1947. Both the French and the Tamasheq were convinced, the education did not attribute to the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the people. Considering that by 1947, Modibo Kéita, was already an active member of US-RDA, this, created a great disadvantage, to say at least, for the Tuareg people to have a voice in the process of decolonisation. The high rate of illiteracy among Tuareg people, as well their unfamiliarity, lack of interest in western structured party politics, and underrepresentation in administrative jobs, left them with little to no voice in the creation of independent states.⁷⁸

The unequal development of ethnic groups within the borders of a by outside forces created state, which by 1960 was expected to establish an independent unified nation, with a political structure, introduced by the Western colonists, still forms the foundation of the internal conflicts Mali has ever since its independence been faced with. The first Tuareg rebellion started in May 1963, when a goumier was ordered by two young Ifoghas⁷⁹ to hand in his camel and equipment, and ‘tell the slaves of the Bouressa that they had come’.⁸⁰ In October that same year Kéita send out a mission of USRDA-officials, and tribal chiefs to negotiate with the rebels. In reply the Tuareg stated: ‘*We fight for our independence. We don't want any of this Mali. The leaders have no patience. They throw us in prison for no reason. There are heavy taxes and exaggerated customs duties. We are beaten and enchained in front of our women and children. There also is the marriage act which does not conform to Muslim custom. We are against Mali because all its institutions are anti-religious and against us. We want our independence, independence, that is all we look for, but we cannot stay with Mali. We are against all the principles of the Party and the Government.*’⁸¹

The arguments used to explain the wish for an independent state, consist of both cultural differences, and the economic inconvenience for the Kel Tamasheq in the Adagh to be part of state-ruled economy.⁸² As mentioned earlier on the Kel Tamasheq is known as a proud people, with strong cultural values that define them as a people, values that are opposing to the values espousing from the by Kéita ruled social government of Mali. The heavy taxes had a negative influence on the export of kin to Algeria, which was the main income for most of the Tamasheq in the Adagh.⁸³

On a cultural level, the Tamasheq customs and traditions, are highly valued by means of the process of identification. One of these traditions is ‘Bellah’, referring to the Tuareg slaves. The Tamasheq refer to themselves, as white or Arab, and see ‘their race’ as superior to the ‘black race’.⁸⁴ In Tamasheq culture, households often consisted of slaves that would contribute to the daily domestic affairs.⁸⁵ Under the rule of Modibo Kéita, ‘Bellah’ was no longer allowed, nor was ‘Imghad’, referring to those of a tributary social

⁷⁸ Lecocq 2010

⁷⁹ Lecocq 2002

⁸⁰ Ibidem

⁸¹ Lecocq 2002 : Dicko, Procès verbal de compte rendu de mission, n.d. (+/- 30/10/1963). ACK.

⁸² Lecocq 2002

⁸³ Ibidem

⁸⁴ Ibidem

⁸⁵ Ibidem

stratum.⁸⁶ As becomes clear, the Tamasheq culture knows quite some social hierarchy, which was in conflict with Kéita's social government. Furthermore being ruled by a black president appeared to be something Tamasheq culture had difficulties digesting as well.⁸⁷

The first Tuareg rebellion, had no ideological intent, but was driven by the wish to preserve the Tamasheq cultural identity and be independent from the rest of Mali.⁸⁸ Whereas the hope of the Tamasheq for French and/or Algerian intervention, was never answered really answered, the Infulagen retreated to Algeria after a mission in Mali, they could sell their obtained heard there, re-equip for battle, and hide from Malian forces.⁸⁹ This changed when from November 1963 until February 1964 an agreement was made between the Malian and Algerian government, that allowed Malian troupes to capture the rebels on Algerian territory.⁹⁰ This greatly undermined the Tamasheq rebels' chances, as well as it would hurt those Tamasheq civilians who had fled to Algeria to hide from the Malian army, that did not exclude women or children from their violent reaction. In September 1963, the Malian government had already pointed out the Adagh north to Kidal, as 'zone interdit', whoever was found there would be shot.⁹¹ In January 1964, the government decided to locate the population of the areas in regrouping zones. The Malian army shot herd and herdsmen, and poisoned water in the forbidden zone, women and children either died of poisoned water, were imprisoned under life threatening circumstances, or captured to work in the regrouping zones, where they were confronted with forced labour, humiliation, sexual harassment and forced marriage.⁹²

In 1964, the Malian forces succeeded in capturing Elledi ag Alia, who was tortured, and presented the option to either collaborate or be executed. Elledi collaborated, and more leading rebels were arrested. The rebel leaders were paraded throughout northern Mali, undressed and spit upon by Malian soldiers, an act of humiliation that caused, to say at least, shock and disbelief amongst the Tamasheq.⁹³ In Kidal random and macabre executions took place on both leading figures and Tamasheq population, after they were shot, the body would be thrown into, what was referred to as Dibby's oven, a pit filled with burning coals, and covered with sand, as is the local way of baking bread as well.⁹⁴

The events during and effects of the first rebellion have naturally become part of the Tamasheq narrative. The discursive traditions, however, on the Tuareg rebellions highly differ between the Kel Tamasheq and the Malian government, apart from the fact that the actions of the Malian government and its army are far from in line with the discursive traditions on Human rights, which, following the line of argumentation used by Modibo Kéita in his speech on Mali's position in the international society, appeared to be of value to him and his government. However, when reviewing the excerpts from Kéita's speech presented before, his references to '*the right to dispose of their own affairs*', '*the right of self-determination*', and the way in which he emphasises the hypocrisy in being '*disloyal to these ideas in their integral meaning*', seem to have

⁸⁶ "Tuareg Facts, Information, Pictures | Encyclopedia.Com Articles About Tuareg" 2017

⁸⁷ Lecocq 2002

⁸⁸ Ibidem

⁸⁹ Ibidem

⁹⁰ Ibidem

⁹¹ Ibidem

⁹² Ibidem

⁹³ Ibidem

⁹⁴ Ibidem

been a matter of convenience, or at least principles he does not need to act upon when it comes to the domestic affairs of Mali.⁹⁵ Although he repeatedly denied alliances with communist states, of which his speech at the Chatham House is one example, they most definitely inspired him. After his eight-week visit to China, Korea, and Vietnam in 1964, Kéita started preparing his ‘Cultural Revolution’, which was launched on 20 August 1967.⁹⁶

Simultaneously, it has become clear that the process of identification, during which ideas of the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’, for the Kel Tamasheq, among other aspects, entailed determining themselves as superior to ‘the black race’. The cultural identity of the Kel Tamasheq, and the principles and values that espoused from this identity caused them to want a separate state. This wish for independency of the Tamasheq society in Northern Mali, was however largely marginalised by Kéita’s socialist ideas on the national identity of his independent Mali. However, the economic crisis combined with a growing discontent in both the international society and among the nation’s population and army led to a ‘Coup d’état’ on 19 November 1968. Modibo Kéita was captured and Mali was now governed by the military regime of Moussa Traoré.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Lecocq 2002

⁹⁶ Imperato and Imperato 2008

⁹⁷ Ibidem; Clark and Baker 2015; Wolpin 1975

Chapter 2: The World Heritage List and the Problem of the North (1968-1994)

Key-words: *The WHL Outstanding Universal value, endangered heritage
Imagined communities, ADH.*

The previous chapter examined different ideas on the construction and re-construction of collective identity under the spatiotemporal circumstances of decolonisation in Mali, as well as the role, and use of human rights discourse in this context. It has become clear which different identities were constructed, continued, and competed. The chapter furthermore revealed the knowledge/power relations effecting the process of narration for the three defined identities discussed. In this chapter the inscription of Timbuktu on the World Heritage List will be discussed in the context of the development of the political struggles that emerged after the decolonisation of Mali. First the criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List will be studied. Followed by the analysis of Timbuktu's inscription, in the spatiotemporal context of Mali's post-colonial politics, and the continuing narrative of the Kel Tamasheq.

Titchen (1995) dedicated an entire research to the construction of World Heritage value, focusing on the 'Outstanding Universal Value' which is referred to by the World Heritage Committee as a criterion for the inscription of cultural and natural sites to the World Heritage List. In doing so she emphasises the importance of the intellectual and administrative tools used to identify the value of heritage sites. She furthermore stresses the dominance of Western thinking in the area of heritage management, both in its creation as in its application.⁹⁸ This critical analysis done by Titchen (1995) serves as a reference in the analysis of the valuation of the Timbuktu heritage in the period of the city's nomination and inscription. Reports of the World Heritage Convention, correspondences between the Malian Ministry of Sports, Arts, and Culture, ICOMOS, and the World Heritage Committee, and research reports extending the knowledge on Timbuktu (which were undertaken in the run for nomination) have been analysed to provide insight in the following matters: First of all the way in which Timbuktu was given meaning within the framework of the criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List of the World Heritage Committee, secondly which recommendations were given, thirdly which alterations were demanded on a legislative and/or administrative level, and finally in what form was assistance provided by the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS to the Malian Ministry of Sports, Arts, and Culture concerning the Timbuktu heritage (Mosques, Mausoleums, and Tombs).

The accountability of the World Heritage Convention relies on the idea that there is heritage with "Outstanding Universal Value" and that mankind holds the responsibility to preserve this for the benefit of future generations. However in disseminating, and acting, on this belief asks for argumentation (which has been discussed in the previous chapter's part on the identity of UNESCO) and an abbreviation on the framework of "Outstanding Universal Value": criteria that define what heritage is of "Outstanding Universal Value" and what heritage is not. In the creation of the World Heritage Convention and simultaneously the World Heritage List, the criteria for cultural and natural heritage sites have developed over time, and as is

⁹⁸ Titchen 1995

specifically focussed on here over the period of 1979 – 1990. It was in these six years that Tombouctou was proposed for nomination and finally inscribed to both the World Heritage List as the World Heritage List in Danger.

By 1978, five criteria for cultural heritage sites (the category in which the ancient city of Timbuktu holds its place) were defined.⁹⁹

- I. *Properties represents a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of the human creative genius (UNESCO 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (i)).*
- II. *Properties have exerted considerable influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental sculpture, garden and landscape design, related arts, town-planning or human settlements (UNESCO 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (ii)).*
- III. *Property should be unique, extremely rare, or of great antiquity (UNESCO 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (iii)).*
- IV. *Property should be among the most characteristic examples of a type of structure, the type representing important cultural, social, artistic, scientific, technological or industrial development (UNESCO, 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (iv)).*
- V. *The property should be a characteristic example of a traditional style of architecture, method of construction, or form of town-planning or traditional human settlement that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change (UNESCO 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (v)).*
- VI. *The property should be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical importance or significance (UNESCO 1978: 3, Paragraph 7 (vi)).*

The first proposal for the inscription of the ancient city of Timbuktu received by UNESCO on 14 Mai 1979 during its fourth session of the ‘Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage’. In the paragraph ‘Identification: a. Description et inventaire’ Timbuktu is described as follows:

Tombouctou est une commune, avec une population d'environ 22.000 habitants. Elle est le chef-lieu de la 6ème région administrative du Mali. Elle compte nombreux monuments historique :

- *Mosquées célèbres: Djingareyber, Sidiyabia, Sankoré;*
- *Tombeaux de saintes ;*
- *Places célèbres: Marché de Badjondé, Tombouctou; Koy Fatouma, la place de l'indépendance (ex place Joffre) avec au centre le monument du cavalier “El farouk”, le port de Kabara relié au fleuve par un canal de 3 km.¹⁰⁰*

The proposal also contained the justification given for the inscription of Timbuktu on the World Heritage List:

1. *Timbuktu is one the world cities of which the name is filled with historic meaning. For West-African people, Timbuktu is, as Rome or Athene are for the Mediterranean; Constantinople, Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Mecca are for the Orient. With Djenné and Gao, Timbuktu is one of the rare cities, witnessing the grand fluctuations of the regions history.*
2. *Throughout time, the city has fascinated the minds of people from all over the world; a fascination that still continues today, as proved by the growing amount of tourists the city annually attracts.*

⁹⁹ Titchen 1995 (p. 114 – p. 119: fig: 5.2-5.7)

¹⁰⁰ UNESCO 1979

3. *Furthermore, if Timbuktu is seen as the northern equivalent of Djenné, concerning the architectural style, its uniqueness can be found in the used material: the stone “Albor”, with which the majority of the houses are constructed, combines resistance, lightness, and beauty.*
4. *The city contains a great amount of historic vestiges.*¹⁰¹

The proposal was accompanied by a letter from minister Konaré, who served as minister of culture from 1978 until 1980, and would later become president of Mali.¹⁰² In this letter Konaré refers to a previous interaction between ICOMOS and the Ministry, where Mali as a member state of UNESCO was invited to select their heritage for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Unfortunately the proposal was received after the deadline for proposals of this session as becomes clear from the replying letter send to minister Konaré and the Cultural delegation of the Malian government. The proposal would therefore be studied for the following session during spring 1980.¹⁰³ On 20 August 1979, ICOMOS confirmed by the Secretary of the World Heritage Committee that the proposition of Mali to inscribe Timbuktu would be studied.¹⁰⁴ On 8 September 1981, the Malian Ministry of Sports, Arts, and Culture (now with Mariko, as its minister) received another letter from the World Heritage Committee, saying the inscription of the Timbuktu heritage properties would be delayed, based on the advice of ICOMOS arguing for a need of supplementary information on the properties.¹⁰⁵ On 3 November 1981, Mariko replied, asking for help in the form of consultancy on the finalisation of the proposition.¹⁰⁶

On 24 November 1981, the World Heritage Committee reached out to Vuilleumier and Ardouin (conservator of the national museum of Mali) to assist the Malian Ministry in the preparation of the needed documents for a complete proposal, stating that considering the amount of work it would be beneficial to send out a specialist.¹⁰⁷ On 4 December 1981, Mariko was confirmed that his request was transmitted to the President of the World Heritage Committee, and answered as soon as possible.¹⁰⁸ This letter was followed up by another one on 15 December 1981, approving the request and proposing the assistance of Maurice Pierard de Maujouy who was introduced as qualified because of his knowledge of UNESCO’s practices.¹⁰⁹ In another letter from 22 December 1981, Vuilleumier was notified that the Committee decided to continue with a French architect-archaeologist (Pierard de Maujouy), again stressing his knowledge of the World Heritage Convention. On 19 January 1982 the World Heritage Committee received a reply from Mariko, accepting the consultancy of Pierard de Maujouy, expressing the wish for his visit to Mali from April to Mai 1982. On 22 February 1982 Pierard started his consultancy mission in Mali.

As presented above the French architect-archaeologist, was thought especially qualified because of his knowledge of the World Heritage Convention, not because he had any background in the historical

¹⁰¹ UNESCO 1979

¹⁰² Konaré 1979; Arnoldi 2013

¹⁰³ Comité du Patrimoine Mondial 1979; Daifuku pour le Directeur Division du patrimoine cultural 1979

¹⁰⁴ Leblanc Directeur du Secrétariat 1979

¹⁰⁵ Bolla, Sous-Directeur général adjoint (Opérations) de la Culture et de la Communication 1981

¹⁰⁶ Mariko 1981

¹⁰⁷ Raidl Division du patrimoine culturel 1981 *‘Comme le travail nécessaire pour la préparation des dossiers et surtout pour l’établissement de “la liste indicative” est assez considérable, je pense que l’envoi d’un spécialiste qui pourra se consacrer entièrement à cette tâche est une bonne solution.’*

¹⁰⁸ Naqvi pour le Directeur de la Division du patrimoine culturel 1981

¹⁰⁹ Raidl pour le Directeur de la Division du patrimoine culturel 1981 *‘Par une double formation et expérience professionnelle dans les domaines de la préservation des monuments et ensembles historiques et de l’archéologie M. Pierard de Maujouy me paraît particulièrement bien qualifié pour cette mission. Il a en outre une bonne connaissance de la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.’*

culture, or architectural traditions of the Sahel region. Furthermore on 15 June 1982 the World Heritage Committee received a letter from Meurillon, another employee of the 'Musée National du Mali', asking to receive the bulletin and several publications of the World Heritage Committee. It seems that within seven years after the World Heritage Convention came into force, it had already acquired a dominant position in advising specialists and ideas to the local and governmental cultural specialists of a nation: the World Heritage Committee decided to choose a French specialist, with knowledge of the World Heritage Convention as a consultant in the finalisation of the proposition to inscribe Timbuktu on the World Heritage List, instead of a specialist active in the cultural field of Mali and located there. Naturally, considering the proposal needs to meet the criteria of the World Heritage List someone with knowledge of the convention is more suitable especially since this would work together with the local connaisseurs, however it does show the dominance of UNESCO, the World Heritage List, and their valuation of heritage.

Having to have to meet the criteria, produced by the World Heritage Committee in collaboration with ICOMOS in order to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, and then having to include a specialist selected by the World Heritage Committee in order to evaluate the authenticity of the proposed heritage shows little cultural diversity in the determination of heritage. In other words, the World Heritage Committee produced a dominant heritage discourse based on Western ideas on heritage and its preservation, as well as it produced the agents reproducing the framework of this discourse on heritage around the world. On 14 December 1987, the Malian Ministry of Culture send out the proposal for Timbuktu's inscription on the World Heritage List for the third time.¹¹⁰ In the report of the 12th session of the World Heritage Convention it was stated that based on criteria ii, iv, v, Timbuktu was officially inscribed on the World Heritage List.

*'The Committee decided to inscribe the three large mosques and sixteen cemeteries and mausoleums of Timbuktu. In view of the threat of sand encroachment at Timbuktu, the Committee suggests that the Mali authorities consider inscription of this property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.'*¹¹¹

In the concluding of a report from ICOMOS the year before it was, however, stated (referring to all participating African countries) that the biggest threat to all of the heritage sites were the actions of people located in the areas of heritage.¹¹²

Be that as it may, the ancient city of Timbuktu was now inscribed on the World Heritage List and would up until 1990 be tasked with the preparation for the World Heritage List in Danger as well as new projects of conservation which would have to compromise with the local activities still alive in the heritage sites. However, before continuing on this matter, there are first the criteria based on which Timbuktu was inscribed. By 1988 the criteria as formulated by the World Heritage Convention had developed somewhat since 1978 and were formulated as follows:

¹¹⁰ Diakite 1987

¹¹¹ World Heritage Committee 1988

¹¹² "Atelier UNESCO-ICOMOS Pour La Conservation Du Patrimoine A L'attention Des Directeurs Des Services Nationaux" 1987 'que ce patrimoine subit une dégradation inquiétante dont les phénomènes naturels sont parfois responsables mais dont les causes essentielles sont dues à l'action des hommes.'

- I. *The property should represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of the creative genius (UNESCO, 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a)(i)).*
- II. *Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world on developments in architecture, monumental arts or town-planning and landscaping (UNESCO December 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a)(ii)).*
- III. *Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilisation which has disappeared (UNESCO December 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a)(iii)).*
- IV. *Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history (UNESCO December 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a)(iv)).*
- V. *Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact irreversible change (UNESCO December 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a)(v)).*
- VI. *Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas and beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion on the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria) (UNESCO December 1988: 5, Paragraph 24 (a) (vi)).¹¹³*

In a more in-depth report on the Timbuktu heritage from 1988 the decision of World Heritage Committee is extended upon, providing the statement of the advisory body saying: *That only the three great mosques, the cemeteries and the mausoleums of Timbuktu be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II, IV, and V. Criterion II, the mosques and holy places of Timbuktu played an essential part in the spread of Islam in Africa at an early period. Criterion IV, the three great mosques of Timbuktu, restored by the Qadi Al Aqib in the sixteenth century, bear witness to the golden age of the intellectual and spiritual capital at the end of the Askia dynasty. Criterion V, built of banco except for some limited repairs (the minaret of the mosque of Sidi Yahia in 1939, the albor stone facework on the eastern façade of the mosque of Sankore in 1952), the mosques of Timbuktu are more representative than the more extensively remodelled dwellings of traditional construction techniques that have become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.¹¹⁴*

Apart from Timbuktu not having determined the development of architecture, monumental arts or town-planning and landscaping in Africa, one could argue that the city has contributed to the spread of Islam throughout Africa, however Islam knows as goes for most religions on different parts of the world, quite some variety. What unique type of architecture or landscaping came from the Islamic culture traveling from out Timbuktu over parts of Africa has not been specified. This appears as a generalisation of culture, especially in comparison to the different cultures and subcultures from Western Europe that were back then and still are overrepresented in the World Heritage List. Secondly, the important works, which started in the 1960's were realised with different materials and techniques, eventually resulted in a modification of the mosque. In earlier history, the mosque had been transformed throughout the ages, with the same materials and the same techniques. Step by step, donations from rich Timbuktu citizens and international organisations established a change in the architecture.¹¹⁵ Finally, the threat of irreversible change, holds a completely different meaning in the context of a post-colonial African city that is located in the desert, than

¹¹³ Titchen 1995

¹¹⁴ "WHC Retrospective Invenotry - Technical Evaluations" 1988

¹¹⁵ Doutreuwe et Salvaing 2013

it does in the case of a heritage site located in Paris or Rome. The ‘threat of irreversible change’ in the case of Timbuktu, could also be referred to as the chance for change, in so far that some change was actually necessary for the city to continue to exist. It must not be forgotten that Timbuktu was and still is a living city, with inhabitants who are in need of certain standards of living.

Now that the three mosques, mausoleums and cemeteries of the ancient city of Timbuktu were inscribed on the World Heritage List, the programmes concerning the conservation and preservation of the properties took off, and it immediately appeared that an annual conservation would not suffice. The first report on Timbuktu after its inscription was created in 1989 by the Malian Ministry of Culture. The report was concerned with the inscription of Timbuktu on the list of World Heritage in danger and proposed several projects and their foreseen costs, as well as the justification for the projects. Interestingly, the report extensively discusses the conditions of the entire city, its problems due to the economic crisis that had hit Mali, and the increasing drought in the area of Timbuktu.¹¹⁶ Therefore another mission to assist in the evaluation of the necessary projects, and report to the List of World Heritage in Danger took place from 23 June until 21 July 1990.¹¹⁷ The main problems that were acknowledged had to do with the drainage of rainwater, congestions caused by silting, and gully erosion of the foot of the mosques’ walls which had to do with the traditional construction and materials, the increasing traffic activity which was very close the outer walls of the mosque, and led through the narrow streets also caused damage.¹¹⁸ The committee was asked to contribute 45.138 EU-dollar to study and work on the problems Timbuktu was faced with. The Malian government would reinforce its personnel on the job.¹¹⁹

In December 1990 the report of the World Heritage Convention stated that *‘The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the List of World Heritage in Danger due to the threat of sand encroachment. A programme to safeguard the property has been set up in order to combat the most pressing dangers, including the consolidation of the Djingareiber Mosque and improvement of terrace rainwater drainage systems.’*¹²⁰ And thus the ancient city was now inscribed to the List of World Heritage in Danger. The mission is referred to in the report from September 1990, which asked for the World Heritage Committee’s approval for the funding of the safeguarding projects as discussed above. What is not referred to in any of these documents or reports from the World Heritage Committee nor the Malian government concerning the Timbuktu heritage, is the ‘Second Tuareg Rebellion’ which started exactly four days after the heritage mission had started on 27 June 1990.¹²¹ The first attacks took place in the Gao and Kidal region, which are located to the south-east and north-east of the Timbuktu region, and although the Malian government was aware of the Tamasheq plans to rebel they had not been able to suppress them.¹²² Furthermore, considering that the Tamasheq revolt aimed at the independence of

¹¹⁶ Ministère des Sports, des Arts, et de la Culture du Mali. 1989. "Liste Patrimoine Mondial En Peril: Plan De Rehabilitation De La Ville Historique De Tombouctou". Report. Paris. NO. C119 Rev. UNESCO Archives.

¹¹⁷ World Heritage Committee 1990

¹¹⁸ Ministère des Sports, des Arts, et de la Culture du Mali. 1989. "Liste Patrimoine Mondial En Peril: Plan De Rehabilitation De La Ville Historique De Tombouctou". Report. Paris. NO. C119 Rev. UNESCO Archives. ; World Heritage Committee 1990

¹¹⁹ World Heritage Committee 1990

¹²⁰ World Heritage Committee 1990

¹²¹ Keita 1998

¹²² Lecocq 2002

the Azawad region, where Timbuktu is located as well, it is quite remarkable that there has not been any mentioning of these events in the reports on Timbuktu's protection.

The drought that struck the Sahel in the 1970s and 1980s had marginalised the Tuareg herds and thereby the economic basis of the society. Insufficient relief aid and state corruption in its distribution (the means were diverted and sold) caused the victims of these droughts, that were still capable of doing so, to move to the urban centres of the Maghreb and West-Africa where they were discriminated, and from the late 1980s on banned.¹²³ The armed uprising against the Malian state in June 1990, started with a small group of young Tuareg men. Iyad Ag Ghali, led the Tuareg rebellions from 1990 – 96, whereas he is now known as the leading figure of Ansar Dine, a group Islamic radicals who want to transform the Northern areas of Mali into an Islamic state. The radicalisation of many young Tuareg men can be traced back to the 1990-96 rebellions, where as a result of the counter actions of the Malian government, combined with the extreme drought, drove many young men to seek for opportunities elsewhere. Muammar Gaddafi's promising financial rewards for joining the military forces of his 'Islamic Legion', appeared to be attractive for the Tuareg men, and they found themselves educated in combat skills as well as Islamist extremist thought in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine.¹²⁴

While making use of typical guerrilla techniques (attacking on various locations, and not being bound to a fixed base camp) the Malian army was constantly confused and experienced difficulties fighting the skilled Tuareg rebels who had gained military experience in Lebanon and Chad.¹²⁵ As a reply to repress the rebellion, civilians were interrogated and executed. On Radio-Mali the interrogations were justified claiming that the individual that were interrogated were intruders who had gained military training abroad and that these people had nothing in common with the perfectly integrated nomadic people of Mali.¹²⁶

However, the horrific manners of execution were resembling to the practices during the first Tuareg rebellion under the Kéita regime. Although it was not possible this time to create a forbidden zone, since the Tuareg were active in the entire North-East of Mali, combat zones, free-circulation zones and concentration zones were established.¹²⁷ In the region of Timbuktu in July 1990 an ethnic cleansing campaign named 'Kokadjè' (which means 'to wash thoroughly'). In the largest operation 94 nomads were killed, they had to dig their own graves, and the Malian forces would then throw in hand grenades.¹²⁸ By the end of July 1990, the state of emergency was declared in all of Northern Mali.¹²⁹

During these same months the mission to evaluate the Timbuktu heritage sites for their inscription to the World Heritage List in Danger took place, there is, however, no mentioning of the events around the Tuareg rebellion and the harsh oppression of the Malian Government in any of the reports produced that

¹²³ Lecocq 2004

¹²⁴ Solomon 2015

¹²⁵ Lecocq 2002

¹²⁶ MALI : La Répression Contre Les Touaregs Bamako Affirme Que "la quiétude s'installe" dans le Nord. "*Ces individus se sont introduits chez nous avec des armes et des matériels de guerre à la faveur du retour et de la réinsertion de nos compatriotes immigrés. Ces bandits armés, qui sont venus de l'extérieur où ils ont reçu une formation militaire poussée, poursuit-elle, n'ont donc rien de commun avec les paisibles populations nomades de tout temps, parfaitement insérées dans la société malienne. Au surplus, les pratiques sanglantes de ces individus sont étrangères aux moeurs des populations maliennes.*"

¹²⁷ Lecocq 2002

¹²⁸ Ibidem

¹²⁹ Ibidem

year. In December 1990 the first attempt to negotiate took place.¹³⁰ Traoré the president of Mali was not only under the pressure of the Tuareg rebellions, but also dealt with political unrest in Bamako where more and more people started to oppose the one-party government.¹³¹ Therefore, it is likely that he wanted his military forces a little closer to Bamako and needed the rebellions to end as soon as possible. In January 1991, Iyad Ag Ghali signed the Tamarasset agreement, consisting of a ceasefire, exchange of prisoners, the withdrawal from the rebels to their base camps, withdrawal from the Malian army from the North, and some vaguely expressed amount of autonomy in the sense of free administration of the local and regional affairs through their representatives in the elected assemblies.¹³²

Be that as it may, after the agreement the Tamasheq movement fractured into different groups with different angels and ideologies concerning the rebellion and the Tamarasset agreement was never fully adopted.¹³³ In February 1991 attacks on villages started again and were claimed by 'Front Populaire de l'Azawad' (FPLA). Iyad Ag Ghali and his 'Mouvement Populaire de l'AZAWED' (MPAMPA) had let go of the wish for an independent state, which was not the case for all of the Tuareg rebels. The FPLA launched a military campaign in February 1991, which spread from the Niger banks towards the region of Timbuktu. The FPLA had a strong representation of the Kell Intessar, a Tamasheq tribe who still identified their fight in the context of the narrative of Elmehti and his son's striving to regain his father's honour and continue his fight for independence, as discussed in the previous chapter.¹³⁴

Meanwhile the political tension in Bamako had grown. The newly founded 'Mouvement Democratique' had organised manifestations throughout the city ambitioning a more democratic government. These manifestations were violently suppressed. On 26 March 1991, Moussa Traoré was disposed by a military coup and replaced by a transition government under the lead of lieutenant-cornel Amadou Touré. In July 1991 a National Conference was held with representatives of the different political parties and civil movements, Iyad Ag Ghali, represented the Tuareg rebel movements and aimed for a federalist state, striving for the autonomy that was promised in the Tamarasset agreement, which was not agreed upon. A promise for decentralised administration would eventually come in effect, but only in 1999.¹³⁵ After his dismissal from presidency Traoré was imprisoned and sentenced to death in 1993, which was later on changed into a life-time imprisonment and finally in 2002 gratified by his successor Alpha Oumar Konaré. Alpha Oumar Konaré was elected president in 1992¹³⁶ He implemented a new constitution and ruled with a multiparty government.¹³⁷

However, Konaré was confronted as well with a weak economy, the continuing problem of drought and desertification. By 1994 the economic crisis led to violent confrontations between protesting students and security forces.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the Tamarasset agreement had not led to peace in the North of Mali,

¹³⁰ Lecocq 2002

¹³¹ Ibidem

¹³² Ibidem

¹³³ Ibidem

¹³⁴ Ibidem

¹³⁵ Ibidem

¹³⁶ Clark and Baker 2015

¹³⁷ Roger 2016

¹³⁸ Clark and Baker 2015

neither was the 'Pacte National' which was signed right before the presidential elections and Konaré had to deal with the continuing rebellions of the Tuareg.¹³⁹

In June 1994, UNESCO published a follow-up report on the report of the safeguarding mission that took place in 1990. In the report it is noted that this second mission dedicated to the protection of the three mosques of the ancient city of Timbuktu was delayed and eventually took place in May 1994. Although it is not stated in the report, it is plausible to assume that this delay was related to the still ongoing Tuareg rebellions. Furthermore, the Malian government had expressed the wish for a 'Mission Culturelle'.

*'The 'Mission Culturelle' will seek to avoid the lack of endemic harmony between national and provincial or municipal authorities. The real role of the 'Mission Culturelle' will be to establish and facilitate a coordinating committee, and relations between the different partners and actors who have an interest in the city of Timbuktu.'*¹⁴⁰

The mission was led by Ali Ould Sidi, who was chosen for the job by the Malian Ministry of Culture. The lack of coordination of- and financial means for the restoration projects were pointed out as the main reasons for the continuing degradation of the heritage sites of Timbuktu.¹⁴¹ Also, the Timbuktu based intervening parties knew only little qualification and lacked proper organisation.¹⁴² UNESCO proposed Ali Ould Sidi to initiate an educative programme on the annual conservation projects necessary to protect the heritage sites.¹⁴³ The idea of this project was to promote local involvement in the works necessary to preserve the mosques.

In the 1994 report of the World Heritage Convention, these same points were presented on the protection of cultural and natural heritage sites in general, the risk of the armed had to be taken in account for the safeguarding of heritage properties and educational programs had to contribute to the protection of the heritage by creating a better knowledge of the value of the sites, and involving the local civilians in the preservation of these sites.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, the wish for heritage preservation policies that would be in line with the regional and national needs and activities was expressed.¹⁴⁵ Specifically on Mali, it was stated that the recommendations from the report of the mission in the summer of 1994 would be adopted.¹⁴⁶

The method referred to was divided into three phases. First a documented study that would list all the foreseen maintenance had to be prepared in order to adequately organise the volunteers at the heritage sites. The second phase would entail the identification of the right type of carriers and supporting materials for the adobe brick (the original material used to build the Mosques). And thirdly, a Malian architect had to be entrusted to organise the executive routine for the construction site and define a long-term conservation program taking into account the local realities of everyday life, while simultaneously ensuring conformity

¹³⁹ Lecocq 2002

¹⁴⁰ UNESCO 1994 'La Mission Culturelle s'attachera à éviter le manqué d'harmonie endémique entre les services nationaux et les autorités provinciales ou municipales. Le véritable rôle de la Mission Culturelle sera de créer d'animer un comité de coordination et liaison entre les différents partenaires et acteurs qui ont une action sur la ville de Tombouctou.'

¹⁴¹ UNESCO 1994

¹⁴² UNESCO 1994

¹⁴³ UNESCO 1994

¹⁴⁴ World Heritage Committee 1994

¹⁴⁵ World Heritage Committee 1994

¹⁴⁶ World Heritage Committee 1994 'Le Comité a été informé que le Gouvernement du Mali avait adopté les recommandations d'une mission de l'UNESCO effectuée au début de cette année et qui préconisait une méthode d'intervention impliquant la participation de la population locale qui, depuis la construction des mosquées, est chargée de leur entretien et continue d'exprimer ainsi la réalité d'une culture religieuse bien vivante. Le Comité a également soutenu cette approche et décidé qu'il soutiendrait sa mise en œuvre au cas où l'Etat partie ferait une demande en ce sens. Le Comité a décidé de maintenir le site sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril.'

to- and improvement of the traditional techniques.¹⁴⁷ In June 1995 the Management Committee and the manufacturers signed a contract with the World Heritage Centre which allowed the start of the first phase.¹⁴⁸ For the second phase of the preservation of the Mosques ICCROM and CRAterre-EAG intervened to provide the necessary technical assistance, which was financed by the World Heritage Fund. ICOMOS would receive the 30.000 EU-dollar requested to finance this intervention divided over the years 1996 and 1997.¹⁴⁹ The Malian state had financed the conservation works, and the execution of the first phase referring to the expenses as an emergency aid, deducted from the national budget.¹⁵⁰

The Malian authorities were praised by the World Heritage Committee for the development of the project and encouraged them to continue the efforts to preserve the Timbuktu heritage. The intervention to provide technical assistance took place from 22 November until 20 December 1996.¹⁵¹ The management committee was encouraged to start complementary projects among which, in the 'Villes Historique' project which was partly funded by the World Bank and concerned with the preservation and rehabilitation of the Mausoleums and the Mosques, and the development of touristic infrastructure.¹⁵²

Meanwhile President Konaré was still struggling to come to a peace with the Tuareg. One of the items listed in the National Pact, was the creation of two separate funds to reassemble the North. These funds were formally established but empty, since the government claimed that they did not have the money to fill them. Only in 1995 money became available for the funding of the reintegration of former rebels in civil society. The other fund meant to aid the victims of the conflict remained empty.¹⁵³ Another important and failed item in the pact was to secure the return of refugees after the end of the conflict. As a result of the conflict and especially the horrific uprising of the armed forces in 1994 an estimated 160.000 people had fled Mali by the end of 1994.¹⁵⁴

Evidently it has become clear that the Timbuktu region was not only faced with problems of drought that threatened the heritage sites, but also with the threat of the armed conflicts in the area. However, thus far this was not perceived as a threat to the heritage sites and did not seem to be of any concern to the World Heritage Committee or UNESCO. The focus on the heritage sites and their restoration can be justified since the organisation focussed on the protection of heritage sites, not on inter-cultural conflicts. However, the principles on which UNESCO is founded, UNESCO's constitution and the creation of the World Heritage Committee based on these principles, imply a concern of human rights, and a promotion of cultural diversity, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Furthermore, heritage management is impossible without a concern for the different interest groups of the heritage site. Especially in the case of lived heritage, social-, religious-, and/or political conflict creates a reasonable threat for the heritage site, since heritage sites contain the value given to the site by people. When a conflict arises, it is thus possible that a heritage site is under threat, either in the sense of collateral

¹⁴⁷ Bureau du Comité du patrimoine mondial 1994

¹⁴⁸ UNESCO 1994

¹⁴⁹ UNESCO 1995

¹⁵⁰ UNESCO 1995

¹⁵¹ UNESCO 1997

¹⁵² UNESCO 1997

¹⁵³ Lecocq 2002

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem

damage, or in the sense of destruction as a means for making a statement.

Timbuktu's inscription to the World Heritage List was justified by its rich Islamic history, Timbuktu was acknowledged to be founded by the Tamasheq, and acknowledged to be ruled by the Tamasheq before the arrival of the French. The fact that these same ethnic groups were now for the second time discriminated in the same city, banned out of the city and later on even cleansed out by the Malian government, the same government the World Heritage Committee was collaborating with to 'protect' the ancient city of Timbuktu and its rich culture, was not of concern for the World Heritage Committee. Indeed, the intention for a project of better cultural understanding arose in 1994, but these plans were executed by appointed delegations of the Malian government, who had thus far not shown the greatest concern for the well-being of the Tamasheq society, nor had they acted upon the human rights principles UNESCO identified itself with. And neither the Malian government, nor the World Heritage Committee showed any awareness of the different meanings and values the ancient city of Timbuktu held for the related identities.

Chapter 3: Heritage Management and the Meaning of Destroyed Heritage (1995-2012)

Key-words: *Heritage management, Islamism, Heritage destruction*

This final chapter evolves around the application of heritage management in Timbuktu, the occupation of the North of Mali and the destruction of Timbuktu's heritage. Specifically it goes in on the meaning that has been given to the destroyed heritage by UNESCO. Three online articles published by UNESCO, directly after- and during the time of the occupation of Timbuktu and the destruction of the mausoleums, will be analysed in both the historical context and the spatiotemporal circumstances. Articles published by Al Jazeera right after the destruction of the Timbuktu heritage are used to provide information on the spatiotemporal circumstances, while the research conducted so far serves to illustrate the historical context in which the events around Timbuktu need to be placed.

In 1995 a policy document entitled 'Our Creative Diversity' was published by UNESCO expressing the organisation's ideologies in thirteen different languages. One chapter goes in on heritage as a means for development, opening with the statement that '*Our generation has inherited a wealth of tangible and intangible cultural resources that embody the collective memory of communities across the world and buttress their sense of identity in times of uncertainty.*'¹⁵⁵ This formulation of the meaning of heritage sites implies that heritage would contain a fixed meaning which is collectively accepted and as a result in times of uncertainty on the collective memory of communities the heritage would provide some clarity by reminding the community of their identity. Although it was followed by the notion that '*Only the preservation of these enables us to see indigenous cultures in a historical perspective. The cultural landscape forms a historical and cultural frame for many indigenous peoples. Were we to accept the wider anthropological approach, diversity would need to be recognised in "heritage" matters as well, leading to the recognition that here too there are no universal recipes for good practice.*'¹⁵⁶, the organisation had not really succeeded in doing so thus far at Timbuktu.

The notion that every heritage site and its related communities asked for a different approach is comforting when bearing in mind the different communal narratives in the North of Mali. However, until then the cultural- and ethnic history was recognised in the justification of the inscription of heritage properties on the World Heritage List. In the practice of the preservation of the heritage sites a universal recipe was applied. A recipe that fits the Western European nation-states, and organises heritage preservation from a collective national history. The cultural diversity referred to is actually national diversity, it refers to the different cultures of different nations and the importance to take this in account for the establishment of proper heritage management. But post-colonial republic of Mali, by 1995 still experienced a conflict of cultural diversity stemming from different perceptions of a collective identity.

UNESCO may not have expressed itself explicitly on the Tamasheq wish for an independent Azawad, ignoring the inter-cultural conflicts in the region where Timbuktu was located, and continuing the

¹⁵⁵ World Commission on Culture and Development 1995

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*

collaboration with the Malian government, which was violating human rights and cleansing the city of Tuareg people sends out a rather different message than is expressed in the citations above. I opted the possibility that UNESCO and the World Heritage List might not have been aware of the practices of the Malian government in response to the Tuareg rebellions, but there are too many sources that prove otherwise. For example the article of 'Le Monde' from 18 August 1990 used in the previous chapter, discussing the horrifying measurements of the Malian government towards the Tuareg civilians in the Azawad area.

After pleading for the recognition of cultural diversity in heritage management, a bridge is made to the actual concern of the chapter. *'Like the "cultural industries", historic preservation and museum development have come to be accepted as contributing to economic development. This is all to the good. Yet each society needs to assess the nature and precariousness of its heritage resources in its own terms and determine the contemporary uses it wishes to make of them, not in a spirit of nostalgia but in the spirit of development that is promoted throughout this Report.'*¹⁵⁷ Bearing in mind the droughts, economic crises and exhaustive political conflicts, economic development was likely to be high on the wish-list of the country. However, the idea that historic preservation and museum development, like 'cultural industries' contributed to economic development had again arisen in Western Europe and the United States.

The concept of a 'heritage industry' and 'heritage management' had started to find ground during the 1980s.¹⁵⁸ Western European countries and the United States had grown towards a different industrial revolution, where knowledge intensive capitalism started to replace labour-intensive capitalism.¹⁵⁹ Simultaneously tourism grew, and the limitations of travel shrunk. As a result of technological development it became possible to travel to parts of the world that thus far had been difficult to reach. Heritage sites were (and still are) a popular attraction for tourists, as the sites reveal the ancient and/or contemporary culture of the area where the site is located. However alongside the development of the concept of the 'heritage industry', which requires the necessary infrastructure for tourists, developed the concept of 'heritage management'. And with the rise of heritage management, questions arose on the balance between the preservation of heritage sites, and the presentation of heritage sites (in the sense of tourist attraction).¹⁶⁰ The studies on this subject during the time, were mostly focussed on the heritage sites located in parts of the world where the gradual development of industries in general and the heritage industry specifically had espoused. For these Western European countries and the United States, the development of the concept of 'heritage industry' and 'heritage management' were a result of general development, and thus a plausible new industry.

Naturally the rise of this new industry required some study on the balance between protection of the sites and attraction of tourists, but if properly managed the heritage industry could benefit the economic development of a city or area where the heritage site is located.¹⁶¹ Whether economic development as a result

¹⁵⁷ World Commission on Culture and Development 1995

¹⁵⁸ Millar 1989

¹⁵⁹ Florida and Kenney 1993

¹⁶⁰ Millar 1989

¹⁶¹ Ibidem

of tourist attraction by means of cultural heritage sites is plausible for a city that is confronted with government corruption, inter-cultural conflict, drought, and violation of the human rights, as was the case for Timbuktu is a rather different question. Especially given the fact that by 1995, UNESCO and the Malian authorities had not even been able to establish a constructive, functioning conservation plan.

Be that as it may, one can also imagine that Mali being in the state it was, encouraged by the World Heritage Committee to lance projects that would attribute to the attraction of tourism, saw an opportunity to reinforce their economy. On 12 August, Ali Ould Sidi (Chief Mission Culturelle de Tombouctou) constructed the annual report, the only one however delivered by the responsible authorities of Timbuktu's heritage or made available by UNESCO, since this type of document never returned in the years afterwards. In the report it was stated that Malian government had not undertaken any new projects concerning the Timbuktu heritage after the conservation plan discussed in Chapter 2. On a local level there had not been any projects either, which is contradicting to the initiatives proposed in 1994, aiming to educate and involve the inhabitants of Timbuktu in the preservation of the heritage sites.

There had not been conducted further research in the development of the sites, and only basic education was given to the personnel of the restauration team. However, the World Bank was still funding the safeguarding of Timbuktu and the implementation of touristic infrastructure.¹⁶² By 2000 Timbuktu had an average of 15.000 to 20.000 tourists a year, mostly of European and American origins. The revenue this brought was not notified. It was furthermore stated that the touristic capacity of the heritage sites would be defined in the second phase of the Restauration project, which implies this was still not launched four years after it was supposed to. On the contrary the infrastructure necessary to answer to the wishes of tourists had developed. And Ali Ould Sidi even dared to confirm that the city would keep attracting tourists.¹⁶³ A final interesting point in the report is the confirmation of illegal human settlement, and or illegal activities in the area. In the specification of these groups Sidi referred to both 'non-migrants' in villages and nomads in lasting camps. However it was not perceived as a threat to the heritage sites.¹⁶⁴

In 2002 another UNESCO mission was organised to evaluate the situation in Timbuktu. The lack of a conservation plan was noted, as well as the insufficient assistance of the locals and religious authorities in the conservation of the heritage sites. The recommendations made after the evaluation were the same as they had been in 1994, and consisted of the organisation of a long-term conservation plan, a project to inform and include the involved local parties.¹⁶⁵ However this time the Malian government, now led by the elected president Touré, was also advised to consider inscribing the entire city of Timbuktu on the World Heritage List, so that a management plan for the restauration of the mosques could be elaborated.¹⁶⁶ In 2005 another mission was organised this time by the World Heritage Committee to discuss the organisation of a proper management of the conservation of the heritage sites.¹⁶⁷ It was decided that the Timbuktu

¹⁶² Mission Culturelle Tombouctou 2001

¹⁶³ Ibidem

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem

¹⁶⁵ UNESCO 2003

¹⁶⁶ UNESCO 2003

¹⁶⁷ UNESCO 2004

heritage no longer needed to be inscribed to the List of World Heritage in Danger, and the Malian Ministry of Culture was congratulated with the progress they had made thus far.¹⁶⁸ The Ministry was again advised to work on a proposal of the inscription of the entire city on the World Heritage List. In 2006, the ministry received 15.000 EU-dollar and the technical assistance of Italy to continue the restauration of the ancient city of Timbuktu.¹⁶⁹

By 2007 new difficulties arose when the authenticity of the materials was questioned. Apparently new work had been conducted without taking in account the technical reports made in the past years.¹⁷⁰ The World Heritage Committee furthermore demanded from the Malian government that they would evaluate the impact of the modifications on the Sankoré Mosque in collaboration with the Ahmed Baba Cultural Centre. The Malian authorities in return had to provide the technical information on all the ongoing restauration projects and especially the project concerning the Mosque of Djingareyberre to the World Heritage Committee.¹⁷¹

Unfortunately the Malian Government had more important concerns. By 2007 the Tuareg had started to rebel again, in the form of attacks and hostages, this time led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga.¹⁷² After the end of the second Tuareg rebellion in 1996 it had been rather quiet in the Northern parts of Mali. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the second Tuareg rebellion had caused the migration of an enormous amount of people. However, as discussed before this had not been the first flow of migration. After the harsh repression of Modibo Keita's government during the first Tuareg Rebellion in 1963, the droughts in the 1970s and 1980s many men had fled the to the neighbouring countries as well. It is often stated that the cause for the Tuareg Rebellions lies with the desertification of the North of Mali, linking the scarcity of means of living to violent conflicts.¹⁷³

This is however a too short-sided conclusion. First of all (as extensively discussed in Chapter 1) the reasoning behind the first Tuareg rebellion lay in the wish for an independent state, and the reproduction of revolution discourse stemming from 1893 and defining Tamasheq identity. After the first rebellion the Tuareg had indeed become victims of the droughts in the 1970s and 1980s and had indeed sought a better life elsewhere, for which the lack possibilities in Mali was one reason, and the massacre of their kin another. The continuous flow of Tuareg refugees, to Algeria and Lybia meant a continuous flow of soldiers. The second Tuareg rebellion was still aiming to create an independent state of Mali. However during this rebellion division between the Tuareg arose, since some were still strongly connected to the Tamasheq narrative of striving for independence, other were more moderate in that sense and indeed mainly concerned with the socio-economic position they had.

¹⁶⁸ UNESCO 2005

¹⁶⁹ UNESCO 2006

¹⁷⁰ UNESCO 2007 '*Le Comité du Patrimoine Mondial (...)Regrette que l'État partie ait entrepris les travaux des construction du nouveau Centre culturel Ahmed Baba, sans avoir fourni les nouveaux documents techniques permettant une appréciation objective des modifications envisagées sur le projet du Centre, dont la construction est prévue à proximité de la Mosquée Sankoré.*'

¹⁷¹ Ibidem

¹⁷² Lawler 2009

¹⁷³ Benjaminsen 2008

Another division that arose in that time had to do with the rise Islamism.¹⁷⁴ Many of the men who had been recruited for Muammar Gaddafi's 'Islamic Legion' had fought in Palestine, Lebanon and Afghanistan, not only equipping them with combat experience, but also confronting them with extreme Islamist ideas.¹⁷⁵ Although Islamism had not been an important subject in the rebellions of 1990-1996, it would become of major influence in the rebellion of 2007-2009 and 2011. The rise of Islamism attributed to international collaboration between communities who shared the same religious ideas. An example of this can be found in the collaboration of the Algerian based GSPC and Malian Islamists. In February 2003 a GSPC base was already located in the North of Mali. They did not only share religious ideas, but also an economic interest and lucratively transported South-American cocaine and Afghan heroin to Europe.

To worsen matters Mali was dealing with a corrupt government lead by Amadou Toumani Touré. Under his lead the Tuareg stood no chance of inclusion in society, since Touré did not stick to the promises made after the second Tuareg rebellion, and only appointed men of his own ethnic group in the government. Again the division between the different ethnic groups grew.¹⁷⁶ Almost immediately after his election in 2002, Islamist clerics criticised the secular governance of Touré. Moderate Sufi Muslims were discredited because of their support of the Touré government that grew more corrupt and oppressive through the years.¹⁷⁷ Simultaneously Islamist charity workers found much ground in the depleted Azawad region which had estranged even further from the capital Bamako.¹⁷⁸

In his book 'Tombouctou 2012', Houday Ag Mohammed (regional director of labour in Timbuktu from 1998 until 2013) quotes an Algerian friend in 2008 saying: You welcomed Islamists, married their women but one day they surprise you. With Jihadists it always starts fine, but often ends badly¹⁷⁹ His comment on the growing Islamism turned out to be quite accurate. Looking at the social-economic developments the North of Mali had experienced had experienced since the decolonisation, it is not difficult to understand the people inhabiting the North being sensitive for the influence of extremist beliefs. As Modibo Kéita stated in 1961: *'When one tells a slave, even if secretly one wants to free him in order to subject him to another domination, when one tells him as he lies bound and struggling to be free, 'I will help you to win your liberty, I will help you to be yourself, to be a man', then the slave will not bother to ask himself what the future behaviour of his helper is likely to be. He will only see the immediate help that is being offered. This is the reality which must be taken into consideration, and which should cause the Great Powers of Europe and America to give more thought to their policy towards colonial peoples, who are struggling for their freedom from the foreign yoke.'*¹⁸⁰ In this case it was the reality of the struggling people in Northern Mali which had to be taken in consideration by the Malian government. However any long-term solution, would have to deal with the enormous amount of illegal weapons in the North of Mali as well as

¹⁷⁴ Solomon 2015

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem

¹⁷⁶ Solomon 2015; Mohammed 2013

¹⁷⁷ Solomon 2015

¹⁷⁸ Ibidem

¹⁷⁹ Mohammed 2013 *«Vous avez accueilli les Islamistes en leur donnant en plus du gîte, des femmes à épouser...ils vous surprendront un jour et vous vous rendrez compte de leurs méfaits. Avec les djihadistes ça commence toujours bien mais ça fini mal... et très souvent dans la géhenne.»*

¹⁸⁰ Keita 1961

the ethnic and clan militias existing in the region.¹⁸¹

Furthermore, the problems was faced with were transcending borders. The rebellions against the state, starting in 2007, took place in both Niger and Mali.¹⁸² Older forms of nationalism and territory reasserted themselves. The context of state failure, as was the case under the lead of Touré and the growing corruption his way governing involved, provided arguments and opportunities to act upon these wishes. When GSPC (as the first Al-Qaeda linked group) had located themselves in the North of Mali, Touré took no action, but is even accused of closing a non-aggression pact with the terrorist, which meant the government would turn a blind eye to the illegal practices in the North of Mali, and the terrorists would not bother the capital Bamako.¹⁸³ While conscious of his support towards the Tuareg, Touré even allowed Gaddafi in 2009 to meet with Tuareg rebels right outside of Timbuktu without any Malian authority, enhancing anger among the Malian army.¹⁸⁴ When in 2007 the Algerian based GSPC reformed into MUJAO (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa), AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) the later one profited greatly of the money earned from the drug trafficking, and hostage ransoms. By June 2012 they would have gained an estimated 130 million U.S. dollar.¹⁸⁵ The MNLA (Mouvement nationale pour la liberation de l'Azawad) was formed in late 2011 by several Tuareg groups.¹⁸⁶ Iyad Ag Ghali, known for leading the second Tuareg rebellion had proposed himself as leader of the MNLA, he was however denied since the MNLA did not want any association with the imposition of the Sharia Law in Mali, to which Iyad Ag Ghali was dedicated. As a result Ghali, with support from AQIM established Ansar Dine in December 2011.¹⁸⁷

Meanwhile, UNESCO had been preoccupied with the effects of the Ahmed Baba cultural centre on the authenticity on the Sankoré mosque, the slow progress of the restauration projects, and the absence of any restauration or conservation projects for the mausoleums.¹⁸⁸ When analysing the reports from UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee, and ICOMOS, it seems that there exists not even slightest notion of the corruption, illegal activities and conflicts that are taking place in the area. Providing a reason for this absence of notifications or references to these armed conflicts, would involve speculation about the practises of the Malian government or UNESCO. As stated in the previous chapter it could be argued that the World Heritage Committee did not want to involve in the political situation of member states, which is contradicting to the ethics presented in their constitution. Naivety on the side of UNESCO concerning the influence of inter-cultural and socio-economical conflicts in general, is being rejected as an argument as well when considering the publication from June 2010 'Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage'. The document consists of a manual for site managers, management teams and the agencies and organisation that

¹⁸¹ Solomon 2015

¹⁸² Ibidem

¹⁸³ Ibidem

¹⁸⁴ Solomon 2015

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem

¹⁸⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2014

¹⁸⁷ Cassman 2016

¹⁸⁸ UNESCO 2008 ; UNESCO 2009 ; UNESCO 2010 ; UNESCO 2011.

have a direct stake in the management of a heritage property to identify and assess disaster risks.¹⁸⁹ The first chapter ‘What is Disaster Risk Management and why is it important?’ includes a determination of the most common hazards that could lead to a disaster:

‘The following are some of the most common hazards that may lead to a disaster (WMO; ICSU, 2007):

- *meteorological: hurricanes, tornadoes, heat-waves, lightning, fire;*
- *hydrological: floods, flash-floods, tsunamis;*
- *geological: volcanoes, earthquakes, mass movement (falls, slides, slumps);*
- *astrophysical: meteorites;*
- *biological: epidemics, pests;*
- *human-induced: armed conflict, fire, pollution, infrastructure failure or collapse, civil unrest and terrorism;*
- *climate change: increased storm frequency and severity, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).¹⁹⁰*

The target groups of this manual were not described as the government or the member states but specifically described as the heritage managers, authorities, agencies etc. This implies that the responsibility for gaining knowledge about possible threats for heritage sites was given to the local heritage authorities, which could be the result of a lack of trust towards the government of UNESCO’s member states. However, the local heritage managers of Timbuktu appeared to experience enough difficulties organising and continuing the restoration and conservation which were agreed upon in 1994 and re-evaluated in 2004. Whatever the exact reasons may have been, the Timbuktu heritage reports from its inscription up until 2011 contained no mentioning of the threats of armed conflict, nor intercultural confrontations or discrimination. Whereas Timbuktu had thus far not been a specific target, with the rise of Islamism since the second Tuareg rebellion this had changed. The, on the World Heritage List inscribed, mausoleums of the city contained shrines used by the Sufi to worship their 333 saints. With the growing influence Islamic thought in the North of Mali, these Sufi Islamic practices would come under threat as they were opposing to the Sharia, stating only Allah should be worshipped.

On the 22nd of March 2012 the Malian army under the lead of Captain Sanogo, staged a coup against the ruling government, which provided the perfect opportunity for the Tuareg rebels to continue their plans. On 30 March 2012 Kidal and Gao were captured by Ansar Dine, followed by Timbuktu on 1 April 2012.¹⁹¹ Five days later the independence of Azawad from Mali was declared.¹⁹² Although Ansar Dine was collaborating with the MNLA, they were highly influenced by- and dependent of AQIM, who provided all the necessary resources for taking over the North. Allowing Iyad Ag Ghali to be the face of the independent Azawad, was a clever move by the hand of AQIM. Ghali’s reputation as leader of the second Tuareg rebellion, allowed him to be accepted as leader of the revolt following the line of the Tuareg’s independence narrative, without drawing to much attention to the influence of Al-Qaeda. Ansar Dine taking over control

¹⁸⁹ UNESCO 2010

¹⁹⁰ UNESCO 2010

¹⁹¹ Solomon 2015; Mohamed 2013

¹⁹² Moseley 2012

in Timbuktu did draw the attention of UNESCO. On 2 April 2012, UNESCO published an online news article stating:

*“The recent takeover of these cities by the Tuareg rebels could have damaging effects on the management and conservation of the three mosques and 16 mausoleums of Timbuktu, as well as the Tomb of Askia in Gao. The Director General calls on all belligerents to ensure the protection of these heritage treasures, to which the international community and UNESCO attach great importance, as expressed by their inscription on the World Heritage List(...)These mosques have played a vital role in spreading Islam in Africa. They carry the identity and dignity of a whole people.”*¹⁹³

However, with the absence of the military army in the now independent North of Mali, the ideological distance between the MNLA and Ansar Dine resulted into fighting, and the MNLA was forced out of the Northern cities by Ansar Dine who shortly after imposed sharia law on the entire Azawad area.¹⁹⁴ In May 2012 the front door of Sidi Mahmoud’s shrine was burned and the people of Timbuktu were not allowed to go in for prayer. Again UNESCO’s Director-General, Irina Bokova expressed concern about the developments in Timbuktu stating:

*“This desecration is a sign of a change for the worse that is deeply concerning in the attacks on Malian heritage, already highly threatened in recent weeks. I call on all parties involved to ensure immediate protection of this World Heritage property, essential to preserving Mali’s rich culture, which is part of the indivisible heritage of humanity. This cultural heritage is our common property, and nothing can justify damaging it.”*¹⁹⁵

If UNESCO’s public statements had any influence on the threats the ancient city of Timbuktu was facing, it was worsening the situation. In June 2012 Ansar Dine’s spokesman Sanda Ould Boumama stated:

*“Ansar Dine will today destroy every mausoleum in the city. All of them, without exception. God is unique. All of this is haram. We are all Muslims. UNESCO is what?”*¹⁹⁶

Indeed, Ansar Dine was now directly confronting UNESCO, implying knowledge of UNESCO’s statements.

When bearing in mind the history of the North of Mali, the history of the Tuareg, the origins of Ansar Dine one can imagine that the discursive traditions on heritage that are reproduced in the statements made by UNESCO created further resistance. The reference to ‘*these heritage treasures, to which the international community and UNESCO attach great importance*’, the argument of Timbuktu’s ‘*vital role in spreading Islam in Africa*’, the statement that the mosques ‘*carry the identity and dignity of a whole people*’ are, to say at least, misplaced when analysing them from the perspective of Ansar Dine. Referring to damage done to a living city as damage done to a treasure of value for the international society, indirectly implies the city to be property of the international society.

The argument for the outstanding value of the city’s heritage to have contributed to the spread of Islam in Africa, first of all contains a generalisation of Islam as discussed in the previous chapter, and secondly is

¹⁹³ Centre UNESCO 2012

¹⁹⁴ Solomon 2015

¹⁹⁵ UNESCO Centre 2012

¹⁹⁶ "Ansar Dine Fighters Destroy Timbuktu Shrines" 2012

quite the unfortunate choice, since the ones responsible for destroying the mausoleums were doing so in the name of Islam. Stating that the mosques carry the identity of a whole people, completely marginalises the fact that the North of Mali, and the city of Timbuktu consist of many cultural identities who have never been defended, or taken in consideration since the city was inscribed to World Heritage List. This may not have been the responsibility of UNESCO, but it was the responsibility of the governments UNESCO was working with.

In May 2012, Bokova referred to the sites as ‘World Heritage property’ when calling for aid, and using ‘*the preservation of Mali’s rich culture (...) part of the indivisible heritage of humanity*’ as an argument. She literally called the ancient city of Timbuktu World Heritage property. Furthermore, the preservation of Mali’s rich culture, to which she refers are many different cultures pre-existing to the nation Mali, existing of identities that have been denied throughout history and no longer knew a home after the independence of Mali, who’s dismissal, and unequal treatment eventually led to the organisation of rebellious groups, among which Ansar Dine. Finally, stating ‘*This cultural heritage is our common property, and nothing can justify damaging it*’, almost seems to be an invitation to Ansar Dine to react, and more importantly it is rather contradicting to the argumentation used in her call for aid. If the spread of Islam in history, is a justification for the preservation of heritage sites, how then can the spread of Islam nowadays not be a justification for the destruction of these heritage sites?

Following this line of discourse, Bokova, while representing UNESCO, is placing cultural heritage preservation above religion, while simultaneously using religion as a justification for the ‘outstanding universal value’ of heritage. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, playing a key-role in the spread of Islam throughout Africa, was one of the reasons Timbuktu was inscribed on the World Heritage List, however using exactly this argument when opposing a group of people working in the name of Allah is likely to enhance feelings resentment towards UNESCO. UNESCO is an organisation based on Western ideas and is still recognised as such, which does not appeal to all mankind. Indeed they plead for cultural diversity, while simultaneously including making use of their agency to include certain cultural identities and excluding other, and in doing so refer to the heritage of different cultures as World Heritage property, while denying the rights of those same cultures to ‘dispose of their own affairs’.

On 24 May 2012, UNESCO had published another online article, this time revealing the collaboration between UNESCO and the Malian government to ensure the safeguarding of the heritage sites of Timbuktu.¹⁹⁷ The government of Mali and UNESCO had agreed on certain measurements that needed to be undertaken:

Mali is to:

1. *Finalize its accession to the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict to enable it to submit requests for the granting of enhanced protection to cultural properties that are of the greatest importance to humanity.*
2. *The government of Mali will request the inscription of the two World Heritage sites of Timbuktu and the Tomb of Askia on the List of World Heritage in Danger by the World Heritage Committee during its forthcoming session (24 June to 6 July).*
3. *Mali has furthermore undertaken to draft an exhaustive report concerning priority measures to preserve Mali's World Heritage sites, in line with international heritage conventions. Mali is also to request technical and financial assistance from UNESCO and the international community.*¹⁹⁸

Only four days after the inscription of Timbuktu's heritage sites and the Tomb of Askia to the List of World Heritage in danger, the remaining 16 shrines were destroyed.¹⁹⁹ Ansar Dine was publicly undermining UNESCO's influence and gained attention from the international society. The finalisation however of the 'Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict' had not only enabled Mali to request enhanced protection for its heritage sites, it furthermore entailed Mali agreeing with article 15 and 16 on the violation and jurisdiction of the protocol, which made it possible for UNESCO to sue those responsible for damaging the heritage sites.

¹⁹⁷ UNESCO Centre 2012

¹⁹⁸ Ibidem

¹⁹⁹ "Ansar Dine Fighters Destroy Timbuktu Shrines" 2012

Article 15 Serious violations of this Protocol

1. Any person commits an offence within the meaning of this Protocol if that person intentionally and in violation of the Convention or this Protocol commits any of the following acts:

- a. making cultural property under enhanced protection the object of attack;
- b. using cultural property under enhanced protection or its immediate surroundings in support of military action;
- c. extensive destruction or appropriation of cultural property protected under the Convention and this Protocol;
- d. making cultural property protected under the Convention and this Protocol the object of attack;
- e. theft, pillage or misappropriation of, or acts of vandalism directed against cultural property protected under the Convention.

2. Each Party shall adopt such measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences under its domestic law the offences set forth in this Article and to make such offences punishable by appropriate penalties. When doing so, Parties shall comply with general principles of law and international law, including the rules extending individual criminal responsibility to persons other than those who directly commit the act.

Article 16 Jurisdiction

1. Without prejudice to paragraph 2, each Party shall take the necessary legislative measures to establish its jurisdiction over offences set forth in Article 15 in the following cases:

- a. when such an offence is committed in the territory of that State;
- b. when the alleged offender is a national of that State;
- c. in the case of offences set forth in sub-paragraphs (a) to (c) of the first paragraph of Article 15, when the alleged offender is present in its territory.

2. With respect to the exercise of jurisdiction and without prejudice to Article 28 of the Convention:

- a. this Protocol does not preclude the incurring of individual criminal responsibility or the exercise of jurisdiction under national and international law that may be applicable, or affect the exercise of jurisdiction under customary international law;
- b. except in so far as a State which is not Party to this Protocol may accept and apply its provisions in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 2, members of the armed forces and nationals of a State which is not Party to this Protocol, except for those nationals serving in the armed forces of a State which is a Party to this Protocol, do not incur individual criminal responsibility by virtue of this Protocol, nor does this Protocol impose an obligation to establish jurisdiction over such persons or to extradite them.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ "Second Protocol To The Hague Convention Of 1954 For The Protection Of Cultural Property In The Event Of Armed Conflict" 1999

The online article, published by UNESCO on 24 May 2012 on the agenda of safeguarding Timbuktu's heritage also included specific responsibilities on UNESCO's part, namely:

1. *Present the World Heritage Committee with a detailed report on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites in Mali, notably Timbuktu and the Tomb of Askia during its next meeting. The report is also to include measures taken by the Government of Mali to safeguard these sites.*
2. *Assist the Government of Mali in reinforcing protection of all its cultural properties which are essential for the preservation of Malian culture, described by the Government as both "rich and tolerant, and part of the heritage of humanity."*
3. *Raise awareness in Mali's neighbouring countries and among members of the international community of the situation to help fight the illicit trade in cultural artefacts.*
4. *Work in close cooperation with all U.N. organizations engaged in humanitarian action in Mali to ensure the safeguarding of the country's cultural property.²⁰¹*

Concerning the first point, it has become clear that the state of conservation of Timbuktu's World Heritage sites had not reached the level of satisfactory since its inscription to the World Heritage List. Many missions had been undertaken since 1988, and many reports have been written. There have been two clear conservation plans, of which the first was never really executed and the second was a retry of the first one. And although nearly every report mentioned the involvement of local people in the preservation of their city's heritage for future generations, when they had built a cultural centre next to one of the mosques, UNESCO sent out a mission to evaluate the damage done to the authenticity of the mosque. In the second point, the Malian government notably is quoted, describing the Malian culture as '*rich and tolerant*', a statement that finds hardly any evidence when studying the nation's history, not on the side of the Tuareg nor on the side of the different Malian governments who have been guilty of corruption, discrimination and ethnic cleansing. However, in this case it was necessary for UNESCO to call for a cooperation with all U.N. organisations engaged in humanitarian action, because the country's cultural property needed to be preserved. It was not necessary during the first Tuareg rebellion, and it was not necessary during the second Tuareg rebellion, it became necessary when Timbuktu was occupied by a radical Islamist group destroying the World's heritage property.

Indeed in this article UNESCO referred to the country's cultural property, while asking for the aid of the neighbouring countries in fighting the illegal trafficking of cultural artefacts. In the former articles Bokova referred to the world's property, while aiming to draw the attention from the international society for the happenings in Timbuktu. In this later article UNESCO had been in contact with the Malian government and needed both Mali as the nation's neighbouring countries to feel responsible for the faith of the heritage properties in order to secure them from being destroyed. Furthermore the urge with which these conflicts were confronted by the UNESCO and the international society can be logically explained by the fact that they entailed terrorist groups. Since the happenings of 11 September 2001, fighting terrorism has been a major point on the international political agenda.

²⁰¹ UNESCO Centre 2012

In the case of Timbuktu, UNESCO was able to use its power to attribute to the fight against terrorism. With the finalisation of the 'The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property' in the Event of Armed Conflict by Mali, it became possible for UNESCO to prosecute Ahmad al-Mahdi in international court for the destruction of Timbuktu's heritage.

Conclusion: Which narrative do you prefer?

The ancient city of Timbuktu has been given many different meanings, created by different interest groups. For the local Sufi's the city contained a holiness that defined the culture of their contemporary everyday life. For UNESCO and the World Heritage List it was one of the many sites they wished to preserve so that all of humanity would have the opportunity to experience the greatness of an ancient culture. For the Tamasheq, it was one of the most important cities of the territory they, continuing the narrative of their community, wished to declare as an independent state. For Ansar Dine the destruction of the mausoleums of Timbuktu provided the opportunity to show the rest of the world their position towards Western values.

All individuals experience a sense of identity which is constructed out of narratives to which the individual relates in a certain way, and which is expressed in both tangible and intangible culture. Heritage sites are memorabilia referring to a specific cultural narrative. Heritage can be defined on an individual level, and on a communal level. A community, in turn, can know its borders on a local, regional, national, or international level. It is therefore important to acknowledge that heritage is defined in many different ways, by many different narratives, of which some are acknowledged internationally and some are not. Although UNESCO is based on the idea that cultural diversity needs to be promoted, and the World Heritage Committee in addition practices this idea by preserving the World's heritage of outstanding universal value, in doing so they produce the dominant discourse on heritage which entails a framework that determines what is and what is not heritage, how heritage should or should not be valued, which arguments are or are not incorporated, and which identities are or are not acknowledged within the international society.

UNESCO cannot be held accountable for the socio-economic development of Mali, nor for the development of the Tuareg people, or the rise of Islamism in Mali. However in the production of a dominant discourse on heritage former and current power/knowledge relations can be detected, which may not have come into being deliberately, but did so anyway. Looking at the development of Mali since its independence it has become clear, that in the process of decolonisation those Malians conforming to the French school- and administrative system had a stronger voice in the development of independent Mali. The Tuareg not being educated in French, were left with little to no voice in the creation of independent Mali. Since the decolonisation of the country this has continued to be a troubling gap the Tuareg community had to overcome. Furthermore the proud culture of the Tuareg, and their strong sense identity coming from their ancestors' narrative on fighting for independence, combined with their alternative lifestyle for which national borders are a threat, did not attribute to overcoming this gap. As an supranational organisation dedicated to the preservation of cultural diversity and its heritage UNESCO is taking the responsibility for the protection of underrepresented cultural identities.

However, the World Heritage List, in the inclusion of heritage sites, which are located in different nation-states, is dependent of the government ruling the territory where the site is located. Furthermore the practices of the World Heritage Committee and its advisory bodies entail defining rather arbitrary concepts with subjective meanings. As a result, heritage is given the meaning that is, first of all conform to the government proposing a heritage site for inclusion on the World Heritage List and secondly this meaning is formulated within the discursive framework on heritage as produced by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. As inclusion to the World Heritage List entails financial and technical assistance, as well as it enhances the attraction of tourism, the proposition of a site for the inclusion on the World Heritage List is an attractive possibility for a developing country to gain more income. Even more so for an ex-colony as their pre-colonial heritage is acknowledged and supported by the international society. However, it is also in this later case that the chances of competing identities often occurs. In search of a national identity, communal identities are revived, some of which find more ground than others. These are all natural developments of cultural identities, and I say natural because both identity and culture are fluid concepts. Identity evolves over time as narratives continue and expressions of culture flow from an experience of identity.

Culture is not always rich and tolerant. Many of the most famous heritage sites could not have come into being without oppression or slavery, and even the stance on slavery is culturally defined. Before being defined as heritage of outstanding universal value, Timbuktu has been conquered and reconquered many times, all leaders leaving their traces by building, destroying, rebuilding and altering parts of the city among which the inscribed mosques. When analysing heritage management one cannot ignore the question whether the preservation of heritage is in conflict with the development of culture.

As has become clear out of the World Heritage Committee's reports on the Timbuktu heritage and the correspondence between the Committee and the Malian government, the conservation projects knew quite some challenges and mostly entailed a lack of proper organisation. Ever since its inscription to the World Heritage List, Timbuktu was confronted with dilemmas on the development of the city's infrastructure, and the maintenance of the site's authenticity. It has furthermore become clear that the reports or correspondences entailed no mentioning of the conflicts in the North up until Ansar Dine occupied Timbuktu, and although the 2012 SOC report mentions the Malian government asking for aid, because of terrorist threatening the heritage. It was UNESCO who urged the Malian government to take action before Mali reached out to UNESCO.

The challenge for UNESCO and the World Heritage List lie in the arguments used for the justification of their existence. The world's most powerful organisation on the level of culture should because of their field of interest be very much aware of the fluid definition of culture, and heritage. If the World Heritage List, in the name of cultural diversity wants to preserve heritage of outstanding universal value, the organisation needs to be careful in determining lived culture as cultural heritage, as well as the organisation should apply some hesitation in defining the heritage as 'world property', especially when it concerns heritage in countries that once were Western countries' property. The difficulty lies in the way that UNESCO and the World Heritage List are dependent on the political agenda of international society.

The extent to which they are able to act from their ideology is dependent on the level to which economically powerful and dominant member states subjectively influence the decision making at UNESCO.

The principles and values on which UNESCO is based and on which UNESCO acts are in essence Western ideas, with which other parts of the world agreed for various reasons. These principles and values have been spread around the world, and perceived in a completely different spatiotemporal context as it was brought upon those who had for generations been exploited, oppressed and discriminated. As we have seen thus far in the case of Mali, becoming a member of UNESCO and inscribing sites to the World Heritage List, does not necessarily entail the government acting upon the same beliefs about human rights and cultural diversity. However, being fully educated in the principles and values UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee identify themselves with creates the opportunity to benefit from them. And as Modibo Kéita so adequately illustrated in his speech, those desperate to liberate themselves, do not care for the intentions of the one providing a helping hand.

This can be said about Mali becoming a member of UNESCO, as well as it applies to the Tamasheq joining Gadhafi's legion, and the rise of Islamism in North Mali. Whatever perspective one takes the narratives evolving around the Timbuktu heritage are sad and although the mausoleums can be revived, this cannot be said for the victims of conflicting identities. Preserving the world's cultural heritage for future generations will not always succeed, and justifying the preservation of heritage sites will probably always entail a certain level of subjectivity. However, striving for a global climate that stimulates the appreciation of diverse cultural expressions can attribute to the dissolving of conflicting cultural identities. The question, however, is whether the preservation materialised cultural expressions attributes to the development of such a global climate. The celebration of historical culture, touches a sense of identity which confirms the dominant discourse on the cultural identity it refers to, as well as it in some cases denies the cultural identity of others. A focus on the exchange of contemporary cultural expressions provides room for a better understanding of the 'Other' in the present moment. Instead of justifying the injustice of the past within the framework of the existing dominant discourse on history worldwide UNESCO should focus on the production of an open discourse, and illuminate the confrontation between the different cultural identities, without choosing a story. This is not possible if we focus on history, mutual understanding is only possible if we focus on the 'Now'.

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