The Organisation of the Illegal Tiger Parts Trade in China



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young adulthood. Thoughts of his courage to walk into yet another chemotherapy treatment have given me immense strength during some of my roughest encounters on my fieldwork journey. The unpleasantness was only a fraction of what he had to face during his battle with brain cancer. By the time I returned from China, he was unconscious. Towards the end of his short but venerable life, he has taught me valuable lessons on life, love and friendship. Many hope for genuine, solid friendship, which Tim has unconditionally given me during his brief time on Earth. For that, I am forever indebted.

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Abstract

The thesis is a study of how Chinese illegal tiger parts trading networks are organized. In particular, this thesis tests in a qualitative manner the causal relationship between three independent variables and the network organizations of these markets. The three independent variables are "ethnicity", "level of enforcement" and "proximity to the source country". The thesis also discusses the dynamics of the illegal transactions of tiger parts products. Legitimate meditators or dispute resolutions mechanisms are lacking in the underworld so the risks, which the parties undertake during trading, are far higher. This thesis explores how illegal transactions are enforced, carried out and honored in this trade. In order to map the organization of the tiger trade, I conducted fieldwork in three trading hubs across China: Lhasa. Kunming and Xining.

I discovered five tiger parts trading networks, three of which specialized in the trading of tiger skins and two in tiger bones. Within these networks, the level of perceived but not the actual level of risk influences the decisions of the actors in the network. Entry into the network is easy when the perceived level of enforcement is low. In these settings, there is no ethnic restriction for entering the network; the supplier is willing to trade with anyone with a trustworthy reputation. On the other hand, accessibility to the network is strictly controlled when actors perceive a high level of enforcement in their operating environment. Under this setting, the organization of the network becomes more exclusive and ethnically homogenous, as shown in the Tibetan tiger skin-trading network in Lhasa and the tiger bone-trading network in Kunming. The proximity of the tiger source country to the re-distribution sites (fieldwork cities) also influences the organization of the networks. When the

level of enforcement is low and the tiger source country is far away from the re-distribution sites, a monetary deposit is required in order to show that the buyer is serious about his/her request, as shown by the tiger skin-trading network in Kunming.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My doctoral thesis aims to study how Chinese illegal tiger trade is organised. My central question is: how do actors exchange goods and receive payments under different levels of police scrutiny, among diverse ethnicities and across various distances between source country and destination market? Ultimately I will explore how trade takes place, and which mechanisms actors employ in the trade to create trust for illegal goods exchange.

In traditional Chinese culture, the tiger represents strength, power and status. Tiger parts play a crucial role in traditional Chinese medicine.[1] They are also used as household decorative items, personal fashion accessories and food in contemporary Chinese society. Although trading tiger parts is illegal, there is high demand for products made with tiger parts. This has created lucrative opportunities for crime groups. Tiger parts are smuggled across Chinese borders from neighbouring tiger source countries, such as Laos, Nepal, Burma and India, to satisfy Chinese demand. This lucrative illegal market raises questions on the network organisation of the illegal tiger parts trade for analysis.

Primary and secondary source data were used to study how illegal tiger trade is organised. In order to map out the organisation of the tiger trade, I conducted fieldwork in three trading hubs across China: Lhasa, Xining and Kunming. In

[1] For an account of the general components of the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicines, see: Maciocia 2004) Leung & Cheng (2003) A historical account of the use of Traditional Chinese medicine can be found in Unschuld, (1998).

addition to primary sources, the study includes data from reports compiled by NGO agencies.

My research questions are as follow:

1. How is the illegal tiger trade organised in these three Chinese cities?
2. How do the three independent variables (ethnicity, provincial enforcement and proximity to source country) affect how networks are organised and levels of trust?
3. How do actors gain access to the illegal networks? How do networks hold together and how and why do actors within the network co-operate and honour transactions?
4. On what basis is trust established and maintained within each network? What motivate actors to stay and co-operate with one another? What are the mechanisms used by the criminals in order to increase the creditability of their agreements?

Thesis Contribution

Existing investigations into illegal trafficking are usually focused on drug organisation (Lewis 1989, Meares 1998, Kenney 1999, 2001, Aronowitz 2001) and human trafficking (Salt 1997, 2000, Schloenhardt 1999). Despite its magnitude and size, the illegal wildlife trade is generally overlooked by academics. This study aims to fill this missing gap and contribute to the theoretical understanding of illegal markets and how transactions are conducted in illegal conditions, as well as adding to broader literature on how trust is established in the underworld, and the mechanims

that allows illegal transactions to be carried out. Since the actors involved in criminal networks cannot resort to the courts to resolve disputes, they might rely on bonds of trust (Gambetta 1988)[2]. On the other hand, illegal actors might develop mechanisms to enforce deals and promises that can reduce as much as possible the need to trust, hence lowering the risk of defection on agreements (Hardin 2005, Williamson 2005).

In particular, my thesis situates illegal transactions in contexts that might affect the mechanisms used to exchange. The contexts I am referring to show variations on three aspects ("variables"): ethnicity, level of enforcement and proximity to source country. Each of these variables are likely to have an effect on how traders are organized and how they accomplish exchanges. Networks operated by homogenous ethnic groups may take the form of a smaller and more dencentralised structure owing to the high level of trust between members. Proximity to source countries reduces the number of links necessary to deliver the goods and a low level of enforcement reduces the need to hide and increases information flow and consquently, facilitates illegal exchanges. In identifying and reconstructing the illegal tiger trade networks and their relationship with these three variables, this study contributes to the understanding of what shapes the structure of criminal networks.

[2] Trust has been defined as, 'a particular level of the subjective probability with which an Agent will perform a particular action' (Gambetta 1988, 217) and that, 'to trust is to believe that results of somebody's intended action will be appropriate from our point of view' (Mistzal 1996, 9) or in essence, the expectation of which an agreement will be carried out. A summary on the literature of trust is provided in the literature review chapter.

The illegal tiger trade in China is motivated by the magnitude and sophistication of the global illegal wildlife trade[3]. Profits from wildlife trade are marginally behind global drugs and weapons trafficking, with an estimated value of over USD 20 billion per annual (Du Bois, 1997). The illegal wildlife trade industry operates on an international level and is related to other illegal markets, such as that of firearms and human trafficking (Lin 2005, 192). It is believed that trafficking groups employ the same methods and forms of transportation to smuggle wildlife commodities (Vince 2002). Therefore, my study will allow for comparison across markets.[4] The severity of the illegal wildlife trade has attracted the attention of governments[5], the Interpol[6], United Nations[7] and numerous non-governmental organisations, yet no in-depth study of its organizational structure has been undertaken. By identifying the organisation of the industry, this study hopes to inform policy in combating illegal tiger trade.

The Illegal Tiger Parts Trade

The tiger is a symbol of strength, dominance and power in the Chinese culture. This belief had undergone a dramatic turn during the Mao era. Mao actively promoted the use of traditional Chinese medicine during the 1950 – 1960s, when the Great Leap

[3]The illegal wildlife crime is defined as, ''crime that involves the illegal trading, smuggling, poaching, capture or collection of endangered species, protected wildlife (including animals or plants that are subject to harvest quotas and regulated by permits), derivatives or products thereof' (Wyatt 2009, 145). See: Wyatt (2009).

[4] Vince's study suggested that organized criminal groups such as the Mafia and drug traffickers were using established smuggling routes for their illegal goods and service to smuggle wildlife. See: Vince (2011).

[5] The Global Tiger Summit held in St Petersburg in November 2010 brought together 13 tiger source countries for policy implementation on the illegal tiger trade, see: Kathy Lally, "World Leaders Meet at Tiger Summit in Russia, Pledge Protection and Co-operation" Washington Post, November 23th 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/23/AR2010112303245.html (accessed April 12nd 2011).

[6]An outline of the aims of the Interpol Environmental Crime committee, see: Wildlife Crime, http://www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/Wildlife/Default.asp (accessed April 12nd 2011).

[7] For the working unit of Environmental Crime operated under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, see: Environmental Crime, https://www.unodc.org/laopdr/en/topics/illicit-trafficking/environmental-crimes.html (accessed April 12nd 2011).

forward took place.[8] Maoist ideology saw China's natural resources as amenable to human exploitation (Shapiro 2001, 86) and vast amounts of Chinese forests and grasslands were deforested for economic growth. Keen to promote the practice of traditional Chinese medicine, Mao ordered a national campaign of tiger poaching in order to supply the market (Mainka & Milss 1995, 194). This attack from the state resulted in the loss of over 3,000 tigers (Jackson & Kemf 1994).

China borders upon the major countries where tigers are sourced: Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and India. The vastness of these borders and the difficulty of monitoring them have created opportunities for organised crime groups to smuggle illegal commodities into China (Moyle 2009). Investigations reveal that wildlife smugglers use well-known smuggling routes to transport tiger products into Tibet, which are then redistributed to other Chinese cities where they are sold.[9]

Any form of tiger part trade is now unlawful in China. All species of tigers[10] are legally protected under the International Convention of International Trade in

[8] The Great Leap Forward was an economic and social campaign, aimed at transforming the country into a modern communist state through the process of industrialization, collectivization and agriculturalisation. For a descriptive historical account see: Fairbank & Goldman (2006).
[9] One of the documented trafficking routes is the Ladakh route between India and Tibet. This route allow India poachers to deliver their skins to buyers in Shiquanhe in western Tibet which is than subsequently distributed to retailers in Lhasa and other parts of China. See: Environmental Investigation Agency (2010, 9).
[10] Species of tigers include the Panthera tigers, also known as the Asian big cats species, which are poached for their skin and bones, see: CITES, http://www.cites.org/eng/res/12/12-05.shtml (accessed December 3rd 2012). The Indian Bengal Tiger resides in Nepal, Burma, Bangladesh and Bhutan. They are also heavily sought after by dealers in the black market and actively poached for their skin and bones for medical use. See: World Wildlife Fund, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/tigers/about_tigers/bengal_tiger/ (accessed December 3rd 2012). The Sumatran tigers are only found in Indonesia. See: Word Wildlife Fund, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/tigers/about_tigers/sumatran_tiger/ (accessed December 3rd 2012). The Indochinese tigers reside in China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia, see: World Wildlife Fund, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/tigers/about_tigers/indo_chinese_tiger/ (accessed December 3rd 2012).

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES),[11] of which China became signatory to in 1981. Requirements for CITES member states are enforced and implemented by regional offices across China managed by China National Management Authority and the State Forestry Bureau (Zhang, Hua and Sun 2008). The State Forestry Bureau is the main regulatory body of wildlife trade; other bodies such as Customs[12], Ministry of Commerce[13], Ministry of Police[14] and Ministry of Industry and Commerce[15] and Ministry of Agriculture[16] are also responsible for regulating wildlife trade. The Chinese constitution [17] and various national legislations[18] contain provisions for the protection of endangered wildlife, including all species of the tigers. The sales of all tiger are prohibited under the 1989 Law of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Protection of Wildlife Legislation (amended in 2004). Under Article 31, Chapter IV of the Act, one will be criminally

[11] CITES is an international agreement among governments, which aims to ensure that the trade of wildlife and plants do not pose threats to their survival. See: CITES, http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.shtml (accessed December 3rd 2012).
[12] Customs is responsible for border control security, for inspecting goods that enters and leaves the designated Chinese borders, and to oversee wildlife smuggling cases.
[13] The Ministry of Commerce is responsible for the registration and management of wildlife and companies that import and export Chinese medicine.
[14] The Ministry of Police is responsible for inspecting and enforcing wildlife trade outside of the custom designated coastal areas.
[15] The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is responsible for the management of domestic wildlife markets, which includes monitoring the selling of livestock and animal parts for medical purposes in the marketplace.
[16] The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the implementation of state laws, regulations and international conventions regarding wildlife trade.
[17]Article 9 of the PRC Constitution held that, ''[a]ll mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land, beaches and other natural resources are owned by the State, that is by the whole people, with the exception of the forest, mountains, grasslands and unreclaimed land and beaches that are owned by collectives in accordance with the law. The State ensures the rational use of natural resources and protects rare animals and plants. Appropriation of damaging natural resources by any organisation of individual by whatever means is prohibited.'
[18] Article 17 and 44 of the Environmental Protection Law are authorities for wildlife protection in the Chinese state. Article 17 held that, '[t]he people government at various level should take measures to protect region representing various types of ecological system, the region with natural distribution of rare and endangered animals and plants, regions where major sources of water are conserved, geological structure of major scientific and cultural values, famous region karstcase and fossils deposits are distributed, glaciers, volcano and hot springs, traces of human history and ancient precious trees. Damage to above shall be strictly forbidden. Article 44 held that, '[w]hoever, in violation of this law, causes damage to natural resources like land, forests, grasslands, water, minerals, fish, wild animals and wild plants shall bear legal liability in accordance with the previous of relevant laws.

liable for illegally catching or killing State protected wildlife animals (which includes all species of the tigers). Under Article 36, sanctions imposed by the Chinese Customs Law will be enforced if a person is found guilty of importing and exporting endangered wildlife. If trade is necessary for scientific research, domestication and breeding, exhibition or other special purpose, approval must be obtained from the relevant department under the State Council. The public security bureau enforces this law at local provincial levels and the People Liberation Army is responsible for enforcing this law at the borders. However, there is a mismatch on the penalties imposed by the law and the actual level of enforcement that takes place. Existing NGO investigations discovered that crimes in trading endangered tiger skins are punishable by a monetary fine and the majority of these crimes are undetected or not enforced by provincial authorities (EIA 2006,2010).

A national ban was enforced in 1993 and the state purged descriptions and usefulness of tiger parts in traditional Chinese medicine educational textbooks to discourage trade (Moyle 2009). In spite of the illegality of trade, there is consistently high demand for tiger parts products in the Chinese community. The tiger bone and penis are key ingredients in the practice of traditional medicine (Flaws 1994, 1998, Tilson & Nyhus 2010). The tiger skin, used as a household decorative item, is heavily sought after by the rich and powerful. Chinese state officials and high ranked military personnel are reportedly regular customers of tiger skins (EIA 2006, 2010).

Given the illegality of the trade, the consequences of enforcement are relatively low. There are isolated cases of arrests and seizures and the risk which actors in the trade face are small. At the top of the supply chain, poachers are responsible for capturing the tiger and processing its body parts for sale. A successful catch can bring a profit

up to thousands of US dollars for the poacher so the incentive to capture tigers in the wild is high. Yet, the enforcement made towards them is low. The consequences they face do not necessarily result in imprisonment but merely an official warning, confiscation of the tiger skin or sometimes, a small monetary fine so it encourages re-offending (TRAFFIC 1999).[19] The skin is then passed on to a driver, whom will deliver the skin to a trader in the city. While progress has been made in closing in on illegal wildlife traders, few have actually been prosecuted (Kumar & Wright 1999, Banks 1999). As the tiger part product moves up the commodity chain, the profit margin increases significantly. The traders who are on top of the supply chain direct the smuggling syndicates and have links to buyers. The level of risk, which the traders face, is also low owing to the relaxed enforcement in the cities they operate in. Generally, the authorities seize the animal products and the trader has to pay a small fine. The buyer bears minimal risks since the tiger parts products will be posted to his/her address by the trader using Chinese National postal services (EIA 2004).

Based on documented investigations and official reports on the trade, the actors I have identified include poachers, traffickers, border control agents, sellers, tailors and clients (see Chapter 3, Table 3.2 for a detailed list).

[19] In 1996, a poacher in possession of tiger teeth and claw was only fined USD 123 in court; he did not receive a jail sentence (Law Enforcement Division, Dept. of Wildlife and National Parks, peninsular Malaysia, *in litt.* to TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, 1999.

The different uses and symbolic meanings of tiger parts are listed in Table 1:

Table 1 – Meaning, Use and Price of Tiger Parts Products[20]

Parts of the Tiger	*Meaning*	*Use*	*Price*
Tiger Skin	Symbol of status and power	Decorative commodities, such as rugs, wall hangings, bed sheets, duvet covers	$11,764-22,058USD
Tiger Bone	Symbol of male virility	Tiger bones are ground into powder to make wine	From $882 – 1176USD/ per kilo
Tiger Teeth	Symbol of good luck and prosperity	Accessories, decorative purpose	From $ 660 USD
Tiger Paw	Symbol of power and strength	Decorative purpose, food	n/a
Tiger Meat	Symbol of wealth and power, believed to enhance male virility	Food	n/a
Tiger Penis	Believed to enhance male virility	Food	n/a

Note: There are counterfeits of all listed tiger parts across the trading hubs.

I chose to visit three Chinese cities: Kunming (Yunnan province), Xining (Qinghai province) and Lhasa (Tibet) for fieldwork between 8/2011 - 1/2012. In each of these trading hubs, I conducted semi-structured interviews with traders and retailers.[21] To

[20] Ibid.
[21] There is a possibility that some traders are reluctant to engage in conversation. An representative from EIA who visited the markets mentioned that some traders were willing to converse and some

comply with the Oxford University's ethical requirements, I disclosed my identity as a researcher. I employed a snowball sampling method. I asked questions about the origins of tiger parts products, how collection is arranged, the payment and delivery of the product to clients across China and ways to manage risk of detections and defections (See interview transcripts in appendix). Over the course of my fieldwork in China, my contacts revealed valuable and relevant information to me.

Several non-governmental organisations provided me with investigation materials, expert knowledge, advice and introductions for data collection. Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) in London has a dedicated team force that travels to China and India to investigate the illegal tiger trade. They provided information, contacts in China and advice on travelling to the three Chinese cities.[22] EIA also collaborated with other environmental NGOs dedicated to tiger conservation based in India[23] and in Asia.[24] TRAFFIC, another organisation dedicated to the monitoring of wildlife trade, has assisted my project to date. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Hong Kong put me in touch with their WWF branch in Beijing responsible for wildlife trade campaigns.

Summary of the Thesis

Below is an outline of the thesis:

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were even quite open about their business (Environmental Investigation Agency Interview, 2011). Moreover, as suggested by Chattoe & Hamill (2005), it is also useful to speak to people not in the network, which can compensate for potential non-responses, though of course the data collected must be treated with caution. Finally, it is also useful and less risky to participants if they drew out their network instead of giving away names and details of trade.

[22] I travelled to China from Hong Kong on a Chinese citizen visa, and this enabled me to travel to Tibet on my own with an independent permit only available to Chinese Nationals. Upon advice from EIA, I also carried my British National Oversea passport at all times.

[23] Wildlife Protection Society of India has collaborated with EIA in several field investigations of the illegal tiger trade in China and India; see Wildlife Prevention Society India, http://www.wpsi-india.org/wpsi/index.php (accessed April 13rd 2011).

[24] TRAFFIC network is another organization that has extensive experience in investigating the illegal tiger trade in Asia; see TRAFFIC, http://www.traffic.org/ (accessed April 13rd 2011).

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the study and presents the research questions this thesis attempts to answer and offers background information on the illegal tiger parts trade in China. This includes the history of the use of tiger part products in China and a summary of the function of each tiger part in traditional Chinese medicine. It also summarizes tiger source countries/Chinese trading hubs and the relevant actors involved in this illegal industry. It outlines how this thesis contributes to the general literature on illegal trade markets and on the illegal wildlife trade.

The second chapter serves as a review of literature on criminal networks, and their connection between level of enforcement, ethnicity and proximity to source country. Issues of trust and risk in illegal transactions and the dynamics and mechamisms of trust employed by actors in the underwork are also considered.

The third chapter serves as a methodology and research design chapter and outlines the methods used to answer the set of research questions, and gives an overview of the three chosen Chinese trading hubs and why they were selected. It also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods and justifies why the chosen techniques are best suited for this thesis. Lastly, it addresses the limitations of the data set and offers suggestions to overcome them.

The next four chapters (fourth to seventh) present the findings from Lhasa, Qinghai and Kunming. With data collected from the field, the chapters reconstruct the tiger parts trading networks in the three cities and offer a discussion of the ways in which

the three independent variables affect the structure of the network and their level of trust within.

The last (eighth) chapter summarises the data obtained from my fieldwork journey. It also provides recommendations and directions for future research in the study of criminal networks.

The next chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Criminal Networks & Trading Illegal Goods: Theoretical Issues

This doctoral thesis is a study of the organizations of illegal tiger parts products trading networks across three fieldwork sites in China. My aim is to understand the structures of the trading networks against three independent variables, the dynamics of illegal transaction in these specific settings and the level and mechanisms of trust (if any) within these networks.

This chapter reviews studies that are theoretically relevant to the understanding of criminal networks, and connections between level of enforcement, ethnicity and proximity to source country, and the mechamisms of trust employed in illegal transactions.

Illegal Transactions: Trust and Risk

When entering any kind of transaction, two (or more) parties undertake a certain degree of risk because it is uncertain whether the other party will carry out the transaction *or* not honour the agreement. The risks include the possibility that one party defects on the agreement, the misrepresentation of the quality of the goods, or the delivery of faulty goods. Parties involved in illegal transactions in the underworld are faced with additional risk factors of defection and betrayal by one of their kind that could lead to arrest and detection by authorities.

One consequence of illegal transactions is that the seller will increase the price of the product and inevitably the increase in price will reduce the demand (Reuter &

Kleiman 1986, Caulkins & Reuter 1998, Weatherburn et al 2000). The 'risk and price' model was developed in the light of the transactions within the illegal drug market. Weatherburn et al (2003) looked at the heroin market in Sydney and other major Australian cities, which the level of heroin experienced a sharp drop during the Christmas period caused in part by tougher law enforcement. Building on the theoretical framework of Reuter & Kleiman (1986) and Caulkins & Reuter (1998), the study found out that those involved in the distribution or supply of an illegal drug market increased the price of their products in the hope of a higher investment return to compensate for the higher level of risk they undertook.[1]

The key distinction bewteen transactions in the over and underworld is that in the former trade and exchange of goods are governened by legitimate mechanisms, for example parties are liable to deliver under contractual agreements enforcable by the courts. If necessary, state insitutions can act as the meditator for dispute resolution bewteen parties and order compensation and damages payable to the dishonoured party. However, these enforcement measures are lacking in the underworld and consequently the risks of defection and arrest are higher.

Yet, in spite of such uncertainties, illegal transactions do happen. Acting in the absence of legitimate dispute resolution and enforcers, actors in the underworld resort to a number of mechanisms to reduce risks in order to increase the level of expectation and the credibility of their agreements (Campana & Varese 2013).

[1] For more see: Weatherburn et al (2003), Reuter *&* Kleiman, (1986*)*, Caulkins & Reuter (1998), Weatherburn, *&* Lind *(*2001*)*, Caulkins (2006).

Mechanisms Fostering Exchange

Trust. Clearly, no state institution is available to enforce illegal deals. How can then actors overcome risk of defection? Trust is one possible candidate. It is defined as expectations regarding other people's actions and intentions. It is the basis for individual risk-taking behavior (Coleman 1990)[2], co-operation (Gambetta 1988)[3], reduction of social complexity (Luhmann 1979)[4] and social order (Misztal 1996).[5] Trust can be understand as the 'correct expectations about the actions of other people that have a bearing on one's own choice of action when that action must be chosen before one can monitor the actions of those others' (Dasgupta 1988,51). Within the context of an agreement to exchange, Campana and Varese (2013) define trust as "the decision by Actor A to transfer resources to Actor B in the expectation that B's action will at a later point in time satisfy the terms of agreement."

Third party enforcement. One of the mechanisms fostering illegal exchanges and reducing the need to trust is third party enforcement (Campana & Varese 2013). In the over world, third party enforcement refers to state institutions which act as enforcers of agreements through legitimate means (Cook, Hardin & Levi 2005, 151 –

[2] Coleman views situations that involve trust as risky because the performance of the other actor will present some degree of risks. He illustrated this point through an example of a merchant banker that received a call from a ship owner in Norway requesting for 200,000 GBP to secure the release of his repaired ship in Amsterdam. The banker transferred the sum of money to Amsterdam and instructed for the release of the ship at once. The risk involved here is that the banker was uncertain whether the call was a genuine request for money from a Norway ship owner and if the money could be repaid to the bank (Coleman 1990, 91-93).
[3] Trust is a mechanism of social cooperation and all the participants must share this belief, 'it is necessary not only to trust others before acting cooperatively but also to believe that one is trust by others' (Gambetta 1989, 216).
[4] Luhmann argues that there are high levels of complexity and information in the modern world so we are faced with overwhelming choices and trust can help analyses and digest information and to reduce the overall social complexity (Luhmann 1979, 46). See also Gamebtta (1989).
[5] According to Misztal (1996), all societies employ ordering principles and rules in order to promote social order, stability, cohesion, and collaboration in our societies. Trust performs a constituent function and reinforces social order.

165). The courts of law can enforce deals and the police can offer protection to those that are exposed to threats and risks of violence. However, a criminal cannot resort to the courts or police if the other party does not honour an agreement. Similarly, claims that involve illegal undertakings do not have any standing in court (von Lampe & Johansen 2004, 159, Lupsha 1986, 33-4, Paoli 2002,84). Therefore, Mafia like organisations provide third party enforcement (Gambetta 1993, Chu 2000, Varese 2001, Hill 2003, Campana 2011). They offer services of protection, dispute resolution in situations where state institutions cannot (Campana & Varese 2013). This doctoral thesis endeavours to examine if the mechanism of third party enforcement applies to the illegal transactions of tiger parts trade.

Hostage taking strategy. During the times of the Ancient Romans, hostages were taken from conquered territories and held in Rome to serve as assurance for post war settlements. Similarly, in the practice of the Neapolitan Camorra, the boss will order all his men to fire shots together when committing a murder therefore every men are made hostages to one another and the incentives for him to defect will be lowered (Campana and Varese 2013).[6]

Middleman. A third mechanism to foster exchange is the use of a *middleman*. Middleman establishes contact between the buyer and the seller, to conduct

[6] A third mechanism to foster exchanges is the *cutting off option*. Organized crime groups employ the cutting off options strategy to make it more difficult for criminals to leave the organization therefore lowering the risk of defection. Members of the Japanese Yakuza cover their bodies with tattoos and images that are known to be associated with the criminal group. Consequently, '[h]aving a 'criminal' on one's body means relinquishing the option of going back to a non-criminal life. That person would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to leave the underworld therefore will be committed to staying in the criminal world as long as he/she can, since no other options are available to him (and those exit options may be extremely costly)' (Campana & Varese 2013, 5). The Yakuza also imposes severe punishments to members who defect the organization by cutting off a section of their last fingers. This explicit form of punishment makes future legitimate employment difficult therefore members are less likely to defect (Campana & Varese 2013, 5).

negotiations and to socialise actors with the illegal norm and rules of exchange; without a middleman, transactions may never take place. The basis of trust between the parties is rested on the middleman (Kawata 2006). From a transactions- cost perspective, economic agents can construct productive relationships without reference to legal contracts (Williamson 1996). In fact, Williamson argues that there is an 'exaggerated emphasis on court ordering (by the institution or state) over private ordering (by the immediate parties and affiliate to transactions)' (1994, 174). Landa's study on the Asian rubber industry reveals that middlemen can act as a bridge between the seller and buyer to uphold agreements and to resolve disputes between the parties (1981). The middleman is arguably more important in the underworld owing to the total absence of legitimate enforcement and dispute settlement. This is highlighted in a study of human trafficking network in the Middle East (Icduygu & Toktas 2003) and in a study of Albanian gangs of their drug trafficking networks (Galeotti 2001). The group of middlemen enjoys a pivotal position in the illegal networks, from facilitating transactions to price setting and dispute settlement therefore increasing the efficiency in illegal transactions.

Reputation. The last mechanism that can aid illegal transactions is the reputation of the actors involved. Dasgupta (1988) conceptualised reputation of trustworthiness as an economic good and demonstrated his argument with the value of reputation of trustworthiness.. In this context, trust is a commodity and can be produced if there is adequate demand. Individuals can choose to invest in a reputation of trustworthiness, which can bring economic advantages in the long run. Reputation is built over time. 'For trust to be developed between individuals they must have repeated encounters, and they must have some memory of previous encounters. Moreover, for honesty to

have potency as a concept, there must be some cost involved in honest behaviour. And finally, trust is linked with reputation and reputation has to be acquired' (Dasgupta 1988, 59).[7] To illustrate his argument, Dasgupta devised a model of salesmen selling motorcars. In this scenario, some of the salesmen are honest, whereas others are dishonest salesmen. Potential customers can choose to enter the salesroom and purchase a car at a fixed price or not enter at all. The salesmen then have to decide whether to sell a reliable car or a faulty car to the customer, and the outcome of the transaction (if any) will increase (or not) the salesman's reputation.

Building a basis of trust on reputation is a common finding in studies of trading networks and organisations (Meyerson et al 1996, Lyon 2000, Dyer & Chu 2000). Reputation can influence a bank's decision on whether to issue a bank loan, as revealed in a study by Ferrary (2003). One bank uses standard commercial statistical analysis to calculate risk, whereas another hired a banker from the same hometown as the borrowers to find out more about their reputation through social networks. The bank that relied on commercial statistical analysis to make its decision on borrowing suffered a greater loss. Trust based on reputation is also evident in other trading networks, such as the Indian diamond trade in which the study concludes that '[r]eputation is bound to honor and without it, within the world of Jain diamond traders, there is no business to be traded' (Westwood 2000,865-866). Bernstein (1992) discovered that the diamond trade is heavily governed by the reputation of dealers and members. Membership with the New York Diamond Dealers' Club equals to a reputation of trustworthiness and honesty whereas smaller, independent

[7] Interestingly, Dasgupta also argues that trust is a commodity, which can be produced if there is adequate demand, thus adapts the example of a motor salesman and the process of generating a positive reputation. See: Dasgupta, (1988).

traders with no memberships are, 'less, well established' (Bernstein 1992, 120). Information about the dealer's reputations is transmitted freely between members. In doing so, reputation of the dealers have actual market value in the industry therefore acts as a deterrent to breach of contract and result in a private sanctioning system against one's reputation if agreements are dishonoured (1992, 157). Therefore, a good reputation is essential in making a good profit.

In conditions of illegality, there is absence of legitimate mechanisms to resolve disputes so personal networks and reputation are relied upon (Beckert & Wehinger 2011, 19). Supplier A may choose to enter into an illegal transaction to supply cannabis to dealer B if A trusts B's reputation as a reliable dealer. This example is found in a study of the drugs market in London, where findings suggested that, despite the supplier having moved away from the neighbourhood, his customers remained the same because of his established reputation (Ruggiero & South 1995, 120). From the supply side, a dealer emphasised the importance of having a strong reputation in order to stay in business: '[p]eople tend to think that it is very easy to get hold of a quantity of stuff and go around selling it. In fact, you must know the right people and be known by them as reliable. You can be using that stuff, all right, but you also have to show that you keep in control and are respected in the scene' (Ruggiero & South 1995, 126).

In my fieldwork, I will explore whether criminal third-party enforcement, hostage taking, middlemen and reputation of the parties are used to foster illegal transactions of tiger part products. I have chosen my field sites in order to ensure that they have different values on their independent variables.

The following section provides a review of the role that the three independent variables play in illegal transactions and their potential impact on the level of trust and risks.

a. Provincial Enforcement

Different levels of provincial enforcement of laws and regulations can have significant impact on the levels of risk in which the criminal network face. When operating in environments of high enforcement, level of trust in the illegal networks may be lower because actors are more prone to suspicion of betrayal and mistrust each other. As such, high levels of mistrust can increase the risk of defection; members may be more willing to sell out information on their group to enforcement authorities in exchange for security and protection. Clearly, levels of risk and detection will also be much higher when operating under increased enforcement level and levels of trust within a criminal network may be lowered. The networks may be more reluctant to trade in order to minimise risk of arrest so the volume of illegal transactions may reduce. Internally, there will be a high level of reluctance to interact and exchange information and knowledge between the members.

The majority of fieldwork research and investigations conducted by NGOs in South East Asia on the illegal markets of tiger trades all found that the level of enforcement was low in the cities of trading hubs (EIA 2009, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2003, TRAFFIC 2010, 2008, 2007, 2000, 1994). As such, this thesis will investigate whether the low level of enforcement affects the organisation of the trading network in the field or

whether some ethnic groups that are under great scrutiny for other reasons may nevertheless perceive that the level of enforcement is higher than it actually is.

b. Ethnicity

In the context of illegal exchange, ethnicity facilitates transactions. Ethnicity is defined as 'the attribute of membership in a group set off by racial, territorial, economic, religious, cultural, aesthetic or linguistic uniqueness' (De Vos and Romanucci- Ross 1982, 3).[8] Ethnic group includes objective and subjective components; distinctive cultural characteristics such as language or religion are the objective elements whereas kinship and sense of community are the subjective elements of an ethnic group (Marger 1985, 5 – 8). It has also been argued that ethnic groups should be defined as independent of cultural features because they are expressed and created by geographical boundaries so cultural features are a result of this creation (Barth 1969).

Ethnicity can act as a mechanism of trust and foster co-operation between members of the same ethnic group. Members of co- ethnic groups are more likely to cooperate and trust each other; this is a form of social trust and is often found in ethnic minority groups and in immigrants' societies (Tyler 2003, 302, Haller 1992, Jacobs 1994). As pointed out by Lo et al (2005), immigrants are at a high risk of discrimination and racial prejudice as illustrated in their study of Chinese Mainlander youth immigrants

[8] Other definitions of ethnicity include, 'a cultural marker that indicates shared traditions, heritage and ancestral origins; ethnicity is defined psychologically and historically' (Orbe & Harris 2001, 7) or 'allegiance to a group – large or small, socially dominate or subordinate – with which one has ancestral links. There is no necessity for a continuation, over generations, of the same socialization or cultural patterns, but some sense of group boundary must persist. This can be sustained by shared objective characteristics (language, religion etc.) or by more subjective contribution to the sense of "groupness" or by some combination of both (Edwards 1979, 10).

to Hong Kong. This could be one possible reason why higher levels of trust and co-operation are found within co ethnic groups.

In theory, higher levels of cooperation are likely to be found between individuals from the same ethnicity since his/her individualistic reputation can be 'guaranteed by the ethnic enclaves monitoring and sanctioning capacity' (Misztal 1996,135, Light 1972, Waldinger 1984, Ward & Jenkins 1984). Ethnic homogeneity is one of the driving forces for countries with high levels of trust and social order (Delhey & Netwon 2004, Fennema & Tillie 1999). The effect of ethnicity in fostering cooperation is deemed to be so powerful that it is compared to the legitimacy of a legal binding contract. '[C]ode of ethnics, embedded in kinship/ethnic networks, function to deter Ego's trading partner from breach of contract and hence may be seen as the functional equivalent of the Law Merchant or modern law of contracts' (Landa 1989, 107 - 108).[9]

Ethnicity also aids collaboration in illegal settings, 'the domination of crime rings or gangs by a single racial or ethnic group indicates the importance of common race and ethnicity as a basis for trust' (Cook 2003, 62). A study on the German cigarette black market revealed that a specific ethnic group dominates different levels within the network, therefore permits a high level of co-operation and efficiency in the overall

[9] Landa (1989) studied a network of Hokkien Chinese middlemen in the marketing of the rubber industry in Singapore and West Malaysia. Her study revealed that ethnic status is a valuable asset because it generates priority rights in the trading network. There is an ethical code of conduct in this market economy embedded in kinship and ethnicity which facilitate business because parties are able to appropriate profit with a high degree of certainty, to reduce out of pocket cost of private protection of contracts and a creation of an efficient forward market in goods and money.

network (von Lampe 2003).[10] Likewise, strong levels of co-operation are found in the heroin market in Netherlands, which is dominated by actors from the same Turkish town, therefore a strong bond of trust is found between them (Bruinsma & Bernasco 2004, 86).[11] In ethnic homogenous settings, risks of defection and betrayal amongst members are likely to be lower.[12]

It is important to note that people can cooperate along ethnic lines for two distinct reasons: if there is a high level of ethnic segregation in a given context, then people cooperate along ethnic lines in several aspects of their daily life, including illegal transaction. If there is no high level of ethnic segregation but high level of police enforcement of the law, people of the same ethnicity, who might not have collaborated together, could form ethnically homogeneous groups in order to minimize arrest. In the former scenario, ethnicity would count as an independent variable; while in the latter ethnic cooperation would be dependent on level of enforcement. This point is elaborated further in chapters 4 - 7.

Although there is little data on ethnicity of those involved in the tiger trade, an EIA report discovered that the traders operating in Linxia (another well documented trading hub) were majority Hui with a minority of Han Chinese traders (2006, 6).

[10] The study on the German cigarettes black market revealed that it is dominated by particular ethnic groups on specified levels. The suppliers are dominantly Polish, dealers are Vietnamese and the majority of the customers are Germans, see: von Lampe & Johansen (2004).
[11] This study do not only examines the role of ethnicity in illegal crime groups but also offers extensive insights to the operation of three distinct criminal markets. See: Bruinsma & Bernasco (2004).
[12] Though it is generally assumed that people will feel a strong sense of attachment and loyalty to their ethnicity group, in theory this can be an inaccurate assumption. Barth argues that ethnicity depends on the individual self-ascription for his/her own ethnicity. '[t]he features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant – some cultural features are used by actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored' (Barth 1969,14). Therefore, the analysis of my fieldwork data has to be exercised with caution since there can/ will be great variation across different ethnicity groups in how strong they identify with their ethnicity. For more see: Barth (1969).

The effects of the varied ethnic circumstances on the operation of the trade were not reported in any existing reports therefore this thesis endeavours to fill this missing gap.

c. Proximity to Source Countries

In the context of this thesis, proximity refers to the distance from the tiger source country to its re-distribution point in the fieldwork cities. The tiger parts products originate from a range of South East Asian countries. The Panthera tigers, also known as the Asian big cats', are mainly found in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia and Bangladesh.[13] The Indian Bengal tiger resides in Nepal, Burma, Bangladesh and Bhutan and the Indochinese tigers are populated in China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia.[14] Given the long Chinese borders that stretch across most of the tiger source countries, the proximity from China to all the tiger source countries can be covered by road.

Existing studies show that proximity facilitates illegal trade markets. The smuggling of heroin from Burma benefits from the short proximity of its redistribution point in China where it subsequently make its way to other parts of Asia, namely: Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Korea (Kurlantzick 2002, McCoy 2000, Chalk 2000, Sturgeon 2004). Likewise, this is similar for the Mercosur countries' illegal tobacco trade, where the short proximity to Brazil allows it to act as a re-distribution point to

[13] For more on the Panthera tigers, see: "Panthera Tigers" http://www.panthera.org/species/tiger and (accessed December 14th2012).

[14] See: World Wildlife Fund, "Indonesia Chinese Tiger" http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/tigers/about_tigers/indo_chinese_tiger/ (accessed December 14th 2012).

Paraguay and Argentina and then to other international markets (Ramos 2009).[15] It has been reported India is a major source of the tiger skins and bone products. The products will travel into Lhasa via Nepal and then re-distributed accordingly (EIA 2009, 2008, 2006, 2004).

In theory, the closer the proximity to the source country, the fewer steps and less complex the process of delivery will be therefore reducing the level of risk and arrest that the actor faces. It is also easier to smuggle products to its destination because of the shorter distance involved. On the other hand, if the products have to travel a longer distance, there will be more human labour involved that can complicate the process and making it more prone to detection. Members involved in the transportation process might not honour their promise and fail to deliver the products to its destination. Given the long distance the products have to travel, the probability of enforcement authorities intercepting the process also becomes higher. This thesis will examine if the situation at field corresponds with the existing theories.

Network Structures

This section provides a summary of the key features of a number of network structures and discusses the ways in which the structure of networks can be affected by the three independent variables.

[15] Ramos has offered an extensive and insightful paper of the Mercosur illegal tobacco trade and offered a body of policy recommendations to the situation. For more see: Romas (2009).

a. Network Models[16]

The analytic tool which this study relies upon is the social network analysis (SNA).[17] The starting point of a SNA is that, 'social life is created primarily and most importantly by relations and the patterns formed by these relations (Marin & Wellman 2011, 11). The uniqueness of the SNA recognizes that that social life is created and formed by social relations that ultimately becomes the building block of the social world. One of the objectives of network studies is to 'analyse[s] the overall relations in an inductive attempt to identify behaviour patterns and the groups or social strata that correlate with those patterns' (Degenne & Forse 1999, 2).

SNA maps the relationships bewteen nodes. Nodes could be individuals, social groups, organisations or countries (Scott 1992). It views nodes and their actions as interdependent rather than independent and their relationship (linkage) can be interpreted as channels for the flow of information and resources (Wasserman & Faust 1994). [18]It focuses on the relationship between the actors/ groups but not on the individual him/herself and in turn gives a precise definition of organization of the network. Moreover, techniques of SNA 'allow for a new leverage for answering standard social and behavorial science research questions by giving formal precise

[16] The definitions of network are as follow, 'a specific set of relations making up an interconnected chain or system for a defined set of entities that forms a structure' (Thompson 2003,54). An alternative definition is, 'any collection of actors (N>2) that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and at the same time lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange' (Podolny & Page 1998, 58-59).

[17] For a comprehensive guide on the use and application of the social network analysis, see Scott (2000), Wasserman & Faust (1999). For selected general introductory reading to social network analysis, see: Degenne & Forse (1999).

[18] The use of social network analysis has been applied to the study of corporate organizations (Zack 2000, Hassan 2009, Useem 1979), online social communities (Ellison & Steinfield 2007, Mislove, M Marcon, KP Gummadi 2007). The social network analysis was to the study of organized crime. Until recently, mainstream studies of crime and criminals were focus on the individual rather than their organization as a social entity, for extensive comprehensions of criminal network see: Morselli (2009).

defintion to aspects of the political, economical and social structual enviroment' (Wasserman & Faust 1994, 3). Studies of social organisational networks allow a deeper understanding of the relationship bewteen the indvidual and his/her social influences and interaction in their environment. As such, studies of social organisational networks is on the increase, building up the pioneer works of Baran (1964) and Burt (1992). The social network analysis technique has been widely applied to the study of legitimate organizations[19] and a wide range of social phenomena and occurrences.[20]

Social network analysis enabled the study of criminal offending by focusing on the social interactions within the criminal groups. The theoretical scope of criminality has already benefited through existing studies on the social network analysis of criminal networks (Bruinsma & Bernasco 2004, von Lampe & Johansen 2004, Kenney 2007, Lesson & Roger 2009, Morselli 2009, Varese 2013).

[19] For the application of the social network analysis to legitimate organizations see, NR Hassan (2009), A BarNir (2002), M Useem (1979).
[20] The use of social network analysis has been applied to the study how HIV virus spreads on street level drugs markets, see: Curtis et al (1995), SNA applied in ceremonial gift exchange networks, see: Ziegler (2008). Application of SNA to examine the level of power and social networks see: Simpson et al (2011). Application to single friends communities, see: Bellotti (2008).

Figure 2.1: Baran's Three Network Structures



Source: Baran (1964)[21]

Network Model (A): Centralised Network

In a centralised network, there is a single central node in the centre, which oversees the operation of the network. This node acts as a multi task unit, responsible for management of risk, arrangement of transaction, flow of information and resolving disputes between all nodes (Griffin & Moorhead 2007). This type of network is particularly vulnerable, as the removal of the central node will dismantle the whole network (Baran 1964).[22] Assuming that the central node passes on information, the transmission of information in a centralised network can be an efficient one. However, the central node has the discretion on how much information he/she chooses to pass on other nodes in the network (Borkowski 2011). A centralised

[21] Baran was part of a pioneering team that developed computer communication networks, which served as an essential part of the Internet, see: Baran (1964).
[22] This point is a controversial one; see Sparrow (1991), Peterson (1994), Carley et al (2001), Campana & Varese (2011).

network is hierarchal in the sense that all the nodes in the network operates under the authority and command of the central node and are subordinate to it (Galloway 1974). The chain of command travels from the centre to outskirts of the network. An illustration of a centralized network is found in network of taxi drivers, who report to and act on order from the dispatcher (the central node) but not to other drivers (Sims 2002).

The Ciel network, a liquid hashish network based in Quebec, Canada resembles this form of organisation structure. A small number of central nodes tightly control the Ciel network (Morselli 2008, 55). N1 acts as the leader of the Ciel Network and delegate tasks to N2 that then assign to N11, a reputed drug trafficker in the industry and N11 subsequently delegates order and tasks to the other node at the lower hierarchy of the network and to deal with the drug mules (Morselli 2008, 57).

Given the high levels of risk of arrest the central node faces, this network structure may be used if levels of enforcements are low in the operating environment. Alternatively, this type of network is likely to emerge when a single supplier controls the supply of the illegal products and he/she has the authority to determine whom he/she wishes to supply to. The central node is the key player in this arrangement. None of the nodes are connected to one another, which suggest that information is not shared in the network, but controlled by the central node only. The only interaction is between the central node and the individual nodes. It is also possible that some nodes are not even aware of the existence of other nodes in this configuration. Given the low levels of enforcement in the tiger trading hubs reported in existing NGO reports, this thesis anticipate that some of the tiger parts trading networks are arranged under a centralised network (EIA 2009, 2006).

Network Model (B) : Decentralized (Hub) Network

The decentralized network in figure B is a multiplication of many centralized networks; 'regional' hubs with their own dependent nodes are connected to other hubs in the network thus there is no single central node that overlooks and exerts commands (Galloway 1974).

As pointed out by Kenney (2007), part of the Colombia drug trafficking is organized in a hub network. The core groups of the Colombia drug trafficking ring enjoy 'preponderance of power and influence' within the network (Kenney 2007, 243). The core groups consist of veteran traffickers with established contacts and knowledge to coordinate transactions and delivery of the shipments. Prone to risk of arrests, the core groups in the Colombia drug ring control risk management in expense of profit and business opportunities (Kenney 2007, 243).

For instance, the central node in each of the regional hubs may control the flow of information. The central node is responsible for his/her own unit and plays an authoritative role. Each hub may specialise in a certain aspect of production and the central node brings the resource together. Alike to the network in figure A, individual nodes only interact with the central node. Given that there is no one single central node, which overlooks the entire network, a high degree of trust is likely to be find between the central nodes of each regional hub.

This arrangement may emerge if there is a high level of trust between the central nodes of each hub or if levels of enforcements are low. It is not ideal to operate and trade in one or multiple centralised network when levels of enforcements are high

since the arrest of the central node can dismantle the network. Therefore, a criminal network is likely to be de-centralised when there are high levels of enforcement and seizures (Morselli 2009).

Network Model (C): Distributed (Flat) Network

In a distributed network, there is no central node. Clearly, not all illegal networks are concern with the transmission of information, some are about making democratic decision and others driven trading illegal commodities. Yet, if the network is concerned with transmission of information, such transmission does not necessarily follow the determined paths and can take place in all directions. A distributed network encourages free flow of communication across the network yet at the same time; it may not be the most effective channel of communication because information has to pass to one end of the network to another or to reach every node in the network (Baran 1964).

In the context of organized crime, the Caribbean pirates are organized in a flat organization (Lesson & Rogers 2009).[23] The flat organization allows pirate to make democratic decisions and the crew can remove their captain or quartermaster from power under election. The flat organization is a high trust environment, personal relation and trust tends to develop between interacting with nodes over a long period of time. Each node is highly independent and disciplined in achieving his/her roles

[23] There are greater incentives for criminals to organize themselves in a flat organization if the industry is less contestable. In their study of the Caribbean pirates, identified to be an incontestable industry with natural high barriers to entry, the pirates have little incentive to organize themselves in hierarchal structure. For more on the operation of the pirates see: Lesson & Rogers (2007, 2009).

since tasks are not delegated by a central node. Nonetheless, the lack of a central co-coordinator makes the network more vulnerable to disputes and conflicts between members (Kenney 2001).

Given the high level of independence granted, this network is most likely to emerge when there is a high level of personal trust and confidence that each member will fulfil his/her roles. Ethnic homogenous groups, which enjoy high level of personal trust, may choose to operate under this arrangement. The risk of defection and betrayal is also likely to be lowered because trust is prominent under such settings.

Conclusion

This thesis endeavours to explore if existing theories reflect the reality in the field. In theory, all three independent variables can affect the organisation and the level of trust and risk within a criminal network. A centralised network structure is likely to emerge if there is only a single supplier and levels of enforcement are low. A decentralised network may materialise if trust is prominent between the central nodes of each regional hub in settings of low levels of enforcement. An ethnic homogenous trading group that enjoys a high level of personal trust may choose to operate under a flat network.

On the one hand, criminals may be reluctant to carry out transactions if level of enforcement is high and consequently, mechanisms of trust are likely to be employed in order to facilitate cooperation. On the other hand, trading networks may be loosely regulated if enforcements are low and the network is operated by members of the

same ethnic circumstances. Under this setting, the risk of defection is also likely to be lower. Ethnicity aids collaboration in illegal settings and higher level of trust is expected between members of the same ethnicity. Lastly, proximity to the source country can influence the size and complexity of the network. Less labour is likely to be involved if the distance the products have to travel is small therefore lowering the risk in the process of delivery.

In light of these debates, this thesis endeavours to understand if the existing theories outlined approximate the reality in the field.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and the methods used for answering my research questions. Different methods of data collection are examined, focusing on the reasons for choosing a particular method over others. This is followed by a discussion of the Chinese cities chosen for fieldwork purposes and the practicalities of how the data collection was conducted during the period in the field. Lastly, I review the chosen approaches for data analysis and potential limitations of the data set.

Research Questions

Using the fieldwork data collected across trading hubs in three different Chinese cities, this study aims to re-construct the structure of the Chinese illegal tiger trade and the ways in which its organisation can be affected by three independent variables: (1) the city's ethnic make up, (2) proximity to the tiger source country and, (3) level of provincial enforcement. Moreover, this study also endeavours to understand the process by which the relevant actors gain access to these criminal markets and how they trust each other within their own illegal criminal networks.

Some of the questions which this study is designed to answer include: how are illegal networks constructed and maintained; how do actors gain access to the networks; why do they trust each other; how do they maintain trust and enforce deals within the networks; how do actors resolve conflict and disputes; to what extent are networks dominated by a single ethnicity?

Methodology

Primary Sources

This study of the organisation of illegal tiger trade network is based on primary and secondary source data.

The primary source of my project are qualitative interviews with individuals directly involved in the tiger trade and the general local population in the three trading hubs: (1) Kunming, Yunnan (2) Xining, Qinghai and (3) Lhasa,Tibet.

Though relevant non-governmental organisations have conducted investigations in the cities I have visited, research into the network organisation of the Chinese illegal tiger trade is a never attempted project so there is little existing data available to draw on. The illegal tiger trade has been reported to be active in Yunnan province, Qinghai province, and Gansu province in Mainland China (figure 3.1) In Tibet, Lhasa, Shigatse and Nagqu are the main trading hubs (figure 3.2).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, all forms of tiger part trade is unlawful in China under the International Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the 1989 Law on the Protection of Wildlife (amended in 2004). These apply to all three fieldwork sites. Apart from Xining, there are official statistics on reported seizures and arrests made in Yunnan and Tibet. Yet, enforcement is loose so there are only small numbers of isolated cases recorded.

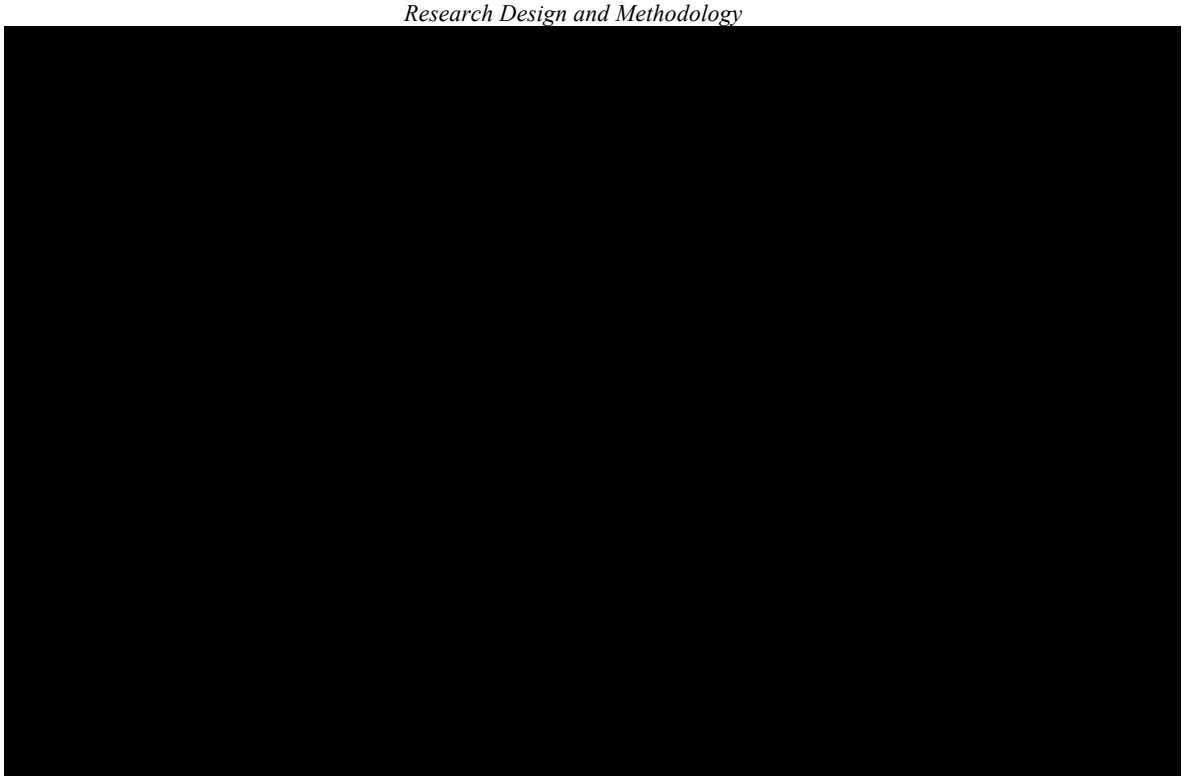


Figure 3.1- Map of China
Source: Lonely Planet, Map of China: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/asia/china/ (accessed July 12nd 2012)



Figure 3.2 – Map of Tibet
Sources: Lonely Planet: Map of Tibet, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/asia/tibet/ (accessed July 10th 2012).

1. Kunming, Yunnan Province

Yunnan, situated in the far southwest of China, borders with Laos to the south, Burma to the west, Tibet to the northwest and Vietnam to the southeast. The capital of Yunnan province is Kunming city. Though Yunnan is famous for its ethnic diversity, Han Chinese dominates the capital. The population of ethnic minorities accounts for less than 12% of Kunming's population.[1] Ethnic minorities groups such as Miao and Dai groups reside in the rural areas. The Chinese Tourism board has actively promoted Yunnan as a top tourist attraction. Attractions such as the Shangri La tour have attracted tourists from all over the world, which in turn created business opportunities for organized crime groups targeting tourists.

Moreover, Kunming and Ruili are the entry points for heroin from Burma into China and consequently the capital has gained its reputation for being a famous weekend party town amongst the young Chinese generation.[2]

[1] See Xing (2007) for a discussion on relationship between Han and ethnic minorities in Kunming. There are a small number of Yi, Hui, Lisus residing within Kunming city. See: Kunming Ethnicity Minorities and Customs, http://www.yunnanadventure.com/YunnanGuide/Kunming-Ethnic-Minorities-and-Customs.html (accessed May 14th 2012).

[2] See Heroin Spreads Amongst Young in China, http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/21/world/heroin-spreads-among-young-in-china.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm (accessed May 14th 2012), Women of Myanmar Arrested for Suspected Drug Trafficking in Yunnan, http://en.kunming.cn/index/content/2011-12/27/content_2791919.htm (accessed May 14th 2012) and Chin (2009).

The map formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 3.3 - Map of Yunnan Province
Sources: Yunnan Map, http://www.yunnanadventure.com/YunnanOverview/Yunnan-Maps.html (accessed July 10th 2012).

Unlike other trading hubs, there is an open level of reported seizures and detection of illegal tiger parts products by official authorities in Yunnan province. In 1999, the Anti Smuggling Bureau of the Chinese Customs seized 16 tiger skins in Ruili and Kunming city. In 2001, the State Forest Administration discovered a stockpile of 23 tiger skins on a delivery truck leaving for Dalai. In 2008, tiger bones were seized in Xishuangbanna, just outside Kunming city, the products were believed to be originated from Burma.

Findings from NGO reports also revealed that there were small amounts of Chinese traditional medicine retailers offering tiger parts for sale (Environment Investigation Agency 2000). The traders were fully aware of the illegality of the trade (Moyle

2009). Owing to its rapid growing tourist industry and its geographical location next to the three main tiger source countries, there are strong reasons to believe that the tiger trade is still active in the Yunnan province.

I visited Kunming twice, in August and December 2011. During my first trip, I visited Ruili,[3] a small Chinese town located next to the Burmese town of Muse. Given that a vast amount of heroin is smuggled from Burma into Kunming, I hoped to discover if tiger products also enter the country in the same manner. I interviewed a number of taxi drivers and local residents during my stay in order to obtain a better understanding of the different forms of illegal trade that take place between the two countries. All of the interviewees were familiar with the illegal activities of their hometown and were willing to share their experiences with me.

In Kunming, I spent a vast amount of time interviewing individuals from Chinese medicine shops and markets since the tiger bone is a key ingredient in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine. Jinmabiji and Nanping Square are the two central areas in Kunming. Within these two main areas, there are up to a dozen of Chinese medicine retail stores, some of which are national chain and some are small private business. Ju Hau Chun village (also known as Chrysanthemum Village) is one of the state recognized Chinese medicine wholesale markets, and it is a 40-minute bus ride away from the city centre.[4] I also conducted interviews in the retail markets where I spoke to sellers, buyers and enforcement actors. As for the search for tiger skins, traders were spotted in town wheeling trolleys of animal skins for sale. They

[3] The reason for visiting Ruili is owing to repeated reports of tiger skin seizure in this area from Burma, for report for seizure, see: TRAFFIC (2007).
[4] For an recent article on the price inflation in the Chrysanthemum Village see, China's Price Inflation, Continue: Caterpillar Fungus, The New Gold, http://www.economist.com/node/17525802 (accessed May 14th 2012)

eventually led me to their operating store (located in a busy part of Nanping Square) where I met and interviewed the shop owner.

I also visited and conducted interviews in Kunming's nightlife district, Kunde area, where heroin is widely available. [5] The Kunde area is made up of approximately 10 nightclubs with numerous 24 hour Internet cafés, gaming arcades, nail salons and a range of small clothing shops. It is located within a ten-minute bus ride of the city centre. Kunde is branded to be one of the 4 upcoming nightlife hubs in China and is highly recommended by young Chinese bloggers on the Internet.[6] I visited the Kunde night market on a frequent basis during my time in Kunming. The area is heavily populated with youngsters every day of the week. A new, trendy nightclub (called Muse) opened during my absence in September 2011. By the time I returned in December, I saw and was told that there were more nightclubs under construction to be opened by January 2012 (in time for Chinese New Year). I have spoken to security bouncers, bartenders, customers and shops owners in the Kunde area. Their responses provided insightful data regarding the city by night, as well as information concerning the illegal heroin trade.

[5] The piece of information in which heroin and possibly, ice are available in Kunde night market was repeatedly given to me by my interviewees which were taxi drivers, workers in hotel and young girls that works in nail salon/massage parlors. Kunde Night Market, http://overview.kunming.cn/index/content/2009-08/04/content_1936945.htm (accessed May 14th 2012).

[6] See: 中国四大夜场之昆都夜市 (Kunde Market: China's Rising Night Market) http://www.jjxww.com/html/show.aspx?cid=117&id=211399 (accessed May 14th 2012) and for popular reviews of nightclubs in the area, see 昆明昆都夜市的另一种夜生活：新兰花歌剧城 (Another Kind of Night Life in Kunming) http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4be5cb48010097pg.html (accessed May 14th 2012).

During my stay in Kunming, I also interviewed young girls working in massage salon, beauty parlours and small clothing retail shops.[7] Not only did this group of interviewees enriched my understanding of the city but they later revealed to me that they have friends, family and partners who are directly involved in the Kunming's drug trade. Their responses have been most helpful in building my understanding of the city.

2. Xining, Qinghai

Qinghai province, situated at the northeast from Gansu, northwest from Xinjiang, southeast from Sichuan and Tibet from the southwest (see figure 3.4 for a map of Qinghai). Xining is the capital city of Qinghai.

The map formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 3.4 – Map of Qinghai province
Sources: Qinghai, http://www.cfguide.com/prov/prov_qinghai.htm (accessed July 10th 2012).

[7] The age range of the girls in which I befriended is from 19 – 23; most of them are local Yunanese with a few exceptions of migrant workers. They have begun working after they left high school (apart from one which opened her own nail beauty parlour at the basement of a shopping mail).

An NGO investigation in 2009[8] discovered that there was active and open tiger parts product trade in Xining and tiger skins rugs were openly displayed in shops. In comparison to Kunming, the general level of suspicion in the trade was lower in Xining. Shops openly displayed illegal wildlife products (such as that of otter and snow leopard skins) and retailers have revealed their ability to access tiger bone products. The same investigation discovered that there were at least three active markets in the centre of town, all of which were easily accessible and frequented by locals and tourists. The ethnicities of the traders in these markets consisted of Hui and Han Chinese.[9] This diversity provides a good setting in examining the relationship between ethnicity and trust. Unlike Tibet and Yunnan, Xining is not located next to any tiger source countries and this distinction may be reflected by the organization of the trade. There are no official records on the number of seizures in Xining or Qinghai province.

Upon my arrival, I discovered that Xining was a town filled with traditional Chinese medicine shops and they were generally catering for tourists.[10] Given that Qinghai province used to be part of Tibet before the liberation in 1951[11], remains of Buddhist monasteries were commonly seen around town. The division of Hui and Han Chinese is evident from the clear separation of residential quarters, restaurants and super markets. However, I saw no signs of violence between the two ethnic groups during

[8] Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).
[9] Ibid, 6.
[10] I have counted the number of traditional Chinese medicines shops on Wusi Street, one of the main roads in Xining. On average, there were 4 traditional Chinese medicine shops from every ten shops. There was also a block where it was filled entirely with traditional Chinese medicine shops.
[11] Qinghai province has a rich history and important position in the ancient Silk Route trade. Most parts of Qinghai form the traditional Tibetan province of Amdo, which were under Tibetan administration up until the late 1960s. Golmud and Xining are the two other main cities in this region and other tiny villages and towns are scattered along Tibetan Plateau in which the Qinghai- Tibet railway runs. Nonetheless, following the liberation agreement between Tibet and China in 1951, all of Qinghai province and Tibet are incorporated into the China state. For an extensive historical summary on this period, see: Grunfield (1996), Smith (2009) and Norbu (2001).

my stay in Xining and to a large extent, the town felt like a peaceful transit point for travel into Tibet.

During my time in Xining, I visited and interviewed owners, sellers, and buyers from traditional Chinese medicine shops. Most of the shops I visited were located on the main roads of town (namely, Wusi street, Binhe road and United road). I also visited two market sites (namely, Shui Jing Alley, and Chi Jang Alley) travelled to Ta'er monastery and an outdoor tourist market 3 hours away from the city centre.

3. Lhasa, Tibet[12]

Lhasa, situated next to Qinghai province, 24 hours by train from Xining city. It borders Nepal and Bhutan, both of which are tiger sources countries (see figure 5 for map of Tibet).



Figure 3.5 – Map of Tibet Sources: Lonely Planet: Map of Tibet, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/asia/tibet/ (accessed July 10th 2012).

I chose Lhasa as a fieldwork city due to its deep cultural significance and the documented usage of the tiger skin within Tibetan communities. In the past, Tibetans

[12] Tibet is one of the five autonomous regions in China. The Tibetans have their own government yet the Tibetan government is led by a Chairman which sits as a branch secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, thus it is questionable the level of autonomy Tibetans enjoys. Following the liberation agreement in 1951, the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and the Tibetan communities is an unstable one, repeated incident of riots motivated by desire of religious freedom and regional autonomy from Mainland China has occurred regularly in the past decades. Thus Tibet, especially Lhasa that is frequently visited by tourists, is heavily stationed by Chinese army troops. Unlike Mainland China, the majority of the Tibetan population do not belong to the mainstream Han ethnicity. The regional population is 93% dominated by the native Tibetan people and followed by ethnicity groups such as, Han Chinese, Hui, Menpa, Luopa, Sherpa, Deng and a small population of Nepali, Lama and Tamang people. See: Potter (2010).

decorated their dress (also known as chupas) with tiger skins as symbols of good luck and prosperity. This special dress was worn publicly in large festivals (for example, the Tibetan horse festival) [13] In contemporary Tibet, the tiger skin is still perceived as a form of high fashion (Beer 2003).

In general, all investigations led by NGOs and relevant enforcement agencies have repeatedly pointed to the existence of an active tiger trade in Lhasa and other regions of Tibet. Tibet is well known for its endangered wildlife skin trade. The largest seizure of tiger skins to date was made in Sangsang, Tibet in October 2003 and Chinese authorities seized 31 tiger and 581 leopard skins. Three Tibetans were arrested. In 2009, an investigation led by a NGO discovered a number of open and accessibly tiger skin trading markets in Lhasa. Three full tiger skins and a number of incomplete tiger bone skeletons were recorded. There are no official records of other tiger parts product seizures apart from the incident in 2003.

The second reason for choosing Lhasa as a fieldwork site is owing to the diverse ethnic background of the city. NGO reports have revealed that although local Tibetans dominated the tiger parts trade, there was also a small group of Han, Monpa and Hui traders involved in the industry.[14] This diversity served as a good entry point for an examination of the role of ethnicity and trust in criminal networks.

Before and during my stay in Lhasa, I was repeatedly advised to visit the Barkhor Square for tiger parts products; it appeared that the square was not just famous for

[13] Various horse festivals are held across Tibet every year, the Litang horse festival is held in the first week of August, the Nagqu horse festival is held in mid August every year. Horse festivals last up to 10 days, the history of the horse festival originated from ancient Tibetan military traditions.
[14] Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).

souvenirs. There were very few traditional Chinese medicine shops in Lhasa thus the focus on my fieldwork was on Barkhor Square. I also travelled and conducted interviews in other Tibetan towns along the Sino-Nepal highway (also known as the Friendship Highway that runs from Shanghai to Zhangmu). My final destination was the Tibet-Nepal border town, Zhangmu. From there I hoped to cross into Nepal from and travel to Kathmandu to conduct more fieldwork, as this is a well-documented trafficking route. I hoped to conduct fieldwork in Kathmandu because it is famous globally for its illegal animal skin markets, with most of the wildlife products coming from India and Afghanistan.[15]

My original plan was to enter Nepal from Tibet so I could conduct interviews on both sides of the border. In order to enter Nepal, I needed a tourist visa (which I had successfully obtained from the Consulate in Hong Kong) and an entry permit (which I had to obtain through a Mainland Chinese licensed tour agency). Upon payment for my entry permit (around 70 GBP), the agency in Lhasa failed to arrange the documents and refused to offer a refund or compensation. Negotiations for compensation with the agency went on for 3 days. At one point, they refused to return my China entry permit card, and I had no choice but to contact both the British embassy and the Hong Kong citizen office in Beijing for advice. Though representatives from both offices were extremely helpful and even contacted the tour agency on my behalf, the situation was not resolved. In the end, I went to the Lhasa police headquarters and fortunately the provincial chief officer attended to my

[15] For more, see: "Lhasa Customs Thwarts Drug Smugglers" People's Daily, November 8th 2011, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90882/7638748.html (last accessed July 31st 2011), "Tibetans Smuggling Yarsha" The Himalayan Times, July 16 2011 http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Tibetans+smuggling+yarsha&NewsID=295782 (last accessed July 31st 2011) and "Tibetans Held for Smuggling Wild Animal Body Parts" The Tibetan Sun, November 28 2011 http://www.tibetsun.com/archive/2011/11/28/tibetan-held-for-smuggling-wild-animals-body-parts/ (last accessed July 31st 2011).

queries. He sent a Tibetan policeman who accompanied me to the tour agency, all my documentations were returned to me that evening and I was even offered a small compensation. The Tibetan policeman gave me his personal contact number and told me that I was welcome to contact him anytime during my stay if necessary. We chatted as he drove me back to the city centre in his police car. Without his help, I am certain the negotiations would not have been resolved in such a peaceful way.

Although my attempt to enter Nepal was unsuccessful, my journey along the Sino – Nepal highway yielded insightful data for my research. During my journey, I visited and stayed at small – medium sized Tibetan towns and interviewed lorry drivers and rice/fur traders. Moreover, I conducted interviews with local villagers, tourists and businessmen. In addition, I experienced first hand the effectiveness of highway security throughout my journey.



Photo 3.1: A Sign of the 318 Highway at one of the mid points
(Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

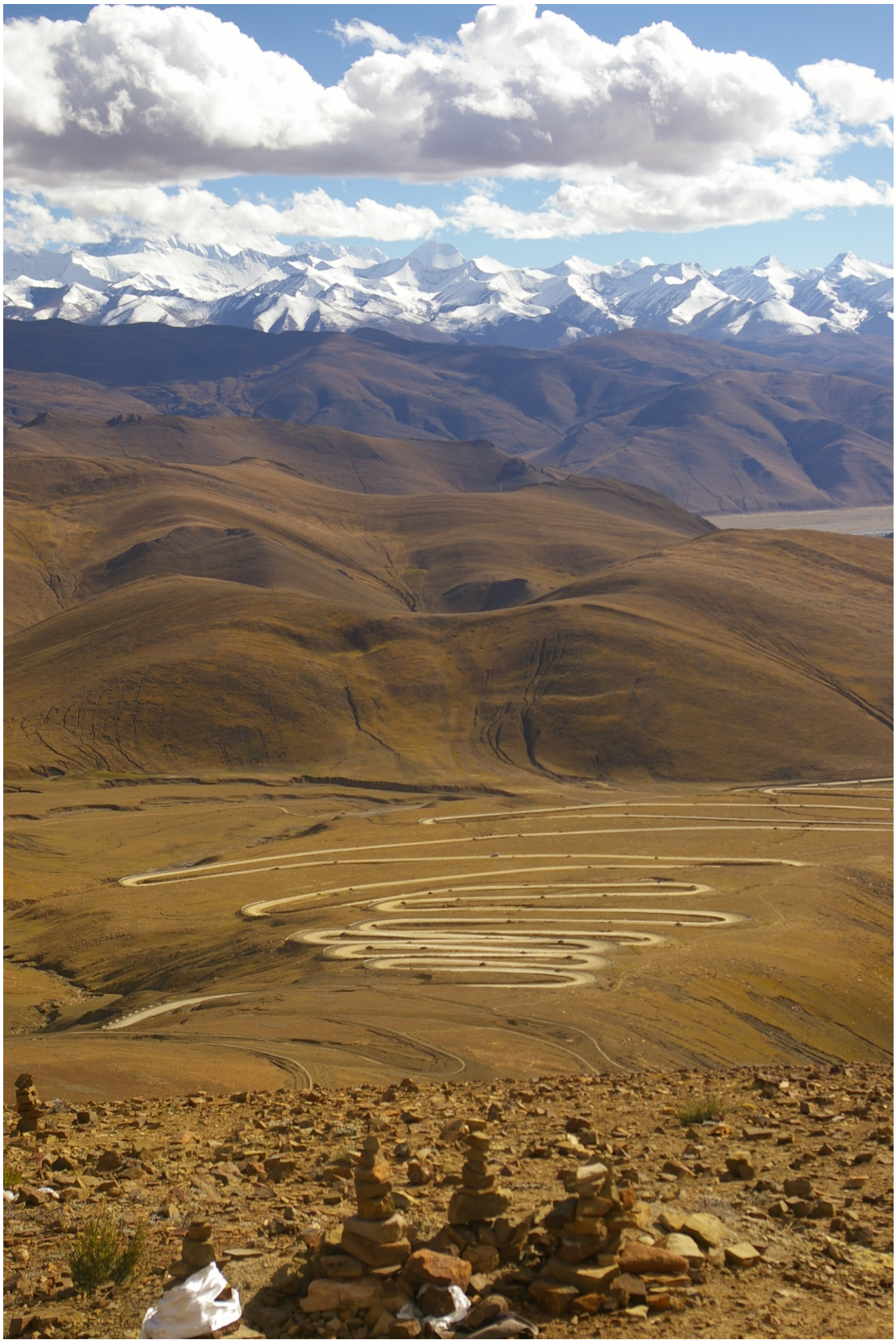


Photo 3.2: Along the 318 highway, the curvy highway road at the background is towards the direction of Nepal. The snowy mountains are the Himalayas range.
(Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

A summary of the variations between the three hubs is presented in Table 1.

Table 3.1 - Independent Variables in Fieldwork Sites

	Ethnic Composition	*Level of Provincial Enforcement*	*Proximity to Source Country*
Kunming, Yunnan province	One major ethnic group (Han Chinese), with ethnic minorities residing in rural areas of Yunnan	High	Yes (Burma)
Xining, Qinghai province	Two dominating ethnic groups (Hui and Han Chinese)	Low	No
Lhasa, Tibet	At least three dominating ethnic groups (Tibetans, Han Chinese, Hui, Monpa)	High	Yes (India, Nepal)

Interviewees

Owing to the sensitivity of the topic, there is a general lack of detailed information. The actors I have identified on the basis of documented investigations and official reports in this trade include poachers, traffickers, border control agents, traders (sellers), tailors and clients. This is summarised in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Actors Involved in the Chinese Illegal Tiger Parts Trade[16]

Type of Actors	*Role of the Actors*	*Location*
Poacher	To capture the tigers in tiger source countries. Studies have pointed out that they sell the products after catch and have no further involvement down the supply chain.[17]	Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Burma.
Trafficker	To deliver the dead tiger to traders in Tibet/China. Studies have showed that the traffickers smuggle the commodities using well-known trafficking routes, which are also used for human smuggling. [18]	Nepal, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Burma.
Border Control	To enforce law at borders. Chinese and Nepalese border guards accept bribes so that commodities are delivered safely across the borders. [19]	Chinese borders, Nepal
Trader (Seller)	To sell the commodities. The traders have stalls in open markets. Many are aware of the illegality of their business.	Lhasa, Nagqu, Shigatse (Tibet) Qinghai, Yunnan, Gansu, Xi'an (China) (Including traditional Chinese medicine retailer shops)
Tailor	To make traditional Tibetan dress (also known as chupas) using tiger skins.	Shigatse (Tibet)
Client	To purchase tiger parts products. Many clients are respectable and wealthy individuals within China.[20]	Heibei, Shanghai and Guangzhou (China) Inner Mongolia, Mongolia, Malaysia

[16] The source of information about the actors and their location of trade are found in the following investigative reports: Environmental Investigation Agency (2009, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2003) and TRAFFIC (2010, 2008, 2007, 2000, 1994).
[17] Moyle (2009).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Environmental Investigation Agency (2009)
[20] Ibid.

Sampling

I have categorised my interview sample into three groups. Group A: actors that are either indirectly or directly involved in the tiger parts trade such as shop/stall owners, employees. Group B: enforcement personnel (border control, enforcement) and lastly Group C: local population (taxi drivers, bus drivers, restaurant owners, local guides etc.)

Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting most of the interviewees against pre-selected criteria. The criteria for selecting interviewees under Group A and B were as follow: if he/she was directly (a trader, supplier, buyer etc.) or indirectly (knowledge of, family members, friends etc.) involved in the illegal tiger trade. If he/she was an enforcement personnel, police, army in the city/along the borders. One of the obvious advantages of using purposive sampling was that I was able to collect relevant and specific responses to my research questions, although this runs the risk of exposing the sample to researcher's bias and limited generalizability.

However, as stated in previous chapters, the data collected in this study do not claim to be representative of the *entire* illegal tiger trade industry in China. The data aims to re- construct the network and more importantly, to understand how the three independent variables can affect the organisation of the networks. In addition, it is not feasible to map out the entire network owing to time and limited resources. I have supplemented interviews with selected newspaper articles and government reports.

On the other hand, I used a 'by chance encounter' sampling technique (non random sampling) to select interviewees under Group C. Responses from Group C have

helped me to developa better understanding of the cities.[21] The advantage of a 'by chance encounter' sampling is that it is less time consuming to conduct. Most of the interviewees revealed detailed and insightful responses overtime. On the other hand, the disadvantage is that it may not be an accurate representation of the whole population.[22]

The difficulties and challenges of any type of fieldwork research are limitless and this is especially evident in the studies of organised crime. Though the recording of interviews with a tape recorder is the standard practice for most researchers, I did not wish to be seen with a tape recorder, which may affect my interviewees and the level of information he/she is willing to reveal. This is a problem also faced by Hamill (2011,11) and Varese (1996,13) in their studies of criminal organisation, which they discovered that recording interviews has made the interviewees uncomfortable and led to vague responses. This is an issue I wished to avoid therefore I relied on memory and wrote up the responses at the end of each interview.

My data collection method also raises questions of validity and reliability. It is impossible to know for certain the extent of truth in each interview account. This was also a problem encountered in Chin's study of the drug trade in the Golden Triangle where he also felt that some of his interviewees was dishonest and had little trust in him thus affecting the validity and reliability of his data (Chin 2007). In order to overcome this issue, I have validated my fieldwork data using a combination of data sources via the technique of triangulation. I have combined fieldwork data with

[21] For example, overtime I discovered that there is a specific group of young girls working in massage parlour and nail beauty salons that are directly or has extensive knowledge of the drug trade in Kunming.
[22] For example, in order to get a good understanding of the level of disputes between the mainstream Han and other ethnic minority, I've interviewed participants from both ethnic groups to avoid collecting an one sided point of view.

participant observations, newspaper articles from provincial, national newspapers, NGO investigation reports and court cases in order to narrate the story analytically and with the highest level of accuracy.[23]

Table 3.3 describes the range of actors I interviewed:

Table 3.3: Range of Actors Interviewed

	Kunming, Yunnan	*Xining, Qinghai*	*Lhasa, Tibet*	*Row Total*
Tiger Skin, Bone Suppliers Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop Owners Employees of Suppliers, Traditional Chinese Medicine Shops (Group A)	• Owner of leather shop which also supplies tiger skin • Owners of traditional Chinese medicine shops • Employees pushing skin trolleys around Kunming city • Employees of Chinese medicine shops (N= 18, Male = 14, Female = 4)	• Owner of traditional Chinese medicine shops which sells tiger bones openly • Owner of souvenir shops which sells a wide range of animal skins • Employees of Chinese medicine shops (N= 26: Male = 11, Female =15).	• Owner of animal skin warehouse • Tiger skin supplier • Employees of tiger skin supplier • Owner of street stall which sell animal skins • Employees of street stall which sell animal skins • Employees of Chinese medicine shops • Tailors making clothes out of tiger skins (N= 22: Male = 16, Female = 6)	66
Enforcement (Border	• Ex solider of the	• Local	• Ex Tibetan government	5

[23] The combination of data sources was also used in the study of criminal gangs in Belfast by Heather Hamill (2011,13), in which she maximized the validity and reliability of her fieldwork findings by combining various data sources. The problems that I faced in my data collection were in many ways similar to that of Hamill (2011).

control, government) (Group B)	People Liberation Army (PLA) (father and son) • Patrol police around city centre/ train station • Private security at nightclubs /jewellery shops (N = 3: Male = 3).	police (N=0).	official • Local Tibetan policeman (N=2: Male =2).	
Local (taxi/bus driver, restaurant owners, workers, local tour guide etc.) (Group C)	• Taxi drivers (in Kunming and on road to Ruili) • Bus drivers • Massage parlour workers • Beauty parlour workers (N = 19: Male = 5, Female = 14)	• Taxi Drivers • Restaurant Owner • Massage parlour workers (N=9: Male = 4, Female =5).	• Local tour guide • Bus/ taxi driver • Family of traders • Massage parlous workers (N= 25: Male= 20, Female = 5).	53
Total No. of Interviews:	40	35	49	124

Group A:

I have conducted semi – structured, open-ended interviews with all the interviewees from group A. All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place in

public spaces.[24] Each interview lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. Most of the interviewees were keen to share their experiences and one of the traders pro-actively waved to me while I was walking across the market and asked me to join him for a chat with his friend. The interviews were not one-off encounters. I have exchanged contact details with most of the traders and met them again for either more information or for a tiger skin viewing in a more private environment.[25] Over the course of time, they revealed more relevant information. All the interviewees in this group were aware of the illegality of their business. There was a mixture of female and male interviewees in this group (see table 3.3). Before the interviews, I made clear that I was a university student conducting research, and did not deceive them into believing that I would purchase goods from them. Yet it is still possible that some of them thought I could be persuaded and were keen to speak to me and to show me more tiger skins. Some of the traders were just as curious about me and chatted with me when their stalls were not busy. In general, a small number refused to engage in conversation but the majority of them were happy to be interviewed.

Group B:

I have also conducted semi- structured interviews with interviewees from group B. All of the interviews were conducted face to face. Each interview lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. Though there was a degree of suspiciousness, most of the interviewees were willing to share their experiences. When expressing their view towards the

[24] Interviews were conducted in a skin warehouse, apartment flat, open tourist market area, open shop in downtown, train station and traditional Chinese medicine shops/ markets. Nonetheless, the disadvantage of conducting interviews in open areas is that the responses may not be candid owing to fear of being over heard. I have overcome this problem by arranging to meet with the traders in a private environment for skin sampling and during the time, to ask more questions about their trading business.

[25] I have viewed a set of tiger skin in the trader's apartment and in a skin warehouse in Lhasa. During the 2-hour interview when he also showed me a number of exotic skins, I also met his wife, daughter and neighbours.

Chinese government, a few interviewees from this group exhibited signs of anger in their verbal responses but shared useful information.

Group C:

As with the above two groups, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with group C. There was a great variation in the duration of these interviews, ranging from 20 minutes to 2 hours. All of the interviewees were happy to speak to me.

Questions

I adopted a semi-structured interview approach in my interviews. This allowed the participants more time and scope to talk at their own pace. Open-ended questions were asked and participants were free to reveal any relevant information he/she wished to, and I always followed up on interesting responses and asked more questions whenever possible.

The questions I have asked my interviewees depended and varied according to their background.[26]

The following is a guideline of some of my questions for Group A. My aim was to re-construct the organisation of the tiger trade networks.

- Where do the tiger products came from? If not China, from where are they delivered? How do suppliers ensure that tiger parts are not damaged/stolen during delivery?

[26] Even if the interviewees belong to the same group, I may not necessarily ask them the same question from the list. The questions I have asked depend on their individual background. For example, I have asked an owner of a restaurant whether he has employed workers of a different ethnic background but I did not ask him about drug use in Xining.

- How many suppliers do you know of?
- How many other people do you work with?
- What measures do you take (as a seller) to advertise your business?
- How can new buyers find out about your services?
- What actions will you take (as a seller) after a potential client approaches you?
- Why should the buyer trust you?
- Do you have an established set of regular clients?
- How do you (as a seller) ensure the safe delivery of the products to your clients?
- How do you (as a seller) know if the tiger products delivered from the source countries are genuine?
- What other measures do you (as a seller) undertakes to ensure the quality of your skin products?
- What happens if someone does not honour the agreement?
- Are you (as a seller) worried about provincial enforcement and getting arrested?
- Is there any competition in this industry? If so, how do you (as a seller) secure clients and profits?

- Do you (as a seller, trader) feel a strong sense of belonging to your ethnic group?
- Are you willing to co-operate with traders of a different ethnic origin?

One of the purposes of interviewing interviewees from Group B was to obtain a better understanding of the provincial security and the level of crime in all three cities. The guideline for Group B is as follows:

- What kind of crime do you feel poses the highest level of threat to your city (Kunming, Xining. Lhasa)?
- How would you describe the level of crime your city (Kunming, Xining, Lhasa)?
- Are there high levels of disputes/ violence between different ethnic groups?
- Do you feel that your role in (Kunming, Xining, Lhasa) is strictly enforcement or do you personally feel you are responsible for other matters (i.e.: keeping harmonious image of city)?
- Do you have any knowledge of cross border smuggling between Yunnan – Burma border or the Tibet – Nepal borders?
- Do you think the provincial government is working towards combatting smuggling and all forms of illegal trade? Do you think it is effective?
- Given the high level of enforcement already in place alongside the borders, why do you think there is still a high level of smuggling?
- Do you feel the recent anti-drugs/prostitution campaigns in Kunming/Lhasa were effective?
- Are you aware that there is illegal animal skin trade in your city (Kunming, Xining, Lhasa)? If so, what do you think can be done?

Lastly, the purpose of interviewing members of the local population in Group C was to get an overall sense of the city. The questions are as follow:

- How long have you lived here?
- What do you like/dislike most about the city (Kunming, Xining, Lhasa)?
- Do you feel safe in the city?
- Do you have friends that belong to a different ethnic group? Will you employ workers of a different ethnic origin?
- Have you heard of/ witness any disputes/violence between different ethnic groups?
- Do you have confidence in the local police?
- Are you aware of the high level of drugs trafficking in your city (Kunming/ Ruili)? If so, do you know anyone that is in any way, directly/indirectly involved?
- Have you heard/know of how/ what kind of illegal good smuggled in from the border (Lhasa/Ruili)?

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources that the study draws upon consist of a range of documents by non-governmental organisations as well as newspaper articles. Several NGOs have conducted investigation in the cities I visited and their findings have proven to be very informative and confirmed the data I collected. This study also relies on articles from a national newspaper. I consulted the People's Daily. The People's Daily was selected owing to their authority and wide coverage of news across China. The newspapers were searchable electronically via database. Keywords searched were

'smuggling', 'organized crime', 'ethnic unrest', 'violence', 'endangered animals' and 'border control'. All the secondary sources act as supplementary materials to my primary data.

Several nongovernmental organisations provided me with investigation materials, expert knowledge, advice and introductions for data collection. The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) in London has a dedicated team force that travels to China and India to investigate the illegal tiger trade. They provided information, contacts in China and advice on travelling to the three Chinese cities. EIA also collaborated with other environmental NGOs dedicated to tiger conservation based in India[27] and in Asia.[28] TRAFFIC, another organization dedicated to the monitoring of wildlife trade, has assisted my project to date. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Hong Kong put me in touch with their WWF branch in Beijing responsible for wildlife trade campaigns. The supplementary secondary sources served as additional data to supplement my interviews, and have been utilized to increase the interviews' reliability and validity.

Analysis

Once the interview data has been collected and transcribed, the next step was to construct the social networks using a social network analysis.

[27] Wildlife Protection Society of India has collaborated with EIA in several field investigations of the illegal tiger trade in China and India; see Wildlife Prevention Society India, http://www.wpsi-india.org/wpsi/index.php (accessed April 13rd 2011).
[28] TRAFFIC network is another organization that has extensive experience in investigating the illegal tiger trade in Asia; see TRAFFIC, http://www.traffic.org/ (accessed April 13rd 2011).

Social Network Analysis (SNA)[29]

In SNA, actors are placed on the rows and the column and the number in the cells indicate presence or abstance of ties between actors. In standard social science, actors are on the rows and variables are on the columns (for instance, in Table 3, actor A is in touch with actors B, C, D, F and not with E, G, H, I, and J).

Table 3.4 – Social Network Analysis Data Matrix (Kite Network)

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
A	-	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
B	1	-	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
C	1	0	-	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
D	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	0	0	0
E	0	1	0	1	-	0	1	0	0	0
F	1	0	1	1	0	-	1	1	0	0
G	0	1	0	1	1	1	-	1	0	0
H	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	-	1	0
I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	1
J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-

The following network diagram is a representation of the data matrix above used by David Krackhardt (1990) to introduce some basic principles of SNA. [30]

[29] For a comprehensive guide on the use and application of the social network analysis, see Scott (2000), Wasserman & Faust (1999).
[30] The kite network has been used as an example to illustrate the principles of the social network analysis, see Bryman & Hardy (2009) and Furht (2010).

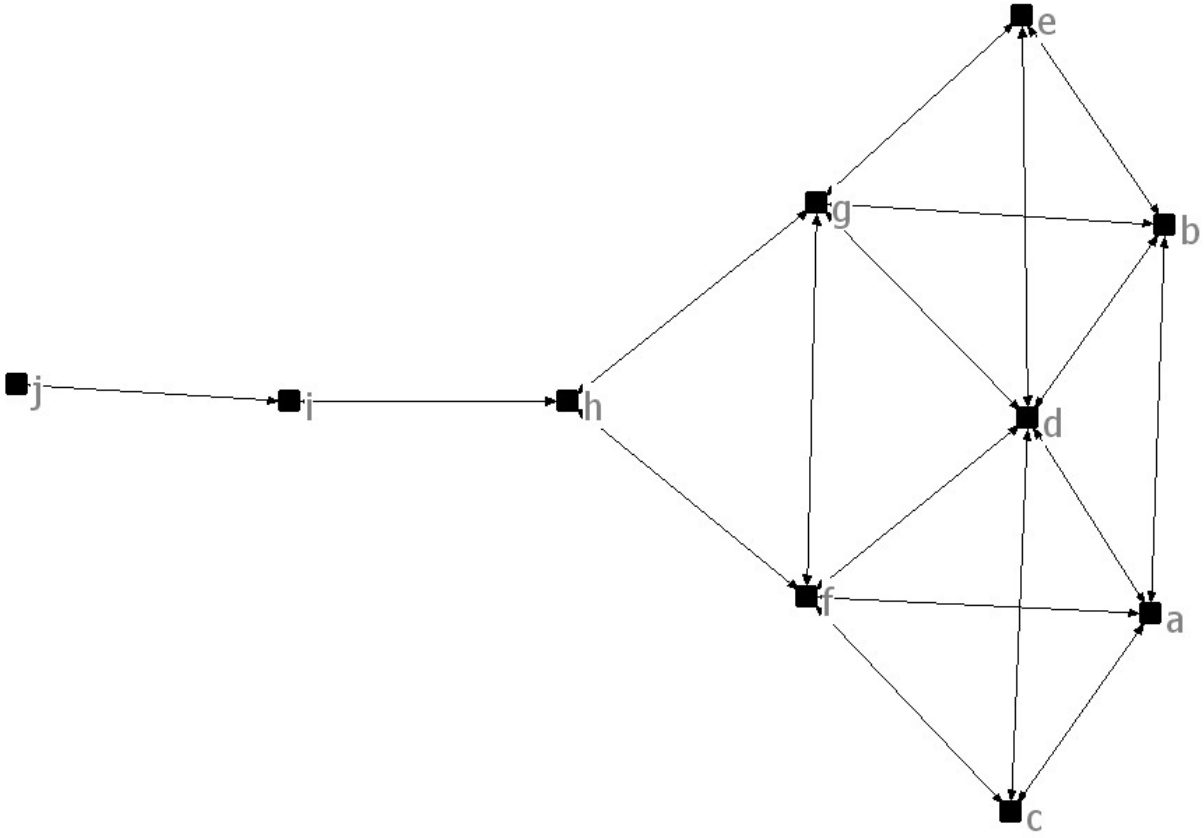


Figure 3.6: Kite Social Network

Node (d) has the highest level of degree centrality in the network; this is the measure of centrality that measures the number of connections a node has in the network. Some authors have stressed the importance of the central node within a network (Sparrow 1991, Peterson 1994) yet this argument has been questioned because the importance of the central node is dependent on the type of the network and its distinctive nature (Carley et al 2001, Chattoe and Hamill 2005).[31]

[31] Their study argued that the importance of the central node is significantly lowered in a network where the centre and the leadership was occupied by two individual, removing the centre node will not severely disrupt the network. See: Carley et al (2003).

Challenges and Limitations

During my time in China, I have encountered various difficulties.

The foremost challenging problem I was faced with was the heightened security across the Chinese borders in preparation for the celebration of the founding of Communist Chinese Party (CCP) on October 1st 2012; this was particularly evident during my travels across Tibet. Moreover, due to the heightened political sensitivity and security in Tibet, I took extra caution in conducting my interviews and limited my time spent in open market areas, which were guarded heavily by Chinese army forces. In order to not arouse suspicion, I left Tibet in the middle of my research and returned later to continue my fieldwork.

Moreover, I was affected by acute mountain illness during the beginning of my journey in Tibet (which I have outlined in greater length in the next chapter). I also suffered from minor food poisoning during my first week in Tibet. Luckily, a friend who is a qualified paramedic accompanied me. I later resorted to a diet of bread, plain noodles and water for the rest of my stay in Tibet.

Like all other data attempting to map illegality, my data should be approached with caution. The goal of this study is not to reconstruct the *entire* Chinese illegal tiger trade network, but only the parts of the network that emerge from my data. Therefore this study makes no claim to represent the entire illegal network across the three chosen cities and China. As suggested in other existing studies on criminal groups,

one of the major challenges in collecting data is the potential level of dishonesty and concealment of the interviewees' responses, owing to their fear of arrest and suspicions of threat. Therefore, the validity of the collected data can be affected. [32] A small number of traders were clearly not comfortable in speaking to me at the beginning of our encounter. In order to overcome this problem, I visited their shops on a regular basis and built up trust over time, and consequently the traders became happy to speak to me. I also verified the collected data across a number of sources in order to eliminate misleading information in my data set.[33]

Owing to the sensitivity of my research and time limitations, there is a chance that I did not fill in all of the missing gaps in my data set. One of the foremost challenges is to be sure of the size and parameters of the illegal networks. Though I have asked the interviewed traders questions regarding the size of their operating network, I have not eliminated the chance of a missing node or inaccurate data completely.[34] This could arise from a trader's unwillingness to reveal what their colleagues are doing, or they simply may possess no knowledge of other actors in the network. Nonetheless, I have taken reasonable steps to rectify this problem by reviewing relevant publications and news coverage. In addition, I spoke to friends and family of the traders, all of whom provided relevant information to fill in missing gaps in the

[32] Admittedly, interview participants giving dishonest answers are a recognized limitation in qualitative studies method. See: Silverman (2004), Denzin and Lin (2005) and Marvasti (2004).
[33] For example, I was referred to Bhakor Square, Lhasa Tibet to begin the search for tiger skin seller. This piece of information was verified against a number of NGO publications, international new reports before I arrived at Lhasa. Upon arrival in Lhasa, some of the local tour guides and agents also referred me to the same part of the square for tiger skins. In order to verify the price and the origins of the tiger skin/bone, I spoke to a number of traders and representative from relevant NGO, all of which gave similar price range and descriptions. During a viewing of tiger skin in the apartment of a trader, I also managed to speak to his neighbour and family members who also re-confirmed what he had told me about his business and how it is operated. Moreover, I have also asked the same questions to different tiger bone trader regarding their network and operation; all of them gave similar answers.
[34] For example, owing to the involvement of other middlemen to ensure the safe delivery of the product, the trader in Kunming may have little knowledge about the supplier in Tibet. Moreover, the network may have changed overtime and the final tiger bone seller may have no knowledge of the changes.

data.[35] Yet, there is still a possibility that not all missing gaps are filled, and that the data that I have collected, are still incomplete. Regrettably, this is a general limitation in studies of social network analysis of criminal networks since there is a lack of certainty of when a network will end thus, a, 'whole social network is rarely a whole…' (Morselli 2009: 44).

[35] During several points of my fieldwork, I had the chance to meet other people whom were connected to the trade. Namely, the wife and daughter of a trader, his neighbour, the lady that owns the stall next to him, some of the temporary staff that works for a skin trader in Kunming and the teenage daughter of a woman that claims to have tiger bone stock etc. I have spoken to all of them when the trader was absent (this is because he/she either went to collect the tiger skin, or was simply not present when I re-visited the stall/shop).

Chapter 4: Lhasa, Tibet – Hui's Network

This chapter presents the fieldwork findings from Lhasa and endeavours to understand the organization of illegal tiger trade networks against the three independent variables (ethnic makeup, provincial enforcement and proximity to tiger source country). Moreover, it offers an analytical explanation as to how one of the tiger trade network is organized in Lhasa. In order to collect sufficient fieldwork data, I have travelled to Tibet twice, from Xining in Qinghai province and from Chengdu in Sichuan province.

The Roof of the Earth[1]

Preparations for travels into Tibet were unlike any other countries I have visited; the foremost threat the mysterious plateau posed was its high altitude, which can lead to severe acute mountain sickness. Tibet's renowned name, 'Roof of the Earth,' is a well-justified one. The main Tibetan city, Lhasa, is 3,568 meters (12,001 feet) above sea level, four times the height of the highest point in UK.[2] Oxygen levels decrease at higher altitude leading to a fall in the number of oxygen molecules in the air and consequently one has less oxygen to breath in.[3] Well wishers have repeatedly reminded me about a number of Han Chinese[4] singers who had to be flown back into

[1] I try to include some personal experience at the start of every result discussion chapter in order to give the reader a sense of my journey and to make my thesis more personal.
[2] Scafell Pike in Lake District where it is 978 meters (3,209 feet) above sea level http://www.merseyventure.com/threepeaks/sca.htm (last accessed June 8th 2012).
[3] For more on acute mountain sickness, see: Altitude or Mountain Sickness, http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/altitude.htm (last accessed June 8th 2012).
[4] 'Han' and 'Han Chinese' refers to the same ethnic group which make up the majority of Chinese citizens. Through out the chapter, I will use the terms interchangeably.

China by helicopter in the middle of producing a movie in Tibet because the thin Tibetan air was posing serious threats to their lungs.[5]

My family doctor offered to give me a free medical test in order to make sure the oxygen capacity in my lungs were fit for travel into Tibet. Having checked my lungs, he gave me leaflets on acute mountain illness and briefed me on the possible symptoms I may experience during my first week in Lhasa. Minor symptoms may include dizziness, breathlessness, tiredness and problems with sleeping. Yet, stronger symptoms such as fever, disorientation, puking and loss of appetite can also occur but in his medical opinion, stronger symptoms tend not to affect the majority of people in my age group. Little did I know, I was indeed in the minority.

In order to equip myself to adapt quickly to the altitude of the Tibetan Plateau, I was recommended by experienced travellers to undertake a course of Chinese herbal medicine 3 weeks before my departure and for the whole duration of my stay in Tibet.[6] Though the effectiveness of the medicine differs depending on one's physical fitness, it was a common and ancient Chinese relief for acute mountain illness. The treatment has to start well in advance of travel because the human body has to adapt to the herbs. To my delight, they come in medical capsules with a tasteless flavour and small size, the recommended dosage being 6 capsules per day.

[5] One of the singers was a Hong Kong pop star called Samuel Hui, he was flew down by helicopter from Tibet to a Chinese hospital during the filming of a film in the Tibetan Plateau, he took 3 months to fully recover. For more see: Tibet Travel Guide, http://www.chinahighlights.com/tibet/overview.htm (last accessed June 8th 2012).

[6] All tourists travelling to Tibet is warned of the possible side effects of high altitude sickness, for more see: About High Altitude Illness, http://www.accesstibettour.com/mountain-sickness.html (last accessed July 31st 2012) and Tibet Travel Tips, High Altitude Travel Tips, http://www.tibettravelplanner.com/high-altitude-sickness.htm (last accessed July 31st 2012). The Chinese Herbal medicine was called Rhodiola rosea, for more see: Medicine for High Altitude Sickness, http://www.tibettravel.org/tibet-travel-advice/medicine-for-high-altitude-illness.html (last accessed July 31st 2012).

I was also recommended to travel into Lhasa via the infamous Qinghai – Tibet railway train. The 24-hours journey from Xining should give my body enough time to adjust to the thin Tibetan air. There was a small oxygen supply tube on the wall of every compartment. When approaching Tibet, train staff sealed all the windows in order to sustain the oxygen level. Announcements were made regularly on the train to remind passengers of symptoms of acute mountain sickness and a doctor was on board if any passengers require medical assistance. Chinese army also patrolled the train. Passengers have to register with an on-board train police and I was given a medical declaration form to complete. This is standard practice after the journey claimed the life of a 77-year-old passenger from Hong Kong, whose death was caused by excessive fluids in his lungs halfway to Tibet.[7]

The effectiveness of the Chinese herbal medicine treatment was put to test in my first hour upon arriving at Lhasa. Carrying with me a 70 litres camping backpack, I was short of breath and physically powerless to stand up shortly after stepping on Tibetan soil. While trying to regain alertness and oxygen on a bench by a busy crossroad, thoughts of giving up occupied my mind for the first time over my course of fieldwork. That same night I developed fever-like symptoms and though I was keen to explore this mysterious ancient city, my body constrained me to the confines of my hostel room. Since then, I always carried with me a can of portable oxygen for the remainder of my stay in Tibet.

[7] For more on the Chinese government coverage of his death, see: "Qinghai – Tibet Railway Transports Over 270,000 Passengers" Xinhua News Agency, September 15 2006, http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/Tibet/181251.htm (last accessed June 8th 2012).



Photo 4.1: Portable Oxygen (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

Locating the Tiger

My first few days in Lhasa were mostly spent in the confines of my room and the local super market downstairs from my hostel. I did not want to take the risk of

travelling into town before my body had fully adjusted to the Tibetan altitude. The supermarket was a major source of entertainment for my weeks to come and was also the place where I was given my first tip as to where to locate the tiger parts traders in Lhasa.

"You should go to Barkhor Square for your tiger skins, the shops look decent but don't be deceived by what they display" (T1). I was told by T1 that a group of Hui traders were concealing their illegal skin trade business behind legitimate shops displays at Barkhor Square.[8] T1 was a local tour guide and she sat next to me at a local manicure bar. We engaged in conversation instantly and she told me a handful of insightful information about Lhasa. This piece of information on the tiger trade proved to be accurate. Later, I discovered that Barkhor Square and the residential area around the Square were the main point of business for traders and suppliers. In addition, there was a second group of Tibetans in this illegal industry in operation at Barkhor Square.

Barkhor Square is an outdoor market hosting hundreds of street stalls selling a wide range of souvenirs: carpets, traditional Tibetan tailors and Buddhist scriptures texts can be brought in the Square. Situated in the middle of downtown Lhasa, Barkhor Square is a popular attraction frequented by tourists from all over the world and as such, one of the most scrutinized areas in Lhasa.[9] I have witnessed numerous

[8] The exact phrase was, '掛羊頭賣狗肉' (selling dog meat when they (sellers) are displaying goat heads in the shops' (T1). For the purpose of clarity, interview reference will take the aforementioned format for the remainder of the thesis. The list of interviewees and their responses are recorded in the appendix. A label is given to each individual, as the letter indicated inside the brackets '(T1)' with T representing Tibet and number for reference and anonymity purposes.

[9] For more on the Barkhor Square, see: "Barkhor Street", http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/tibet/lhasa/barkhor.htm (accessed May 8th 2012),

instances of Han Chinese army soldiers marching into Barkhor Square at all times of day and night, the unit of army easily occupying the entire pavement. I have spent enough time in Barkhor Square to discover its short cuts, detours and passageways linking it to other parts of town. By day, the Square was a hot spot for tourists, traders and locals and by night only the Han Chinese army shadows the Square. Army presence was not limited to ground level at Barkhor Square. Soldiers were stationed on rooftops of buildings surrounding the Square.



Photo 4.2: The Barkhor Square area is an outdoor market set out in a rectangular shape, this is one of the main sections towards the middle of the square. (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

"Barkhor Street", http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/Tibet/tibet-barkhor-street.html (accessed May 8th 2012) and "Barkhor Street", http://www.tibettrip.com/lhasa/barkhor.htm (accessed May 8th 2012).



Photo 4.3: A root top army station at Barkhor Square under the green umbrella (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

Tigers

During my stay in Tibet, I was repeatedly told that there were no tiger bones' products in Lhasa, but tiger skin can be purchased at Barkhor Square (T12 & 14 & 21). [10] I later confirmed this information with the skin traders who only traded tiger skins. They had no idea of where the bones could be found.

[10] It appeared that it was common knowledge that tiger bones and other tiger skin products is not available in Tibet but easily accessible in Qinghai region. During my stay in China, I was repeatedly told that it is possible to purchase tiger bone in Qinghai but not in Lhasa. (T12 & 14 & 21).

I discovered that there were *two* separate groups selling tiger parts products in central Lhasa.[11] One network is dominated by Hui, with a minority of Han Chinese traders. The second network is solely made up of traders of Tibetan ethnic origins, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Though both networks offer and sale the same product in Barkhor Square, the organization of the networks differ significantly and each has a different relationship with the three independent variables. The pricing of the product was also different: the price of tiger skins from the Hui network is 10 times lower than that from the Tibetan network.[12]

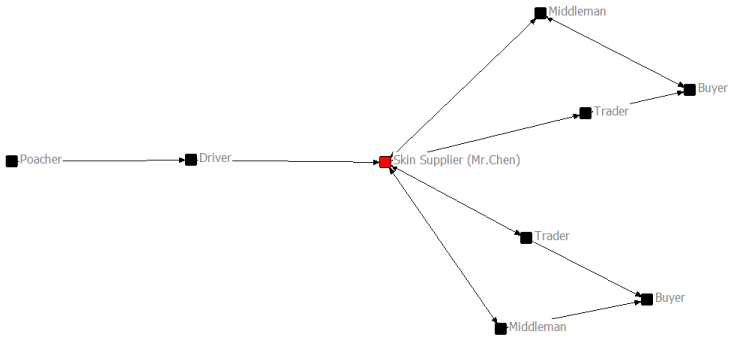
The organization of the Hui network allows for high level of flexibility for actors to move in and out of the network. Nonetheless, there are two different *perspectives* as to the level of enforcement and risk of detection within the same network: one from the supplier and one from the traders. It is interesting to see that the actual enforcement and the perceptions of enforcement perceived by the actors involved in the trade are different. Actual enforcement was loose and relaxed; there are no records of arrests and seizures in Lhasa by the Chinese authorities but there are hearsays amongst the traders that people have got into trouble for dealing with tiger parts products in the past. This very low level of enforcement was only recognized by the central node while all the traders working for him perceived a high level of enforcement in their operating environment.

[11] Findings from relevant NGO reports also points to a group of Hui and Tibetan traders, for more see: Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).
[12] A tiger skin from the Hui network was 6,000 RMB whereas it was 60,000 RMB from the Tibetan network. One possible explanation for the significant difference in price could be because the skins sold by the Hui network are fakes however I have no way to verify the genuineness of the tiger skin. It is also possible that the Tibetans perceived a higher level of risk in their operation so they charge a higher price for the tiger skins products.

Situated at the very centre of the network, the supplier in the Hui network felt there was very little risk of arrest in his operating environment. As such, he allows for a high level of ease for entry and exit in his network, dealing with anyone as long as they appear to be sincere and have money to purchase the skins. The mechanism that fosters trust between the supplier and his team of traders is the *reputation* of the parties. However, the traders operating in street stalls perceived a much higher level of risk than the supplier. In order to minimise the risk of arrest and seizure, a Han middleman must be appointed by the buyer. Here, the mechanism that fosters trust between the trader and the buyer is the appointment of a middleman and their ethnicity.

The Hui Tiger Trade Network[13]

Figure 4.1: Network Visualization of the Hui Network of Illegal Tiger Trade



N.B. The picture is based on the information revealed by Chen (T7) and his traders, the estimated connections of the network poacher and driver is represented by blue nodes). The data on the Hui network is collected from the key skin supplier, Chen and a group of traders operating in Barkhor square. I have validated their responses against each other in order to maximize accuracy.[14]*Even though the diagram shows that there is only one driver and one poacher supplying skins in this network yet this is not necessary the case as indicated in the responses.*

It was down to pure luck that I met the skin supplier for the Hui network. My initial encounter with the Hui skin supplier, 'T7' (hereafter referred to as Chen[15]) was purely coincidental. I approached his skin rack on Barkhor Square out of curiosity. He came over from his working van to greet me and invited me to his warehouse. His skin warehouse was located on the third floor of an apartment block; the climb was not an easy one given that I was still affected by acute mountain sickness at the time.

[13] Hui is one of the 56 Han state recognized ethnic minorities groups. They are mostly of the Islam faith and most of them can be found in the Northwestern region of China, especially concentrated in Gansu, Qinghai and in Tibet. For more see Dillon (1999) and Gladney (1991).
[14] To validate my findings of the Hui network, findings from 2009 by Environmental Investigation Agency in Lhasa, which pointed out an active, Hui skin supplier that has a large supply of stockpiles. In 2009, he operated in the Hui quarter. This finding validates my data that there is a key skin supplier of Hui ethnicity active in Lhasa. For more see: Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).
[15] Chen is not the real name of the skin supplier; I have re-created a name for him to protect his identity. I have given all my interviewees a fake name in the proceeding chapters.

Chen checked to make sure I was ok every few steps and was laughing hard by the time I reached the warehouse. Perhaps it was my clumsiness in climbing the staircase or because he was eager to share his life story, I sensed that Chen took an immediate liking to me during the first moments of our encounter and overtime he revealed enormous amount of valuable information.

I established during the first moments of our meeting that Chen was a very proud businessman. He revealed to me during the early stages of our first meeting that he had been in the skin trade business for over 20 years. Chen was very proud of his established reputation in the skin trade market in Lhasa. He did not shy away from any of my queries. In fact, he was eager to tell his story and waved to me across the Square whenever he saw me walking pass. I eventually had to divert my route in order to avoid him.

Risks of arrest were not of any concern to Chen. He was more worried about a fire in his warehouse because that would damage all his stockpiles. He has a strictly no smoking policy near his products. Although the topics of our conversation mainly revolved around his skin business, he also told me about his personal background. He moved to Tibet during his teenage years but he is still very attached to his hometown and returns there often to visit friends and family.[16]

There are two dimensions to Chen's business: illegal and legal animal skin trade. On the legal side, Chen supplies foxes, wolves and sheepskins to a group of traders who are majority Hui, with a small number of Han Chinese traders. On the other hand,

[16] Chen looked around early 40, though he did not wear a white paper cap but he indicated that he is a Hui during our first meeting.

Chen claimed that he could obtain illegal endangered animal skins if there were interested buyers. The buyers can contact his group of sellers at the street level or him directly. He claimed that he could obtain tiger, leopards and Tibetan antelope skins, all of which are internationally classified as critically endangered with a strict international ban on any forms of trade.[17] Throughout the interviews, Chen emphasized several times that 'face' is very important to him and he only supplies top quality skins in order to not lose face and business connections. His nation-wide clientele base is evidence of his strong presence in the market; phone numbers and names of clients were scribbled with a black marker pen all over the four walls of his warehouse. He explained that he can post skins to his clients all over Mainland China and he has clients from Beijing, Gansu, Shanghai, Tianjin and even as far as Guangzhou. Given that an average tiger skin is around 6,000 RMB (around 600 GBP), his clients are wealthy and powerful businessmen/women or government officials. Chen commented that a tiger skin is an ideal gift of bribery for the upper class.

Overtime, I verified with other skin traders on Barkhor Square that Chen is the *only* skin supplier to the Hui network. I re-constructed the network as shown in Figure 1. Some of the traders were not willing to reveal the name of their supplier, but most of them either described Chen as 'the famous supplier' or pointed to the direction of his warehouse as to where viewings of exotic skin will take place (T32 & 37 & 41 – 43).

[17] Skins in which Chen was able to obtain were tiger, leopards and Tibetan Antelope skins. All of which are internationally classified endangered with a strict international ban on any forms of trade, see: CITES Species Database, http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/species.html (last accessed March 5th 2012).

The Hui network is centralized. Owing to the low level of enforcement, the network is easily accessible and open to all ethnic groups. The central node (Chen) does not enforce an ethnic homogenous rule but he is happy to work with anyone as long as they can perform. At this level, the mechanism of trust between Chen and the traders is the *reputation* of the parties. However, the opposite is found amongst his team of street traders who enforce a strict requirement of a Han middleman for the viewing of the merchandise because they *perceive* a higher level of risk. This is to protect themselves against the risk of arrest as they believed that a Han middleman is unlikely to attract unwanted attention from law enforcement or cause any kind of trouble. The middleman (given his/her ethnicity) fosters trust and exchange between traders and buyer. The close proximity to the source country allows for fewer nodes to be involved in the process of delivery of tiger skins into Lhasa.

Owing to the low level of perceived risk in their environment, Chen has organized his network in a way to maximize economic gain. He is willing to supply to any traders in the region and allows flexible exit and entry into the network. There are numerous nodes connected to the central node, but none of the nodes are connected to each other. They may know of other skin traders but they considered one another competitors (T40 – 43 & T46). This is not unreasonable given that most of the skin traders are not in the skin trade business full time. They have their own stalls at Barkhor Square and only enter the skin business when timing is right, normally at peak tourist seasons. They will signal their knowledge of endangered animal skins by hanging animals' skins on their stall, I was told that this strategy has proven to work and it has attracted curious tourists that eventually made a purchase of endangered skins (T40). Because of the high level of entry/exit to/from the network, the size of

the Hui network changes constantly. To validate this point, I interviewed a number of traders operating at the street level who claimed to be able to obtain tiger skins, and none were full time traders.

The procedures to obtain a tiger skin is not a straightforward one, and the importance of a middleman is highlighted. The buyer must appoint a middleman in order to view the tiger skin. This is the responsibility of the buyer. The explanation for appointing a middleman differs between the traders on the street and at the supplier, owing to the different levels of risk perceived by Chen and the traders. As the supplier, Chen is in a much better protected position than the traders so his requirement for having a middleman is solely to show that the buyer is sincere with his/her purchase.

In essence, the role of the middleman is to facilitate trust for a transaction to take place but for a middleman, no exchange will take place. Though the reasons for the appointment of a middleman differ between the traders at the street level and Mr. Chen at the supply level, the middleman fosters trust in exchanges of exotic skins. Though I did not specifically asked how the requirement of a middleman circulates, an educated guess from my collected data is that either the traders or Mr.Chen would tell interested buyers of the requirement of a middleman so this is not public information. There are two ways in which a viewing can take place. Any interested buyers can contact one of the traders at Barkhor Square and subsequently will be told of the requirement for the appointment of a middleman, the middleman will then be taken to see Mr.Chen by the trader to sample the skin. The second way is that the buyer will contact Mr.Chen directly and to view the skins directly at a designated location. I would assume that regular clients prefer the second method.

Having discovered that Chen enforced a strict middleman requirement, I pondered about why he felt comfortable speaking to me. Other fieldwork studies have suggested that interviewees were willing to speak because of development of trust and friendship over a period of time (Fine 2003), some for the sake of self-expression and some want the interviewer to listen (Silverman 1973).

Unpredictably, people with unfortunate circumstances or involved in illegality is also willing to talk about their experiences in an interview setting. A majority of rape victims interviewed felt that the interview on her experience was a helpful and cathartic experience and in speaking of their experiences, they were able to reanalysed the incident, the justice system and most importantly, to unleash their emotions (Campbell et al 2010). One of the foremost problems with interviewing actors from the underworld is their worry that information would be leaked out to authorities. This was the case in Chin's study of the Golden Triangle opium trade (2007), he had difficulties recruiting drug traders in Burma because they were worried their information would be leaked to the authorities. He overcame this difficulty by not asking or recording any information that could expose the identity of the drug traders and managed to interviewed 35 drug traders who repeatedly reminded his team of interviewers not to expose any information. Using open-ended questions was also an effective interview strategy when interviewing illegal actors, because it allowed more freedom and flexibility in the responses, as shown in the study of sex worker traffickers in London (Black & Troshynski 2008). As a result, the interviewers were stunned by how open and candid the traffickers were in their responses (2008, 38).

In my experience, I believe Chen was eager to tell someone his story because he was extremely proud of what he has achieved. He appeared happy when he learnt that I would include his story as part of my thesis and relieved when I told him that I am not from the Mainland and would return to Hong Kong after my research. Perhaps the fact that I was not a local also lowered his doubts of any ulterior intentions I might have so he was willing to reveal his business to me. The interview was conducted using open-ended questions and he did not shy away from responding to my queries, I was astonished by how comfortable and how much information he revealed in our meetings.

On the other hand, all of the traders interviewed felt that a Han Chinese middleman is unlikely to arise suspicion and they felt generally 'safer' to work with him/her (T41 - 43). [18] It seems that the extra ethnicity requirement amongst the traders on the street is a reflection of their perceived level of risk and this is a precautions they undertake to protect themselves from trouble. The traders I interviewed have also commented that Han Chinese is easier to get along and to work with (T41). The mechanisms to foster trust between the trader and potential buyers are 'appointment of a middleman' and 'ethnicity'.

[18] The reason for the need of a middleman differs between the supplier and the trader. The former wishes for a middleman since he wants the buyer to show he/she is sincere whereas the trader believes that a middleman can as a form of protection of his/her identity. Also, the former accepts a middleman of any ethnicity whereas the latter will only deal with a Han Chinese middleman (Chen ,T33 & 41-43).

The complexity of this network is summarized as follow:

Table 4.1: Roles and Function of Actors in the Hui Network

Role	*Function*	*Mechanism to Foster Trust*	*Gains*	*Deposit*
Skin Supplier "Chen'	To co-ordinate delivery of tiger skins from border, supply skin and deliver skin to clients	Reputation of trader : to ensure he/she is sincere.	Money: from selling tiger skin products.	n/a
Traders operating in Barkhor Square	To attract customers at Barkhor Square and arrange skin viewing.	Ethnicity: Han middleman	Commission: though the exact amount is uncertain.	n/a
Middleman	To meet the trader which will than take him/her to view the skin	Personal trust of the buyer: in order for him/her to appoint him/her as middleman	n/a	n/a
Buyer	To purchase skins	Middleman	Tiger skin: provided if transaction is successful.	Middleman

There would not be a transaction but for the appointment of a middleman. Trust is heavily built on this middle person.[19] There are two kinds of risks, which the Hui

[19] The importance of a middleman in the studies of criminal network is highlighted in a study of human trafficking network in the Middle East, the importance of a middleman is highlighted, see: Ahmet Icduygu & Sule Toktas (2003) and the importance of a middleman is also highlighted in the study of Albanian gangs and their drug trafficking networks, see: Galeotti (2001).

network faces: the risk of arrest and the risk of defection and betrayal within their own networks. In this context, streets traders minimize both kinds of risk through the appointment of a middleman. As for Chen, the risk he faces is not so much related to the risk of arrest, as he did not show any signs of concern for enforcement during the interviews. He is more concerned with finding a *bona fide* buyer who will not waste his time. Through the appointment of a middleman, Chen believes that this additional step for the buyer to procure a middleman is a sign of sincerity and genuineness in purchasing a tiger skin. The importance of a middleman cannot be overlooked in the Hui network. There may not be a successful viewing or transaction but for an appointed middleman by the buyer. From the interviews, Chen nor any of the traders outlined in detail whom exactly the middleman could be but it appeared that the middleman should be a friend of the buyer and whether he/she will be paid for his/her service is at the discretion of the buyer and not decided by Chen or any of his traders. I did not have the opportunity to speak to any middleman.

Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to speak to those involved in the delivery of the skin from the border or any of the tiger poachers (as represented by the blue node). Based on the data collected from Chen and his traders, there are several points of entry for the animal skins[20]. He hires driver to collect the skins from the border and deliver them into Lhasa. The sampling of the animal skins takes place after dark either in the clients' hotel room or in one of his warehouses. The form of the payment is usually via bank transfer, although Chen bragged that on many occasions he has walked away with suitcases full of cash.

[20] Chen did not specify the number of entry points the drivers use to delivery animal skins into Tibet but he mentioned that the Tibetan town, Zhangmu is one of the main entry points (Chen). For more information on Zhangmu, see: "Zhangmu: The Tibet – Nepal Border" http://kekexili.typepad.com/life_on_the_tibetan_plate/2009/03/zhangmu-the-tibetnepal-border.html (last accessed April 6th 2012).



Photo 4.4: Chen's Skin Rack. The white skins are sheepskin, which cost from 300 – 600 RMB (30 – 60 pounds). The two dark colour skins in the middle are wolves' skins, which cost from 400- 800 RMB (40 – 80 pounds). The rest of his skins are inside his warehouse (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 4.5: Inside Chen's flat (also his skin warehouse), his bed is at the left hand corner of the photo. The green sheet is his bed sheet and white item is his pillow. He lived in rather poor standards given he runs a lucrative business of endangered tiger skin trade yet he did mention that he has other homes in Qinghai, his hometown (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

Though Chen claimed to have no memory of how many traders he has supplied and is still supplying, he revealed that he has established a stable working relationship with his team of traders overtime. During the peak tourist seasons, he will supply up to 30 – 40 traders, but during low season he will only have about 7 – 9 traders. There are no obligations for the traders to continue working with him. This ease of exit and entry within the network can increase the risk of defection, but Chen did not feel the same. He believed that dishonouring agreement is not a sensible move and will only lead to unwanted attention and loss of face. He was aware of a small network of Tibetan traders in Barkhor Square that also traded in endangered animal skins. Though they were in competition, Chen did not speak badly of the Tibetan network and wished them well, commenting that the consequences could be quite severe if arrested by the authorities. Interestingly, the level of tension with the Tibetan network was much stronger amongst the street traders, as I later discovered.



Photo 4.6: There are two rooms in Chen's flat. Through his bedroom one can access is a much large room stacked with bags of sheepskins. Inside the white and green bags there are varieties of fox's skins, different in sizes. Chen did not show me what was inside the rest of his bags. This is the room where our first interview took place (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

Ethnicity, Enforcement, Proximity to Source Country

a) Enforcement

Though the Hui network is operating in the same square as the Tibetan traders, the level of perceived risk from law enforcement is much lower in the Hui network than in the Tibetan network.

The perception of risk of arrest among the Hui differed for Chen and the traders operating at the street level. Chen was very willing to talk and share information on his business during the interviews openly. He was very proud of what he had established: 'I have been in this business for over 20 years, ask around, people here know who I am!' (Chen). Fully aware of the illegality of his business, Chen did not consider himself as a law-breaker; instead he saw himself as being in the decorative carpet business. His skin warehouse (where one of the interviews was conducted) faced an army station on the main square of the city. When asked for his views on the high army presence around the square, he calmly replied, 'never mind, I know them [army personnel on the Square], why would they want to create more trouble and more work for themselves?' (Chen).



Photo 4.7: Chinese Army Stations are frequently seen on Barkhor Square (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

In his responses, Chen was more concerned with customers wasting his time. He told me that in the past he had a few 'fake' buyers and they only wanted to take photographs of his products, which made him very angry. Consequently, he enforced a rule amongst his traders: the buyer must appoint a middleman to show his/her sincerity. He also said that he would normally advise his clients not to carry the skin with them. He would deliver the skins to a given address using the National China Post. If they insisted on carrying it back with them, they should say that the skin is a gift and they should not reveal anything about his involvement.

On the other hand, the level of enforcement perceived amongst the traders on the street was much higher. The trader is usually the first point of contact for potential buyers. A buyer would approach one of the traders and he/she will be asked to appoint a middleman to deal with Chen, the trader will receive a percentage of sales as commission if the transaction is successful. The trader will accompany the buyer in meetings and skin sampling sessions with Chen. From their responses, they were

generally more concerned about enforcement and told me that arrest could possibly lead to a jail sentence. Most of the traders shared with me some of the hearsay gossip they have heard about authorities seizing street stalls and removing licenses. In order to minimise the risk they face, a middleman must be appointment. Well aware of the discrimination Tibetans are faced with in Lhasa, the traders believe that a *Han Chinese* middleman is less likely to cause trouble or arouse suspicion; therefore it is necessary for the buyer to appoint one in order to protect him or herself from arrest.

Owing to the low level of enforcement and defection perceived by the central node, the network is not organized in a way to manage risk or to conceal its illegality, but to maximize profit. Chen showed little concern regarding the illegality of his activity; he subtlety revealed that given his experiences in the business, he is able to get himself out of trouble. Unlike the central node in the Tibetan network (discussed in the next chapter), ethnicity is not a consideration for Chen; he is willing to employ anyone as long as he/she performs.

b) Ethnicity

Before embarking on my fieldwork and as outlined in Chapter 2, it was unclear whether ethnicity was an independent or dependent variable. As I discovered during my time in the field, the level of actual or perceived enforcement amongst the actors in the network did not influence the ethnic composition of the tiger parts trading network. Ethnic composition of the network was not a response to the level of enforcement directed at tiger trading networks but reflects the pre-existing ethnic segregation in the fieldwork sites. This is suggested in separated residential areas

between Tibetan, Hui and Han Chinese. Though my interviewee told me that she would not eliminate all interaction with Han Chinese in Lhasa, she does prefer to live, work and have their children receive education separately from the Han Chinese or Hui and felt that her opinion represent the majority of Tibetans in Lhasa but they were scared to speak out (T18).

Both Hui and Tibetans are a minority group in Lhasa, yet they perceive and manage risk of arrest very differently.[21] The Hui has a more relaxed and loose perception of the level of risk, which they are faced with.

The feelings amongst the interviewed Han Chinese towards Hui were generally positive. The Hui enjoy a much more peaceful presence and enjoy a rather peaceful relationship with the local Han Chinese population. 'I do not mind them, they are nice people' (T30) 'Hui are very good businessmen, I have a lot to learn from them. They are hard working and street smart, they are always doing something' (T35 - 36). In the majority of interviews with Hui, there were no major signs of negativity towards any other ethnic groups and unlike the Tibetans most of them were happy with their lives in Lhasa.

Within the Hui network, ethnicity does not seem to have a strong connection to the organization of the network. Chen is responsible for recruiting new traders into his network and told me that there are no strict criteria in his selection but he prefers

[21] The Hui only accounts for around 2% of the general population in Lhasa. See, "Hui" http://www.everyculture.com/Russia-Eurasia-China/Hui.html (last accessed May 9th 2012) and "西藏民族概况" http://www.xizang.gov.cn/getCommonContent.do?contentId=341957 (last accessed May 9th 2012).

dealing with male traders in their middle age.[22] The term of their partnership can be a one-off transaction or a long-term working relationship. Some of the traders are only involved in the skin business during the peak tourist seasons[23] and many of them leave after a short period of time. Rarely, Chen would turn away traders that wished to purchase skin from him: 'business is business,' he said.[24]

He commented that there is a general lack of interest from the Tibetan traders in Barkhor Square to work for him; the majority of the traders in Chen network are Hui, with only a few Han Chinese traders. When speaking about trust, Chen showed little concern towards traders dishonouring deals and failing to pay for the skins. He has had such experiences in the past and he said that no good will be brought upon both parties in being dishonest because this will only damage his/her reputation, 'Lhasa is a small place, it will go around like fire' (Chen).

On the other hand, the mandatory requirement of a Han Chinese middleman enforced by traders on the street is a reflection of their high level of perceived risk and how they mitigate this risk. They are well aware of the general high level of scrutiny Tibetans are already under in Lhasa so they do not wish to work with a Tibetan middleman in order to minimise the risk they have to bear (T40 – 43).

[22] The reason for such is that Chen feels that people in middle age generally has more liabilities and responsibilities and is less likely to bring trouble by not paying or spreading rumours (Chen).
[23] The recommended time for travels into Tibet is between April – October and the peak season is from May – September. The extreme weather conditions make it unsafe to travel around Tibet outside of the recommended seasons. See: "Travel China Guide: Tibet Weather", http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/tibet/climate.htm (last accessed February 17th 2012).
[24] The exact words Chen used were, '在商言商' (in business, talk business) (Chen).

c) Proximity to Source Country

The close distance between the tiger source country and Lhasa allows for a smaller network amongst the Hui and the Tibetans.

Lhasa is a three-day journey by car to the Tibet – Nepal border town, Zhangmu and from there 135 miles (approximately 6 hours by car) to Kathmandu, another well documented skin trade hub (see below Figure 2). The highway towards Nepal is known as the Friendship Highway, frequented by tourists all over the world. I was among one of many to travel down this route in the hope of obtaining first-hand experience of border security, travel conditions and eventually to spend some time in Kathmandu for more fieldwork research.

Figure 4.2: Map from Lhasa to Zhangmu

The map formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Source: Lhasa to Zhangmu Route Map, http://www.chinatrekking.com/maps/tibet-maps/lhasa-to-zhangmu-route-map (last accessed July 1st 2012).

The journey from Lhasa to Zhangmu was an uncomfortable one, most of the time was spent inside the vehicle and stops were infrequent. Although the roads were newly built (the Chinese government in the hope to stimulate trade with India), they were nonetheless rocky and somewhat unsafe. At the Everest base camp, where I stayed overnight, elevation was up to 5,364 meters (17, 598 feet). My acute mountain sickness was so strong that I had to resort to inhaling oxygen from a portable oxygen tank. I had minimal sleep and a very intensive headache the whole evening. I was not the only one suffering from the forces of nature so I managed to conduct one of my longest interviews (in terms of time duration) with my driver 'T25' since he was also sleepless through out the night.

My original plan was to spend time in the Tibet–Nepal border town of Zhangmu before moving onwards to Nepal and I had prepared all my documents for the crossing. The journey did not go according to plan and I never reached Nepal. Nonetheless, in the end I still managed to collect data by interviewing drivers, army personnel, villagers and likeminded travellers. From what I was told and saw, enforcement along the Friendship Highway is relatively weak. The highway security is mainly concerned with controlling the movement of Tibetans. I have been told many accounts of Tibetans escaping to Nepal or India to seek religious freedom, many of them being shot by the Chinese army during their attempts. In order to control for the movement of Tibetans around Tibet, a travel permit is required to leave Lhasa and this piece of paper, I was told is very difficult for a normal Tibetan to obtain (T27) (see below photo 4.8).



Photo 4.8: My Travel Permit that allows me to leave Lhasa towards the direction of Nepal. (Photo Credit : Rebecca Wong).

I was told that only a limited range of people would be successful in obtaining a travel permit, for example tour guides, registered tour drivers, lone traveller and anyone with a legitimate reasons to travel to out of Lhasa (i.e.: traders, businessmen, educational purposes etc.). To ensure that no one leaves without a permit, checkpoints were located in some of the most remote sections of the highway. All passengers have to leave the vehicle and register their permit with the police before proceeding (see below photo 4.9). The security I experienced during my return to Lhasa was almost non-existent, apart from speed limits enforcements and relevant speeding checkpoints; the drive was a smooth and straightforward one.



Photo 4.9: One of the police check points along the highway, there was one police stationed in the room and another one charging tourists for use of their washroom at the back (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)



Photo 4.10: Waiting to enter the police station to register our permit and passports.

My driver has over 12 years of experiences driving along the Friendship Highway and other Tibetan mountain routes. He has pointed out that the armies at the checkpoint never searched inside the car or the storage units of the vehicles so it was relatively for 'things/people' to hide inside the car and make their way towards Nepal

(T25&27). Through out our journey, he described the border as 'hard to leave, easy to enter' (T25). '[A]nything can travel along these mountains as long as the speed limit is within range! Even if it is not, you just pay a small fine and get on with it – why would they check, more trouble for themselves, no a good idea!' (T25).

The Hui network obtains tiger skin products from India where the skins are transported to Nepal. The product then makes its way to a number of Nepal–Tibet border towns and subsequently arrives to Lhasa. Yet, given the weak security enforcement along the way, it is questionable as to how much risk is posed to the delivery of the tiger skins. Nonetheless, the two networks take different measures to minimise the risk of interception and arrest in the process of delivery. In the Hui network, a driver is hired for delivery of the product. The involvement of fewer nodes in the process of delivery is made possible because of its close proximity to the source country and this can lower the risk of arrest. [25]

Conclusion

My time in Tibet was the most rewarding and inspiring of my fieldwork journey. However, it was also the most challenging one. Before embarking on my journey, I worried that I would not be able to conduct such sensitive research in one of the most scrutinized cities in China. I did not expect that the process of data collection would run relatively smoothly. On the other hand, I was not prepared for the extreme

[25] The drive from Lhasa to Zhangmu is over 900km and can take up to 4 days on Highway 318 (also known as the Sino – Nepal or Friendship Highway). There are numerous security stations alongside the highway and a special travel permit is required for everyone (including Han Chinese and local Tibetans) to travel outside of Lhasa on this highway towards Nepal. Though some of the security checks were very loosely done and most of the security was to enforce speed limits and to monitor movements of Tibetans (T25).

Tibetan climate and the ways it has affected my body in Tibet. My encounter with the local police (which I have covered in depth in the research methodology chapter) was a challenging episode of my fieldwork and I am glad that it was eventually resolved peacefully.

I discovered two distinct illegal tiger trade networks. Their uniqueness contributed significantly to the overall understanding of this illegal market. Ethnic tension and intensive government surveillance did not seem to affect the structure of the Hui network. The mechanism to facilitate illegal transactions is the *reputation* of the parties involved, as one would expect in most legal transactions. Interestingly, the perception of risk plays a larger role than the actual level of risk in the Hui network. The central node, Chen, and his team of traders does not share the same perception on level of risk and led to different causes for a mandatory requirement of a middleman strictly enforced within the network.

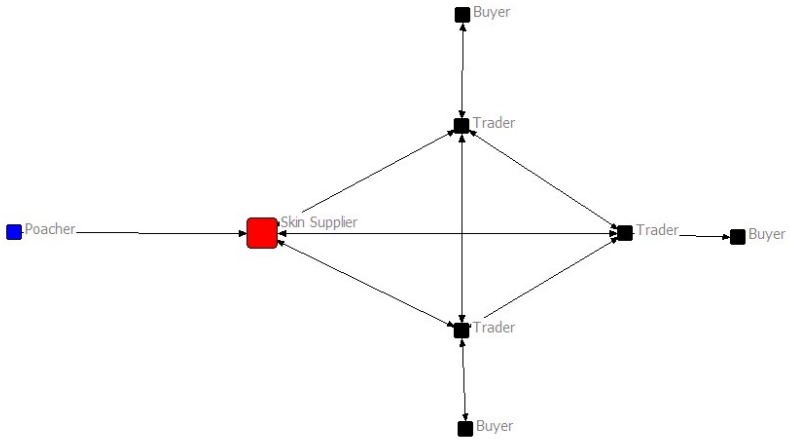
Though operating in the same city, the organisation and the mechanisms between the Hui and the Tibetan network are very different, as shown in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Lhasa, Tibet – Tibetan's Network

Another network, which I discovered during my time in Lhasa, was a tiger parts trading network operated by local Tibetans. The Tibetan network was organized in a more exclusive structure. The Tibetans perceived a high level of risk of arrest hence, unlike the Hui; they would only employ ethnically homogenous traders (Tibetans). All the traders knew one another on a personal level and have an established, long term working relationships.

Overview of the Tibetan Network

Figure 5.1: Network Visualization of the Tibetan Trade Network



Based on information given, an estimation of their connection with the network is represented by a blue node in the network. Data were collected from the skin supplier, skin traders and some of his family/ neighbours to re-construct this network[1]. N.B. The arrows in the network diagram indicate a two-way relation, e.g.: the skin supplier and the poacher is connected.

[1] Again, the finding of a Tibetan trader active in trade was also discovered during a fieldwork investigation report by the Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).

My encounter with the Tibetan trader Xi (T33) was indirectly initiated by a group of Hui skin traders. One of the Hui traders (T32) revealed to me in front of his street stall that a Han Chinese middleman must be present in order to secure a tiger skin viewing and he specifically stated that no middleman of Tibetan ethnicity would be accepted. A Tibetan lady at the next stall overheard our conversation and was outraged by his comments. I watched from a distance as the Tibetan lady questioned him but T32 ignored her. Owing to this emotional and potentially violent incident, I deliberately avoided that specific area of Barkhor Square for a number of days. Upon my return, Xi approached me and asked if I want to see some 'blankets' and, from that point onwards, I began my discovery of the Tibetan tiger parts trading network.

Following our encounter in Barkhor Square, I arranged to meet with Xi again on a later date. He agreed to tell me more about himself and to sample a tiger skin. He could bring the skin to my hostel room or I could visit his apartment flat so I can also meet his wife and daughter.[2] He emphasized that 'such items' cannot be shown in public and must be kept in a safe place. The start of the journey to his apartment flat was a dramatic one. The Hui trader, with a stall close to Xi's (T32) saw me approaching the Square and waved to me from a distance assuming that I have returned to speak to him. He was not impressed when he discovered that I was actually meeting with Xi and followed us for a short distance whilst screaming abusive comments. I asked Xi if he was worried about offending the Hui traders. Xi replied calmly that he is 'not scared of them, only of the police in Lhasa' (T33). Though I made clear that I would not purchase any skin products from him, he was keen to persuade me into buying one and offered to show me more of his 'blankets.'

[2] Xi offered to bring the skin to my room. However, for safety reasons I insisted on seeing the skin at his apartment flat located at a busy part of town and with his family present.

Later he sent me a number of telephone text messages and asked if I want to see more 'blankets' (see below photo 5.1).

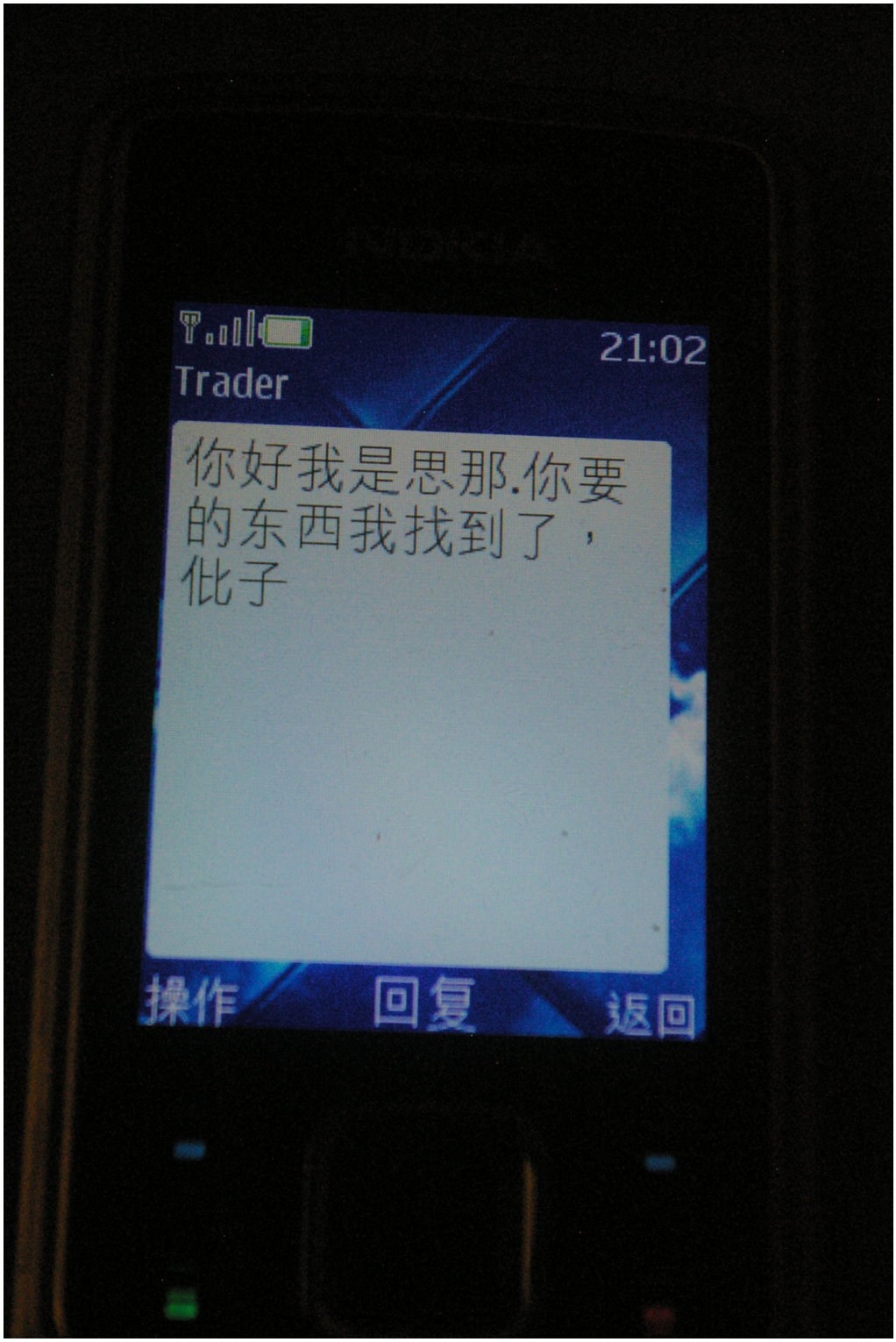


Photo 5.1: One of the text messages from Xi offering to show me more of his skins (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

Xi also asked me not to reveal any of the information to traders from the Hui network (I agreed and kept my promise). He also told me on numerous occasions that I should not purchase anything from any of the Hui traders, because their skins were fake. When I asked how he could be so sure, he simply replied, 'I have been in business longer than any of them, I know' (Xi). A trick, which I have learnt over my studies into illegal tiger skin trade, is to distinguish between a fake and a genuine skin by burning it with fire. If the skin is a fake, it will give off a smell of plastic, whereas a smell alike to the burning of human hair will be released if the skin is genuine. Though the Tibetans are extremely mindful of the risk their network faces in Lhasa and enforce a strict Tibetans-only policy to join their network, it is interesting to note that they are willing to sell to anyone with money (Xi, T34). In fact, most of their customers are senior army and Han Chinese businessmen.[3]

The Tibetans tiger parts trading network perceived an inaccurately high level or risk in their operation. The high level of perceived enforcement affected the way in which the Tibetan network is organized. It is structured in such a way to reduce risk of detection and defection. As minority in Lhasa, they perceive a high level of risk in their operating environment and are willing to sacrifice profit to protect and conceal their operation.[4] The price of a tiger skin is ten times higher than that in the Hui network, with the average tiger skin asking for 60,000 RMB (around 6,000 GBP). [5] Xi

[3] This finding was also pointed out in investigation report by Environmental Investigation Agency, a NGO devoted to the conservation of tigers in South East Asia, for their report see: Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).
[4] Similar findings were discovered in the study of Colombia drug trafficking ring. Prone to risk of arrests, the core groups in the Colombia drug trafficking ring control risk management in expense of profit and business opportunities see: Kenney (2001).
[5] The reason why Tibetans charge high prices can be explained by the high level of perceived risk they face in Lhasa under the 'price and risk' model outline in the literature review section. The model suggests that if selling of illegal product is more risky owing to surrounding circumstances, price will increase and consequentially this increase in price will suppress the demand (Reuter & Kleiman 1986, Caulkins & Reuter 1998, Weatherburn et al 2000). For more see: The 'risk and price' model was developed in the light of the illegal drug market. The latest study conducted by Weatherburn et al

told me that his customers are willing to pay such a high price simply because his skins are genuine and are always the best, 'so it is worth every penny' (Xi). Again, the traders in the Tibetan network were not full time skin traders. Although Xi has a souvenir stall on Barkhor Square, it appeared that this was not his only source of income, given that the décor of his apartment was very luxurious for Tibetan standards. His wife and daughter were also present at the skin sampling sessions. His young daughter was very curious about the skin and her father asked her to stop touching the dead animal before she went back to the living room to watch television.

In one of the interviews, Xi left me alone with his family to collect the skins. At that point I was able to speak to his wife, daughter and a very curious neighbour (she came over from her flat to meet me). His wife treated me with great hospitality and served traditional Tibetan tea and freshly sliced fruits. She mentioned to me that I am amongst one of the many people her husband brings back to her flat for viewing the products. However, there are other friends involved in the business, so viewing can take place elsewhere. Everyone in the network is Tibetan. Having learnt that I am a university student, Xi's daughter asked if I could do her homework for her. Xi's neighbour showed me some of her handmade crafts and told me that she owns a business selling souvenirs near Barkhor Square. She was very friendly and talkative.

Moments later, Xi returned with a middle-aged Tibetan man, the skin supplier (T34) with a paper bag of animal skins. The bag was much smaller than the folded skins so

(2003) looked at the heroin market in Sydney and other major Australian cities in 2000, which the level of heroin experienced a sharp drop during the Christmas period caused in part by tougher law enforcement. Building on the theoretical framework of Reuter & Kleiman (1986) and Caulkins & Reuter (1998) the study found out that those involved in the distribution or supply of an illegal drug market will increase the price of their products in the hope of a higher investment return in order to compensate for the higher level of risk they have to undertake for. For more see: Weatherburn et al (2003), Reuter (1986).

half of a skin was visible. At that point, the neighbour took her leave and we went to the back of the house so Xi can lay down both sets of tiger and leopard skins in full. For the remainder of this interview and skin sampling session, T34 sat at the back of the room with his arms crossed, and replied to my queries with either a simple nod (indicating yes) or by shaking his head (indicating no). Before answering questions, Xi always turned to him for reassurance; questions I asked included prices for other endangered animal skins and for a bigger tiger skin.[6] Xi revealed that he and T34 have been in a stable working relationship for a long period of time. T34 also supplies to other traders in the network and has the highest level of centrality in the network. He is responsible for coordinating the orders and the physical delivery of tiger skins into Lhasa, price setting and accompanying traders in private skin viewing appointments.[7] T34 entered the room with a paper bag and with half the tiger visible. When I asked if he was scared of arrest or to be seen with tiger skins, he replied with a simple nod, indicating 'yes'.[8]

All three independent variables (ethnicity, level of provincial enforcement, proximity to source country) seem to impact the organization of the Tibetan network. This tiger trade network is made up entirely of suppliers and traders of Tibetan ethnic origin. All the nodes in the network are connected to the central node and the traders know each other personally. As such, the risk of defection is much lower within the Tibetan than in the Hui network. Positioned at the centre, the Tibetan skin supplier 'T34' is a

[6] I also sampled an adult jaguar skin and a number of small jaguar skins, all of which cost around 60,000 RMB (around 6,000 GBP). They claimed to have more skins to show me and were persistent in trying to persuade me to purchase one.
[7] During a skin sampling session with a Tibetan trader, the skin supplier was present. He was very quiet and reserved. He sat with his arm crossed but was very attentive and focused, he answered some of the question briefly and the trader elaborates the answer. The trader asked for his approval and confirmation before giving out price or other details of the skin products (Xi & T34).
[8] It is not unheard of for traders to carry skins in visible paper bags, see findings from a NGO report: Environmental Investigation Agency (2009).

multi-task enterprise and serves several roles in the network. There is only one skin supplier from tiger source country. Similar to the Hui network, removal of this central node can potentially disrupt the entire network. The perceived level of risk of arrest is much higher and this is reflected in the organization of their network. The close proximity to the source country allows for fewer nodes to be involve and consequently for a small network. The complexity of the Tibetan network is summarized as follows:

Table 5.1 – Roles and Functions of Actors in the Tibetan Network

Role	*Function*	*Mechanism to Foster Trust*	*Gains*	*Deposit*
Seller	To obtain skin from poacher, drive skin to Lhasa, supply skin, price setting, attend viewings	Ethnicity: Personal friend	Price of skin	n/a
Trader	To attract customers and arrange for skin viewing	Ethnicity: Personal friend	Price of skin	n/a
Buyer	To purchase skin	Trust: the seller is honest.	Skin	Full payment upon purchase, can arrange for postage for a few extra hundred dollars

Ethnicity, Enforcement, Proximity to Source Country

a) Enforcement

Overall, Tibetans in Lhasa feel that they are treated unfairly and oppressed by the central government. The general responses from the Tibetans I interviewed indicated that they felt that the People Liberation Army (PLA) in Lhasa was to spy on the population and they believed that they were monitored on a daily basis. Though the army is not specifically targeting the Tibetan tiger trade network, this high level of enrooted censorship in the Tibet has indirectly affected their network organization and their perception of risks. Like the Hui, the actual enforcement directed at the illegal trade in Lhasa is very low and the Tibetans perceive a higher level of risk than they are realistically faced with.

A brief historical account of Tibet can aid the understanding of why Tibetans feel that they are mistreated by the central government and consequently affecting the way in which perceive enforcement. Following the liberation of Tibet in 1959, the central government sent a large amount of PLA soldiers to Tibet. It has been argued that the presence of the PLA is to monitor movement of Tibetans, prevent unrest and violence between ethnic groups and to promote a harmonious image of the city to foreign visitors and has little involvement with crime and order.[9] Till date, official statistics shows that an estimation of 50,000 Han Chinese soldiers are stationed in Tibet.[10] Despite their over whelming presence, the central government is still sending troops

[9] For more on the general presence of the Chinese army in Tibet see Norbu (2001), Grunfeld (1996) and Goldstein (1997).
[10] The number of army troops in Tibet heightened before the Beijing Olympics in 2008, "Chinese Troop Numbers Increased in Lhasa", *Tibet Sun*, 11st November 2008 http://www.tibetsun.com/archive/2008/11/08/chinese-troop-numbers-increase-in-lhasa/ (accessed May 9th 2012).

into Lhasa. Arrival of new troops into Tibet is frequently reported as moments of selfless sacrifice and glorified in the national newspapers.

The image formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 5.2: An image of the newly arrived Han Chinese army into Lhasa welcomed by the local population with blessings and gifts (People's Daily, December 3rd 2011).

The image formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 5.3: National Headline: 'To the toughest regions: Troops in Tibet helps to re-construct housing for locals', Han Chinese troops are often reported to be doing heroic deeds in Tibet (People's Daily, January 12st 2009).

There were mixed feelings in the responses from local Tibetans regarding the presence of the Han Chinese military in Lhasa, none of which were positive. In general, the Tibetans I interviewed were not comfortable to speak about politics in public, but overtime revealed how they felt about the situation in Lhasa.

All interviewees felt the PLA were sent to Lhasa to monitor the Tibetan community and hinted that they wished them to leave. Regardless of their occupation, they all felt that they were being watched all the time in Lhasa because of their ethnicity: 'not here, not now, there are eyes and ears everywhere. This is Lhasa.' (T6/18/19).[11] Some interviewees simply said they were intimidated by the military and told me that they look away when they walk pass army posts in town but they were reluctant to explain the causes of their fear (T6/18/19). Elderly interviewees who had witnessed the liberation in 1951 felt the presence of the PLA adds to their shame of losing their homeland.

[11] The question in which I asked was whether they enjoyed working with Han Chinese people in Lhasa. Though they refuse to respond to my potentially sensitive questions in public, over time they revealed more and were more open and willing to speak about their experiences. (T18&23).

Some of the more outspoken interviewees tried to educate me about the 'accurate and truthful' historical account of Tibet's downfall. A Tibetan lady who works for a local NGO was at first reluctant to speak to me, but overtime she began to open up and expressed her point of view when we met in her office. She has been awarded a full scholarship to attend an American University for a Master's degree in International Relations. However, owing to her involvement with a local NGO, her passport application was refused twice. She has now given up hope of ever leaving Tibet. Given her experiences, it is reasonable to see why her comments towards the central government were largely negative: 'we know how (the Chinese Communist Party) works, they are nice to you at first and then the real deal comes – like what happened before!' (T18). To add to their worries, some of the elderly Tibetans commented that it is well known that some Tibetans have chosen to betrayed their people and work for the central government as spies: 'they are the worst, everywhere, and you really have to be careful' (T6, 18&19).

The high level of provincial surveillance directed at the Tibetans in Lhasa has indirectly affected the organization of the Tibetan tiger trade. The purpose of the PLA in Lhasa is not to monitor the illegal trade but to act as a general surveillance tool of the Tibetans. Thus as a network of Tibetans carrying out illegal trade, their perceived risk of arrest and detection is significantly higher than their Hui counterparts. During the first moments of our first meeting, the Tibetan tiger skin trader spoke of his fears: 'I am scared of police, it will create trouble'.[12] Though he has had army officials purchasing tigers' skins from him, he is still worried about arrest.

[12] The exact words used were, 'scared of the police, will bring trouble' (怕警察，會有麻煩) (Xi).

To manage risk, the Tibetan network enforces a strict rule of entry (Tibetans only), and the numbers of nodes are controlled for. By having a strict criteria on who is allowed in / out of the network, members hope to minimise risk of arrest and defection. Moreover, with all the nodes connected to everyone else in the network, efficient flow of information is enabled in all directions (information of potential seizures, arrests, clients etc.) therefore the network operates more efficiently.

b) Ethnicity

It is clear that the ethnic composition of the Tibetan network is not a direct response to the level of enforcement towards illegal trade but a response to the rooted ethnic tension between Tibetans and other ethnic groups (in particular that of Han Chinese) in Lhasa. Their strict enforcement of a homogenous ethnic network of Tibetans was a response to the general enforcement towards Tibetans in Tibet. As Tibetans, Xi and his colleagues are well aware of the risk they faces based on their ethnicity so they try to mitigate the additional risks of running an illegal operation by co-operating only with people from the same ethnic background.

Overtime, it was clear to me that the tension between Tibetans and the Han Chinese in Lhasa was very high.[13] The root of the anger amongst Tibetans towards the central government and Han Chinese is largely because of the peaceful 'liberation', and the

[13] Alongside with a number of minor disagreements on the square, I have witnessed a fight between a Tibetan man and a number of Han Chinese policemen outside the Potala Palace one early morning. There was a group of Tibetans cheering for their fellow man on the side of the road while 3 policemen pushed him down to the floor, handcuffed and eventually dragged onto a car. Whilst in the car, he continued kicking and throwing punches in the air. I spoke to some of the Tibetans about this incident in which they show concern for their fellow Tibetan, 'he (the arrested Tibetan) is a brave one, most of us will not dare – I hope he will be ok.' (T18).

ways in which the Chinese government openly insults their religious leader, Dalai Lama across national media.

Politics and Dalai Lama were topics not to be discussed in public with Tibetans in Lhasa under any circumstances. The former is a forbidden subject amongst the Tibetans at all times, since there are 'eyes and ears everywhere' (T18). Only a small number of Tibetan interviewees expressed their opinions. In addition, the mention of Dalai Lama, the foremost religious and spiritual leader of all Buddhists worldwide, is also strictly prohibited. The display of any image of the Dalai Lama is illegal in Tibet, photographs will be burned and destroyed upon discovery by the Chinese police. I was also told that copies of the 'Lonely Planet' travel guide would be confiscated since they contain many "Westernized" opinions about the situation in Tibet. I made sure that my copy was well hidden inside my jacket every time I walked pass an army station.

The root of tension between Tibetans and Han Chinese can be partially explained by the overwhelming presence of Han Chinese in Tibet. In 2008, it was reported that there were over 87% of Tibetans residing in Lhasa,[14] yet this official figure is open to question.[15] Many sources point to the fact that Tibetans are now the minority population in their homeland. The high influx of Han migrant workers to Lhasa is encouraged by the state under the 'High Plateau Incentive Scheme'. The Chinese government is encouraging Han immigrants to move to Tibet by offering them a "High Plateau" incentive on top of their wages and consequently attracting a huge

[14] "西藏民族概况" (The Situation of the Tibetans) http://www.xizang.gov.cn/getCommonContent.do?contentId=341957 (last accessed May 9th 2012)
[15] It has been argued that the central government deliberately conceal the accurate population figure of Tibetans to create an image of ethnic harmony to the outside world, when in fact Tibetans are the minority and largely under-represented in Tibet. See: Mann (2007).

influx of workers from nearby provinces, such as Sichuan, Qinghai, Xi'an and Gansu. The situation has worsened since the opening of the railway connecting Sichuan and Qinghai to Lhasa. I have met a handful of migrant workers on my way to Lhasa; all of them were returning to Tibet to work after a holiday at home.

Working in Lhasa is an attractive option to many Chinese workers. On average, an immigrant worker in Lhasa will earn 30 to 40% more than their counterpart in Mainland China. 'I used to be a driver in Sichuan and now I am massaging feet in Lhasa! Who could have guessed! I would not be here but for the higher wages and I don't like it. I don't plan to stay here for long. I cannot stand the thin air, you know – I have to stop when I walk too fast or climb the stairs to catch my breath – I cannot live like this! I have been here for 2 years and I am still affected by acute mountain sickness. I cannot grow old like this' (T8).

The problem has worsened with the opening of the Qinghai Tibet railway, which can bring up to 32.7% more tourists (pre-dominantly Han) into Tibet annually (note that this figure does not include Chinese tourists which will arrive into Lhasa by plane or car).[16] Lhasa is divided into two sides, the Han Chinese and the ancient Tibetan quarter. The influx of tourists has created business opportunities and has led to a rapid expansion of the Han Chinese quarter. By day, tourists will visit Potala Palace, temples, and monasteries. By night discos and Chinese styled restaurants will be filled with merry (and often drunk) Han Chinese tourists. During a short taxi ride, a Han taxi driver offered to sell me 'ice' (crystal meth) at 400 RMB (around 37 pounds) per

[16]It is now possible and common to drive to Tibet from Sichuan province, see: Qinghai – Tibet Railway Brings More Visitors to China's Plateau City, http://www.businessghana.com/portal/news/index.php?op=getNews&news_cat_id=1&id=160742 (last accessed May 10th 2012).

100 gram. I refused and asked if he normally offers ice to passengers. He replied, ' just some - ice is well liked and used by young partygoers in Lhasa.[17] The many discos and massage parlours from time to time made me forget that I was in one of the most religious corners of the planet.[18]

Though tourism brings a vast amount of income and stimulates economic growth for Tibet, it is frowned upon by local Tibetans and heightened tension between the ethnic groups. During my time in Lhasa, I witnessed the on-going construction of a new shopping mall in the middle of town; advertisements of international designer brands were already in place before the mall is open. None of the Tibetans I spoke to approved this development, 'the shops sell designer bags to rich officials because they need to bribe each other, no Tibetans will be going into there, look what they are doing to our home!' (T18).

'[I]t is ok for them to come, but it is not ok for them to invade – note the difference!'(T20). The involvement of the central government in the development of Tibet is branded heroic and a humble act by the state controlled media (see figure 5.4). 'I do not think any Tibetans here likes the Chinese government and their army, but what can we do?'[19] (T26). Though some of the Tibetans were more reserved than others, similar responses are found in all of the interviews conducted with the Tibetans.

[17] An educated guess is that the ice came in to Tibet from Iran, see "High Times for Iranian Drugs Mafia", Asian Times Online, 5 January 2012, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MA05Ak01.html (last accessed June 15th 2012) this was later confirmed in an interview with the girlfriend of an addict in Lhasa (T48).
[18] For more on the Chinese/ Tibetan quarter division in Lhasa, see: "Lhasa Under Siege", The Economist, 17 May 2008, http://www.economist.com/node/10871821 (last accessed 14th June 2012).
[19] A small number of the Tibetans interviewed said that they will not believe in anything reported on state owned media, they do not believe it to be an accurate or fair representation of current events. (T18)

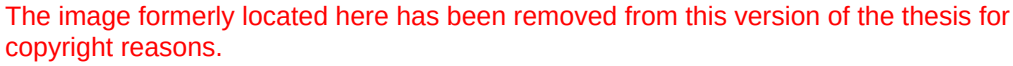


Figure 5.4: 'A Glorious Turning Point, Magnificent Journey: 60th year Anniversary of Tibet's Liberation' (People's Daily, May 22nd 2011).

Repression of Dalai Lama further adds to the tension between Tibetans and Han Chinese. Young Tibetan monks express the anger towards the Chinese government for repressing their religious leader in frequent displays of self-immolations across Tibet.[20] A minority of Tibetans interviewed explicitly asked me not to mention the Dalai Lama during our conversation, because it could potentially bring trouble. National newspapers portray Dalai Lama as a leader of an organized cult who is

[20] The most recent self-immolation was reported during early February 2012, "Death Toll in Tibet Protest Rises to 21", The Independent, 13th February 2012 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/death-toll-in-tibet-protest-rises-to-21-7237467.html (last accessed May 10th 2012). Some of the selected coverage of other reports of self-immolation as a form of protest against the state amongst Tibetan monks see: and "China Blames Dalai Lama for Tibetan's Monk Self Immolation" http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_china-blames-dalai-lama-for-tibetan-monks-self-immolation_1657575, Daily News & Analysis, 2nd May 2012 (last accessed May 10th 2012).

trying to disturb the peace of Tibetans[21] (see Figure 5.5). To insult their holy leader on a national scale is to every devoted Buddhist, a sin (T18 -19&24&38).

A Chinese national flag is placed at the top of the Potala Palace, once the residence of the current Dalai Lama. For some, this can be interpreted as a constant reminder that the central Chinese government has taken over and they are in charge (see below photo 5.2).



Photo 5.2: The national flag of China is placed in the centre of the Potala Palace. (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

[21] The mention of the name 'Dalai Lama' constitute an offence in Tibet and any photographs of Dalai Lama are strictly prohibited and if found, it will burn by the Han Chinese police. The traditional practice of Buddhism is tolerated in Tibet but not welcomed. Thus it is common for Tibetans to smuggle into Nepal and India to seek religious freedom. Though the journey will take up to weeks to complete by feet, nuns and monks have took their chances and to cross into Nepalese soil. If arrested, some of them would rather kill themselves on the spot than to be taken away by the Chinese armies. It is also an offence to have in possession or on display of photographs of Dali Lama therefore most Tibetans households/ shops display the photograph of Panchen Lama only (the 2nd highest ranking Lama after Dali Lama). Moreover, it is forbidden to bring sensitive publications into Lhasa, an example is the Lonely Planet Travel Guide, which will be taken away if view in public.

The image formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 5.5: National report of the Dalai Lama Group on their involvement in the large scale riots in Lhasa on 14.3.2008 (People's Daily, 25.3.2008).

During my time in Lhasa, I overheard various tour guides narrating the history of Tibet, none of whom made reference to the current Dalai Lama and spoke very briefly of the preceding Dalai Lamas. During one of the sessions, I overheard one of the Han Chinese tourists asking a question about the current Dalia Lama. The tour guide simply said she cannot answer the question and changed the topic. Buddhism is not regarded highly by some of my interviewees. Some of them believed that the monks put on a show for tourists and only pray during the day but will 'continue their praying in brothels at night' (T8 & 9). Negative remarks about their religion extends to other aspects of daily life, as exemplified by this remark: 'you know, you cannot eat the fish or any of the seafood in Tibet, the (Buddhists) puts their dead in the river and the fish will eat the corpse –bloody gross!' (T8).

Despite the negative attitudes from local Han population and state media, it appeared that Tibetans in Lhasa remain unshaken in their faith. It is a common sighting to see Buddhists, regardless of age, gender, and occupation to bow, kneel and chant prayers with their praying wheels in Lhasa (see below photo 5.3).



Photo 5.3: Buddhists praying in front of Potala Palace (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

The Han Chinese in Lhasa is well aware of this ethnical tension amongst the Tibetans. The Han interviewed were proud of what the central government has done for Tibet in terms of economic growth: 'they complain and complain about how much we took from them but why don't they think of all the opportunities we have given them? Education, health care, infrastructure, they really should open their eyes and shut up' (T25).[22] Overtime, I got to know two young migrant workers quite well and they told

[22] The central government has provided for all ethnicity minorities in China (Tibetans included) subsided education, healthcare and housing. I have spoken to both the Han Chinese and Tibetans regarding stated provided services. It was a widespread belief amongst the Han Chinese that the Tibetans will never be able to provide for them but for the intervention of the Chinese government. (T8, 9).

me that on the surface Tibetans and the Han get along fine, but deep down everyone knows that it is not peaceful (T8 & 9). They felt that the great portion of the tension is actually from the Tibetans and not from the Han Chinese (T8 – 9 & 31).

The Tibetans also excludes themselves from the Hui population in Tibet. In an interview with a rather outspoken Tibetan, he commented that 'they (Hui) are always the shameless ones, they are always doing something illegal (drugs trade in Lhasa)!' (T26). '[T]he Hui do not have a strong backbone like us (Tibetans), they will change their surnames and forget who they are just for money, this is something we will never do' (T38). '[T]hey are not honest people, they bribe their way through the system and bring no good to anyone, do not trust them' (T26). Yet, majority of the Hui I interviewed in Lhasa commented that they did not mind Tibetans or Han Chinese. 'I mind my own business, I have goods to sale, bills to pay and I go home to my family, this is my life. I do not care what they do as long as they don't fight in front of my stall and cause trouble for me' (T39).

I am unsure of which dimension of ethnicity bounds the Tibetans together but as a whole, the Tibetans I interviewed preferred and do indeed work, live, interact amongst themselves but would no eliminate all interaction with Han Chinese (T18). To a large extent, the city is segregated into Han Chinese and Tibetan quarters; the Hui are commonly found living amongst the Han Chinese. However, it is inaccurate to think that the segregation represents all aspects of life in Lhasa. It is also common to see Tibetans eating in restaurants owned by Han Chinese and Hui or Tibetans purchasing goods in the Han Chinese quarter. Yet, interaction is still limited. This general level of mistrust felt by Tibetans in Lhasa pushes them to isolate themselves

from the majority of the population and limit interaction (social or commercial) to their own ethnic group. As such, this is reflected by the fact that they actively chose to work with Tibetans.

Consequently, mechanisms that underpin exchange in the Tibetan network are shared ethnicity and personal relationship. The entry requirements are two folds: one must be a Tibetan and also must know other nodes personally in order to gain access to the network.

c) Proximity to Source Country

Given the short distance the tiger parts products have to travel from India In the Tibetan network, the central node is responsible for the collection and delivery of the skin into Lhasa unlike the operation by the Hui Muslims where a driver is hired especially to deliver the skins to the supplier.

The close proximity from the tiger source country allows for the Tibetans to operate in a smaller network with fewer nodes so knowledge of the trade is kept to a minimal number and in doing so, can reduce the risk of defection and enforcement.

Conclusion[23]

The actual risk posed by the provincial enforcement is low but actors in both networks act on their perceptions of risk instead of the actual risk in their operating environment in Lhasa.

In the Tibetan network, managing the risks of seizure and arrest were the foremost concerns amongst traders and these considerations affected the organisation of their network. The high level of surveillance of the Tibetan population in Lhasa *indirectly* affected the structure of their network. The actors feel that the risks they are faced with are not targeted at their illegal operation but at their ethnicity. Consequently, the mechanisms, which foster exchange, are shared ethnicity and long-term personal relationships. Unlike the Hui network, the Tibetans operate in a small, close-knit arrangement and the central node strictly controls for entry/exit into the network. The Tibetan network demonstrates that in situations where criminals perceive a high level of risk, ethnicity is a consideration resulting in an ethnic homogenous arrangement in their illegal networks.

Chapter 6: Kunming, Yunnan – Tiger Bone & Tiger Skin Network

This chapter presents the fieldwork findings about Ruili and Kunming, Yunnan province, which I visited in August and December 2011. I discovered two distinct networks, which specialised in the illegal trading of tiger bone and skin. The organisation and levels of trust within the two networks were at two extremes.

Similar to the findings from Xining and Lhasa, the tiger bone network in Kunming confirmed that, when the enforcement level perceived by the actors is low, entry to the illegal tiger parts trading network (in this case, the tiger skin network) is open and easy; ethnicity is not a consideration. The mechanism, which fosters exchange, is the reputation of the parties. Owing to the low enforcement level and far distance from the tiger source country, a group of middlemen are involved in the delivery of the tiger skins, and a monetary deposit is required. On the other hand, the results obtained about the network specialising in tiger bone trading showed that the reverse mechanism was in operation. Given the high profile arrest of a tiger bone company owner in Kunming, network actors believe the risk they have to bear is high, so they operate under a high level of secrecy by the Han Chinese. Consequently, this network's actors are unwilling to sell anything to anyone unless he/she is a family member or a close personal friend.

City Life Served Cold

If the smell of burning incense and gamey yak beef triggers my memories of my time in Lhasa, the smell of cheap Chinese cigarettes and spilt alcohol reminds me of my time in Kunming. Kunming is very different to the two other fieldwork sites. As part of my

adventure, I also travelled to the Chinese-Burmese border, to a small town called Ruili, on the south-eastern border of China (see figure 6.1): a notorious hub for heroin trade between Burma and China.

The map formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 6.1: Map of Yunnan Province. Source: http://www.yunnanadventure.com/article-g449-yunnan-maps (last accessed March 22nd 2013).

Apart from locating the tiger parts trading network, my experiences in Yunnan were deeply enriched by my encounters and interviews with the local youngsters, who revealed to me a wealth of valuable information about the local illegal drug trade. Over time, I got to know a few of the interviewees personally, one of whom was Cecilia (K21).

One of my favourite pastimes in Kunming was to visit the local shopping centres; they were different to the big, national chain stores because they catered more for the younger

generation. These shopping centres open from late afternoon until midnight. Rows of nail parlours occupied the centre of the shop, surrounded by boutiques displaying a range of replica designer brands and local fashions. In a place with young female Chinese sales assistants screaming down the aisles, catchy Asian pop music playing in the background and groups of sales assistants taking the occasional cigarette break outside their shop, this is where I met Cecilia.

My time in Kunming was deeply enriched by Cecilia; proud, young entrepreneur with her own nail parlour and a full-time staff of four. She was only 19 when she started her own nail parlour business with her savings from part-time jobs and a generous loan from her sister. Two years later, she moved to her current premises and now enjoys a steady income. She is planning to open a second shop by the end of 2013. Her success comes at a price. She shared stories of being threatened by older competitors and bullied by the local police, and how she viewed the death of her grandmother as her motivation to live a productive, happy life. I am uncertain why she told me her story but am extremely grateful that she did, for it was an evening that I will always remember. We did not exchange contact details but I did return to her shop to say good bye – we wished each other well and she asked me to promise to visit her shop again if I ever return to Kunming; I gave her my word. I hope our paths cross again in the future, as she was charming, fun and inspiring.

My time in Xining and Lhasa followed a regular routine. I began the day early, conducting interviews, and returned to my flat after supper to write up my findings. My days in Kunming were the opposite; I spent a vast amount of time exploring the city and tended to return to my flat in the early hours of the morning. I spent a lot of time in

Starbucks, watching busy passers-by rushing to their next destination, I gathered around a bonfire (by which I mean a burning pile of dry wood and cardboard boxes next to a busy car park) with a group of local workers and we shared stories and jokes. I visited a massage parlour at 2am and chatted to the masseur until her shift ended at 5am. Overall, my time in Kunming was very entertaining.

Kunming City, Yunnan Province

I began my search for tiger parts in Kunming city centre by exploring the main shopping districts. I started on Nanping Business Street, the city's central commercial district.[1] Nanping Street's main street stretching over three long blocks in the centre and numerous smaller shopping arcades connected to the main road on both sides. The mainstream foreign and local Chinese brands dominated the main street while smaller, local run business were located inside the underground shopping centres. Signs of globalization were everywhere, as tired shoppers retired to Starbucks for their latte and secondary school students visited Pizza Hut and MacDonald's after school. Kunming's reputation as a first tier Chinese city is well deserved.

[1] For more information on the Nanping business district, see, 'Nanping Shopping Mall' http://www.topchinatravel.com/china-shopping/nanping-shopping-mall.htm (last accessed June 29th 2012).



Photo 6.1: Parkson Shopping Centre, located on the corner of the main Nanping street. The shopping centre offers a wide range of foreign and expensive local Chinese brands. It is a national chain owned by Malaysian Golden Lion Limited (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong).

Life in Kunming was never dull. One can shop all day. The Kunde area has plenty to offer at night. The famous Kunde area is open daily from dusk till dawn and is always filled with energetic partygoers. The majority of them were locals but there were also a handful of young tourists from other Chinese cities. I spent a vast amount of time in this area and conducted a number of interviews with people whom I met in the nightclubs.



Photo 6.2: One of the newest clubs in Kunde night market (photo credit: Rebecca Wong).

Ruili City, Kunming Province

I visited Ruili in August 2011; it had been reported that tiger skins were being smuggled across from Burma into Ruili, entering Kunming and being transferred onwards to other Chinese cities. Owing to unforeseen circumstances, my stay in Ruili was very brief but I managed to catch a glimpse of this infamous illegal trade hub. On the surface, Ruili was a peaceful town situated on the Chinese-Burmese border. It is 45 minute flight from Kunming Airport followed by a 2-hours drive or, if one is feeling adventurous, it takes 13 hours to reach by overnight bus. Paddy fields and farmland owned by the Dai ethnic minority flank the highway to Ruili. My taxi driver (also a very knowledgeable tour

guide) informed me that this area is a popular tourist attraction; rice produced by the Dai there can be sold at 400 RMB (around 40 GBP) for 100 gram in the city (R1).



Photo 6.3: On way to Ruili from Mangshi Airport. The sign reads 'Welcome to Ruili' (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

Rice from Ruili may be famous nationwide but its heroin (also known as number 4 by the locals) is famous internationally. Due to its geographical location, Ruili is one of the main entry points for the traffic in Burmese heroin. My taxi driver described the border security as 'slack and easy to get through; you can throw a package across at night and someone will come and pick it up off the floor on the other side (Ruili)' (R1). Heroin was just one of the many illegal commodities being smuggled across the border; tiger skins were also known to have made their way into Ruili and I was told that tiger meat banquets were being served in certain hotels in the town.

Which Part of the Tiger?

I discovered that *both* tiger bone and skin were available in Kunming via two distinct, illegal networks.

Tiger Bone

It appeared that I was not the only one in Kunming seeking tiger bone products. After turning me away from her traditional Chinese medicine shop, a female sales assistant suggested I access the Internet to do some secondary research (K14).

I discovered numerous discussion threads related to enquiries about obtaining tiger part products online, and a large portion of these requests were made in Kunming city (see figures 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 & 6.5).

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Figure 6.2: An Urgent Request for Rhino Bone and Tiger Bone in Kunming, found on Baidu.com (Mainland China's equivalent to Google).

The image formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 6.3: A Potential Trader Advertising Tiger Bone on the Kunming city listing on Baixing.com (similar to Craiglist.com in the West).

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Figure 6.4: The daughter of a man with health problems enquires about tiger bone products in Kunming.

The image formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 6.5: A potential trader selling his tiger bone wine collection for 50,000 RMB on the Kunming city listing.

Although the response rate to the message threads was very low, they suggested that there exists a demand for tiger part products in Kunming, so there must be a hidden supply.

Tiger Bone

'It's a risky business; don't try it.' (Sam)

Before recounting my search for tiger bone, I must stress that it ultimately proved unsuccessful, although the journey revealed some interesting findings about this illegal trade.

My search for tiger bone began around busy Nanping Street. Most of the traditional Chinese medicine shops on Nanping Street are big national chains, with the occasional, smaller shop tucked away in the quieter areas (see photos below).



Photo 6.4: One of the national traditional Chinese medicine chain stores around Nanping Street (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 6.5: Another traditional Chinese Medicine shop on Nanping Street (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

I visited around a dozen traditional Chinese medicine shops, none of which claimed to have access to tiger bone. My knowledge of the general usage of traditional Chinese medicine was deeply enriched by a small number of keen female sales assistants, who explained to me the alternatives to tiger bone products (K11 – K14). When asked about the availability of tiger bone products, their response was unanimous, all stressing that their sale was illegal. One of the sales assistants was certain that I would not find them in legitimate Chinese medicines shops and that, if I did, it would not be genuine tiger bone (K14).

Following my unsuccessful search, I visited a provincial Chinese medicine wholesale market: Juhuyuan market. Located outside Kunming, Juhuyuan is a 45-minute bus ride from the city centre. It was built in 1991 and has been the only state-recognized Chinese medicine retail market in Yunnan province ever since. The market was massive, with at

least 75 retail stalls and a spacious car park at the back. The customers tended to be shop owners from the city, and there were very few people in the market while I was there (see photo 6.6 & 6.7)



Photo 6.6: Kunming City Juhuanyuen Chinese Medicine Retail Market (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 6.7: Inside the Market, Chinese herbal medicines are laid out to dry on the floor (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

The market was not busy because most of the sales took place in the early morning, while the rest of the day was reserved for packing and delivery (K5). Many of the stalls were vacant or closed during my visit. I certainly stood out during my visits.

My search for tiger bone proved unsuccessful during my first few hours in Juhuanyuen market. Although all of the shopkeepers claimed to know nothing about how to obtain tiger bone products, some revealed insightful details about the tiger bone industry. There is no such thing as real tiger bone; it is all fake cow bone (K4). Some of the interviewees were very familiar with the prices of tiger bone, despite claiming to have no knowledge of the industry (K4 – K7). However, they suggested that I should further my search in the big traditional medicine companies, especially the ones located inside the buildings

near to the market (K4 – K7). Though they were happy to speak to me at their empty stalls, I sensed mistrust and suspicious in their responses.

This high level of suspicion displayed towards a stranger asking about tiger bone products could be due to the recent high profile arrest of their fellow stallholder for selling 480,000 RMB (around 48,000 GBP) worth of tiger bone to a wealthy government official. The tiger bone had been a gift to another powerful official, and it was delivered to Hangzhou via the National China Post but intercepted by customs. The local police raided the market stall and both the seller and buyer were arrested. The seller was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment.[2] This incident is not only well documented on the Internet but also a common topic amongst the retailers in the market. One of the more talkative retailers, Sam (K8), was keen to re-tell this story and show me where the raided stall had been; it remains shut since the owner's arrest. 'It is still empty/ I don't know when he will be back and I don't think he will ever come back. He should not have done it!' (Sam)

According to Sam, this was just one isolated case of arrest made in the market for as long as he could remember. The market is generally very peaceful but this high profile arrest caught everyone off guard and heightened their fears of being arrested. Yet, there have been no other arrests, so this is an isolated case.

Sam informed me on every hearsay he heard about the arrest and we were soon joined by two of his colleagues. They were as curious about me as I was about the tiger bone. Sam and his colleagues claimed not to know of anyone selling tiger bone in Kunming.

[2] This high profile arrest was reported in numerous national tabloids in China; see, for example, 'Tiger Bone and Rhino Horn Intercepted in Hangzhou.' http://www.js163.com.cn/show_news.asp?id=4564 (last accessed July 2nd 2012).

Like K4 – K7, they suggested approaching the big traditional Chinese medicines companies about this. I was told that one of the companies inside a commercial building five minutes from the market had tiger bone. Yet, he advised me to ring the company first rather than going directly to their office. He was certain that a Han Chinese businessman runs the company and that 'this sort of goods' was reserved for his family and friends. He explained that it is all kept within the circle (Sam). In other words, I would not be welcome because I am neither a family member nor a friend.

Moreover, he advised me to stop seeking tiger bone and looked uneasy when he learnt that I was determined to locate some. Before I left, he warned me again that the risks were very high and not worth it. Perhaps he was genuinely worried about my well being or, more probably, that he could be traced as my source if I got into trouble. I discovered that the names of the companies that Sam gave me were incorrect; none of them existed, and I did not find any companies with similar names located in the buildings near the market. Due to the limited resources and time, I called off my search for tiger bone and focused on locating tiger skin traders instead.

The recent high profile arrest in Kunming made it more difficult to access this market and, in order to conceal the operation, it is only open to traders' family members or close friends of Han Chinese ethnicity. However, there has only been one isolated case of arrest, so enforcement was relatively low, yet the actors in the tiger bone network perceived a much higher risk then approximate in reality. This confirmed the finding in the Tibetan's tiger skin network in Lhasa that a perceived level of high enforcement by the actors in the network will lead to a more exclusive network structure with a homogenous ethnic composition.

Tiger Skin

My discovery of the tiger skin network was unexpected. Upon my arrival in Kunming city centre by taxi, early on a December morning, I saw a middle-aged man pushing a trolley full of tiger skins (photo 6.8).



Photo 6.8: In December 2011, I saw several similar trolleys filled with skins around the city (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).

I was shocked, but the taxi driver laughed at my ignorance, assuring me that men wheeling trolleys piled high with animal skins was a common sight in Kunming city during the winter, and stressed that I would certainly see more of them (K3). He was correct. I saw other trolleys full of animal skins, mainly those of wolves, dogs or sheep that tended to be used as seat covers for motorbikes and cars. Depending on its size, a sheepskin cost around 600 RMB (60 GBP), while a wolf or dog skin was slightly more expensive, costing 650 – 800 RMB (around 65-85 GBP) (K25-27).

There were two distinct skin trade networks. One was operated by a group of Urghur men from Xinjiang and the other by Han Chinese. Both groups have their own skin trollies and a similar range of wolf, dog, sheep and leopard skins. It appeared that the Uyghur traders from the Xinjiang network were more concerned about the potential risks involved in engaging in the illegal skin trade. They stated that they did not and would not engage in the tiger skin trade, since it was illegal to do so (K25 - 27). However, there seems to be some blurring between what is legal and what is illegal among the traders from both networks. For example, any trade in leopard skin is strictly prohibited under international and domestic legislation, yet I saw a wide range of leopard skins displayed on the trolleys. Nevertheless, only the latter network, run by Han Chinese,

claimed to have access to tiger skin products.



Photo 6.9: Another trolley of skins found in Kunming city centre Kunming, belonging to the Han Chinese network (photo credit: Rebecca Wong).

The Serbian Tiger

'Miss, it is not a tiger – it is a Serbian Tiger!' (Lin)

My discovery of the Han Chinese tiger skin network occurred towards the end of my second visit to Kunming, at which point I was already planning to leave, having accumulated few relevant findings. After another disappointing morning spent around the train station, I decided to walk back to my flat. Half way home, a trolley filled with skins appeared in front of me. I was overwhelmed with excitement and followed the man pushing it. This proved quite difficult, because the roads were crowded with people arriving in Kunming by train with their cases. After much pushing and squeezing through a lively crowd, I found myself standing next to the trolley filled with skins at a crossroads (see photo 6.9). The trader, Lin (K31), agreed to speak to me.

Lin is a male from Gansu province, in his early twenties. He has a quiet nature yet was not shy about answering questions regarding accessing tiger skin products. He was quick to make clear that he did not work for the Uyghur group, although he was aware of their existence. To my surprise, he also ruled out any possibility of obtaining tiger skin products from Burma, as they all came from India (via Nepal and Tibet). He stunned me with the suggestion that he might be able to obtain a Siberian tiger skin, but at a very high price. I was astonished by this remark because none of the traders interviewed so far had mentioned the possibility of obtaining a Siberian tiger skin.[3] Given the distance involved, there would be a minimum of 2 months' wait and I must leave a 50% deposit, a minimum of RMB 500,000 (50,000 GBP) since the skin is sold at 1 million RMB. Lin

[3] Siberian tigers reside in the Russian mountains. Like all other species of tiger, international trade in their skins is strictly prohibited. See: 'Siberian Tiger' http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/siberian-tiger/ (last accessed April 23rd 2013).

refused to say where he was based but revealed that he belongs to a team of men who work for his boss. We exchanged our contact details and bade each other farewell. As he walked away, he kept stopping to look back at me every few meters to ensure that I was not following him. He then went into an alley to smoke a cigarette and by then I decided to enter another street to avoid trouble but, for the brief moments while I was following him, I felt like I was starring in a detective film.

Later that same week, I met two of Lin's colleagues as I was coming out of a fast food restaurant. Both men were pushing their trolleys full of skins along the main Nanping Street. I approached them and, although they were less talkative than Lin, they pointed me in the direction of a leather stall to obtain further information.



Photo 6.10: The leather shop where I met a supplier from the Han Chinese tiger skin network. (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong).

The leather stall openly displayed a small range of fox skins (a white fox skin can be seen hanging up in the left of photo 6.10) and publicly advertised cow skin products. It attracted many curious passers-by but very few consumers. I spoke to the owner of the stall: Wong (K39). Several of his employees attempted to eavesdrop on our interview but Wong told them to go away, and he was happy to talk about his expertise when we were alone.

Wong was in his early thirties, but looked very young for his age. He claimed to have run the shop for so long that he could not remember when he started. He is a local Yunanese. At first, he remained reserved in his answers and gave out little information

but, over time, he appeared to relax and told me more details about his network. I have re-constructed the network as follows:

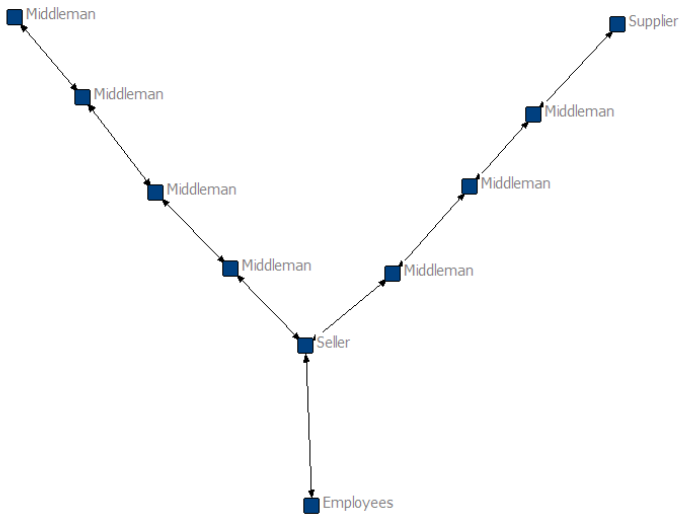

Figure 6.6: The Kunming tiger trade network. The two diagonal chains represent the two possible routes via which tiger parts products can reach the seller (the left-hand chain represents Tibet, with fewer middlemen, while the right represents Russia, with more possible middlemen due to the greater distance involved). The number of middlemen shown in the network is an estimation based on the information Wong has revealed to me. He did not specify the exact number but he stressed that there was more than two middlemen involved in the delivery process from Tibet and a 'large' group involved in the delivery from Siberia.

Wong confirmed that, apart from the trolley pushed by Uyghur men, all of the other trolleys laden with skins that I saw in Kunming city centre belonged to him. Lin and the two trolleys pushers whom I met were all his employees. He has six or seven trolleys and their main aim was to sell legal/common (i.e.: dog, wolf, and sheep) skins. But, sometimes, the trolleys attract customers who request other type of skins, he/she will be directed to Wong. He was very happy and told me that this strategy was effective, given that I have shown up at his stall.

Wong was well aware that other (he estimated 4 – 5) exotic skin trading networks existed in Kunming but was quite reluctant to speak about this topic. He was able to obtain tiger skin products from India or Russia. Yet, given the number of 'hands' the skins must pass, their price is very high. A full tiger skin from Tibet would cost 500,000 RMB (50,000 GBP), whereas a Siberian tiger would cost double that (a million RMB or 100,000 GBP). A 50% non-refundable deposit is mandatory in order to pay the 'hands' involved.

Ethnicity, Enforcement, Proximity to Source Country

a) Enforcement

Though the nature of the enforcement was very different to that in Tibet, the police also heavily patrolled Kunming. As I witnessed myself, the level of enforcement in Kunming city differed significantly between day and night.



Photo 6.11: A police car parked next to a mobile police station is a frequent sight (photo credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 6.12: Signs advertising police hotlines are common in Kunming city (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong).

Apart from the occasional pickpockets and random fights, Kunming is a relatively safe city during the day. Perhaps the many mobile police stations and police cars around the city served as a constant reminder that the police was always nearby,[4] and their presence did not necessarily suggested that there was a high crime rate in the city. The locals stated that the police were there for show (K16). The frequent police patrols were designed to protect the safety of officials and singers from across China visiting Kunming. Also, the government had perceived the drug issue in Kunming as a threat to the city's image and so increased the level of police patrols (K16).

Kunming is a much more interesting place at night. Many young professionals and university students spent their time in Starbucks, and I chatted to several friendly people in this over- priced coffee shop. In addition, the local nail parlours frequented by young females and their boyfriends (most of whom sat beside their girlfriend while she had her nails painted) were another of my favourite spots. The staff knew just as much about the city as experienced taxi drivers, and speaking to them was always enjoyable. A 24-hours massage parlour awaits you, where you can stay overnight in a guest room for a higher rate. The police presence appeared to be concentrated only in the Kunde area at night; in fact, the number of police patrolling this nightclub district was astonishing, as if there were preparing for some kind of practice drill. I later learnt that the police were there because of the serious drug use there amongst the young. A taxi driver told me that many of his colleagues had been assaulted by drunks or people who had taken drugs, as a

[4] While in Kunming, I saw several police officers interfering with the citizens' daily life. The incident that had the greatest impact on me was when I witnessed a policeman slapping a teenage boy's face and screaming into his ear outside a mobile police booth by the train station. People nearby told me that the policeman was outraged at how the young man was treating his girlfriend and so had decided to teach him a lesson and shame him in public.

result of which the local government passed a law stating that the taxi driver's seat had to be protected by a metal cage (K36).

In a city where police patrols and mobile police stations were very common, it was amazing how relaxed Wong felt about selling illegally-traded skins from his stall at one of the busiest junctions in town. He believed that it was pointless being fearful of the police as he was providing a product that was highly sought-after by many. Unlike many of the drug dealers in the city, who were ruining lives and destroying families, he was providing a harmless benefit, which many people strongly desired (Wong). He insisted that he belonged in the decorative item business and has worked hard to establish himself in the city. Although his comments might seem absurd to many, they did reflect the reality on the ground. I have seen trolleys filled with skins being pushed past mobile police stations yet neither party appeared to acknowledge, or even notice, the other's presence. One police officer laughed at the idea of there being tiger skins in Kunming and joked that he would want to see them if this is true (K40). This is not a surprise given that there were only a handful of records on official arrests and seizures made in Yunnan province in 1999, 2001 and 2008. None of the arrests were made within Kunming city. Wong believes there are minimal risks in trading tiger skins.

Since the tiger skins must pass through many 'hands' in order to reach Kunming, Wong emphasized that he cannot guarantee their safe delivery but insisted that it was very rare for them to be intercepted. He did not reveal exactly how the skins were transported but stressed that it would not be in anyone's interests to 'screw things up'. Although Wong did not speak much about the delivery process, my in depth interview with an ex-solider (K17) filled in many of the gaps. K17 informed me that one of the most lucrative jobs in

China was to belong to the People's Liberation Army and be stationed at the borders. Having been stationed at the Yunnan-Vietnam border, he described the system as 'fuckin' dark', with bribes appearing in advance of consignments of illegal goods. It is clear why parents are willing to pay up to RMB 50,000 (around 5,000 GBP) as a 'registration fee' to get their son into the army. The 'registration fee' is three times higher for females and one must pay 150,000 RMB (around 15,000 GBP) (K17) to secure a place for one's daughter. So, K17 was certain that tiger skin products could not enter the country were it not for the corrupt border police: 'How else would they get into the country? We can stop a mosquito from flying in if we have to; how can we not stop a skin?' (K17).

In many ways, the tiger skin network in Kunming was similar to that of the Hui's tiger skin network in Tibet and the tiger bone network in Xining. The enforcement in Kunming was concerned with tackling the drug trade whereas, in Lhasa, enforcement was concerned with maintaining the city's positive image. In Kunming, given the low level of enforcement, entry to the network is easy and open to different ethnic groups. The reputation of the parties fosters exchange because both sides understand that it is not in their best interests to dishonour an agreement.

b) Ethnicity

The relevance of ethnicity was limited in this network. Wong did not perceive a high level of risk of arrest in his operating environment and allowed easy entry to/exit from his network, just like the Hui's network in Lhasa. Coincidentally, Wong's employees were all Han Chinese. Wong stressed that this was not intentional but merely due to the

fact that there was such a huge influx of migrant Han Chinese workers seeking work in Kunming.

Although Yunnan province is promoted widely for its ethnic diversity by the state tourism bureau, the majority of the population is Han Chinese because most of the members of ethnic minorities reside in the countryside around Yunnan. The ethnic minority groups in Yunnan enjoy a comparatively primitive way of life and are keen to retain their traditions, perceiving this as impossible to achieve in the city (R1). They choose to stay in their own area, paying little attention to the world around them (R1). This resistance to change was also found among the native Han Chinese in Kunming; the majority commented that they were unwilling to leave Kunming and did not want to change. Therefore, it is not uncommon to hear that they will not leave Kunming even if offered a better job in another first-tier Chinese city. Many of the females whom I interviewed were keen to find a local, Yunanese spouse (K18-19).

On the other hand, there has been a huge influx of migrant workers from across China into Kunming, most of whom found themselves working in the service sector, although not all of the migrant workers were in legitimate employment. It is a well-known fact that Xinjiang migrant workers dominated the Yunnan local drug trade (K22, K24). In fact, I was told that the situation has worsened over the years and now there was a shortage of young men in some parts of Xinjiang because they had all gone to Kunming to sell drugs (K22).

None of the interviewees expressed any negativity towards any of the ethnic minority groups. This is unsurprising, given that most of the interviewees have never met a

member of any ethnic minority (K15). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that Wong said that he employed Han Chinese workers only because there were so many of them available to work in Kunming. For him, it did not matter who they were as long as they did their job (Wong). He will not trust them any more or less because of the dialect they speak or their ethnicity; as long as they deliver clients to him, he is happy.

c) Proximity

Kunming's proximity to the tiger source countries has a strong causal effect on the structure of Wong's network.

The map formerly located here has been removed from this version of the thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 6.7: Map of Kunming highlighting the distances to Nepal and Russia

Source: http://www.99daystopanama.com/China/China.html (last accessed March 23rd 2013).

Kunming is situated next to Burma, one of the main tiger source countries, but Wong and his team revealed that all of the tiger skin products came from either India (via Nepal) or Russia. Wong explained that a portion of the cost of the tiger skin was used to 'buy connections' in order for it to reach Kunming safely (Wong).

Wong felt certain that, with his connections, the skin would arrive safely in Kunming. He confirmed that there was more than one middleman involved in the delivery of the

skin and the number of middleman varied depending on the transaction, so he was unsure of the exact number (Wong). The high number of people involved in the process of delivering the tiger skin led to the question of defection and betrayal within the network: how does Wong ensure that the middlemen will pass on the tiger skin? Wong gave a simply reply to this question: it would be foolish for anyone to 'mess up' because a good reputation is a long-term investment (Wong).

Conclusion

Prior to embarking on my fieldwork, I was naive enough to imagine that locating the tiger skin trade network in Kunming would be the easiest one of all. I was extremely disappointed when I made little progress in the city during my first visit in August and was prepared to return again after my second visit in December. This surprised me because Kunming was much more advanced and modern than Lhasa and Xining, yet none of its modernity made my fieldwork any easier.

In Kunming, I discovered a tiger bone and a tiger skin network. It is striking that, although both networks operate in the same city, their organisation and transaction method are very different. Both networks offer insights into how an illegal trade can be influenced by the three chosen independent variables while, at the same time, confirm some of the key findings from Lhasa and Xining. The ways in which the two networks were organised and the risks managed were very different. Owing to a high profile arrest, the tiger bone network members *believe* they are faced with high risk so operates under a high level of concealment and will only sell to family or close friends. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak to anyone involved in this network, but many individuals actively

involved in the traditional Chinese medicine industry confirmed to me the existence of this exclusive trade.

On the other hand, the tiger skin network in Kunming operates under a low level of enforcement. Wong, the key node in the network, paid little attention to the police presence in Kunming, insisting that it would be unreasonable to be scared of the police. Consequently, the network is easily accessible and open to different ethnic groups. Given the distance that the tiger skin products must travel, Wong entrust a number of middlemen with the delivery process. Similar to the Hui's network in Lhasa and the tiger bone network in Xining, reputation is the main mechanism for fostering exchange. Wong did not think that any of his traders or middlemen would act in a way that might damage their reputation and so he felt confident that they would deliver.

Chapter 7: Xining, Qinghai – Tiger Bone Network

Xining is not the kind of place that young people go to searching for a fortune or to fulfil their dreams. In fact, it is quite the opposite. It is a peaceful gateway city to Tibet, with strong, dry winds all year around; the kind of city where one should not be surprised if the electricity goes off in one's flat for several hours or if the whole hot water system of the neighbourhood shuts down (as I discovered). The economy is largely dependent on mining and petro chemicals; the grounds are rich in oil and petrol. Although it is a most ambitious city, daring young people would wish to leave it. This is the type of city one should come to if one wishes to see behind the illusions of skyscrapers and shopping malls filled with European designer brands in the few first tier Chinese cities.

Although I am of Chinese ethnicity and have been raised in a traditional Chinese family, my first few days in Xining were a culture shock for me. My time there taught me that it was the custom (though not mandatory) to order dumplings by the kilogram and, by the time I had finished, the restaurant owner came over to my table and gave me a pat on the shoulder. I also hadn't realised that you have to pay an additional fee if you wish to use sanitized towels in a local Chinese massage parlour. It is considered rude if you refuse chilli on your food (even if you cannot tolerate spicy food) and that, sometimes, a hard shove from a stranger may be a gentle reminder that you must push your way onto a bus.

This chapter will present the findings of a tiger bone network discovered in Xining. Similar to other networks identified in Lhasa and Kunming, the level of enforcement has a causal effect on the organisation of the identified tiger bone network and also on its ethnic composition. On the other hand, the independent variables of ethnicity and proximity have minimal causal effect on the network structure. Similar to the Hui and the tiger skin network identified in Lhasa and Kunming, the reputation of the parties played a significant role in fostering trust and exchange in the network.

The Taxi Chase

My first two hours in Xining were nothing short of intense and intimidating. The only thing that made the situation better was the fact that I had a female friend with me, so I was not alone. I had never travelled outside of the tourist hot spots in China and no amount of preparatory reading and research could have prepared me for what happened when I arrived in Xining.

In order to reach Xining from Hong Kong, I had to take three connecting flights; my first destination was Shanghai, with a two hour transit to another airport to take my connecting flight to Xi'an. My flight took off for Xi'an at 8pm and we had landed by 10pm. All of the passengers were required to leave the aircraft and wait in the lounge (more like a run-down warehouse) for the next flight to Xining. The flight to Xining was delayed for an hour and we took off around midnight, arriving in Xining by 2am.

The airport staff must have been very anxious to leave by the time we arrived, as they switched off all of the runway lights as soon we landed. With minimal light, our pilot navigated in the dark to find a parking space. After over 20 hours of travelling, I was absolutely delighted to be reunited with my backpack at the luggage conveyor belt. Yet, by the time my friend and I left the building (which was instantly locked behind us with a heavy industrial chain), everyone on our flight was either getting on the last bus or being greeted by friends and family. The only light came from the few streetlights outside the airport building, so dim that they looked like they would go out at any second. We crossed the road to an empty car park to find a taxi but to no avail.

A private car then approached us, offering to take us to our destination for a very high fee. Shortly afterwards, another car drove into the empty car park and advised us to go with him instead. He warned us that the other driver was not to be trusted and advised us to go with him instantly to avoid trouble, which was not a very respectable strategy for attracting customers. The two drivers entered into an argument and exchanged foul remarks. Just as they were starting to throw air punches at each other, a legitimate taxi (with a meter) drove into the car park. He stayed only briefly, as the two angry drivers immediately ran up to his car, and began screaming verbal abuse at him and throwing air punches. The legitimate taxi driver drove off, leaving my friend and I in the car park.

The thought of sleeping in the empty car park crossed our minds but, due to the cold, we decided against it. Moreover, it was simply unwise for two females to do so, so, eventually, we decided to go with one of the drivers (our choice was made

wholly on instinct). Luckily, our instinct proved correct and the driver took us to our flat. I chatted with him throughout the journey (about 50 minutes) and he revealed that he used to serve in the People's Liberation Army and had been stationed in Tibet for many years. For the whole time, the other driver was following us, flashing his lights and sounding his horn repeatedly to remind us how angry he was at our decision. Though my driver had a far bigger physique and could not care less about his stalker, it was a frightening experience for us.

Instincts

During my time in Xining, I spend most days wandering around the city and taking random buses to ensure that I saw as much of the city possible in an economical way. One of the many places I visited during my first few days in Xining was Ta'er Monastery, a famous Buddhist temple built in the 1360s that marks the birthplace of the founder of Yellow Hat Sect Buddhism.[1] The monastery is located 16 miles from the city centre, a 2-hour bus journey and, like many other temples or places of worship in China, it has now become a tourist hot spot. Though the site is well preserved, it is unfortunate that only a small number of monks still reside in the monastery; their purpose in staying is more for tourism than faith. An outdoor flea market was held next to the monastery, aimed at tourists but one could easily tell that it was enjoying limited success, as it was empty and very quiet. The stallholders chatted amongst themselves, and some played cards on the counters.

[1] "Tibetan Buddhist Sects." http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=221catid=6subcatid=34 (last accessed July 14th 2013).



Photo 7.1: The Entrance to Ta'er Monastery (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 7.2: Food stalls outside Ta'er Monastery (Photo Credit: Rebecca Wong)

Nonetheless, I spent some time in the market and ventured into some of the surrounding alleys. Most of these alleys were empty and the shops in them were closed. Towards the middle of the market, there were a few stalls, which displayed animal skins, mainly of wolves or foxes. I was told that there were no tiger skins for sale in the area and that I should try my luck in Lhasa if I wished to find any kind of exotic skin (X1-X7).



Photo 7.3: A stall near the entrance to the market (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong)

It proved that the information revealed to me by X1-X7 was inaccurate when I ventured into a quiet corner of the market, where there were two stalls selling exotic skins (to date, I remain unsure to which animal it belongs). The skins hung from the door of the stall.



Photo 7.4: One of the stalls with exotic skins hanging at the door (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong)

There was no one around and, even though all of the stalls were open for business, no lights were on inside any of them. I was thrilled to make my first potential discovery of an exotic animal skin trade network.

I peered into one of the shops and saw three middle-aged men sitting inside, chatting together. Though I was in a public place, I felt uneasy. The area was completely empty. I tried to work out an escape route but reminded myself that, if they were to lock the door from the inside, I would be trapped inside. After a few moments, I decided to heed my instincts and leave. It was the first and only time I felt so strongly against a particular shop on my fieldwork journey and, on reflection, though I am still curious about what kind of data I might have been

able to collect from the shop, I was glad that I did not stay long enough to find out.

The Head of a Tiger

My first discovery of a tiger parts trade network was made on a sunny afternoon in Wuxi Street. The street was full of traditional Chinese medicine shops. On average, there were at least five Chinese medicine shops per block (with approximately seven to nine shops per block). I have never seen anything like this anywhere else in China. The shops were empty and spacious, occupying at least 800 square feet each. All had similar décor and looked as if they belonged to the same standardized chain.

I found my tiger bone in the first shop I visited. It was a big shop with a busy bus stop outside. I picked it because all of the staff were female and at that point, I felt safer speaking to a member of my own sex. Posters of Bengal tigers were displayed inside the shop and a fake tiger head was mounted at the entrance. I still remember how nervous I felt when I saw the tiger's head, as if it belonged to a human being. I was also nervous about asking about tiger bones, so I causally chatted to the staff for a while before bringing up the topic. To my surprise, the female sales assistant told me about the procedure of purchasing a tiger bone from her shop as if it was any other legal ingredient used in Chinese medicine.

The sales assistant was happy to talk to me about tiger bones and revealed all sorts of information about the trade (X13). By the end of our conversation, I was so

nervous that I nearly fell down the steps in front of the shop as I left and jumped onto to a random bus at the bus stop. I cannot explain why I was so worried and scared when I was not the one breaking the law.

The Infamous Tiger Bone

All of the tiger bones I discovered in Xining were in traditional Chinese medicine shops, of which they were many. The two main areas where I discovered them were Wuxi Street, a busy area with local shopping malls frequented by local youngsters, and Binhe Road, a less busy area that hosted many large traditional Chinese medicine shops and a modest number of family run shops and restaurants.



Photo 7.5: One of the smaller traditional Chinese medicine shops in Wuxi Street, a family run store. (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 7.6: A Department Store on Wuxi Street, near the end of the street, which tends to cater for younger shoppers. The majority of the traditional Chinese medicine shops are at the other end of Wuxi Street (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong).



Photo 7.7: One of the main underground shopping alleys on Wuxi Street (Photo credit: Rebecca Wong)

Interestingly, most of the traditional Chinese medicine shops on both Wuxi Street and Binhe Road were empty and over staffed, and the treatment I received inside them consisted of two extremes; some of the sales staff greeted me with overwhelming enthusiasm while others continued chatting with each other while I wandered around the store. I discovered that the shop owners were usually very willing to speak to me about their business while the sales staff tended to ignore me. In fact, the shop owners were so open and friendly; it was easy to forget that I was actually right in the middle of discovering an underground illegal network.

All in the Family

During my time in Xining, the main re-distribution points for tiger bone products were the traditional Chinese medicine shops on both Wuxi Street and Binhe Road. Their network can be summarised as follows:

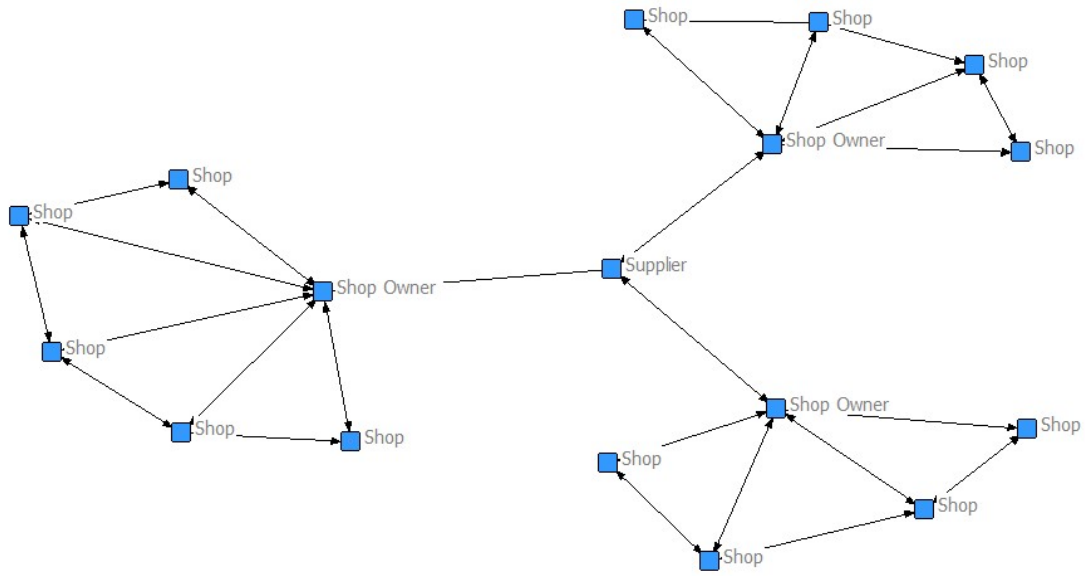

Figure 7.1: Network Diagram of the Xining Tiger Bone Network

The overwhelming presence of traditional Chinese medicine shops in both areas was a strategic move used by the shop owners to drive their competitors out of

business. The same shop owner would try to occupy the entire block with his/her shops in order to increase his/her exposure and drive out the competition. (X14-18, Kim). Three of the owners whom I interviewed were X14, (Teng), X18 (Mrs. Liu), both female Han Chinese in their mid-40s, and X20 (Kim), a talkative gentleman in his early 50s. All three own a larger number of traditional medicine shops in Xining and claimed to have access to tiger bone products.

Teng explained that the shops in this area were owned by four to six oligopolists, all of whom were Han businessmen/women and a small number of shops were family run businesses, which she predicted would be driven out of business very soon (Teng). Though the strategy of occupying the entire street was illogical to me, Teng believed that it was a good idea. Their client bases were not the local population but travellers from all across China, many of whom were senior business-people seeking to buy traditional Tibetan medicines to take home as souvenirs. The dried caterpillar collected on the Tibetan plateau was an extremely expensive, rare fungus. The best quality caterpillars were sold at a rate of 100,000 RMB per kilogram (around 10,000 GBP). Owing to its prestige in the world of traditional Chinese medicine, it is often referred to as the 'Golden Worm',[2] and is a status symbol craved by the rich and powerful in China.

[2] Finkel, Michael. "Tibet's Golden Worms." *National Geographic*, August 2012, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/08/tibetan-mushroom/finkel-text (last accessed May 14th 2013). The Tibetan nomads are expert in identifying dried caterpillar fungus because of their knowledge of the Tibetan Plateau and its climate – this knowledge gives them a distinctive advantage. Though I am not entirely sure of the accuracy of this, I was told during an interview with a migrant Han Chinese worker that a Tibetan family had 'bought' their way out of Tibet because they had discovered an extremely rare species of dried caterpillar and have now migrated to Switzerland (T8/9).

Teng explained that the supplier was responsible for supplying, delivering and setting the price of the tiger bone. A small number of suppliers monopolised the supply of tiger bone products in Xining (Teng). The bone is always with the supplier. Owing to the small number of suppliers of tiger bone in Xining, the shop owner, Mrs. Liu, commented that she always used the same supplier and that she had established a good working relationship with him over time (Mrs. Liu). She emphasised that, because there were so little tiger bone left in the region, she cannot afford to be choosy (Mrs.Liu). Yet, she was not worried about being cheated or dishonest transactions since the supplier would place his reputation on the line if he failed to honour their agreement (Mrs.Liu).

The process of obtaining a tiger bone was not difficult, given that five out of the twelve shops I visited claimed that they could arrange a tiger bone viewing. There was roughly a 50% chance that you would find a tiger bone. Out of the five shops, which claimed to have access to tiger bone products, three signalled this through displaying either a tiger's head on the wall or posters of tigers in their shops. I confirmed with a female sales assistant that the sole purpose of such a display is to signal to the customers that they can obtain tiger bones there (X13). In order for a transaction to take place, there was no requirement for a middleman and the price of the bone was stated before the viewing (prices range from RMB 200,000 to 300,000, which is equivalent to 20,000 to 30,000 GBP). Unlike transactions in Lhasa or Kunming, there was no need for the client to pay a deposit before viewing the product. There would be a two to five day wait for the tiger bone to be sent from the source country to the shop. It has been confirmed that the bone travels from India via Nepal into Tibet and eventually into Xining (Kim & X34).

The wait is necessary because the bone has to travel a long distance rather than being designed to ensure that the buyer was sincere in his/her request as it was the case in the Hui network in Lhasa.

Despite the stiff competition, all the shop owners got on well and preferred to stay out of each other's way (X20). The level of concern about enforcement was extremely low and the sale of tiger bone was treated like any other kind of legal transaction (Mrs. Liu). Trust exists within the network, given that transactions were carried out. The mechanism of trust within the network relied on is the reputation of the parties (Teng, Mrs.Liu, Kim).

Neither Kim nor Mrs. Liu have any concern about the level of trust in their network. Given that the tiger bone was handled just like another Chinese medicine ingredient, it was the responsibility of the employees to introduce and promote tiger bone products to the clients. Mrs.Liu trusted that her team of employees would not 'screw up' because it would cost them their job and reputation as a Chinese medicine sales assistant, and she was very pleased with her team of employees so far (Mrs. Liu). On the other hand, the reputation of her tiger bone supplier enhanced her level of trust in the transactions. Mrs.Liu was not worried about her supplier being dishonest because of his established reputation (Kim & Mrs.Liu). In Xining, the transactions of tiger bones were just like any other legal exchange.

Base on the data collected in Xining, the role of the different actors in the network can be summarised as follows:

Table 7.1: Summary of the roles played within the tiger bone network

	Function	*Mechanisms to foster exchange*	*Gains*
Tiger Bone Supplier	To collect the tiger bone from Tibet and deliver it to the traditional Chinese medicine shop at a designated time to be viewed by the buyer. To keep the bone. The bone product always stays with the supplier. To set the price of the tiger bone products.	Reputation of shop owner	Commission: if the transaction is successful (exact amount unknown).
Shop Owner	To deal with the skin supplier in securing tiger bones. To act as a bridge between the buyer and supplier.	Reputation of tiger bone supplier	Commission: if the transaction is successful (exact amount unknown).
Shop Employees (Sales Assistants)	To introduce tiger bone products to clients. To arrange for transaction to take place in shop.	Employee-employer relationship	n/a

Buyer	To purchase tiger bone products	Long term relationship: regular customers Reputation of the shop owner	Tiger bone product.

Ethnicity, Enforcement, Proximity to Source Country

a) Enforcement

The data collected in Xining indicated that there were only a few tiger bones suppliers in the market, some of which supply more than one network: 'It does not matter where you go, you probably end up with the same bone from the same supplier – don't waste time checking quality and prices!' (Teng).

Despite the scarcity of tiger suppliers and tiger bone products (Teng, Mrs.Liu & Kim), it would seem reasonable to assume that the supplier and transactions were kept reasonably concealed in order to minimise the risk of arrest. Yet, this was not discovered to be the case in Xining. The shop owners and their employees who claimed to have access to tiger bones showed minimal suspicion about my questions. Chinese authorities also seem to have overlooked the illegal tiger parts trade in Xining. There were no official records of arrests and seizure in Xining and the trade is only documented by a number of investigations by NGOs. In light of these circumstances, I sometimes forgot that I was, in fact, talking to people engaged in an illegal trade.

Unlike the networks in Lhasa or Kunming, no middleman was required for a tiger bone viewing and no deposit was required from the potential buyer. One can just walk into the shop, request a tiger bone, return at a later date and, if happy with the quality, pay for it and leave – just like making any other kind of legal purchase. Though it was explained that most of the clients were regulars or had been referred to the shop, it was also common to have walk- ins, especially wealthy middle-aged Han businesspeople who were on holiday or en-route to Tibet (X16 & Mrs.Liu). Provided that they had the financial means and were willing to wait a few days, a transaction was certainly possible (X34).

None of the shop keepers/owners I interviewed showed any sign of concern about being arrested nor had had any trouble from the police (Mrs Liu, Teng & Kim). The situation can be summarised neatly by a remark made by Mrs. Liu during an interview: '[N]o one cares!'

Since the level of enforcement was extremely low (close to non-existent) in Xining, this network is easily accessible, open and strongly resembles the Hui's network in Lhasa and the tiger skin network in Kunming. All three networks saw their operating environment as low risk so they formed the structure of a centralised network. The key node is a person who was willing to position him/herself at the centre of the network because he/she believed that enforcement was not an issue and therefore did not think that his/her position was at all risky. By being at the centre of the network, he/she is able to control who can enter and leave it and oversee transactions. Given the low level of enforcement, the trust between the parties is based on their reputation.

b) Ethnicity

Xining was predominately inhabited by people of Hui and Han Chinese ethnicity. Yet, unlike the Tibetan network identified in Lhasa, in the formation of which ethnicity played a significant role, ethnicity also had no impact on how the network is organised in Xining.

Consideration was given to the employee's ethnicity during recruitment *solely* because the employers felt that Han Chinese employees have a better understanding of the practice of Chinese medicine than Hui and so will be able to communicate better with clients, rather than to reduce the level of risk (as demonstrated in the network in Lhasa where the Tibetans operated under an ethnic homogenous network in order to avoid the risk of arrest). One of the shop owners commented that he did not think that there is any difference between the work ethics of Han Chinese and Hui workers but that it seems contradictory for the latter to sell medicine, which is traditionally used by the Han Chinese population (X16). Mrs. Liu confirmed this, revealing that her preference for Han Chinese employees was purely because she felt that these would have a better, broader knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine and therefore perform better in their job. She also commented that the risk associated with employing Han Chinese or Hui to handle tiger bones was the same: non-existent (Mrs Liu).

In addition, perhaps the lack of consideration paid to employing workers of a different ethnicity can be explained by the reasonably harmonious relationship between Hui and Han Chinese in Xining. Although there was some tension

between the two ethnic groups, it did not reflect the general view of the population. Unlike the situation in Lhasa (where the tension was extremely high between Tibetans and Han Chinese), that in Xining was much calmer, although, inevitably, some of the Han Chinese made a very few negative comments during the interviews.

The owner of a supermarket situated close to my flat, which I visited regularly, warned me not to purchase food from any of the shops owned by the Hui since she was certain that most of the food they sell is out of date but the labels have been replaced with new ones indicating a later expiry date (X24). The owner of a homemade yoghurt shop warned me of young Hui petty pickpockets in the city centre and told me that his shop has been the victim of petty crimes. Given his negative experience, he did not speak highly of them at all (X28).[3] Yet, not all of the comments were negative. In fact, I was surprised by how open-minded they seemed to be in some of their comments. One Han Chinese lady whom I met in my flat felt that comments made about Hui were unjust, believing that everyone deserves a second chance (X29). One of the older Han Chinese male commented that it was unhealthy to hold a grudge against people and felt worried about the younger generation if they blindly hold on to grudges based on what they have been told rather than their actual, personal knowledge (X32).

[3] The local Qinghai yoghurt is a specialty of Qinghai province. In fact, several national manufacturers produce yoghurt (based on an authentic Qinghai recipe) to sell all over China. The flavour of the yogurt resembles a thickly textured soft cheese. The owner of the yogurt shop has been making his own yogurt for a few decades and has a small stall at a busy crossroads in Xining. Personally, I found the taste of his yogurt unpleasant but, clearly, was the exception to the rule because his stall was crowded with customers every time I passed it. A bowl of yoghurt cost 3RMB (30 pence).

c) Proximity



Figure 7.2: Map indicating the distance from Lhasa to Xining. It is also possible to travel by train (23 hours) or plane (1 hour). This map also gives the reader a sense of how far other Chinese cities are from Lhasa.
Source: http://www.itourstibet.com/tibet-train-tour/tt51.htm (last accessed November 27th 2012).

It was confirmed during the interviews that the tiger bone products travelled from India to Tibet via Nepal (Mrs.Liu, Kim & X34). As such, this allowed for a smaller network with fewer nodes to be involved in the process of delivery. The

supplier collected the bone in Tibet and drove it to the shops in Xining (Mrs.Liu & Kim) and was also involved in the sampling and price setting of the tiger bone. Given it short proximity, the network can be organised on a small-scale and involved no middlemen.[4] A smaller network can reduce the risk of defection because knowledge of the trade is shared by only a small number of nodes. All of the shop owners praised their suppliers for the promptness of their delivery, often arriving before the clients with high quality tiger bones (Teng, Mrs.Liu, Kim & X34).

Conclusion

The process of data collection in Xining was the easiest and most accessible of all three chosen sites. This can be interpreted as a reflection of how open the tiger bone trade was in the city. The shop owners who claimed to have access to tiger bones spoke with a subtle sense of arrogance during the interviews, and it was clear that they felt little concern about the risk of arrest or defection within their networks. As with most legal transactions, the reputation of the parties was the key mechanism for fostering trust and exchange within this network. The parties involved understood clearly that it would only ruin individuals' reputation if they failed to deliver and therefore they relied on a rational decision to upheld agreements and deliveries. This is similar to the findings related to the two networks identified in Kunming and Lhasa. The ethnic composition is unaffected by the level of risk perceived by the central nodes but based on their belief that a Han Chinese employee will perform better within the traditional Chinese

[4] This a short distance by Chinese standards; the train journey from Xining is 1233 miles and takes 23 hours. It would take roughly 36 hours by car. Xining is one of the closest Chinese capital cities to Lhasa. See: 'Xining to Lhasa', http://www.tibettravel.org/xining-to-lhasa/ (last accessed November 27th 2012).

medicine market. The close proximity to the source country allowed for a smaller network with fewer nodes, which, in theory, reduces the risk of defection within the network since the knowledge of the trade is shared by a smaller number of nodes.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Tiger bone is used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine and is available illegally in China. Tiger skins are also keenly sought after and used as household decorations, personal fashion accessories and local delicacies in contemporary Chinese society. Consequently, this demand has created lucrative opportunities for criminals. Tigers are smuggled across the Chinese borders from neighbouring tiger source countries, such as Laos, Nepal, Myanmar and India, to fuel the demand amongst the Chinese population. The illegal market for tiger parts products raises questions about the network organisation and which mechanisms underpin illegal transactions.

This thesis explores the network organisations of five illegal tiger parts trade markets at three fieldwork sites across China. It aims to understand how these networks are constructed and operated under the condition of illegality. In particular, this thesis tests in a qualitative manner the causal relationship between three independent variables and the network organisation of these markets. The three independent variables are "ethnicity", "level of enforcement", and "proximity to the source country". In theory, a centralised structured network is likely to emerge if the supply of illegal commodities is monopolised by a single supplier. He/she may also oversee the operation of the network and is in an authoritative position over the other nodes; levels of trust are generally low in such settings. In contrast, high levels of independence and trust may be granted in a flat network. There is no authoritative node and the size of this network tends to be smaller and it is usually based on personal trust between the actors.

The thesis also discusses the dynamics of the illegal transactions of tiger parts products. Legitimate meditiators or dispute resolutions' mechanisms are lacking in the underworld so the risks which the parties undertake during trading are far higher. This thesis explores how illgeal transactions are enforced, carried out and honoured in this trade.

In addition, the levels of trust within each of the networks were also considered in this thesis. This study examined the ways in which the three independent variables impacted on the levels of trust within the networks. Theortically, if the levels of enforcement are high, the actors may find it harder to trust and, therefore, be more reluctant to carry out illegal transactions. On the other hand, actors within illegal networks may be more willing to exchange and cooperate if the risk of arrest is low. Ethnicity can faciliate trust and reduce risk. On the basis of theories discussed in Chapter 2, one might expect to find lower levels of defection in ethnically homogenous networks owing to the higher sense of belonging and trust between members from similar ethnic background. In light of these debates, this doctoral thesis examines if the existing theories approximated the reality in the field.

In order to answer my research questions, I undertook fieldwork research trips to China in 2011. The three sites were chosen because they exhibited variation in the values of the independent variables, and therefore their effect on the dependent variables (network organisation and levels of trust) could be observed (King, Keohane & Verba 1994). The fieldwork sites were Xining (Qinghai Province), Lhasa

(Tibet) and Kunming (Yunnan Province). I collected a range of data on this illegal trade and discovered a number of tiger skin and tiger bone trading networks.

My findings are as following:

Firstly, I discovered five tiger parts trading networks, three of which specialised in the trading of tiger skins and two in tiger bones.

Secondly, the data collected from the field revealed that the level of enforcement has an impact on the organisation of the network and its ethnic composition. Interestingly, the level of perceived risk but not the actual level of risk present in a given setting largely influences the decisions of the actors in the network as demonstrated by the Hui's tiger skin network and Tibetan's network in Lhasa. Moreover, entry into the network is easy when the levels of enforcement are low. In these settings, there is no ethnic criterion for entering the network; as long as individuals can perform well and attract clients, the network is accessible to anyone. Three of the networks (Hui's network in Lhasa, tiger bone network in Xining and the tiger skin network in Kunming) are organized in such a way that allows flexible exit and entry, and there are no limits placed on the number of nodes. The central node in the three networks did not feel at risk of arrest or detection. The reputation of the parties was the mechanism for fostering trust, as in any legitimate exchanges and transactions. The actors involved understood that dishonoring deals and agreements could have a negative effect on their reputation, so they choose to act in accordance with their illegal agreements. As such, agreements were honored and the network enjoyed a high level of stability since actors were unlikely to disappear and not carry

out the transaction. However, the situation was reversed under high level of (perceived) enforcement, as reflected in the Tibetan tiger skin network and the tiger bone network in Kunming. In order to conceal their operation and reduce the risk of arrest, the central node strictly controlled entry to the network and only members from the same ethnic background or whom central nodes knew personally can participate in and purchase from the network. This is summarized as follows:

Table 8.1 : Level of Enforcement and Its Effect on Network Structure

Network	*Level of Perceived Enforcement*	*Entry/Exit to the Network*	*Mechanism(s) to Foster Exchange*
Hui Network, Lhasa	Low	Flexible	Reputation, Middleman
Tibetan Network, Lhasa	High	Tight control by central node	Reputation
Tiger Bone Network, Kunming	High	Tight control by central node	Kinship
Tiger Skin Network, Kunming	Low	Flexible	Reputation
Tiger Bone Network, Xining	Low	Flexible	Reputation

Thirdly, the proximity of the tiger source country to the re-distribution sites (fieldwork cities) influences the organization of the networks. The data obtained from the tiger skin trading network in Kunming confirmed that, when the level of enforcement is low *and* the tiger source country is far away from the re-distribution sites, a monetary deposit is required in order to show that the buyer is serious about his/her request. Moreover, a large deposit is paid to the middlemen involved in the delivery process, as in the case of the tiger skin network in Kunming (which was the furthest away from any of the tiger source countries). In Lhasa and Xining, where the tiger source country was only a moderate distance away, the central node in the trading networks requested no monetary deposit.

Fourthly, the role of a middleman cannot be overlooked. This figure plays a pivotal role in the transaction of illegal tiger parts. In the Hui Muslims' tiger skin tiger network in Lhasa, the supplier and traders required the appointment of a Han Chinese middleman by the potential buyer. There were no viewings or transactions without a middleman. The tiger skin network in Kunming also highlights the significance of the role of the middleman, as the supplier revealed that a group of middlemen was involved in the delivery of the tiger skin from India or Siberia to Kunming. Were it not for this group of middlemen, the tiger skin would never arrive.

A number of implications can be drawn from this study:

Foremost, this is the first academic attempt to study illegal tiger parts products trade from a social network perspective. In doing so, this thesis hopes to highlight the structure of this industry and draw attention to the general illegal wildlife industry. Secondly, this thesis contributes to our understanding of how the structures of criminal networks and levels of trust can be influenced by external factor, such as enforcement level, ethnicity and proximity to the product's source country. This shows that external forces can shape the way in which criminal networks are organised. Lastly, this study contributes to the existing literature on the mechanisms of trust employed in the underworld. In particular, by situating illegal transactions in contexts that might affect the mechanisms used for the exchange, it adds to the existing body of literature and highlights that the middleman and reputation of the parties involved are important components in illegal transactions. The mechanism of

relying on third party enforcement, cutting off strategies and hostage taking has no relevance in the specific setting of the illegal tiger parts trade.

The study of illegal tiger trade networks has a number of implications. Firstly, contrary to popular understanding, the illegal tiger parts trade is independent of drugs or firearms smuggling, and has no connection with other organised crime groups. The market model of the tiger parts trade consists of *both* legitimate entrepreneurs and members or organised crime groups. It is important to note that that the market is not entirely consisted of members of the underworld. On one end of the supply chain, traders at their street stalls or behind their skin trolleys and owners of legitimate Chinese medicine shops are involved with attracting new buyers and informing them of the requirement for a middleman. On the other end, suppliers are illegally sourcing and supplying exotic animal skin. Interestingly, even though the actors are aware of the illegality of their operation, most of them view themselves as legitimate businessmen supplying a service to the general public with little (of no) illegality involved with their operation. All the identified networks specialised in trading in endangered wildlife products and claimed to have no connections to other illegal markets and do not operate in other illegal markets. This may be owing to the fact that organised crime groups are localised so they are not involved in smuggling activities away from their home. The Hong Kong triads have emerged in the political arena and the local entertainment industry.[1] Therefore, the illegal wildlife trade should be studied as an industry on its own and specific policies should be devised to counteract this branch of illegal trade.

[1] See Fung (1996) and Lo (1993, 2010).

Secondly, this study highlights the importance of middlemen in these illegal transactions. Moreover, a single, central node holds the networks together. He/she is responsible for price setting, co-ordinating with the supplier over the delivery of the product and arranging skin sampling between the clients and the supplier. Therefore, instead of identifying the traders involved in the trade, resources should be devoted to identifying the middleman and the central node. Ultimately, laws, campaigns and regulations can only do so much when the underlying principle and challenge revolves around the law of supply and demand among the human population. Supply and profit rely on a willing consumer. A change in values does not happen overnight – particularly when that change requires considerable time and money to be invested in education, enforcement, and a socio-cultural shift that values the live tiger more than its skin on the wall or its bones brewed in a ceramic pot.

Nonetheless, this thesis has a number of limitations. In any study of criminal networks, it is impossible to identify the clear boundaries between the criminal networks that can allow us to draw predictions and perform an analysis.[2] In other words, studies of criminal networks lack certainty and accuracy because the networks are bound to change over time. Thus, it is important to stress that this thesis does not aim to represent the *entire* illegal tiger trade industry but only to re-construct and understand the network that was evident from the data collected during my time in the field. In addition, it was impracticable to map out the entire network owing to the limited time and resources available.

[2] Felson (2003) put forward this argument and Morselli (2009) responded to it in his studies of criminal networks.

Due to the novelty of this topic and the difficulty of gaining access to organised crime groups, there are some limitations to the validity of the data I collected. I took a number of measures to address this problem. Firstly, I relied on a number of secondary sources to validate the data that I collected in the field. These include a range of selected newspapers' reports and government documents and reports. The Environmental Investigation Agency and TRAFFIC, two active NGOs, have produced several investigations on tiger parts trading in China. These reports were not only helpful as preparatory reading for my fieldwork trip, but also helped to validate my findings. Moreover, I conducted extensive research on selected databases of Chinese provincial newspapers and included relevant articles to support my arguments. Secondly, I cross-examined my data across a number of sources wherever possible. Instead of relying on only one interviewee, I asked a number of interviewees the same questions in order to confirm my findings (i.e. I asked the tiger skin traders, sales assistants, and suppliers a similar set of questions in order to validate the source). I cross-examined my field data via the techniques of triangulation across newspaper articles and NGO reports in order to narrate the story analytically and with the highest level of accuracy.

The process of data collection was successful because it enabled the research aims to be achieved. The data collected from the field allowed me to reconstruct the structure of the networks. I was able to reconstruct such networks using the techniques of SNA. The data also enabled me to position the nodes in the network and identify their level of involvement in the trade. The effects of the three independent variables were reflected in the organisation networks so, consequently, I was able to offer a

theoretical explanation of how the structures of criminal networks can be influenced by the three independent variables. Furthermore, the data set also aided the theoretical understanding of illegal transactions and highlighted the importance of middlemen in illegal exchanges. It is regrettable that I was unable to collect data from any middleman, buyers of tiger parts products or from poachers or traders in Nepal. The number of people from enforcement agencies that I managed to interview was limited; the reason for such is because of the difficulties in gaining access to these groups. A lack of data from enforcement agencies restricted my understanding in how representatives from the State react to this illegal trade. In order to ratify this issue, I have referred to a vast amount of news reports and NGO investigations in order to understand how the Chinese state response to this illegal industry.

This thesis has brought together several areas of sociology and contributed to a number of contemporary debates in the field. In particular, it has attempted to broaden our understanding of the organisation of criminal networks and the dynamics of illegal transactions. It is hoped that the techniques of social network analysis will play an increasing role in our theoretical understanding of criminality.

In general, the industry of illegal wildlife trade is an area of criminal activity which, to date, remains seriously under-researched and calls for academic attention. This is an emerging area of crime, which, through enhanced research and understanding, has a great potential to contribute to our understanding of criminal networks and illegal transactions in general. The illegal wildlife trade is distinctive from other illegal trade industries in the sense that the nature of the commodities involved is very different. Given a sufficient level of capital investment, technology and concealment from the

authorities, criminals can mass-produce firearms and drugs for trade and, therefore, control the supply. This is not the case for wildlife products, because their production cannot be so easily manipulated. One may be able to control the number of animals in captivity but not in the wild. Moreover, the lack of impact that the illegal wildlife trade industry is deemed to have on the general human population makes it distinctive from that of human trafficking. Yet, this is no justification for dismissing the damage produced by the global illegal wildlife trade industry. In addition, this is an area of study that has the potential to offer extensive insights into our theoretical understanding of illegal trade markets.

The supply of shark fins in Chinatowns across England is another interesting niche in this industry.[3] Despite its magnitude and history, it is under-researched and deserves academic analysis. In addition, future research might explore the role that the middleman plays in other illegal circumstances. It would be interesting to see if a middleman is also pivotal in other illegal settings. Moreover, the mechanisms underlying dispute resolutions in the underworld are also worthy of further scholarly examination, specifically exploring whether the mechanisms of exchange identified in China also apply to long distance illegal trade, where the destination country is an advanced society with robust policing institutions and relatively low levels of corruption (such as the UK).

The work presented in this thesis has shown that there is a relationship between the organisation of criminal networks, level of enforcement, ethnicity and proximity to

[3] Richard Vines, "Shark Fins Comes off Menu as Cruelty Campaign Sways U.K. Chef", http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-01/shark-s-fin-comes-off-chinatown-menu-as-cruelty-campaign-sways-u-k-chefs.html (last accessed November 16th, 2012), Bite-Back: Shark and Marine Conservation, "Man Eating Shark Spotted" http://www.bite-back.com/man-eating-shark-spotted-in-chinatown/ (last accessed November 16th, 2012).

the product's source country. It has also shown the effects of the three variables on the structure of the networks and the mechanisms underpinning exchange in illegal markets under the setting of the illegal wildlife trade. It is hoped that this thesis has convinced the reader of the theoretical and practical importance of illegal wildlife trade markets.

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Appendix 1: Lhasa Interviews

Number *Label*	*Location /* *Date*	*Interviewee*	*Group*	*Information*
1 T1	Manicure Salon, Lhasa Mall October 2011	Tour Guide from Xining (F)	C	She referred me to Barkhor square which has a lot of shops, a lot of Han Chinese will come up to buy them – no problem to bring back as long within PRC. Not sure about taking it back to Hong Kong. Can post in PRC and no one check parcels. Though a lot of fake stuff so they come up to chose before buy and will usually be posted back, rarely will carry it back. She said 2 – 3 shops has them and are run by Tibetans, can go have a look at some carpet stores. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '掛羊頭賣狗肉' (concealing true identify with something else)
2 T2	Lhasa, Beijing East Road October 2011	Lhasa Fur Company, Souvenir Shop owner (Hui M)	C	The yak skin was hung outside the shop and was priced at 1000 RMB. There was a signature at the back of the skin which, according to the shop owner is the signature of the poacher. Skins are usually signed to indicate their rank. No tiger skins.

3 T3	Barkhor Square October 2011	Street Stall Owner (M)	A	Do not have other skin for sale. Only dog and sheep skins to keep warm. The skin/ fur of the animals was cut up into smaller pieces to make waist wraps, socks and jackets.
4 T4	Barkhor Square October 2011	Street Stall Owner (M)	A	No other skins, tiger skins are illegal but he said Hui traders have them and are not hard to find.
5 T5	Barkhor Square October 2011	Street Stall Owner (Hui, F)	A	She mentioned Dalai Lama speech in 2008 which led to a lot of monks burning tiger skin yet she is not sure if there are still sellers around the square. She said the BS is usually quite calm but sometimes there are fights between traders over business, most she feel is not motivated by ethnicity difference.
6 T6	Barkhor Square October 2011	Street Stall Owner (F, Tibetan)	A	When asked about what the army was doing and if they intimate her because they are positioned in front of her stall. She said they are here to control riots because it is a famous tourist areas, she is used to it. Just don't take photos of them. She said as long as she don't say/ do anything stupid, she is not too worried but felt they are not needed because Tibetans are well behaved and trouble usually caused by Han and Hui. Spoke ill of the Hui and commented they are dishonest and will do anything for money. Witnessed Tibetans arrested for insulting army, Hui get into trouble because had too much to drink. Night

				time around BS is quiet but can be quite rough.
7 T7 (Chen)	Skin Rack/Warehouse Barkhor Square, 1st meeting October 2011	Skin Supplier (M, Hui)	A	In business for 20 years so he is well known and I can trust his stuff is real. From Qinghai and goes back regularly, do not mind living in Lhasa but misses home. He also supplies to some of the street stalls in the square so he will know if I buy from any other stalls he supplies to, he do not remember how many traders he has, do not care about ethnicity – as long as they pay him money, he give them the skin. He has a few Han Chinese traders working for him. In this conversation so far: wolves, dogs, sheep skins. Can test if the skin is real by burning it. He knows of a small Tibetan run network also selling skins, do not operate with them and Tibetans generally stick to themselves and not willing to work with other ethnic groups. He felt sorry for them. His wolves, dogs, sheepskins Lin Chi (Tibet) and are hunted and skinned by Tibetans, which drives them here for sale. Mentioned that he can get other skins if clients so wish, mentioned that tiger skins is one of the products he can obtain. Mentioned the speech made by Dalai Lama in 2008

				but it has not affected sales too much. Most of the clients are Han and not based in Lhasa. Wall has lots of phone number; he said they are his regular contacts and client base all over China. Pointed to Shandong, Beijing, Xi'an. He can post skin. Overall, he was not reluctant to talk about illegal skin trade. He also said he is not worried about enforcement and do not care about the army. *Direct Quotes / Translation:* '面子很重要' (face is very important) '在商言商' (businessman, talk business only) '沒關係，我認識他們，為什麼他們想要更多麻煩和更大工作？' (never mind, I know them [army personnel on the Square], why would they want to create more trouble and more work for themselves?) '我在這行業超過 20 年，到處打聽，這裡的人知道我是誰！' (I have been in this business for over 20 years, ask around, people here know who I am!) '拉薩是太小了，（壞消息），它會像火一樣擴散'

				(Lhasa is a small place, it will go around like fire)
8/9 T8/9	Massage Salon, Lhasa October/November 2011	Han Workers x 2 (Mx2)	C	Do not think highly of Tibetans; think they are lazy and dirty. Do not show much respect for their religion either, made fun of the monks in Lhasa and claims to have seen them in brothels after dark, calls them 'tourist monks'. Blames the Tibetan burial traditions for polluting the fish in the sea. Only in Lhasa because they get higher wages to work here hence incentives to leave home town: Sichuan and Xi'an. Surface looks peaceful but can get very violent. Have witnessed fights between Tibetans and Han when they are drunk – when they are drunk, they say nasty things to each other and believed that this is their true feeling. Have had some wealthy Tibetan locals visiting massage salon, some Tibetans are not as innocent as they claims, corrupted and likes money. One of his clients brought his family out of Tibet by picking dried caterpillars and was able to afford to move to Switzerland after discovering a rare find. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '我曾經是的士司機，現在我在拉薩！較高的工

				資是為什麼我在工作但我不會呆在在拉薩．已經兩年,我無法呼吸正常!’ (I used to be a taxi driver, now I am here in Lhasa! I came only because of the higher wages – I can never stay here long, I still cannot breath properly after two years!) ‘大部分的僧人來到這裡是因為旅遊，他們要錢!在晚上，他們在這裡按摩 - 女人．他們都不是真正的和尚’ (Most of the monks are here for the tourists, they want money. They come here at night, hire a few women. They are not real monks!) ‘你知道海葬是什麼？因為它，在西藏我們不能吃到魚！他們真的很噁心!’ (You know you cannot eat the fish or any of the seafood in Tibet, the (Buddhists) puts their dead in the river and the fish eats the corpse – they are bloody gross people.)
10	Skin Rack, Barkhor Square	T7 (M,Hui)	C	Chen considered himself to be in the carpet business, nothing illegal and he is very proud of his business.

T7 (Chen)	Second Meeting October / November 2011	A friend of T7 was also present, though he was very quiet but he seem to have enjoyed listening and nod at times. The conversation lasted for roughly 60 minutes.		He do not think what he is doing is illegal or nor he will ever get arrested because he has relevant connections with the people that can help. He supplies to street stalls in Lhasa, he does not know who and where they are but they know how to come find him. He said again that he will know if I buy any skins in the square (if I buy from his traders). He is very proud to have earned a reputation amongst the traders in Lhasa. He will not sell fake skins and is angry at the idea – he insisted that his reputation is why customers always comes back to him. He stressed that face is very important. He do not directly referred to tiger skins by their name but instead calls them the 'other skins' or 'that skin'. He have sold them to high officials and wealthy businessmen across China. Some are reserved for VIPS and he post them to their address – no one will check. If insisted on carrying it away, tell officials it was a gift from grandfather era, no one will follow up. If dealing in face with new customers, he request for a middleman to show that he/she is sincere and will not waste his time. He have had clients whom are just messing with him and wasted his time / taking photographs so he is keen to make sure it won't happen again. Do not mind if the middlemen is whatever ethnicity. His bottom line is if they are

				sincere and has the cash, he will enter into business with him/her. The skin normally comes from India and is delivered to the border by Nepal for pick up. He has a number of drivers (3? – but he is not certain) working for him and will deliver the skin from Nepal border into Lhasa. Not worried about security on the way or in city center. He insisted that Lhasa is a small place, so he will know if any of the people in the network do not honor deal.
11 T11	Street stall, Barkhor Square, October 2011	Street Stall Owner (F)	A	Some of the tradition Tibetan knives she had for sell at her stall was not legal to carry on to trains and flights. When asked how customers are supposed to carry it back, she ensured that with an additional of 50 RMB, she can promise a safe postal delivery to anywhere in China. She has not failed once. ***When I went to post items in the China Post office in Lhasa, the staff checked everything in my

				box and packed the box for me.
12 T12	Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop October 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	No tiger skins because it is illegal. To ask elsewhere for bone never heard of it but can try other cities, i.e.: Qinghai. They only sell Tibetan medicines in Lhasa, because this is why people come here for.
13 T13	Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop October 2011	Shop Owner (F)	A	Abid, though do not mention that tiger skins were illegal but said that she do not have them.
14 T14	Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop October 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	No tiger bone, may be some in Nepal or near border – he is not sure. Said it is very hard to get so not sure if I can find in Lhasa. Yet, possibly in Qinghai or Gansu province.
15 T15	Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop November 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	No tiger bone again, he said not possible to find. So many Tibetan medicines for sale – why would people want tiger bone if there are other medicines just as good (dried caterpillars).
16 T16	Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop November 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	Told me he can try to find one but will take 2 – 4 days for it to reach Lhasa, it is not from Lhasa. In his knowledge, there is no tiger bone in Lhasa but only Tibetan medicines. A lot of Han tourists come for Tibetan medicines.
17	Lhasa, Tibet	Businessman (M, Han)	C	When ask if he has any purchase in skin or know of it

T17	November 2011			– he said no. He said 'no law' in China – just say it was a gift from CCP for your grand parents and they will not check. As long as it doesn't affect stability of city or politics, they do not care. It is very clear that all CCP cares about in Tibet are to control riots and maintain order.
18 T18	Lhasa, Tibet October/ November 2011	Tibetan (F) Works for a local NGO ***Information revealed over two meetings, one in an open area (restaurant) and another in her office	C	Refused to say much at first meeting because we were in a open restaurant, she warned me that there are 'eyes and ears everywhere'. She was very outspoken as time developed. Do not feel happy with CCP around, she was successful in earning a full scholarship to US for a master course but no matter how hard she tries, she cannot get a passport to leave Lhasa. She was sad with this and angry at the government. Do not feel the have the right to be here to tell Tibetans what to do, they do not belong here. Yet, she will not eliminate all interactions with Han Chinese but prefers to be with her own people and wants the younger generation to be educated separately from Han Chinese. She think her point of view is a fair representation of all Tibetans in Lhasa. Also not pleased with how much the city has progress and lost it's character. Frowned upon the construction

				of the new shopping mall and claims that Tibetans do not appreciate such luxurious items and unlike Han, is content with life as it is. Mentioned fight witnessed outside Potala Palace and commented that they are very brave since most Tibetans will not fight back the Han police. Also mentioned the fact that she dislike the CCP government repressing their religion and insulting it bu turning PP into a tourist attraction. People should be let in for free to worship. On the subject on Hong Kong and tension with the PRC, will not believe in anything the CCP / newspaper says – it is all a con. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* 在這裡不談，在拉薩有人看和聽 (not here, not now, people watching and listening in Lhasa.) 首先,他們是很好的…然後你知道一切都是假的（They (CCP) are very nice at the start then you know everything is fake). 他們是最壞的，出賣我們，我們一定要小心 (They are the worst, everywhere, and you really have to be careful).
19	Lhasa, Tibet	Tibetan (F)	C	Enforcement is only strict if anyone done/said

T19	October 2011			something wrong to offend the CCP. Most of the times, they are ok provided that you do not provoke them. People get taken away and beat up badly if they offended them. Do not like the way they sometimes joke about worshippers and monks. She chose to look away whenever she see army but in general, they are not ruthless and some of the army are nice people and will respect them.
20 T20	Lhasa, Tibet November 2011	Tour Guide (M, Tibetan) ***Over a number of interviews	C	Lots of Tibetans wore tiger skins before 2008 Dalai Lama speech, it usually comes from India and he knows of a group of Hui traders in the BS which can get hold of them. He doubt if any Tibetans will still wear them now so he guessed that the client is mainly Han Chinese. He feels like the CCP has invaded his homeland. Feel it is ok for them to come, but do not bring army with them – feel it is an insult to lose homeland to outsiders and constantly being watched. *Direct Quote/ Translation:* ‘來和入侵我的家是不同的！’ (Coming and invading my home are different!)
21	Traditional Chinese Medicine shop	Shop Owner (F)	A	Han owns all TCM shops in Lhasa, very rare for Tibetan to run shops. The same boss runs a couple of

T21	November 2011			them. Tibetans know little about TCM so they do not open shop. The Tibetans supplies the medicines but it is the Han shops that sell them. No idea of tiger bone, she said I should try Qinghai, Gansu or Sichuan
22 T22	Taxi November 2011	Taxi Driver (M, Sichuan)	C	Lhasa is famous for ice (crystal meth) RMB 400 per gram and is on sale openly at nightclubs (one of the night club is called Barbie). Came from Nepal direction, lots of young people come to party from all over China – offered me some and asked if I want to go clubbing with him. 15.9.2011 - 三打行動 (黃，毒，賭) so there is less drugs on sale but he can get me some if I wish. The city turns into a red light district at night. Famous red light district in Lhasa – mainly for army.
23 T23	Local Tour Guide October 2011	Tibetan (M)	C	Do not know the trade is illegal, not much people buy tiger products now because of Dalai Lama speech in 2008. He said he has some TB friends in tailoring business – usually small piece for clothing (10,000 rmb average). No one cares much about it but best to be careful so he would not advise carrying it around Tibet. The road security only checks people and not bags so it is

				safe in general. The CCP controls for Tibetans moving around because a lot of them has smuggled out of Tibet to seek religious freedom in Nepal. Even as a tour guide, he has to renew papers often and he said he know he will never be able to leave Tibet, which he was very angry about.
24 T24	Local Tour Guide November 2011	Tibetan (M)	C	CCP do not want Tibetans to be travelling around so lots of permit check points on the way out of Lhasa towards Nepal, not to check for goods but people. Guide can ensure crossing with phone call because there is ALWAYS one guard on Nepal side. Tough on TB, do not care about foreigners. Nepal border opens from 9 – 5 but can arrange for crossing after hours. People that live around 30 KM of the border town, Zhangmu can cross freely. He said the border control is not very useful and effective so goods can easily get in and out.
25 T25	Along Friendship Highway on way to Nepal November 2011	Driver (M, Xi'an) *** did not get along well with T27 during the journey	C	All security check point to/from Lhasa are for speed checks because of an accident in 2008 and a car fell off the road, which affected tourism image. Out of 4 stations, only 1 of them had a policeman at station and the police signed the paper and let us go. Explained that the checks are to make sure no one is speeding, you are not to report to the next checkpoint

				until you have reached a time (usually an hour between checkpoint so to make sure you are not speeding – however, known for drivers to speed to checkpoint, nap than to slow down) very ineffective in his opinion Heard of smuggling of drugs from Nepal, doubt the checkpoint staff cares – they are just to stop people speeding. Know they can hide things in the car and no one will know. He do not like TB, disagree with the way they work – think they are lazy and fed by CCP. Dislike them very much. He thinks they should be grateful for all that the CCP has given them and stop moaning but instead they are even lazier. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* 車不要開得太快 - 沒有人在乎， 為什麼多做工夫? (do not drive too fast, no one cares – why would they do more work?)
26 T26	Shigatse, Tibet November 2011	Tibetan (M, middle aged. Ex government servant and took part in the re-development of Shigatse)	B	Do not like any ethnic minorities in Tibet. Made it very clear that he hate the sight of them, especially Hui. He calls them dishonest, dirty and low life. He even made rude faces at one of the waitress whom is a Hui female. He said in general, no incentive for the army to work – most of them do not want to be here in the first

				place because it gets very rough in the Winter. The ones with some connections will be placed in Lhasa whereas a lot of them are just thrown into the wild. Their presence has dirtied Lhasa because they bring in prostitutes and corruption. Their main job is to control riots and to maintain peace. He said they do not care about other things because it is not their role. Never heard of tiger skin but know that many people buy rare gifts to please boss. Not surprised that it came in from Nepal, not very strong incentive to check. Just worried about people smuggling out. During his time, he knows for a fact that the army will shot nuns and monks trying to cross and hide their bodies. Most Tibetans here do not want to be here under the watch of CCP. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* ‘回族是無恥的，沒用。不信他們．總是做一些非法的，危害大家！’ (The Hui are shameless, useless. Always breaking the law, harming everyone in the community – I do not trust them.) ‘沒有人喜歡中國軍隊，我們能做什麼呢？’（No one likes the PLA – what can we do?)
27	Friendship Highway,	Tibetan (M, 20s)	C	When ask why there is no security checkpoint

T27	Tibet November 2011			between Lhasa and Nepal border for bags and criminals, he replied He was one of the most outspoken Tibetan I have met so far. He is wholly unhappy about the situation in Tibet. He complained about the propaganda around the city and how CCP is brainwashing the young generation through education. He is upset that the CCP is slowly ridding their mother tongue and sad that if he has children one day, they may not be able to speak Tibetan. Regarding general livelihood, he feels that though it is clear that their general standards of living has increased but he rather live a simple life than to have freedom taken away (and that of his children in the future). He has never left Tibet (expect to go to a short trip to Nepal), he knows he will never be able to leave Tibet because he cannot get a passport. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '西藏沒有恐怖分子，他們 (CCP)才是恐怖分子！（there are no terrorists in Tibet, the CCP are the terrorists!)

28- 29 T28/29	Hong Kong Cyclists (cycled for 26 days from Qinghai to Lhasa) November 2011	Hong Kong (Mx2)	C	We met in Xining and we had dinner in Lhasa when they arrived. No checkpoints all the way to Tibet, no one checked their passports or asked for any identification documents. Army at Lhasa seems worried with the red flag they had on their bikes and asked them to remove the flag.
30 T30	Hostel Worker November 2011	Han (F)	C	Warned not to go into city center at night on own. Lots of drunken Tibetan men fighting and can get quite rough. When asked why they are fighting, she replied they have too much time. Did not speak highly of them of Tibetan yet when asked if the Hui are a threat, replied that they are generally nice people and easy to get along with. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '回族人很不錯，我不介意他們' (I do not mind them (Hui), they are nice people).
31 T31	Taxi November 2011	Taxi Driver (M)	C	Have seen many drunk Tibetan at night, nothing to do and do not have to work- just cause trouble and get into fights. He also complained about Tibetans living off the government and not being grateful for their efforts to modernize Lhasa.

				He feels that the tension is mainly from the Tibetans, nobody really cares but they are always angry.
32 T32	Barkhor Square November 2011	Hui Trader (M)	C	He sold cow and dogs skin on the stand. He said he has tiger skin which are much lower price than Tibetan traders. Jaguar is RMB 3,000 – 6,000 and tiger is around 6,000 for a very small skin. He can post the skins back to me but I must have Han middlemen because Tibetan middlemen will arouse suspicion and he wants to work with Han. The Tibetan lady next to us was not happy about this and started to question him which he ignored. When ask where to view skin, he said his supplier Chen, will show my middleman the skin and than can negotiate. No difference if I go to another stall because very likely collect skin from the same supplier in Lhasa so no difference in price. The way he described supplier and his warehouse is matching with Chen. He do not know personally of any other traders in BS. Can trust him because he works for a reputable supplier, they will refund if not happy with quality. Do not have to pay unless happy with skin, is ok to just view it.

33 - 34 Xi (T33) T34	Barkhor Square November 2011	Tibetan Skin Trader/ Supplier (M x2) Xi was tipped off by a Tibetan lady whom has over heard my conversation with the Hui trader, X32. The TB skin trader yelled at me when I walked pass and ask if I would to purchase some 'blankets'? Very comfortable living standards in his flat, his wife is very proud of what her husband has achieved. *** over period of time	A	Xi asked me not to trust the Hui trader because he sells fake tiger skins. He also made me promised him not to tell him what he will show us. He asked if I would like to view and converse in his flat or hotel. We meet after his shops were shut back in BS. The Hui, T32 noticed me and was not happy at all. He followed us for a short distance, again trader ask me not to reveal anything to the Hui trader. We carried on the interview and the viewing in his apartment, where I met his wife, daughter and neighbor. He left and shortly returned with skin and another guy whom is the key supplier. While husband was gone, I conversed with wife and neighbor; they explained that he has been in the skin business for over 10 years, a very small but reliable operation. Sometimes the viewing takes place in his partner's house, all of which are Tibetans and long-term friends. His daughter (around 14) was keen on watching Chinese TV and singing along to songs but her mother was not pleased. She asked me to do her homework for her. She was very sweet. The trader, Xi did most of the talking. He revealed that there were only 3 - 5 other Tibetan traders in this network and said the supplier is the key person. They all know one another on a personal level and refuse to work with other ethnic groups (knows about X and

				said he supplies fake skin to Hui traders – do not like them) The jaguar skin is 65,000 (adult) and a smaller one is worth 50,000. The tiger skin is 65,000 – 70,000. Mainly reserved for the 老兵. He has posted skins back to Beijing and Shanghai and is confident the skin will arrive safely (extra charge of 200RMB). He said will give us postage receipt and ensure the product can get pass custom. His cilents are Han, skins came in from India and than to Nepal. He said it is impossible to bring the skin back from Nepal without connections. They trader and supplier know very well that they face much higher risk than the Hui traders. They feel like they are targeted because they are Tibetans hence they do not want to work in a big network (supplier). Supplier picks up from one poacher and drives it down to Lhasa to be sold to clients. Do not need a middleman – unlike Hui. Has a wider range of skins in size and species if I want to see/ purchase. For the interview, Xi did the talking and looked to the supplier for confirmation. The supplier only nod or shake his head and had his hand crossed the whole time.

				Direct Quotes/ Translation: '怕警察，會有麻煩' (Worried about the police, will bring trouble) '值這個錢' (Worth every penny) '不是他們（回族）但害怕警察' (not scared of them, only of the police in Lhasa) '我在在這個行業時間比他們長（回族）所以我知道 ' (I have been in business longer than any of them (Hui), I know)

35/36 T35/36	Restaurant November 2011	Restaurant Owner, Han Male (Male x 2 Xian)	C	Has set up business for over 5 years in Lhasa, mainly accommodate for tourists and local. Do not take notice of the ethnic tension in the city but stressed that they welcome anyone to eat. Hui are very strong competitors and very good businessmen, can learn from them whereas Tibetans are more laid back and relaxed.

				Direct Quote/Translation: '回族是很不錯的商人，我向他們學習。他們努力工作和街頭智慧，他們總是在忙' (The Hui are smart businessmn, I need to learn from them – they work hard and are always busy doing something)
37 T37	Barkhor Square November 2011	Street stall owner (Male, Hui)	A	Has animal skins hanging from stall, asked that he can get tiger skin for me but have to wait 1 – 2 days. I will need to produce a Han middleman for security reasons. When asked where will I view the skin, he pointed to the direction of Chen's warehouse and said that the supplier is a reputable one active in Lhasa so I can trust him. All the skins came from India so that is why I have to wait for a few days before viewing.
38 T38	Lhasa, Tibet November 2011	Tibetan (F)	C	Do not speak highly of the Han/Hui she has to work with everyday. Claims she has seen them sell their true self for money which she do not agree with (mainly due to her religion) She feels that she has to be constantly mindful of what she says because there are Tibetans whom are working for the CCP to watch over their own

				people (she heard from people – denies knowledge) but she feels shameful of them to betray own people and religion. Again, she was brave in making this statement but the conversation didn't last very long. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '回族並不像我們（藏人）有原則，他們改變他們的姓氏，忘記他們是誰，只為了錢！' (The Huis do not have strong principles like us, they can change their surname – forget their roots – all for what? For money!)
39 T39	Lhasa Tibet November 2011	Hui Trader (M)	A	Do not have animals' skins for sale but suggested that I can have a look at the stalls, which hangs animal skins out, they are very likely to be able to obtain some tiger skins. The trade is not very exclusive, it is quite open and well known amongst the square that a circle of traders are involved. Do not know about the Tibetan traders. The traders do not mind other people as long as they don't cause trouble in front of his stall. He knows there is tension in the BS over business but will stay out of it

40 T40	Barkhor Square	Hui Trader (M)	A	Most of the traders in the BS are Hui, followed by Tibetan. He gets along with everyone in the square because he is only here for business. Skin trade – he laughed and said you can get anything here if you have the money and connections. Told to ask at stalls, which has animal skins hanging on display. It probably means they have more in stock.
41/42/43 T41/42/43	Barkhor Square November 2011	Hui Trader (M x2) Han Trader (F)	A	They all claim to be able to get tiger skin from their supplier. However, I must have a Han middleman for security reasons. They do not want trouble so that is why they want a Han middleman – least likely to arose suspicion. The name of the supplier they claim to obtain skin from is the Chen. When asked where they view the skin, the point at the direction of Chen's warehouse.
44 T44	Taxi November 2011	Han Taxi Driver (M)	C	Like Lhasa very much, do not think will be returning to hometown. Better living better quality, better environment to have a family in. Knows about tension between Han and Tibetan. Generally Han do not like trouble so leave them alone but Tibetans always picks fight and insults Han people. Sometimes it is not safe to drive around Lhasa at night. He will not pick up Tibetan passengers because some of his colleagues have been attacked before. He wants everyone to get on

				peacefully.
45 T45	Barkhor Square November 2011	Hui Street Stall Owner (M)	A	Possible to get animal skins, he do not know him personally but knows of a Hui supplier in the market that is very established.
46 T46	Barkhor Square, Lhasa, Tibet November 2011	Hui Street Stall Owner (M)	A	Again, stressed that it was possible and ask for a contact number. Can arrange for meeting in 24 hours with supplier but need a middleman. Trader said only one supplier in the region so no point in asking anyone else. He do not know which trader in the square has connections to him.
47 T47	Local Bakery, owned by a young Han male from Sichuan, November 2011	Father of the Bakery Owner	C	Son has moved up to set up business, more opportunities in Lhasa. Has recently brought a house here and hopes to settle down here. He is very proud of his son.
48 T48	Train to Sichuan from Lhasa	Girlfriend of Drug Addict, (F, Siuchuan)	C	The family of her boyfriend has sent him to Lhasa hoping he can give up his addiction to ice. Yet, she revealed that Tibet is in fact where the ice in Mainland China comes from so he is in the wrong place, most of the ice comes from Iran into Tibet than into China. Her boyfriend used to be a dealer in Sichuan, for the best quality ice, 2,400 – 3,000 per gram, and once it reaches Shanghai it can bring up to 6,000 per gram. She said this is the top quality ice, you

				can get cheaper ones for up to around 1000

49 T49	Following incident after Nepal visa	Local Policeman (M)	B	Accompanied me back to the travel agent and drove me back to town afterwards. Told me that Lhasa is generally very safe but can get rough after dark.

Summary of Interviewees in Lhasa:

	Group A	*Group B*	*Group C*	*Total*
Number	Male = 16 Female = 6 N=22	Male = 2 N =2	Male = 20 Female = 5 N = 25	 49

Appendix 2: Kunming Interviews

Number Label	*Location / Date*	*Interviewee*	*Group*	*Information*
1 K1	南通道 (Nantongdao) ，一心堂 (Yixintang) National Chain Traditional Chinese Medicine Shop August 2011	Sales Lady (F)	A	Stressed that it is illegal and impossible to seek tiger products in Kunming because it is against the law. Yet, after much persistence, she revealed that it might be possible to buy – but certainty impossible to bring back to Hong Kong.
2 K2	Kunming Airport August 2011	Local Han Jade Trader (M)	C	I met a local jade trader that travels regularly between Burma and Kunming to sample stones. His family lives in Ruili and he was on way to go back to see them when I talked to him. He commented on how corrupted Burma is and he felt angry at the situation, which in his opinion would not change. Most of the jade he brings back must be declared but he commented that it is always easy to just give them a small amount of bribery to ensure the stones arrive in China. In practice, Burmese stones are processed and added value to when in China and sold in the market, some the stones are very expensive. Though he did not know how corrupted the borders

				were but he told me that it was easy to smuggle anything across on the Muse – Ruili border, just have to pay bribery so they would tell you when to cross the borders at the right time. Lots of Burmese workers in Ruili because they are much cheaper than the local Chinese. He did not know how much they are paid and how they got into Ruili but he was certain that they are not legitimate. Offered to take me to Ruili, on a new car. Some people in Ruili will purchase a car in Kunming and someone has to drive it down, the driver will charge 200 – 400 RMB for the empty seats that can be used to take people to Ruili. I did not take up on his offer. Ruili is safe in general, though lots of drugs coming from Burma into the city, it is safe if you avoid some of the dodgy areas. He likes Ruili very much.
3 K3	City Center December 2011	I saw a skin trolley pushed by a trader while on a taxi. Taxi driver (M)	C	The man has a range of leopard skins visible on his trolley, he was pushing the skin trolley on one of the busier sections of town. I saw him on a taxi. The driver replied that it is common to see skin trolleys around town during the Winter, can found them in the city center so I will certainly see another one before I leave.
4 K4	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market : which has more than 40 TCM	Shopkeeper (M)	A	He claimed he did not have any tiger bones but told me a lot of information about it. For example, he pointed out that it was very hard to buy them because

	shops December 2011			many people use them for gift. A small bone (size of a normal fountain pen will cost RMB50,000 or more). He also told me that a lot of sellers use cow bone as tiger bone to con inexperienced buyers. Interestingly, he suggested going to bigger traditional medicine companies to ask for tiger bone, more likely to have them and has more confidence that it will be a real bone and not just some plastic.
5 K5	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market December 2011	Shopkeeper (M)	A	No tiger bone in the area, emphasized it is illegal and knew nothing about it. The shop was quiet because everyone was packing; people buy in the morning and usually deliver the goods in the same afternoon. Not just in Kunming but to other provinces in Yunnan. Can try asking bigger chains.
6/7 K6/7	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market December 2011	Shopkeeper (M x 2)	A	Do not have them and not many people would come asking for them, the customers mainly want herbal medicine. He told me that there were not much enforcement in the area despite the large number of police cars outside the market – he suggested going to bigger wholesale companies to ask (not the ones that have open store inside the market but directly to the company along the road)

				He said similar thing, asking me to go directly to big company if I really want to find a tiger bone, not likely to get it in small wholesale shops

8 K8 (Sam)	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market December 2011	Shop Keeper (M)	A	Do not sell them, emphasized that it is illegal. He revealed he knew of a shop that got into trouble for selling tiger bone wine, rhino see: http://www.js163.com.cn/show_news.asp?id=4564 Never mind what position he is, if caught with that stuff, everyone will get into trouble so he will not risk it, he also referred me to bigger companies TCM companies down the road from market (just like K4 – K7). He gave me a few names to follow up but there was no such companies (perhaps I heard the name wrong) Yet, he stressed that the companies will not sell to me because I am not someone they knew well (friend/ family) – did not matter if I am Han, local person, rich – risky business. Police never comes in unless something happened (ie: fight) which is very rare. He doubts anyone has tiger bone in the market. He told me it is RISKY business and NOT worth it (he tried to talk me out of looking

				further). The client and the seller will both get into trouble. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* ‘不值得，不要試’ (Do not try it, it is not worth it) ‘店仍是空的，他還沒有返回 - 我不知道會發生什麼事，他不應該這樣做 ‘ (It is still empty, I don’t know when he will be back, I don’t think he will ever come back, he shouldn’t have done it!’) ‘只有官員能負擔得起’ (only those people (government officials) can afford it).
9 K9	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market December 2011	Shop Keeper (M)	A	He also said similar things as K7 / 8, revealed that a shop has been raided because they were selling illegal animal parts and they never re-opened. Even if the shops here have any, unlikely to tell you the truth because you are an outsider and they will not trust you. Said it was illegal and risky. Yet, suggested trying bigger companies.

10 K10	Kunming Juhuayuan Chinese Medicine Wholesale Market December 2011	Shop Keeper (M)	A	He was not sure whether there were tiger bones in the market, however he has heard of people getting into trouble for buying/selling it in the Traditional Chinese Medicine industry in Kunming.
11 - 14 K11 – K14	Various Traditional Chinese Medicine Shops Nanping Street Visited 14 – 16 TCM shops, only noted down K11 – K14 because they were more keen to talk since had less customers to deal with at time when I went in December 2011	Shop Keeper (F x3)	A	All said that they did not have tiger bones, banned and illegal – not even the labeling of tigers on products are legal. If anyone sells you any bone, it is very likely that it is fake. The provincial enforcement is very strict. One of the sale lady took me around the shop and gave me a tour of all the medicines they have which can act as a replacement for tiger bone or is popular to bring home from travels. One of the sales ladies referred to searching on the black market and on the Internet but stressed that she do not know much about it. She also said that the price will not be cheap (K14).
15 K15	Nanping street December 2011	Young local girl giving out questionnaires	C	Got chatting to her because I filled in a questionnaire for her, she is a local Yunnan girl and talked about her work. She enjoys life in the city, as opposed to her hometown that is in the rural side. She commented that there is little ethnic

				minority in Kunming but a growing population of Xinjiang Uyghur moving to Kunming city. The city is generally very safe and she feels safe visiting areas at night.
16 K16	Kunde District December 2011	DVD Shopkeeper (F)	C	She said she do not think enforcement is excessive and that Kunming is a very safe city. Although there are many police patrol around the cities and mobile police stations around the city, she feels safe. Many car patrols because of many official and singers in town to perform so traffic is always very bad. Whilst on the bus, I saw a group of local protesting for property rights outside hospital and she said it is very normal. Commented that it is a big city, of course there will be unrest. As to the uniformed men outside jewelry shop – she said it is due to a high level of burglars and the shops now hire private security (many of them are ex-army).
17 K17	Taxi Driver December 2011	Ex – Solider (now turned taxi driver, M)	B	Corruption at border, people want to buy their son a place that will cost RMB 50,000 and a place for their daughter will cost RMB 150,000 to position at the People Liberation Army. They make extra money on top of salary from

				bribery to let illegal consignment pass (average RMB500,000 per service) to split between teams. The higher rank you are on, the more you get. He is 100% sure that anything illegal and wildlife animals is able to find their way in to China because the army has been given money 'How else will they come in to the city! We can stop a mosquito from flying in if we want!' He saw lots of cargos coming in from Vietnam (Hakou) when he was stationed there during his teenage years. Although not sure what was inside but told not to check them and let them through. He was sure that the army was heavily involved in the drugs trade, lots of heroin comes in from Burma then make its way to Beijing/Shanghai – he quoted a recent report of a Chinese pop star confessing to using drugs and feels very angry that the situation has worsened. When asking of the infrequent checks between Ruili and Mangshi, he commented that the occasional checks were for show only and used to write reports with, the reality was very corrupted Everyone knows but everyone wants to be involved because of the high social status of being a PLA army. He has left the army to start a family because he

				wished to spend more time with his son. His father was also in the army and he has been in service since 17 – he told me that he always tells his son to leave China as soon as he can and not come back, he dislike the situation very much now. He hates to see his son being dragged into a corrupted system. He also commented that the police in China is 低級的流氓 (low class scum) that the people really qualified for the job will never get it. If they are really doing their job, Kunming will not have such a bad drug problem, it is known for easy drugs that are cheap and affordable by young people. Kunming is a party town and lots of kids do not get into trouble because they have rich parents. He complained how in general, morals are slipping etc. He called them the 怪現像 (weird phenomena) of China. During the interview, he said that many times that the situation in China was very 太黑 (fuckin corrupted) and the 中國的老百性他媽的太善良 (Chinese citizens are too bloody navie) so the deserving and those that really need the help of the state are those oppressed by the government. He much rather prefer to live under the Mao era, where at least everyone gets a equal share and would enjoy a good life with less complexity.

				Direct Quotes/ Translation: '他們是如何來到中國？如果我們想要的，我們可以停止蒼蠅進來，為什麼不虎皮可以進來嗎？' (How did they come to China? if we want, we can stop a fly coming in, why not a tiger skin can come in?)
18 K18	Massage Parlor December 2011	Young Massage Girl (F, young 20s)	C	Lots of rich kids in Kunming that she knows will use drugs, but she claimed that she never used any in her life. She wants to leave Kunming because people here are not willing to try new things, she rarely goes clubbing but knows that Kunming is famous for nightlife and it is very vibrant. Lots of people come here to party and also visited her massage parlor. Said that there are a few Burmese girls that work in the parlor.
19 K19	Massage Lady 2 December 2011	Massage Lady (F) (First migrant worker I met in Kunming)	C	Likes living in Kunming but complained that it is quite expensive, big city – not easy to make a living.

20 K20	A group of locals that has built a fire from cardboard paper and wood to keep warm has allowed me to join them	News agents Taxi drivers (M, F) (Circle of friends: around 4 – 6 because some joined mid way)	C	All of them enjoy living in Kunming; life is very stable and easy and feel very safe in the city. They all know of the drug problem but they do not care because it does not affect them (no idea where it is from etc.), taxi driver commented that he has seen once or twice teenagers being very high and acting abnormal on the street late at night but will not stop and go past them to avoid trouble. They commented that the train stations are dodgy at night, often occupied by Xinjiang people and know there are fights and people using drugs there - can see fresh needles in the morning, do not recommend going.
21 K21 (Cecilia)	Manicure Salon Lady Taobao Shopping Mall on Nanping Street (Basement) December 2011	Owner of Manicure Salon (F) (Young 20 – she has been in business since 18)	C	She has been in the nail business for 4 years, started working for her sister when she was 18 and saved some money to open her own shop (with support from her family). The death of her grandmother is a constant source of motivation. She lives near the Kunde night market. She said though a bit noisy but it is not too bad at night, people are well behaved and lots of police on patrol. She complained about her shop because she needs to pay 5k for monthly rent so she needs to make at least RMB200 per day to break even. She pointed out to me the competitors around

				her and which one she especially dislikes. Sometimes, the city guard (城管） comes down to the mall and asks her that she needs to pay them for 'tea', best to give them some money to avoid trouble.
22 K22	Manicure Salon December 2011	Employee of Nail Salon (F)	C	She revealed that she is a regular at Kunde, she goes 3 – 4 times a week. She gets 1 day off per week and works from 1ish – 11 pm so is perfect to go after work. Most of the people that go are to have a good time and relax and it is common to see people using drugs. No one she knew has ever got caught (usually heroin or sometimes cocaine) just do it subtly and stay inside the club/bar. The police do not care unless people start fighting or cause a scene. Around RMB450 – 600 per 100 gram, depends on the quality, well known Xinjiang dealers in the area. If I ever want some, should ask the bartender or bouncer for information, not difficult to buy.
23 K23	Manicure Salon December 2011	Shop Keeper (F)	C	Another regular at Kunde, commented that Kunming is a very popular party town and many people from all over China will come and have a good time. Revealed that she has used heroin sometimes to

				relax. Her previous boyfriends were all users and some are dealers, she knows it is risky to use drugs but none of her friends has ever been caught. In her experience, the police are there to make sure there are no fights or drunken people causing trouble on the streets. They do not care what happens inside the nightclubs.
24 K24	Manicure Salon December 2011	Shop Keeper (F)	C	Her boyfriend is a drug dealer; she seems to be proud to be dating a dealer and was keen to tell me her story (she overheard my conversations with other girls in the next shop section). Her boyfriend works for a group of dealers, he is not full time but he makes good money from it. He personally does not use drugs – most of his supplies are from a Xinjiang circle that dominates the market in Kunde. Will not deal in Kunde because of police, usually through friends and referred people whom he can trust. Asked if I needed any.
25 K25 - 27	City Center December 2011	Xinjiang Trader (M x3)	A	They were all walking around Kunming city center with a trolley of skins, he has sheep, cow skin etc and said it was mainly to keep warm during winter. Saw them at different times but they were all from Xinjiang. He also has some leopard skins for sale (not sure

				if it is real or not – very cheap, cost only RMB 800 but noted that leopard skins are illegal too). Sheepskins were RMB 600, wolves and dogs skins were around RMB650 – 800 He said most of his clients are actually Westerners and not locals. All the skin came from Xinjinag and there is a group of them operating around train station so I can find them there. Skin used to warm seats for drivers. His group will go and pick up skins personally and bring them back. No tiger skin, he do not sell them because it is illegal to do so.

28 K28	Kunming Train Station December 2011	Security Guard (M)	B	He knew straight away the groups of Xinjiang traders I was talking about that are very active around the train station. In 2008, Kunming government did a crackdown on the traders and since, they are not allowed to operate near the station, but they still come back and no one tells them off because they do not want trouble or get into violence. The guard said what they sell depend on which time of the year; they tend to circulate the city with trolleys of animal skins during the Winter and sell books/gadgets during the Summer.
29/30 K29/30	Kunming Train Station December 2011	Shop Keepers of Shops around the Train Station (M x2)	C	The shop owners did not know of skin traders but was aware of the group of Xinjiang traders that gathers around here. They told me to stay away at night because it was not very safe. They also said that it was best not to get involved with them, has no idea what they are selling but probably not legitmate and dangerous. Have seen skin trolleys around but unsure if they belong to the Xinjiang group. Security here not very strict, no special

				enforcements unless something happens. Incident like today is not very often but not rare too. They fight, scream and then will leave the scene. Nothing sinister.
31 K31 (Lin)	Kunming Train Station December 2011	Skin trolley trader	A	Saw a skin trolley around the train station so went to speak with him; he is from Gansu province, not Uyghur. He is in his early 20s, he claimed that he do not work for the Xinjiang group – knows of them though. He is not a full time skin trader; he sells other products during the Summer. He confirmed that there are 6 – 7 traders also working for the same boss wheeling skin trolleys around town. He showed me what was in his trolley, which was full of animal skins; he has a lot of leopard skins in his trolley. When asked about tiger skin, he commented that it would take some time to acquire one. He said price depends on where tiger comes from, if it is from Siberian tiger (RMB1.5 – 2 million). The buyer must pay 50% of deposit up front and rest of the payment when it arrives. Deposit to ensure buyer is committed and to arrange delivery via several middlemen. It is non-refundable. The skin will arrive 30 days from Siberia and then pay rest of the sum; can post within China

				but not outside of China. Cheaper alternative is to get tiger skin via India that comes in from Tibet which will cost up to RMB 500,000 and takes around 20 days to arrive. He gave me his contact number. He knew the trade was illegal. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* 小姐，不是老虎 - 這是一個塞爾維亞老虎！ *(Miss, it is not a tiger – it is a Serbian Tiger!)*
32 K32	Woman TaoBao Shopping Street on Nanping Street (Basement) December 2011	Shop Keeper (F)	C	Her ex boyfriend was a drug dealer and worked around Kunde, he sold heroin that was generally brought by the rich kids in town for weekend. She knows of the Xinjiang traders in the area but claims that neither she nor her ex boyfriend has anything to do with them.
33 K33	Women TaoBao Shopping Street on Nanping Street (Basement) December 2011	Shop Keeper (F)	C	A regular at Kunde, she said she knows people who will go weekly to get high, very easy to get heroin there (and other drugs) – police do not care unless it is very obvious. The posters and the campaigns around the

				district are not useful, people still get high and no one cares about enforcement. Though of course, it is always smart to be safe and to keep a low profile.
34 K34	Coach Station (near the train station) December 2011	Bus Station Operator (F)	C	Underground casinos are an attraction in Ruili, no casinos in Kunming (also confirmed by one of the taxi drivers) people need to go to the outskirts for gambling which is quite far away from Kunming city
35 K35	Nanping street December 2011	Skin Trader (M)	A	Again, a skin trolley came out of a back alley on Nanping street – one of the busy down town streets of Kunming. The trolley looked similar to that I saw near the train station, approached him and confirmed that he is from Gansu as well. Confirmed that there is a group of 6 – 7 traders wheeling skin around cities. Works for the same boss. He is not sure about tiger skin but likely to be able to, needs to speak to boss.
36 K36	Kunming December 2011	Taxi Driver (M)	C	On way to Kunde night market, he complained that most of the drug dealers are from Xinjiang, they get at least 80% revenue from their drugs sales. It is known that there are a lot of widows in

				Xinjiang because their husband has been caught selling drugs, which he feels very angry about. The overall level of safety for taxi drivers is very low in Kunming; the taxi cage inside the vehicle is to keep them safe.
37 K37	Kunming December 2011	Taxi Driver (M)	C	He knows about the illegal drug trade in Kunming, but did not say much – he commented that this is a serious problem
38 K38	Namping street December 2011	Skin Trolley Trader (M)	A	Another skin trolley on Nanping street, the skin he has was similar to what I saw previously in Lin's trolley. He pointed me in the direction of where he is based, the same direction which K33 pointed me to – a leather goods shop based inside a back alley.
39 K39 (Wong)	Back Alley on Nanping Street December 2011	Leather goods shops, shop owner (M, Han)	A	The shop was not busy when I approached him and he was quite friendly to talk to me. He did made sure none of his staff were close by before speaking to me. He has been in business for as long as he could remember. He seems to be in his early 40s – very young. Local. He confirmed that all the trolleys I saw (apart from the Xinjiang trolleys) all works for him – he has around 6 – 7 people working for him, which are from Gansu or Han Chinese.

				Most of the traders are not full time, only 1 – 2 stay on because not much people wants skins in the Summer apart from tourists. They are commissioned based and Wong has no idea what they do with rest of their time. He do not care and is not surprised if they are involved in drugs – because it is quick money but he claims he has nothing to do with drugs, just 'decorative' items. He also stressed that though he has knowledge of but do not work with Xinjiang gang but know of them. He did not speak badly of them. He also knows of 3 – 5 groups that are in the animal skin business but stressed that as good business practice, they tend not to interfere with each other business. Most of his clients are local who only wants skins to keep warm but has regular customers from all over China and can post their order via National China Post system. He told me he has been in business for 10+ years and is well known in circle. When enquired about tiger skin, he gave similar information as K33, he commented that there is ***more than one*** middlemen involved in the delivery– the middleman/men must be paid in order for the skin to get to Kunming. He do not trust the

				middleman and know exactly who they are but emphasized that it is not in anyone's interests to screw up the delivery. This is why the cost is so high because a lot of people have to be paid in order for the skin to arrive in Kunming. He emphasized that it is a long way to travel so it will take time and money. Confirmed what Lin said, can either get skin from India or Serbia (though he laughed at the idea of a Serbia tiger because it is so rare). The one from India will travel via Tibet cost around RMB 500,000 and will take around 30 days, Serbia tiger is much more expensive and will take longer to reach the city. No tigers coming in from Burma, though it is close but rarely obtain skins form that distance. More choices from India – Nepal – Tibet – Yunnan. Owing to distance travel, need to hire people at different stage to bring it down, risk and to 買關 (buy customs) and he highlighted the high risk involved in travelling the long distance. Although he seem open in telling me about tiger trade, there is a general sense of reservation when he speaks of the trade and how it works, ie: how many middlemen are involved. However, he is certain that they will not 'screw up' since it is not in the parties' best interest to not honor the transaction yet he did not tell me

				exactly how big the network is and how many middlemen are involved. Has never met the middlemen in person and do not think they will mess up He ensured us that if skin is lost midway, we will not be able to get refund but this is rarely the case, normally it will arrive (but it is a long wait) – he commented that if I am happy with quality, can go back or referred customers to him and establish a working relationship. Most of his customers are wealthy businessmen. Little regard for the police near by, so many problems in Kunming, why go after him? He do not think what he is doing is harming anyone whereas people selling drugs should be locked up first. He is only providing a good sought after by those that can afford it.
40 K40	Nanping street	Uniformed Police Patrol (M)	B	The street is still very much alive after dark, when asked about the skin trolleys – the police said they are selling legal animal skins so will not interfere. He laughed at the idea of tiger skins and wants to see one if they are around.

Summary of Interviewees in Kunming:

	Group A	*Group B*	*Group C*	*Total*

Number	Male = 14 Female = 4 N=18	Male = 3 N =3	Male = 5 Female = 14 N = 19	 40

Appendix 3: Ruili Interviews

Number/Label	*Location/Date*	*Interviewee*	*Group*	*Information*
1 R1	Way to Ruili, from Mansghi Airport	Taxi Driver (F,Han)	C	On way to Ruili, lots of paddy field and Dai ethnic minorities. It is a famous tourist attraction to see the Dai people. The best rice can fetch up to 400 RMB per 100 grams in the city. Lots of drug from Burma coming into Ruili – it is not difficult to get stuff pass the gates. At night, can throw stuff across the border and no one will notice The people usually use public buses to get the drugs into Mangshi, and then to Kunming for sale. There are 4 checkpoints on the way and not long ago, a solider fell into the river and killed himself while trying to chase smugglers whom escaped by jumping into the river. The checkpoints was closed when I was there because of a visit of Beijing officials inspecting hygiene, when officials comes, all the army are stationed to protect their security inside town. When ask how she knows officials are in town, she said provincial government usually announces it so everyone can get ready.

				Mentioned that there is animal trade, but only fine and confiscated and not arrested like drugs. Business men are mainly Han because Han are smarter and better connected than Burmese traders, no one cares about illegal animal trade – if found, will be issued a fine. The drug trade is very established, directed me to part of town and told me to avoid it at night, not uncommon to see used needles on the streets of that area. She stressed that you can see here what you cannot see in rest of China. Also stress that ethnic minorities stays in this area so they can live their traditional way and not get interfered by modern city life *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* ‘越牆扔東西，然後會有人把它撿起’ (Throw things over the wall, someone will pick it up)
2 R2	Ruili Hotel	Bell Boy (M)	C	Can get tiger in the hotel before, people from China will come get – 3000 RMB per kg of tiger meat From Burma, also Bear paws – not often now.

				Churn bone into powder to be smuggled across into KM. The Xinjiang traders usually supply the heroine market, from cannot bring into KM – usually consume within Ruili. Referred two night clubs in Ruili which can esaly get drugs.
3 K3	Way from Ruili	Taxi Driver (M, Han)	C	Showed me another way into Burma while driving away from Ruili which is to cross a river and you are on Burmese land. This is also the route part of the Long March took place on. Commented that because there are officials in town so all the security checkpoints are shut, commented that they are not too useful because no one is ever there. The port only search big cars and not small vehicles so many smaller cars and bicycle can just cycle pass the security check points. Told us that the hotel we stayed in, the owner of the hotel benefited a lot from the illegal drug trade and is a big millionaire in the city

Summary of Interviewees in Ruili:

	Group A	*Group B*	*Group C*	*Total*
Number	0	0	Male = 3 N = 3	3

Appendix 4: Xining Interview

Number Label	*Location / Date*	*Interviewee*	*Group*	*Information*
1 X1	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (F)	A	The fox skins usually come from Qinghai and Nagqu region. Many businessmen travelling and sightseeing would come and purchase skins and bring them back as gifts, cost around 600 – 1200 RMB per skin. Never heard of tiger skins, it is illegal and not sure where I can find them.
2 X2	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	Also trades in fox skins and said that he collects skins from a trusted supplier and knows him personally. He seems surprised that I asked if he has tiger skins but asked me to go to Lhasa to locate tiger skins if I want to find any. No idea where I can get them in Xining.
3 X3	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	Wolves' skins are illegal to sell but he did say if it is illegal to purchase the skin as well, say that he offers postage service to his clients and said that they can go to the police if he does not honor the deal. No tiger skins in Xining and suggested that I should look for them in Lhasa, knows (heard of) of Hui Muslims traders specializing in endangered skin. Do not believe that I can find any tiger skins in Xining.
4 X4	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	Do not know of any tiger skins on sale in the area, said that it is illegal to sell tiger skins and will be arrested if anyone is caught dealing with endangered skins.
5	Ta'er Monastery	Shop Owner (M)	A	Not a patient man and was not happy when I asked about tiger skins.

X5	August 2011			Mentioned that tiger skins are illegal and no shops will sell them in the market.
6 X6	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (F, Han)	A	Friendly, chatty shop owner. Do not know anything about tiger skins and was not sure if the tiger skin I saw hung outside on the other side of the market is real. Yet, suggested not to explore because it is illegal to sell tiger skins in China.
7 X7	Ta'er Monastery August 2011	Shop Owner (M)	A	Tourists usually come into the market after going to the monastery to purchase Buddhism textbooks, knives etc. No one come in for exotic skins but should try my luck in Lhasa.

8 X8	Shui Jing Alley August 2011	Shop Owner (F, Han)	A	Do not know anything about tiger skins and said that it is illegal to sell them.
9 X9	Shui Jing Alley August 2011	Shop Owner (F)	A	Her daughter came to visit her and she was very pleased to speak to me, the mother was in a very good mood. Explained that many Han businessmen will come to Xining before going into Lhasa and buy the skin in bulks, can usually post back to their hometowns for them before they travel further. Some of the skins are dyed to make it more appealing to tourists, Tibetans in Yushu usually hunt foxes and they drive the skins here to sell to the shops, normally around 700 – 1300 RMB per piece. Do not know of anything to do with tiger skins, it is illegal to sell them.

10 X10	On the way back to the apartment August 2011	Taxi driver, from Sichuan (M)	C	Told me that he dislikes the Hui Muslims and thinks of them as dirty and uncivilized, like to get drunk and pick fights and told me to be careful. Think of them as a lower class of society and do not earn their money and gets it from the government because they are ethnic minority. Han and Hui Muslims do not tend to mix, live their own lives and mind their own business. Had bad experiences in the past with them in a car accident,
11 X11	Apartment August 2011	Young HK couple (F)	C	Met a young HK couple and they are intending to go to Lhasa from Xining by train, commented on how popular it is to travel through Xining. Chatted mostly to the girl.
12 X12	Bar (opposite from apartment) August 2011	Waitress (F)	C	Told me that a lot of young Westerners come here as a stop before going to Lhasa, but they do not usually stay long. People come in and out all the time from Xining because it is close to Tibet. Most popular gifts would be traditional Buddhist handcrafts or traditional medicine from the region. Generally, it is very peaceful in Xining. Racial tension between Hui Muslims and Han do exist but kept to a minimum. Feels that people here get on well with each other and do not think ethnic is a big issue, at least not for her personally.
13 X13	Wu Xi street August 2011	TCM Shop Sales (F)	A	First attempt to locate any tiger products in Xining, heart pounding after I left the shop. I was very nervous so we talked about all sorts of TCM before I asked about tiger part products. To my delight, the sales was very opened to talk about the tiger bone sale in, she was worried that I cannot bring bring the tiger bones back to Hong Kong but ensured that it was ok for the shope to post to anywhere in China.

				Depends on the quality and the part of the bone, the price is around 200,000 – 300,000 RMB per bone. It is a very popular product for tourists and officials so need to come back in a few days for viewing. When asked why it is so expensive, she explained that because it is very rare and the price setting is pretty much decided by the supplier and the shop owner and not by her. She is just doing her job. She talked of the tiger bone as if it was a legal product. The shop has a tiger head on display. When asked why and if it is real, she said it is a fake and used it to attract customers into buying tiger products.
14 X14	Wuxi Street August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (F)	A	The shop was much bigger than the first one I went into, I asked about tiger bones and the owner, Teng, was happy to speak to me. Teng was friendly and patient. She was curious why I was alone in her shop and what brought me here to her. She was willing to talk to me but stressed that it was impossible to bring the bone back to Hong Kong because it will be intercepted at customs. Yet, she can deliever for me and she can post them to an address inside China. However, it takes 2 – 5 days for her to get the tiger bones to the shop, no need to pay a deposit or middleman. They are around RMB 200,000 – 300,000. A cheaper and legal alternative are dried caterpillars – the best she can do for me is RMB 70,000 – 85,000 per kg. It will make an impressive gift and make my friends back home happy. She can arrange for a viewing before her regular clients arrives into Xining, she has to inform the supplier and he will bring the bones into the shop. Warned me that no one in the industry will sell powdered bones unless they are out to con you, there are no way in telling the differences between a fake and real bone unless you have worked with bones for a period of time.

				She claimed that most of the TCM shops on the street are owned by the same owner, there are around 4 - 6 big owners in the area and they want to drive other out of business by taking as much space as possible to increase exposure by dominating an entire street with their TCM shops – she claimed that this is an effective tactic and has proven to work. Families own the small shops but they are not in their league and she predict that they will be driven out of business very soon. It do not matter which shop you go because they are likely to get the bones from the same supplier or are owned by the same boss, not a lot of tiger bones so only a few supplier. She is not sure if her suppliers supplies to other shop nor does she care – as long as the supplier honour their agreement, she is happy. Shop has tiger poster. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* '不管你走到哪里，它都是一样的 - 不要浪费时间去检查价格！' (It does not matter where you go, you probably end up with the same bone from the same supplier – don't waste time checking quality and prices!)
15 X15	Wu Xi Street August 2011	TCM Shop Sales (F)	A	Do not know of any tiger bones on sale and has never seen anyone selling it in, she believes that, it is not commonly demanded by customers. All the shops were owned by a small number of wealthy locals and they open as many shops in the same areas as they can in order to drive smaller businesses out of competition.

				Normally they get on well with one another, peaceful working ethnics. The smaller medicine shops are either family run or have been here for a long time. No tiger display in the shop.

16	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (M)	A	People usually come here to buy Tibetan medicine, though Xining is a transit for many hoping to go to Lhasa, it is not easy to get to Lhasa because of health problems or other issue so Xining is as far as some people can go. Clients are usually Han Chinese, you rarely find young Chinese people asking for traditional medicines, it is usually their parents that purchase the medicines, such as dried caterpillars etc. – not all of them will go to Tibet from Xining. Also have had walk in customers in the past and she happily sold them the bone. Can be sold for around 100,000 RMB per kg – only the very best fungus and not easily found. As such, it is better to employ Han young people to serve them so they will understand what is happening and will be able to converse better with clients. Do not think Han are better workers; just feel Hui Muslims may not be the best choice of employee to promote traditional Chinese medicines. He owns 3 shops on Binhe road, a very small number compared to what other people on the street owns, knows of people that owns a couple of streets of traditional Chinese medicine shops. No tiger signal.
17 X17	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (M)	A	I visited a much smaller shop, family run and not a shop popular amongst tourists. The owner explained that most of his income he made from wholesale to other parts of China and not so much from tourists in Xining.

				Explained that he knows most of the shop are owned by a couple of people and commented they are more catered for tourists rather than his shop is. No tiger signal in the shop.
18 X18 Mrs. Liu	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (F)	A	Mrs. Liu told me that alot of people from the South comes to buy medicine in her shop. Most of the shops are run and owned by Han because the Hui Muslims and the Tibetans do not believe in traditional Chinese medicines themselves so it do not look good on the shop to have non-Chinese selling them. She revealed that the shop has just sold a bone to a Han businessman a couple of days ago and he drove back to his hometown with it, perfectly safe – just say it is a cow bone and will not get into trouble for it because the police will not take it to a lab for examination – no one cares. She also accept walk in customers as long as they are sincere in purchasing and had had no trouble so far. The bones came from India (via Tibet) so there is usually a few days wait before it gets to Xining. She obtains her bones from the same supplier that will deliever the bone directly to the shop. She commented that there are not much suppliers in the region and she knows her supplier very well and trusts him 100%. He is from Lhasa. She is not sure if he also supplies to other shops but she said as long as he deliver the bone to her shop, she is happy to go back to him because tiger bones are very hard to find and beggars cannot be choosers. Also, he has a good reputation so she do not worry about him not showing up of giving her poor quality bones. She sees it as a logical business decision to honor their agreement. The bone always stays with the supplier, not at the shop. Customers can choose between a a male or female bone, each is around 200,000 – 300.000 RMB and are all on high demand. Though men tend to choose the male tiger bone. There is really no way in telling which is which but she stressed that

				she trusts her supplier very much. Her family owns around half a dozen of TCM shops in the area because they want to increase exposure and drive out competitions so she is keen to open more in the future. She tends to hire Han employees because the Hui Muslims knows very little about TCM. She said she was also worried Hui Muslims will not work hard or steal from the company. She personally has nothing against the Hui Muslims but feel that Han are more trust worthy and they will know more about TCM than the Hui Muslisms. When asked if she is worried they will expose her trade in tiger bone - she said no because doubt anyone will care too much about it. She trusts her team of Han employees and knows they always do a good job in selling tiger bone to clients. She feels that they will not 'screw up' and commented that it is not wise to do so because they will lose their jobs. Tiger signal in the shop. *Direct Quotes/ Translation:* 谁管？ (Who cares?)
19 X19	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Keeper (M)	A	It was a very small shop and I assumed that it is a family run store with all the children inside and helping out. The shop was very dark inside and I felt unsure so I left shortly.

				No tiger signal.
20 X20 Kim	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (M)	A	The owner, Kim, was very keen to chat and open about his business, I reckon he was bored since the shop was pretty dead when I went in. He was inside alone and there were no staff around. Kim said he can reserve tiger bone for me if I wish but it will take a couple of days for it to arrive, the bone came from India via Tibet and supplier has to drive and pick it up and deliver it to the shop. He did not reveal much detail about the supplier but confirmed that he has been using the same supplier over a period of time and he is reliable. There are only very few supplier around since there are not much tiger bone left to go around. He said that it is a normal business transaction and there is no need to complicate things. No middleman or deposits are required, just arrange with himself and he will contact the supplier to bring the bone in. The bone is stored with the supplier, not at the shop. He trusts him to bring it over at the agreed time and hopefully sales will be completed and they each get a share. Reputation of is supplier is very good so he do not have to worry about quality. He did not say how many shops he owns in the area but commented that the same group of people, which gets along pretty well, owns most of the shops here. Everyone minds their own business and try not to get into each other's way. No tiger signal in the shop.
21 - 23 X21 – X23	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Sales Lady (F)	A	No such thing as tiger bone around the area, it is illegal.
24 X24	Near apartment August 2011	Super Market Owner (F)	C	Local Han from Qinghai region, the daughter and mother run the supermarket. I have been visiting the same supermarket for quite a while now so I have came to know them reasonably well.

				She commented that many Westerners come here but not so much people from Hong Kong, she commented that most tourists will stay around here because it is the Han quarter, she said it is better to stay with the Han people as the Hui Muslims can get quite violent and unreasonable. Also warned that the Hui Muslims supermarkets are usually filled with expired goods and re-write the labels to con money out of tourists.
25 X25	Shui Jing Alley August 2011	Shop Owner (F)	A	She have a couple of dog skins hanging from her shop but commented that she do not know of any tiger skins sellers. She said that wearing skin is very common in Xining since it gets cold very early, she is not sure what kind of skin people are wearing and there are many shops that will sell skins as fashion symbol. She said I should try Lhasa since it is common knowledge that senior Lamas wears tiger skins so there should be a supply there. The dog/sheep skins on display in her store are killed by Tibetans in Yushu and drove to Xining for sale to the shopkeepers, like herself, in Shui Jing Alley. Lots of polices around because there are many pickpockets in the alley and to make sure they don't cause trouble in the Alley. Must watch out for groups of small children because they try to distract you and then steal from you.

26 X26	Shiu Jing Alley August 2011	Shop Keeper (M)	A	He was alone in the shop and spoke some Cantonese, he claimed that he has never heard of tiger skins on sale in Xining but many other type of skins to chose from.
27 X27	Shiu Jing Alley	Shop Keeper (F)	A	No tiger skins but she suggested that she have wolves' skins (which are second class protected) yet she seems to give little regard to their illegality. She did not answer if what she was selling is illegal and there seems to be a general blur in her

	August 2011			knowledge. She said no one cares if they are illegal and the polices that patrol the area probably do not even know what the skins are nor do they care about what shops are selling. The wolves skins in her shop are hunted and drove down to her shop by the Tibetans, she has never been to Yushu before and will not go because she is worried about earthquakes. She was a friendly lady and very patient in talking to me. Before leaving her shop, she asked me to be careful with my bags in the alley and ask me to come see her before I leave. I would wave to her whenever I pass by her shop.
28 X28	Shiu Jing Alley August 2011	A yoghurt shop owner (M)	C	Very revolting home made yoghurts but had to finish the bowl to be polite. The owner has been making his own yoghurt for a few decades. He said that many time, kids came to take the yoghurt he had display off his stall so he would only use empty bowls on display. There are lots of Hui Muslims kids stealing and some of them have been blacklisted by the police, usually take them to their parents and not to the police. He does not have any bad feelings towards the kids but more to their parents.
29 X29	Shiu Jing Alley August 2011	Lady at the apartment (F)	C	The area in which we are in are the Han quarter, few Hui Muslims will come to live in this area. The Hui restaurant opposite are just catered for the few of them that lives around here, she do not mind them at all – have a very close Hui friend and gets along well with them. Do not think they are bad people but know there are some very

				extreme ideas about them. She feels that in general, the racial tension is not high. There is not a high level of exclusion in the community and people do get along well. Of course, there will be the occasional fights when they have a wee bit too much to drink. Feels that it is not fair to hate the Hui Muslims for no reason and everyone deserves a chance.
30 X30	Massage Parlor August 2011	Massage lady (F)	C	The lady came from Chongqing and has been in XNG for 3 hours, she enjoys life in XNG and it is not as busy as it is in Chongqing. Do not mind the Huis in general but feel that a lot of them free ride and get free stuff.
31 X31	Noodles Restaurant August 2011	Owner (M)	C	I come to this shop very often while I am in Xining, the owner told me that a Han boss set up a chain of beef noodle shops for Han because a lot of the Han will not go into a Halal noodle shop and thinks they are dirty and their meat is not clean and business has been good so far.
32 X32	Hui Halal restaurant August 2011	Waiter (M)	C	His shop is a family run business, does not mind the Han customers and welcomes anyone into his shop. Understand that there is still a misunderstanding between Hui Muslims and Han Chinese and he do not think is healthy for the younger generation to hold grudges. He personally does not mind them at all. You get bad/ good people of all ethnic, cannot just narrow it to one ethnic group.
33 X33	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (M)	A	He commented that it is not difficult to obtain tiger bones in Xining because the sale is very open. He claims that he does not stock them or knows of anyone that does but suggested that I go around the shops and ask other shop owners.

34 X34	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Owner (M)	A	The owner claims that he has tiger bones and can get them for me if I wish to see them but I will have to wait a few days before it arrives in Xining. It is easy to get them and do not require paying a deposit, just have to come back a few days later. The bone comes from India via Tibet. The bone is stored with the supplier not at the shop. Supplier needs to go pick up in Tibet and drives it down to Xining. He will be there when there is an arranged viewing and will take bone away if there are no sales. He and the supplier is happy to sell it to anyone as long as they have money and is sincere in buying one. All his worker are Han Chinese, no Hui Muslims –because Hui will have no idea what a tiger bone does in the practice of Chinese medicine so makes it difficult to explain to sales. He is not worried about being exposed because he do not have the stuff in his shop – how do you prove he is connected to the trade if he do not have the product. No tiger signal in the shop.
35 X35	Binhe Road August 2011	TCM Shop Sales (F)	A	Believe that there is tiger bone here but a general lack of supply because there is such high demand. Asked me to go to the next store to ask.

Summary of Interviewees in Xining:

	Group A	*Group B*	*Group C*	*Total*
Number	Male = 11 Female = 15 N=26	0 N =0	Male = 4 Female = 5 N = 9	 35

Appendix 1

Interviews