Burkina Faso Under the Presidency of Thomas Sankara – A Post-Developmental State ?

Master thesis

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“We must dare to invent the future.”

(Thomas Sankara in Murrey 2018a, p. 11)

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CDRs — Comités de Défense de la Révolution (Committees In Defence of the Revolution)

CNR — Conseil National de la Revolution (National Council of the Revolution)

IMF — International Monetary Fund

ISDS — Investor-State Dispute Settlement

NGO — non-governmental organization

OAU — Organization of African Unity

ODA — Official Development Assistance

PD — Post-Development

SAPs — Structural Adjustment Programs

tbm — translated by myself

UFB — Union des Femmes Burkinabès (Union of Burkina Women)

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1. Introduction

1) Painting of Thomas Sankara by the Beninese artist Youss Atacora, included with his kind permission

Thomas Sankara is one of the most celebrated African idols. You will inevitably see his face in arts or hear his name when meeting politically interested people on the African continent and beyond.[1] Even more than thirty years after his death, he still inspires African youth and activism. The memory of his acts survived a period of 27 years after his assassination, although his successor erased any attempts to commemorate him or even to teach about him in Burkinabè schools (Ouedraogo 2017, pp. 8). Sankara managed to achieve what some African presidents have tried before him, after the formal independences, though with limited success: a radical break with colonialism. More than that, he brought about alternative ways, striving after a good life for all and a "new societal project, free from any form of exploitation and oppression" (Sankara 1987a, p. 199, translated by myself (tbm)). Different contemporary African social movements refer to his politics and life, most prominently the Balai Citoyen. This Burkinabè social movement spearheaded the popular uprising in Burkina Faso in 2014, which chased away Sankara's successor, the dictator Blaise Compaoré (Soré 2018, p. 225).

The Post-Development texts considered "classical" originate from the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 90s, which leads Klapeer (2016) to interpret them as a response to the so-called lost "development" decade of the 80s (pp. 125) including the years of Sankara's presidency (1983-87). Post-Development is the most radical critique of the practice, the discourse and the politics of "development". According to Aram Ziai (2004a), we can speak of a Post-Development school, which unites different scholars with a range of slightly different approaches (p. 169). They have in common the radical rejection of the very idea of

[1] I found documentaries about Sankara in Kiswahili, Amharic, Wolof, Portuguese, French, Spanish, English and a number of other languages I could unfortunately not identify – a clear sign that his story is widely spread.

"development" instead of only seeking to reform it (Ziai 2001, p. 1). Consequently, Post-Development (PD) calls us to search for alternatives to "development" (Escobar 2011, p. 218).

Arturo Escobar (2011) highlights local grassroots movements as promising actors for creating such alternatives to "development" (ibid.). They are supposed to have the best conditions for realizing self-determination instead of imposed "development" (Ziai 2001, pp. 11; Ziai 2004a, p. 192). However, Julia Schöneberg (2016) underlines that "the mere fulfilment of this factor does not necessarily lead to structural contestations of development […]" (p. 205). As a corollary, if self-determination alone does not necessarily lead us to a post-developmental future, the need of a normative PD framework beyond mere self-determination arises. According to Schöneberg (2016), Post-Development theory is "generally dismissed as lacking practical potential" (p. 201). Are grassroots initiatives really the ones who are going to change the global system of hegemony, capitalism and "development"? She stresses that the search for practical alternatives to "development" should touch on various practical fields including politics, the economy, and knowledge (p. 206). This point of view encouraged me to follow up on my idea and explore potential areas where Post-Development could achieve transformation on a state level. However, the aim of my master thesis is not to discuss if the nation-state is indeed the best way to organise a society, but rather to take into account that nation-states are a reality we live in, a reality which does not seem to be overcome easily at least in the short-term. So, let us explore together if PD could also flourish on the level of nation-states.

The failed-state literature as well as the literature on neopatrimonialism look at African states and only see dysfunctions (Niang 2018, p. 195). In contrast to that, my research expects to shed light on an inspiring practical experience of an African state, Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara. I assume it has the potential to offer many lessons for states with post-developmental ambitions in the global North and South. Through analysing revolutionary Burkina Faso[2] as a potential PD state, my thesis intends to address a striking research gap in Post-Development literature. Indeed, alternatives to "development" were rarely tried to be explored on a different level than the local, grass-roots level. Exceptions of analyses of states through Post-Development lenses are analyses of Ecuador and Bolivia whose constitutions integrated values from the respective indigenous communities, so-called elements of Sumak Kawsay, Buen Vivir, etc., in 2008/09 (Acosta 2016, p. 4). In view of the fact that there is so

[2] With the term "revolutionary Burkina Faso" in this paper, I refer to Burkina Faso under Sankara's presidency (1983-87) without claiming that this was the only revolutionary phase.

little research on states as alternatives to "development" yet, we deal with an under-explored field of research. Acosta underlines the importance of distinguishing between the official state propaganda on Buen Vivir and the implemented policies, which de facto often led to the expansion of capitalism and an intensification of state power (ibid.). This concern inspired me to combine an analysis of both the official discourse and the implemented policies of Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara (1983-87). While some scholars consider Burkina Faso at the time an "African socialist[3] inspired alternative to neoliberalism" (Jackson 2018, p. 116), I assume it to be also an alternative to "development". At that time, it must be mentioned that many labels have been put on Sankara's policies, but he neither published written work on his political ideology or action plans (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 31), nor did he label the politics and ideology of his government in terms of a particular category (p. 29)[4]. However, many scholars and activists use a new category, 'Sankarism' or 'Sankaraism', for highlighting the uniqueness of Sankara's political philosophy and politics (Murrey 2018a, p. 10; Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 23). With this work, I do not aspire to assign a new label to Sankara's political philosophy and economy, but rather to make sense out of it through Post-Development lenses. Thinking Thomas Sankara's vision and politics and Post-Development together, my research question thus is to explore whether Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara can be considered an alternative to "development" and then likewise a post-developmental state. From a feminist PD perspective, my work hopes to provide an additional, modest contribution to overcome the widespread blind spot of gender relations within PD theory as diagnosed by Ziai (2007b, pp. 231). Moreover, a post-colonial political economy perspective on PD strives after taking processes of material impoverishment seriously, thereby taking critiques on PD into account (cf. Kiely 1999, p. 46).

The ensuing part of my thesis (ch. 2) lays the ground for the analysis by the introduction of relevant theoretical concepts, debates and my methodology. First of all, I shed light on my understandings of "development" "aid" and state-led (post-)development (ch. 2.1). Then, I discuss the 'self-determination dilemma' and normative boundaries in PD theory (ch. 2.2) and

[3] "African Socialism […] claimed to draw on communitarian, humanist and socialist values in African traditions without strictly adhering to and following the classical and doctrinaire model of scientific socialism (Marxism) from Europe" (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 27).

[4] Many scholars have concluded that Sankara's ideology and politics were influenced by Pan-Africanism, African Socialisms including Nkrumahism, nationalism (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 30), anti-neo-colonialism (p. 32), anti-imperialism and other socialisms including forms of Marxism (p. 21) from which he eclectically drew inspirations for his pragmatic and locally adapted policies (p. 32). Yet, Sankara called it a Eurocentric practice to try to "uncover spiritual fathers for Third World leaders" (Genève Afrique in Phelan 2018, p. 66), which is I why I want to restrain myself in this regard.

provide a PD literature review on the topic of the state (ch. 2.3). Starting from this literature review and in order to operationalize an alternative to "development" on a state-level, I have decided to take the normative orientations of a PD society as formulated by N'Dione et al. (1997) as a basis and further expand these (ch. 2.3). The methodology section covers the applied method of qualitative content analysis as well as my understanding of knowledge, thus including this thesis, as 'situated knowledge' drawing from an intersectional[5] feminist perspective (ch. 2.4). In chapter three follows the main analysis of both Sankara's speeches as well as of his government's actions. It is ordered according to the characteristics of a PD state as elaborated in chapter 2.3: national self-determination politics (ch. 3.1), popular self-determination politics (ch. 3.2), inclusion and redistribution politics (ch. 3.3). The last chapter condenses Sankara's main arguments for the rejection of "development" (ch. 4.1), the alternative, (post-)developmental policies offered by his government (ch. 4.2), and where tensions with ideas of Post-Development theory lie (ch. 4.3). In the end, I point to some of the specific potentials and dangers of a PD state and undertake some first steps to situate it as an actor to bring about a post-developmental world (ch. 4.4). Yet, in the end, we have to acknowledge that there are "no blueprints valid for all times and places" (Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxix), which is certainly also valid for a PD state – but still, I am convinced that we can learn from the multifaceted experience of revolutionary Burkina Faso.

2. Laying the Ground

2.1 "Development" Practice vs. Post-Development in Practice?

The term "development" is difficult to grasp as it has multiple layers and interpretations. Thus, the Ivorian scholar Tanella Boni speaks of a "*concept fourre-tout"*, a catch-all concept (in d'Almeida & Lee 2015, p. 135). In the following, I will mainly focus on "development" as materialized practice (aid and policies) although knowing that the discourse, ideology behind play a crucial role for this materialization as "aid". Firstly, I will argue why in my understanding development "aid" or cooperation is paternalistic, neo-colonial, depoliticising and thus needs to be abolished – at least in the long run. Secondly, the subversive appropriation of the term

[5] 'Intersectionality' is a concept developed by the Afro-American feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw and originates in anti-racist feminist theory (Carastathis 2014, pp. 304). It emphasizes that the intersection of different kinds of discriminations leads to unique experiences and thus brings up the need for multidimensional analyses taking all kinds of intersecting systems of oppression into account (ibid.).

"development" in the sense of self-determination leads to a hybrid form, which I mark as (post-)development.

Paternalistic "development" practice to be abolished as neo-colonial and depoliticising "aid"

Moctar Dan Yayé (2020), a political activist from Niger, told me that whenever he leaves his country and is asked where he is from, he feels as if having a sign on his front saying "last place on the human development index". He feels stigmatized as a Nigerien because his country is the last in the global race for "development". Felwine Sarr (2019) is convinced that indicators, which pretend to measure human "development", cannot tell us anything about life itself, that is societal relations, the degree of social alienation, the quality of the cultural and spiritual life (p. 18). Moctar did not deny that, like in many other places, there is a poverty[6] problem in Niger. But even worse, he says, there is a problem with the tremendously high dependence of the state on "development" "aid", which obviously has not been capable of eradicating the poverty since decades, so that this kind of dependence on Western "charity" is sticking just as poverty is. The promise of wealth behind the "development" discourse has not been upheld (Sarr 2019, pp. 23). In the end of our conversation, my Nigerien interlocutor suggests that Nigerien politicians as well as the numerous Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international organizations at place feel quite cosy with this situation of constant "aid" money flow and thus are not really motivated to change the situation.

Usually, the birth of the discourse and the concomitant politics of "development" is dated back to the Truman speech in 1949 (Ziai 2015, p. 840). When anticolonial discourses became louder, making decolonization seem more and more tangible, the "development" discourse was strategically employed in an attempt to win the decolonizing states for the capitalist camp during the Cold War (ibid.). The capitalist system and especially its trading system were promised to deliver wealth to the global South's newly independent states (ibid.). Beyond this nowadays outdated Cold War logic, "development" "aid" has been very much part of a system of neo-colonialism, which will get more concrete and illustrative during the analysis of Burkina

[6] In this paper, whenever using the term 'poverty', I mean life situations, which the concerned people themselves perceive as material poverty and consequently want to escape from it (cf. N'Dione et al. 1997, p. 369; 374). In contrast, with the term 'poverty' I do not mean life situations, which are classified as poor by outsiders, e.g. "development" "experts", but not by the concerned people themselves. For such an example cf. Lang 2019, pp. 185.

Faso under Thomas Sankara. The analytical concept of neo-colonialism goes back to Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah (1965), who defines it as follows:

> The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State, which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside (p. ix).

Aminata Traoré highlights that the neo-colonial interference of the global North in the global South violates the aspirations of the African population towards living a good life in dignity (in Ly-Tall 2017, p. 106). Consequently, she reveals that African leaders must break these relations of subordination, which are an obstacle to African emancipation (p. 107). During the Cold War era, which includes Sankara's presidency, "development" "aid" mainly existed in its public form as financial assistance by the governments of the respective capitalist Western or socialist Eastern blocs and the states of the global South as the receiving end (Gould 2019, p. 35). The mirage of a catching-up "development" was a strategy applied in both capitalist and socialist contexts (Mies & Shiva 1993, p. 8), despite different goals of the respective societies. Even though Sankara considered himself an African socialist, his country did not align with the Soviets, but stayed non-aligned (Harsch 2018, p. 148). Sankara's political companion Somé (1990) confirms that Sankara did not get trapped in the idea of a false alternative between a capitalist and a socialist path of development.

Central to the PD critiques of "development" "aid" is that it legitimizes power relations by locating "development" expertise solely in the person of a so-called "development" "expert" and by locating "developmental" problems exclusively in the so-called "developing" world. Thereby "development" "aid" denigrates the knowledge of people from the global South who seemingly are in need of help from the former colonizers to overcome situations like poverty. This mainstream notion of "development" ignores the problems in the global North, the potential to solve Northern problems by learning from the global South, the destruction of social and ecological systems by "development" projects as well as the global power asymmetries and systemic interdependencies leading to the poverty-inequality nexus.[7]

Against the backdrop of critics of PD that many PD scholars would neglect the material need to overcome "underdevelopment" as poverty and instead romanticise poor living conditions

[7] In this paragraph, I formulate my condensed understanding of Post-Development after having read many different PD contributions e.g. Ziai (2004a) throughout the last years.

(Kiely 1999, p. 46), I would like to emphasize that the poverty-inequality nexus should be a central issue in PD, which is already sometimes the case (cf. Bendix & Ziai 2015, p. 165; Matthews 2006, pp. 62). The PD concept of the 'anti-politics machine' coined by James Ferguson (1994, pp. 176) is very useful in pinpointing us to the centrality of poverty-inequality created and maintained by politics. The difference to a mainstream "development" approach of poverty eradication would be not to offer technical solutions to the poverty problem, but to politicise poverty as the result of an ongoing global, national and local politically implemented pauperization process, which corresponds to the analysis of my Nigerien friend Moctar, who considered the lack of political will on all sides as main impediment to overcome poverty. Such a pauperization process inevitably results in ever more growing inequalities between the global North and South: between continents and countries, between higher and lower classes (often highly intermingled with the analytical category of race) and between different genders[8] with (cis-)men remaining at the most privileged and thus financially rich end. To put it in a nutshell, where "aid" as 'anti-politics machine' delivers seemingly apolitical pseudo-solutions, which ignore the reasons why poverty was and still is created, PD means searching for enduring and just political solutions to the politically created problem of a constant pauperization.

Self-determined (national) (post-)development with the goal of an endogenous African way of a good and dignified life

Sally Matthews' (2017) article 'Colonised minds? Post-development theory and the desirability of development in Africa', which she presented at the Post-Development Conference at University of Kassel in 2019 was an eye-opener to me. So far, in line with PD theory, I had understood "development" as a discourse, politics and practice to be rejected altogether because of manifold theoretical reasons.[9] However, this well-justified critique of "development" and especially the proposal for grass-roots alternatives to "development" do not match the aspirations of the vast majority of my African friends, both those on the continent and those who migrated to Europe. In addition, I cannot sincerely claim that for instance doing subsistence agriculture and accepting traditional hierarchies match my aspirations of my own life. In fact, I have had difficulties in reconciling my own desires plus communicated aspirations of friends with my theoretical PD perspective. Therefore, the critical questions of Matthews strongly

[8] The understanding of gender and thus of the most common categories of "women" and "men" are influenced by historical, societal and cultural meanings as well as by biological deposits. In my understanding, a variety of genders exists which queries the binary gender system that evolved in Europe in the 18th century through societal norms as well as medical assignments and which was proliferated through colonialism (cf. quix 2016, pp. 93).
[9] For a comprehensive overview of Post-Development arguments against "development", cf. Ziai (2004a).

resonated with me. She makes an intervention addressed at the PD school to acknowledge the diversity of desires of people from the global South (p. 2656). To illustrate the point, while some may well prefer to live a traditional lifestyle in subsistence and conviviality, others would prefer a lifestyle resembling the one lived by the majority of people in the global North, if they had the choice (ibid.). Many people in the global South however do *not* have the privilege of such a choice, but find themselves in precarious situations, which they understandingly want to escape from. These situations perceived as such by the concerned ought to be taken seriously by PD theory, too. Not to forget, in the global South within the North[10], hunger and poverty exist as serious problems as well (Marshall 2020, p. 2).

As a theoretical implication, it becomes clear that self-determination alone could lead to different ideas of a good life than those lifestyles found in the global North — but it could equally lead to desires which are typical of classical "development" projects, as the practical work of Enda Graf Sahel with marginalised communities has proven (Matthews 2017, p. 2652; 2657). Therefore, the criterion of self-determination without being flanked by other normative criteria in terms of a more anarchist Post-Development perspective can also lead to the widespread lifestyle in the assumingly "developed" global North based on exploitation of other people and nature, which PD scholars would not want to regard as PD, even if it is the result of self-determination.

In chapter 2.2, I will argue that even if these desires need to be taken seriously, there has to be a normative framework around self-determination in order to consider it as a PD practice. Now, Sankara (1987b) as a president did not promise a Western lifestyle for all, but an African[11] way of a good and dignified life. This appears as a post-developmental goal for a society, however for the way forward, Sankara uses the term "development", for instance in the national development plans. Thereby Sankara and his government subversively appropriate the term "development", which, in its original design, was never meant to be self-determined and freed from neo-colonialism. In order to visually mark this subversive appropriation and thereby the change of the meaning of the term "development" into a post-developmental direction, I have created the hybrid term '(post-)development'. This hybrid term points to the goal of a post-

[10] The term "global North" can refer both to the former colonising nations as well as to the rich elites in the South, likewise the term "global South" can refer both to the former colonised nations as well as to exploited groups in rich nations (Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxi).
[11] Even if on the hand, the homogenizing of the African continent can be seen critically, on the other, it highlights a sense of solidarity and unity based on a shared history of slavery and colonialism.

developmental future, which is tried to be achieved by national self-determination, which can have both development-like projects and post-developmental policies, as we will see.

2.2 The Normative Boundaries of Self-Determination

Self-determination is often cited as the criterion for defining an alternative to "development" (Ziai 2001, pp. 11; Ziai 2004a, p. 192). This chapter opens the floor to discuss a central controversy that I perceive in Post-Development theory: the normative boundaries of self-determination. Matthews (2006) describes this as a "tension between the desire to be sensitive to difference and the desire to avoid cultural relativism" (p. 64). In other words, while we PD scholars do not want to prescribe universalized solutions because of the power hierarchy between prescribers and prescribed that such an act would bring along, we still have values about which we do care. The PD debates about alternatives to "development" show that there is no consensus on how to define such alternatives (Schöneberg 2016, p. 206), even if different attempts for normative criteria defining PD alternatives have been started and become more concrete over the years (Rahnema 1997, pp. ix; Escobar 2011 [1995], p. 218; Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxix). In this chapter, I will firstly argue why self-determination needs to be the heartbeat of any PD alternative and secondly why there still need to be socio-ecological boundaries for the project of self-determination.

Similarly to the phase of colonization, the era of "development" "aid" takes both resources and rights of people in the global South away (Shiva 1993, p. 164). The "development" "experts", foreign persons defining what "development" is and how it can be achieved, are in a position of power because they can impose on others in which direction to move and which kind of sacrifices would be necessary for achieving that pre-defined goal (Ziai 2007a, pp. 8). As a corollary, self-determination instead of determination by others is demanded in PD theory.

From this derives a third understanding of the term "development" describing the state of so-called "developed" societies as prescribed goal of all societies. Escobar (2020) spells this as universal declared goal of a society out as "assemblages of heteropatriarchal, Eurocentric, and racist capitalist modernity" (p. 115). Thus, following Escobar, the so-called "developed" societies of the global North normalise discrimination and oppression. Simultaneously, the societies of the global South are not free from this neither; from the feminist PD position of Mies & Shiva (1993), it is dangerous to consider all cultural traditions as of equal value and thus beyond criticism (p. 11). Such a cultural relativism would imply the acceptance of

patriarchal or in other way exploitative structures such as the caste system in India or female genital mutilation (ibid.). Felwine Sarr (2019) highlights in a similar way that we have to free ourselves, "whether modern or traditional, from anything that humiliates humans […]" (p. 32, tbm). Therefore, neither the traditional nor the modern societies are innocent, but in my understanding, PD aims at dismantling any abuses of power[12].

A feminist PD perspective can see the relevance of self-determination as follows: "The demand for self-determination, for autonomy with regard to our bodies and our lives, is one of the fundamental demands of the women's movement" (Mies 1993b, p. 218). This right to self-determination is mainly demanded from the state as a patriarchal institution, more often than not interfering into women*'s rights on their bodies for instance with restrictive abortion laws like in the case of Germany until today (cf. ibid.) or forced mass sterilizations like in the case of Peru in the 90's – the latter in close cooperation with "development" organizations and the state (cf. Schultz 2000, p. 56). An intersectional feminist perspective would add that all other discriminated groups in a state, including groups which experience different forms of discrimination simultaneously, need to defend their self-determination and integrity of their lives against the paternalistic interference of the state. The latter might only allow for two sexes to be registered, its police might be especially violent towards Black people, trans persons and even more violent towards Black trans persons and finally it might deny people their human rights due to an attributed illegal status. Mies (1993b) sees the demand for self-determination as "based on the right to resistance" (p. 219). This right to resistance, to me, seems fundamental for any PD state in order to overcome the absoluteness of the power monopoly of the state and to be able to criticise abuses of power.

Nevertheless, Mies (1993b) critically reflects upon self-determination by drawing from Farida Akhter (1986) who explains that survival comes first for women in Bangladesh in times of potential starvation and that emancipation could not be a priority in such situations, even if it would be in principle as important for Bangladeshi women than for women in the global North (in Mies 1993a, p. 219). This inspired Mies (1993b) to manifest the importance of always "attacking the exploitative economic world order from which [we feminists in the global North]

[12] In my understanding, power can have positive transformative potential where it is used to the benefit of the people and the planet or it can be abused if used in an unjust way to the benefit of a minority and on the cost of others.

profit" and which makes survival for many so difficult, when talking about self-determination or emancipation (p. 220).

"Although all 'civilized nations' recognize nations' right to self-determination it seems that this right is also based on exploitation and destruction of some 'others'[…]" (Mies 1993a, p. 128). While I would contradict that the right of nations for self-determination usually gets respected as we have discussed already in the debate on neo-colonialism, with this quote, Mies brings the normative limits of self-determination to the point: as soon as some 'others' are exploited and their right to self-determination is being curtailed, a normative boundary is reached. Mies (1993a) calls the desire of the same material wealth and living standards of the global North, we have spoken about in chapter 2.1 'catching-up development' (p. 127). If the aspired goal is an emulation of the "European industrial-colonial-patriarchal nations" (ibid.), this is however inextricably linked with the exploitation and destruction of other people and of our planet (p. 129). In other words, with the non-generalizable 'imperial mode of living' rooted in "capitalist-fossilist-industrialist society-nature relations" common in the global North, a good life for all gets impossible (Brand & Wissen 2013, p. 704). Consequently, the objective or practice of an imperial lifestyle needs to be criticised for anyone, even if the responsibility of the West is relatively higher, because for decades of both colonialism and "development" discourse and practice, it has presented itself as a "civilized" role model, which all others should follow.

Self-determination is a great concept underlining the agency of people, yet it needs some shared normative foundations to be applied in practice without dangers. My conviction is, among others, influenced by the feminist postcolonial scholar Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (2003) expression of the need for a shared reference of transborder conceptualizations of justice and equity (p. 502). Her call is the result of a deeper reflection process starting with her former insistence on difference and cultural particularities (Mohanty 1986 in Mohanty 2003, p. 501), which had the ambition to reveal different power positions (Mohanty 2003, p. 502; cf. Bendix & Ziai 2015, p. 167), later superseded by Mohanty's (2003) critique of cultural relativism (p. 509) and a turning to universal justice (p. 502). The Ugandan scholar-activist Sylvia Tamale (2008) confirms that shared points of reference, which would be preferably of non-Western origin, can be of great help in activism (p. 54, pp. 64).

To conclude, I strongly agree with Mies & Shiva (1993) who pledge for taking into account self-determination while also respecting the interconnectedness of all our human and non-

human worlds (p. 12). In sum, I see the necessary normative boundaries of self-determination as the manifold forms of discrimination and oppression, thus including our economic system and lifestyles based on the exploitation of some 'others': people and planet.

But how can respect for these normative boundaries be secured?

2.3 Post-Developmental States – A Contradiction in itself?

"[W]hat European imperialism and third-world nationalism have achieved together [is the] universalization of the nation-state as the most desirable form of political community" (Chakrabarty in Niang 2018, p. 185). Whether the nation-state is indeed the most desirable form or which other forms of organizing societies exist indeed calls for further debate, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. Even among nation-states, there is a multitude of different models (cf. Niang 2018, p. 193). However, the fact that we all live in some kind of a nation-state should suffice as a good reason to think through the potential of a post-developmental state. This is equally valid for the very rare cases, when autonomy is granted within a nation-state – yet it needs to be fought for and then granted, so that there is an inevitable dependency on the nation-state. This chapter starts with a literature review of PD scholars writing about the state, including both scepticisms who might even query that there can be a PD state at all, but also more optimistic viewpoints, which back the possibility of post-developmental states. In the end, I will then discuss why Burkina is worth being examined as a post-developmental state.

Not surprisingly, many PD scholars express scepticism towards the institution of states. In the last chapter, I have already provided an initial intersectional feminist critique of the state in the context of self-determination, but certainly, the critique does not end here. The rising number of states where the political Right is in a steering position undoubtedly gives cause for alarm. In this case, national identities are constructed in a way, which implies the exclusion of migrants or nationals perceived as foreign from the respective nation (Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxiii). Leftist government are of course not exempted from such practices. Mies (1993a) bluntly unravels that "the modern nation-state needs to exercise violence and coercion": Without the military and the police, states could not upheld themselves (pp. 122). Kothari et al. (2019) assess both representative democracies and state socialisms as dysfunctional and incoherent as they have only achieved "welfare and rights for a few" (pp. xxiii). Esteva (2020) concretises a critique towards Leninist socialist states when he states that in such states autonomy is reduced

to “a decentralized form of administering the vertical powers of the state within structures of domination” (in Escobar 2020, p. 99). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (2008) interprets Lamming’s posture as people cannot be sovereign, when they have an oppressing other, the post-independence state included (p. 166). According to Neusiedl (2019) (post-)anarchistic Post-Development clearly opposes organization by any nation-state, because it rejects all forms of domination and instead strives for local autonomy and self-determination (pp. 2).

However, alternatives to “development” are far from operating in a “bubble” (Schöneberg 2016, p. 206). Even grassroots movements cannot escape their embeddedness in existing power structures: states, international organizations and the global capitalist system inevitably restrain their space of action (ibid.). The example of Rojava as a radically decentralised democratic, ecological and feminist alternative to “development” unfortunately illustrates this quite well: Their attempt to establish a bigger-scale, not nation-state-based Post-Development alternative was thwarted by a war-like invasion by Turkey not long ago (Rommel 2019, pp. 13). Taking this very unfortunate recent failure to establish a stable, bigger-scale, non-national alternative into account, my research proposes to explore the potential of nation-state-based alternatives to “development”. Also from his anarchistic PD stance, Neusiedl (2019)acknowledges the “ubiquity of power relations on both the macro and the micro level” (p. 2). Thereby, he includes not only states, but also the grassroots initiatives regularly heralded in PD (cf. Escobar 2011 [1995], p. 218), which are anything, but naturally free from manifold power relations, including tendencies for xenophobia. In addition, many of them are structured around class, ethnicity, nationality or religion and thus have an exclusive character (Kothari 1997, p. 146). Although in 2011, Escobar had advocated for grass-root movements to lead our way towards a post-developmental future (p. 218), in 2020, Escobar mentions that institutions, among them “most states” perpetuate multiple “crises of the environment, the climate, society, and meaning” (p. 5). I conclude that if not all states are part of this harmful club, this implies that Escobar also assumes that there are states that are in the present or were in the past choosing an alternative path (ibid.).

The notion of “development” is a justification for both the state itself as well as for state action (Lang 2019, p. 178). Ashis Nandy (1988) describes how science and “development“ have become two new reasons or justifications of states after the second World War. On one hand, in the name of “development”, states inflict material sufferings on their population and on the other, most citizens usually willingly participate in this (ibid). Despite this paternalistic side of

states, I would agree with Wainwright (2016) that state power is not only dominating but also bears transformative potential (in Williford 2018, p. 101). Post-Developmental states could have the potential to offer political solutions to problems defined by the "development" apparatus as such, e.g. poverty, by an internal redistribution of resources as well as by challenging neo-colonial North-South relationships. This kind of transformative potential of states motivates me to explore Sankara's case further in order to understand the potential of states adopting a Post-Development posture and policies. Yet, it would need to be critically assessed, if PD can be a justified alternative reason of state. On one hand, accepting this would cement the model of nation-states, back state power and be exposed to the risk of PD being co-opted by the state, similar to the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador. On the other, a PD state could deliver a self-determined future in a positive normative framework on a bigger scale than grassroots initiatives.

Let us explore further the argument pro alternatives to "development" on a state-level that states as political entities can deliver political solutions to political problems like inequality. In the "development" discourse, political questions like distribution of land and wealth are depicted as technical "development" problems with the need of a seemingly apolitical "development" intervention instead of a political response. This leads PD scholars to a demand a repoliticization with a focus on the interconnectedness of our world (Schöneberg 2016, p. 193). When politicising "under-development", this also means to politicise the poverty-inequality-nexus as a constituent part of it (Shivji in Schöneberg 2016, p. 193). To put it in a nutshell, Post-Developmental states could be a response to the 'anti-politics machine' (cf. Ferguson 1994, p. 180). Aminata Traoré speaks out against the impoverishment of the global South through the neoliberal noose of the World Bank's and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment programs (in Ly-Tall 2017, p. 105). This is exactly the kind of neoliberal and neo-colonial "development" Sankara was opposing in the eighties.

Again, Matthews (2017) points to the articulated desire for certain goods, services and skills associated with the project of "development". As a way of illustration, she refers to the so-called 'service delivery protests' in urban South Africa, where protestors demand better public provision of housing, water, sanitation, electricity and education (p. 2652). The protestors do neither demand more "development" "aid" projects in the respective sectors, nor do they demand to live an autonomous and/or traditional life in the countryside, but they demand the state to take on its responsibility in offering good frame conditions including the delivery of

public goods for its citizens. This is where I would situate one of the post-developmental state's potentials: the provision of public goods, or in other words, the securing of commons, like land and water, which is of course deeply political (cf. Lang 2019, p. 187). Notwithstanding, the protests are about more than the delivery of public goods: They concern the recognition of people's dignity as citizens of a state and further as citizens of humanity (ibid.). The need of such an affirmation of people to be human like everyone else becomes much more comprehensible, when we remind ourselves that the colonial past of the African continent, in which black people were openly dehumanised, in many African states has ended only 60 years ago or even less:

> For some, the continent of mystery becomes an unleashing outlet for a barbarism that returns civilized countries to their primitive state. One allows oneself there virtually everything: looting, devastation of life and cultures, genocides (the Herero), rapes, human experiments: all forms of violence have culminated there with ease. (Sarr 2019, p. 10, tbm)

Such an outstanding dehumanization has certainly deep left traces: Many people still vividly remember the stories of their grandparents and even traumas can get passed on to the new generations, rendering the felt need for dignity even more pressing. Moreover, neo-colonialism tends to be omnipresent until today. Furthermore, a citizen status had been denied for slaves, women and workers without property for a long time in many contexts (Mies 1993b, p. 223). This profound racist, sexist and classist denigration can explain the seduction of the "development" discourse, which promises equality in rights and lifestyles (cf. Mies & Shiva 1993, p. 8).

Especially from a self-appointed 'sceptical' PD stance, the mentioned under-exploration of PD research related to states has noteworthy reasons, namely tensions with the very idea of how alternatives to "development" should ideally function: the idea of a consensus-based radical democracy (cf. Ziai 2004b, p. 1054). To illustrate the point, local Buen Vivir alternatives in the Andean and Amazonian regions actually aim at transforming the state radically: They pledge for horizontally organised societies with direct democracy and self-administration in a new form of a plurinational state instead of an authoritarian, hierarchical top-down state (Acosta 2016, p. 8).

Exploring the example of the state of revolutionary Burkina Faso, this work will examine the question of a horizontal vs. vertical state organisation and show some related potentials and

risks of states as actors in the context of a transformation towards a good life for all. The embeddedness of Burkina Faso in its specific temporal and local context will be taken into account following Brand & Wissen's (2013) recommendations:

> A central assumption is that the state cannot be understood in its institutional materiality and discursive role, its functions and multifaceted policies, if it is not analysed as connected to socioeconomic and cultural and also socio-ecological relations, including norms of production and consumption, societal interests, hegemonic and marginal value orientations as well as power relations and the special role capital plays in modern societies and in the structuring of the dominant forms of the appropriation of nature. (p. 694)

During the predominantly neoliberal decade of the 80s, the state was less and less seen as an actor capable of bringing about (post-)development in terms of improving the life conditions especially of the poor and marginalised (Braig 2016, p. 270). This renders the case of Burkina Faso even more special, as a presumed PD state in an era of widespread neoliberalism, which goes along with the institutionalised promotion of weak states and laissez-faire economic policies. Yet, this has not always been the case: In the 60s and 70s, the period of Keynesian economic policies, the state was assigned a more active role of steering the economy, which better allowed states to actively combat poverty-inequality (p. 269). Hickel (2017) perceives what he calls "developmentalism" in many countries of the global South after the independences, especially in the self-proclaimed African Socialist countries like Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah or Tanzania under Julius Nyerere (p. 149). With "developmentalism", he associates an emulation of those policies, which had led to the economic success in the European countries and the USA (p. 150). Sankara had definitely learned from those experiences, including their failures, for instance, he did not focus on an industrialization process as Nkrumah, but on the agricultural sector and the rural population, and he did not envisage an industrial lifestyle similar to the former colonisers, but at an African way of good living. Maybe, this is why Hickel considers Burkina Faso as one of the rare examples (and the only one he named), where he judges the "developmentalist" state project as successful (p. 166). Hickel's perspective shows again the hybridity of my assumed (post-)developmental case study, whose ontology changes according to the applied lenses.

Eventually, I want to explain why I consider Sankara's Burkina Faso as being worth analysed as a Post-Developmental state. I felt a strong resonation with Sankara's ideas and policies when reading this quote of the PD scholars N'Dione et al. (1997):

> If we were to evaluate the wealth of a society by its level of independence or autonomy vis-à-vis the foreigner, the far-off, the unknown; if we were to assess it according to its capacity to integrate and 'include' the greatest number of people; if we also assessed its capacity to redistribute – one would be led to conclude that many in the West live in a state of poverty. (p. 369)

According to my pre-knowledge about Sankara's policies, I was led to conclude that according to this definition, Burkina Faso under Sankara's presidency could have been judged rich or in other words, as a society of good living, a post-developmental society.

Now this quote might seem rather like a mental game than like a serious set of criteria for alternatives to "development"[13]. Nonetheless, I would like to take it as my point of departure and draw the following three normative orientations out of it: 1. societal self-determination, 2. inclusion and 3. redistribution. In the quote above, self-determination is set into relation with a society, in my case study this would be the nation-state of Burkina Faso as a formally independent, post-colonial state.

Apart from these three criteria by N'Dione et al., I would like to add a fourth criterion as the result of the preceding chapter: self-determination on the level of the people, in the context of PD states above all vis-à-vis the state and only restrained by the overarching normative boundaries of PD. As outlined in the introduction, this grassroots level is central in PD theory when it comes to alternatives to "development". The proposed normative boundaries where self-determination must end due to the interconnectedness of our world (cf. ch. 2.2) will complement the aforementioned four normative orientations during my analysis.

In sum, I operationalize the four normative orientations taken from N'Dione et. Al plus as a fifth criterion the normative boundaries as developed in chapter 2.2 as follows:

- self-determination on the level of the state vis-à-vis other states and international institutions[14]

[13] Anyway, it needs to be asked by whom a serious catalogue of criteria for PD societies could be formulated? I have no practicable answer for that.
[14] National self-determination vis-à-vis international corporations would also be important to analyse, but extends the scope of this paper and further was less relevant at the time than it has become today.

- societal inclusion on the level of gender[15], class, ethnicity and generation[16]
- redistribution mechanisms tackling the poverty-inequality nexus
- self-determination on the level of the people vis-à-vis the state
- normative boundaries preventing discrimination, oppression and exploitation of humans and nature

How can these five normative orientations be translated into politics and by whom? And how can a post-developmental state guarantee the respect of normative boundaries?

Finally, we generally should not get stuck and consider any catalogue of criteria as absolute or fixed. Despite a small number of abstract criteria, there should still be enough space for a 'pluriverse' of Post-Development alternatives to be born (cf. Escobar in Demaria & Kothari 2019, p. 50). This is equally valid on the level of each alternative, as Sankara himself had acknowledged:

> [W]e must take care to avoid that unity becomes one dry, obstructing and sterile voice. On the contrary, one should promote multiple, diverse and productive viewpoints and actions; nuanced thinking and actions, bravely and genuinely aiming at accepting differences, acknowledgement of criticism and self-examination, towards a bright future which cannot be anything else than the happiness of our people. (Sankara in Jaffré 2018, p. 100)

2.4 Methodology

During the analysis part (ch. 3), I apply a qualitative content analysis inspired by Lamnek and Krell (2016) of Sankara's speeches and of secondary literature including policy analyses of revolutionary Burkina Faso, while weaving in the theoretical concepts introduced earlier: "development" practice to be rejected as 'anti-politics machine' and as neo-colonialism, plus a (post-)developmental state operationalised through the aforementioned normative orientations and boundaries. More precisely, the four normative orientations structure chapter three as categories of analysis in order to find out, to which degree they were realized in the case study.

[15] Despite my aforementioned own comprehension of a variety of genders beyond the binary, I rely on primary and secondary literature that works along the logic of the binary gender system and therefore I also remain within this binary logic when analysing Burkina Faso at the time given my lack of information concerning the inclusion of other genders.

[16] Such a list of categories of possible discriminations can never be exhaustive, but in this case is constituted of those categories for which I found enough sources to conduct an analysis. Where possible, I will analyse their intersections, e.g. between discriminations based on the simultaneity of gender and class as well.

The normative boundaries play a pivotal role especially where they are harmed to figure out tensions with PD.

Qualitative content analysis

A few more words on the method of content analysis. From a political science standpoint, the focus of the analysis is usually on the materiality behind the content of speeches and writings of the public discourse (Lamnek & Krell 2016, p. 457). However, as Sankara's government only had four years to realize a ground-breaking turn, a revolution, I would insist not to undervalue those parts of his speeches and plans which point to the long-term vision and goals of the revolution. Furthermore, the concrete practice of politics within the rather short period of his presidency was adapted in between as a consequence from the will of learning from mistakes.

The speeches and writings of people mirror their postures, intentions, assumptions and interpretations of their environment (p. 447). Yet, their environment also shapes what they think and say (ibid.). Thus, a content analysis draws interpretations from the level of language to the level of non-linguistic phenomena (ibid.), including mental and emotional states, behaviour and actions (p. 454). A qualitative content analysis orients itself according to the interpretative paradigm (p. 448), which means that it tries to unearth the meaning of what is uttered (p. 449). This includes both the explicit, concrete content of communications as well as implicit, both conscious and unconscious content (p. 452). It comprises both the meanings of the utterances for the speaker (p. 478) and how this might be received by the audience of the communication (p. 453).

Situated Knowledges

From an intersectional feminist perspective, Donna Haraway (1988) argues that all knowledges are situated. With this stance, she criticizes the idea of a disembodied objectivity, which the "unmarked positions of Man and White" (p. 581) claim for themselves, but do not grant 'others' (p. 575). Instead, Haraway writes about all knowledge as necessarily situated in the viewer and their partial perspective (pp. 581). Acknowledging this embodiment of knowledge is necessary to hold it accountable (p. 588). As a consequence, I have to acknowledge that my *white* female middle-class 'vision' of revolutionary Burkina Faso remains fairly limited. In my person, a long list of race, class, educational and ability privileges intersects with my gender identity as a cis woman – the only position from which I suffer discriminations, and a relatively privileged one among racialized and trans women. My limited sight on the topic is symbolized by the photo of myself on the right-hand side visualizing the body and viewpoint this thesis is written from and its distance to the object of investigation, revolutionary Burkina Faso, symbolised by a poster. Thus, my perspective on Burkina Faso is not only necessarily partial, but it is relatively difficult from my position to get a clear vision on it: Neither have I lived in Burkina Faso at the time – and I was certainly no Burkinabè citizen participating in the revolution, nor have I ever lived in Burkina Faso, and I am no Burkinabè. My only experience in relation to Thomas Sankara worth mentioning was a week spent in Ouagadougou in order to participate in an impressing event of one day: a Thomas Sankara symposium, a 'revolutionary march' through the town and a 'revolutionary concert' with many West African artists singing about Sankara. On this day, 2 October 2016, delegations from all over West Africa, in the majority from francophone countries, met in Ouagadougou to celebrate the visionary Thomas Sankara only two years after the ousting of Blaise Compaoré, and there was something very special in the air. This day, I felt so much passion and enthusiasm around me, so strong emotional vibrations full of positivity, which also seized and permeated me. I was already a big fan of Sankara before this day, but my passion was reinforced especially on an emotional level following this event. Finally, this unforgettable experience constitutes a big part of my motivation to dig deeper and improve my 'vision' on the acts of a man who inspires whole generations until today.

2) Me posing in front of a poster advertising the Thomas Sankara Symposium in Ouagadougou in 2016

My interpretations of Sankara's assumingly Post-Developmental state will remain interpretations from a standpoint of limited 'vision', in the sense that I am far away from

knowing how it felt to live under the presidency of Sankara. Thus, any of my interpretations certainly remain debatable, and I would be eager to learn from and exchange with contemporary witnesses about their own, closer, even if still necessarily partial, perceptions. Haraway encourages scholars to make efforts and try to learn how to 'see' from the perspective of the subjugated (p. 583). Integrating interviews and other qualitative methods would certainly have enabled me to gain a better (yet still limited) vision on the multiple realities lived by the citizens and non-citizens in Burkina Faso at the time. As this was beyond the scope of this paper, and as I am hesitant towards extracting knowledge from people in the global South for my own career without them benefitting in any way, I could only listen to already documented contemporary witnesses, read and *try* to think through this Burkinabè alternative to "development" – also from a perspective of nationality, ethnicity, gender and class different from my own (cf. ch. 3.3).

Finally, as Escobar (2020) writes, "[q]uestioning this belief in a single reality means developing another, entirely different understanding of what change and transformation are, and thus of what politics can be" (p. 3). With this quote, Escobar expresses that the creativity of the mind to think of new politics leading to a radical transformation is freed when acknowledging that the world is not objective, but, to get back to Haraway's wording, depends on the viewers and what they can 'see'.

3. Analysis of Sankara's Discourse and Policies

The intended conceptional work on the Post-Developmental state is fed by a content analysis on the case of Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara. This analysis includes primary literature and material, including Sankara's political speeches, books and testimonies of Sankara's companions and original recordings of Sankara. The primary literature is further enriched by secondary literature and newspaper articles from that time period (including by his critics), films about Sankara and songs about him. After having viewed large parts of the material and drawing from the criteria by N'Dione et al., expanded by myself, I developed categories for different PD policy fields of Sankara, which order the ensuing sub-chapters (cf. Lamnek & Krell 2016, p. 486). Of course, the policy categories are arguably artificial because of their interconnectedness. In the following, I analyse self-determination on the state-level (ch. 3.1), self-determination on the grassroots-level (ch. 3.2) and finally the multi-facetted field of

inclusion politics (ch. 3.3), which among others includes redistribution politics as well as exclusion politics.

3.1 National Self-Determination Politics: Combating Neo-Colonialism

"Thomas Sankara sought a national break from Upper Volta's[17] neo-colonial and imperialist domination" (Zeilig 2018, p. 51). With Sankara becoming president of what was still being called Upper Volta, only 23 years after its independence from its former colonial master France, the topic and task of the decolonization was still very current for that time. "Demands for racial equality and global justice" (Marshall 2020, p. 3) marked the decolonization era and invoked the objective of sovereign equality for the newly born African nation-states. In other words, the PD notion of self-determination translated to a national level means sovereign equality with the former coloniser states. Therefore, it is no surprise that one of the most dominant motives of Sankara's speeches was the fight against neo-colonialism in its various disguises, illustrated also by Sankara's well-known slogan "Le néocolonialisme – à part!"[18]. Indeed, with it, Sankara built on neo-colonialism as the analytical concept coined by the first president of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah (1965), which was introduced in chapter 2.1.

From Nkrumah's definition of neo-colonialism follows Sankara's understanding of "aid", debt and food imports as neo-colonialism, which will be shed light on throughout this chapter. From a PD perspective, Ferguson (2006) goes slightly beyond Nkrumah's criticism of neo-colonialism when shedding light on the ambiguous character of the independences. He sees them on the one hand as "almost synonymous with dignity, freedom and empowerment", on the other "in some respects [as] a trap" (pp. 50). The trap's origin lies in the "development" discourse's depoliticizing nature, which has turned poverty into an attribute of the national economies of the global South (p. 60). Thereby, national sovereignty succeeds in "obscuring regional connections and localizing responsibility for poverty within national borders" (p. 65). Likewise, root causes of poverty outside national borders are neglected. Bluntly speaking we need to link "rural black poverty with urban white wealth" – and this beyond the South African context, but on a global scale[19] (p. 61). Sankara certainly had a similar assessment of the main roots of poverty as external, most prominently when assessing debts as illegitimate due to their

[17] 'Upper Volta' or in French 'Haute-Volta' was the colonial name of Burkina Faso, before Sankara renamed it into Burkina Faso some weeks after seizing power (Diallo 2015, p. 310).
[18] "Neo-colonialism - apart!" (tbm)
[19] Global processes of pauperization include historical ones like slavery and colonialism as well as contemporary ones like the "development" machine, trade relations and the imperial mode of living of the global North.

colonial origin presupposing impoverishment processes during the period of colonialism and after.

Not that economic indicators would be usually meaningful for PD theory. Quite the opposite, a severe critique of the gross national product as a measure for "development" is widespread in PD theory (Shiva 2019, p. 6). But ironically, the World Bank and the United Nations documented a positive macroeconomic "development" for Burkina Faso since 1982: a yearly increase of the gross national product per capita of 2%, which Hammer explains mainly by a growth in agriculture, the extraction of gold and the public sector (pp. 134). The empirical experience of alternative economic policies in revolutionary Burkina Faso contradicted conventional, neo-classical models of economic analysis and forecasts according to which Burkina Faso should have had less growth than its peers who adhered to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), but which was not the case (cf. Murrey 2020, p. 200). While extractivism is to be seen critically from PD lenses because of the ecological and social consequences of such an exploitation of our planet, state expenses in agriculture and the public sector can seem reasonable if used wisely. Yet unromantic, if we want to deal with Post-Developmental States, we cannot ignore the question of state revenues. Despite our PD rejection of an economization of life, we need to acknowledge that "in certain sectors an accumulation of resources and the consequent investments are necessary…" (N'Dione et al. 1997, p. 368). I would say state finances in the global South is such an area as it is a sharp restraint in the leeway for PD politics otherwise. For PD states in the global South this might even entail a necessity of a certain economic growth, in contrast, the economically strong states of the global North urgently need to reverse their imperial economic growth to a degrowth. Even if in the long-term a PD state in the global South aimed at radically getting rid of economic growth, in the short-term it is obvious that more financial resources are needed e.g. for the delivery of public goods like clean drinking water and a good health system. In face of severe budget limitations, the government, the 'Conseil National de la Revolution' (CNR), succeeded in realizing many impressing projects via mobilizing citizens and soldiers, for instance to sink wells and to plant trees against desertification (Reza 2016, p. 98), but in a country where destitution is one of the realities, we PD scholars should be realistic enough to acknowledge that there is a need for financial means (at least until an ideal state is reached). Thus, the issue of financial independence and self-determination of PD states is a topic of utmost importance, which is exemplified by Sankara's anti-debt, anti-aid and anti-free trade politics.

From a postcolonial political economy perspective, I understand capitalism as a relation between the "developed" and the "underdeveloped" world, between the motherland and the colonies, between the centre and the periphery (Spehr 1999, p. 51). Capitalism cannot be understood if only looking at the global North or South, but the interplay between the exploiter and the exploited is at its very core (ibid.). Despite this focus on the global dimension, capitalist exploitation for accumulation occurs of course also within the global North or South, including within states. Instead of the capitalist system, from a PD perspective, the main characteristic of an economy should be to serve the society (Sarr 2019, p. 81). It must be said that even if this approach of a sovereign PD state serving the society leads to an inescapable "methodological nationalism" (Marshall 2020, p. 3), we will see in the following, how Sankara overcame such a focus on the national with actions to alter the "international structures of unequal integration and racial hierarchy" (cf. ibid.), with attempts to create regional federations (cf. ibid, p. 6) and with attempts to decentralise participation in politics with the help of the Committees in Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) (cf. ch. 3.2.1). For examining a potential PD state, in this chapter, I take the national level as my starting point to analyse self-determination on the level of the state vis-à-vis the international scene.

3.1.1 Sankara's Refusal to Pay the Debts

In 1982, the year before the popular revolt, which would bring Sankara to power, a serious debt crisis hit the African continent as well as other regions of the global South and would leave its mark on the whole decade (cf. George 1997, p. 211). According to Susan George (1997), "[m]assive overborrowing (encouraged by the creditors, welcomed by the borrower governments) coupled with high interest rates led to the debt crisis" (p. 212). During 1982-1990, the debt service (without other South-to-North outflows) paid back by the countries of the global South exceeded the financial transfer from global North to global South by 418 billion US dollar. In other words, all the bilateral, multilateral and private "development" "aid" monies, trade credits, foreign direct investment flows and new bank loans together reaching the South (927 billion US dollar) were a lot less than the debts, which were paid back by it (1345 billion US dollar) (OECD in George 1997, p. 209). Susan George (1997) comments this in the Post-Development reader as follows:

> At the behest of the [World] Bank and the [International Monetary] Fund, debtor countries have deprived their people – particularly the poorest among them – of basic necessities in order to provide the private banks and the public agencies of the rich countries with the equivalent of six Marshall Plans. This

> unprecedented financial assistance to the rich from the poor may be startling but it is none the less arithmetically true. (p. 209)

This calculation exposing "aid" by and not to the global North as hypocrisy is the overarching reason, why I write so-called "aid" in apostrophes. Despite the impositions of such high rates of debt to be paid back, Sub-Saharan Africa's total debt rose by 113 per cent in the same period (p. 210). The pattern of debt volume overweighing the "aid" or Official Development Assistance (ODA) volume persists uninterruptedly, with debt service outflows being more than three times the volume of ODA inflows (Eurodad in Bendix & Ziai 2015, p. 165).

The probably most famous moment in Sankara's political life was his speech against the debts in front of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)[20] on 29.07.1987, when he called his fellow African presidents to form a debtors' cartel with joint forces, the 'Addis Ababa Club against Debt' and thus to refuse to pay back the debts.

> The debt cannot be repaid; first, because if we don't pay, the lenders will not die. That is for sure. But if we repay, we are going to die. That is also for sure. (in Yimovie 2018, p. 180)

With this quote, Sankara lays bare the reality of an abhorrent inequality between global North and South. In contrast to the creditors, Burkina Faso would really need the monies. Further, he unearths the vulnerability of the Burkinabè people by painting a scenario of what would happen, if the debt was repaid. Thereby, Sankara politicises the poverty-inequality nexus: He proves that debt and poverty are not natural conditions for African states, but that they depend on political will and could politically be negotiated and even abolished. Further, Sankara contextualises debt as follows:

> We think that debt has to be seen from the standpoint of its origin. Debts origins come from colonialism's origin. Those who lend us money are those who had colonised us before. Debt is neo-colonialism in which the colonisers have transformed themselves into a form of technical assistant... Under its current form, that is imperialism-controlled, debt is a cleverly managed reconquest of Africa, aiming at subjugating its growth and development through foreign rules. Thus, each of us becomes the financial slave, which is to say a true slave." (in Yimovie 2018, p. 185)

With this part of the speech, Sankara declares debt as deriving from the era of colonialism and enduring to the era of technical assistance or "development" aid, which to a good part consists of loans - meaning it is aid, which needs to be paid back. In this logic, the colonisers became

[20] The OAU was founded in Addis Ababa in 1963 and renamed into African Union in 2001.

"developers" and creditors, the colonised became "underdeveloped" debtors. Apart from outlining this colonial continuity, Sankara points to its neo-colonial character: Foreign powers try to control or even re-enslave the global South via the instrument of debt, which clearly violates self-determination on a national level. This analysis gets confirmed by Yimovie (2018) who interprets debt in the same speech of Sankara as "limitation to the exercise of the sovereign right to self-determination" (p. 183). Likewise, with "debt as reconquest", Sankara alludes to a new form of subjugation in the form of conditionalities going along with the grant of new credits, which in the debt spiral system become necessary to compensate for paid back loans.

Very unfortunately, different from the impression the discourse-level of Sankara's speeches offers, "economic and financial independence remained a dream" (Zeilig 2018, p. 55), as the (post-)developmental politics needed to be financed from somewhere – by 1987, the country had doubled its long-term debt (ibid.). Interest rates on loans certainly played their part in this. Nonetheless, Burkina Faso at least was considerably less indebted than other states in the region (Jeune Afrique Economie in Hammer 1992, pp. 135).

In the following part of the speech, Sankara words seem forecasting the future…

> I would like our conference to adopt the imperative of making it clear that we cannot pay the debt.[…] This is to prevent us individually from being murdered. If Burkina Faso alone refuses to pay the debt, I will not be there at the next conference! However, with the support of all, which I need very much, [applause] with the support of all, we will be able to avoid paying. (tbm)

Shortly after this historical speech, Thomas Sankara was assassinated on the basis of an order by Blaise Compaoré (RFI 2022), assumingly against the backdrop of an international plot, pointing to geo-political reasons – probably he was perceived as a too dangerous figure to the neo-colonial capitalist world order. [21]

[21] 'A qui profite le crime?' (Who profits from the crime?) is the reasoned question and song title by Smockey, founding member of the Balai Citoyen. In February 2022, Sankara's former close political companion and successor after his death, Blaise Compaoré, was convicted in absentia to 30 years of prison for having ordered the assassination (RFI 2022). Profound research by Jaffré (2018) leads to the assumption of an internationally planned plot with the involvement of France, the United States, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Charles Taylor associates from Liberia who are assumed to have bribed Sankara's best friend Blaise Compaoré (pp. 96-111). The international network 'Justice pour Sankara, justice pour l'Afrique' (2022) protests against the absence of an investigating judge in the trial in charge of pursuing the investigation of the international dimension of the assassination of Thomas Sankara and his companions.

3.1.2 Abolishment of the SAPs and of Development Aid

What was before the task of the state, namely to deliver "development" as improving living conditions and providing public goods, with the era of the SAPs transformed into the task of the market (cf. ch. 2.3). Burkina Faso, however, as an outstanding exception, refused to take part in the neoliberal project of the SAPs.

> [T]he most serious consequence of these policies [the Structural Adjustment Programs] was not the reversal of the many gains of independence, but the erosion of the ability of the citizens to control their own destinies. Self-determination, originally such a powerful motor force for mobilisation in the anti-colonial movement, was gradually suffocated. Economic policies were no longer determined by citizens and their representatives in government, but by technocrats from the international finance institutions such as the World Bank, with hefty support provided by the international aid agencies. As the state was forced to retreat from the provision of social services, the space was avidly occupied by the development NGOs […]. (Manji 2012, pp. 5)

Manji (2012) assesses the SAPs' most damaging impact as depriving the people of democratic self-determination and instead being steered by the various disguises of the "development" apparatus, in this case made up of the neoliberal Bretton Woods institutions promoting the SAPs as "development" policies and supported by classical "development" "aid" organisations taking up space where the state had to retreat. This makes clear why this neo-colonial "development" policy enterprise needed to be resisted against from a post-developmental stance. Via the instrument of the SAPs, the IMF and the World Bank imposed neoliberal economic policies like market openings, austerity politics, privatizations, export orientations and deregulations (Ziai 2020, p. 131). Retrospectively, the consequences of the "development" package of the SAPs of the 80s are judged catastrophic by many different actors. Indeed, the SAP decade of the 80s was so bad that even World Bank president James Wolfensohn admitted that the so-called "developing" countries were better off in the 60s and 70s (Hickel 2017, p. 88). "Economically, socially and ecologically speaking, 'structural adjustment' has been a disaster" for the people, whereas corporations and banks (and third world elites) profited from it (George 1997, pp. 210). Allegedly to mitigate the debt crisis, the SAPs were imposed on the debtor countries (ibid, p. 207). Thereby, international institutions "acting on behalf […] their major stockholders" (ibid, p. 208) interfered in the economic policy-making of now de jure sovereign states, which corresponds exactly to the aforementioned definition of neo-colonialism by Nkrumah. Among others, the repayment of the debt needed to be prioritized relative to other state expenses, which enormously tied the hands of politicians (George 1997, p. 208). Broadly

speaking, by imposing the SAPs, the global North prohibited the global South to implement the very policies, which had economically "developed", industrialised and enriched the global North itself (Hickel 2017, p. 37). In this game, the IMF pretended that the SAPs would tackle the origin of the debt crisis, thereby ignoring that the real roots of the crisis were exogenous, not endogenous (p. 203). This brings us back to Ferguson's (2006) pledge for shedding light on political impoverishment processes beyond borders of nation-states. The dominant logic of the IMF was that "[s]tructural adjustment is needed to liberate market forces to work their development magic" (Ferguson 2006, p. 97).

In addition to the determined rejection of the SAPs, Sankara further had a very critical regard towards "aid" in general:

> The root of the disease is political. The treatment could only be political. Of course, we encourage aid that aids us in doing away with aid. But in general, welfare and aid policies have only ended up disorganising us, subjugating us, and robbing us of a sense of responsibility for our own economic, political, and cultural affairs. We choose to risk new paths to achieve greater well-being (Sankara in Yimovie 2018, p. 189).

Here, Sankara highlights that the solutions to problems need to come from responsible, self-determined policy-making rather than from "aid" which shall be abolished in the long run. His emphasis on the political origin of national problems reminds of the analysis behind the concept of the 'anti-politics machine' (cf. ch. 2.1). Consequently, Sankara tried to gradually reduce dependence on "aid" by fostering domestic revenues (Harsch 2018, p. 152).

> À l'époque de Sankara, nous avons fait de notre mieux pour être financièrement indépendants. Chaque mois, nous avons contribué financièrement à quelque chose. Il y a eu les efforts d'investissement populaires. Et toute l'aide reçue était destinée à ne plus en avoir besoin.[22] (Ganou 2019)

Whereas the SAPs deprived states of their economic base via privatizations of public enterprises and services, the decrease of tariffs, fees and concessions (Braig 2016, p. 270), Sankara's practical PD alternative of a "revolutionary austerity" (Jackson 2018, p. 113) repeatedly rejecting IMF assistance (Harsch in Jackson 2018, p. 121), striving after financial sovereignty

[22] In Sankara's time, we did our best to be financially independent. Every month we contributed financially to something. There were popular investment efforts. And all the aid we received was destined to help us not to need it anymore. (tbm)

as far as possible and still funding the revolutionary (post-)development plan was not an easy way neither.

At this point, I have to admit that the sources I have read seem to contradict each other at least at first glance concerning the question, if Burkina Faso abolished aid or not. Reading different sources in parallel, I come to the tentative interpretation that there could have been a period (1985-1988), when Burkina Faso did not receive any foreign "aid" neither from countries of the global North nor from the Bretton Woods institutions (Dembélé 2013), but other forms of foreign finance seem to still have contributed to the funding of the national (post-)development plans. Concerning the latter, Zeilig (2018) names "foreign investment", which he uses as synonymous with "long-term borrowing" (p. 55) - I can only assume he speaks about South-South cooperation taking Dembélé's statement into account. Yet, the evidence in the literature consulted is too weak to make any firm statements on the origins of the mentioned foreign finance.

Reza (2016) comments that Sankara cleverly "tried to get Burkina Faso's donors to co-operate with one another and to fund parts of his programme", thereby certainly writing about the national (post-)development plans (p. 99; cf. Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 47). Indeed, Sankara created the first office on the African continent to coordinate the actions of NGOs in the country and uttered very concrete fields, where he would like to see them engaged, such as the financing of water reservoirs for the cultivation of vegetables as the former director of this office confirms (Sawadogo 2008). Yet, if giving credence to Fahrenhorst (1988), one comes to realize that the increase in internal finance vis-à-vis a decrease in external finance only moved on slowly: The popular (post-)development plan for 1986-1990 was financed with internal resources by 13% in 1984, by 18% in 1985 and was planned to be financed by 25% national means by 1990 (p. 60). Further research could try to clarify how the anti-aid discourse was translated into politics during the four years of the revolution and thereby point to limitations of financial autonomy in post-independence states, who are denied debt reliefs and/or reparations for past injustices.

3.1.3 Food Sovereignty and other Import Substitution Politics in Trade

> L'Afrique réclame le changement
> Elle en a marre de ces politiques
> Ces hypocrites qui prêchent dans le vent
> Nous sommes Sélassié soldats
> On veut des actes concrets comme ceux posés par

L'homme que l'on nomme Thomas Sankara
L'autosuffisance alimentaire
Pour éradiquer en Afrique la famine et la misère
Transformer nos matières
Pour que dans nos assiettes elles ne nous reviennent plus chères.[23]

Many songs have been composed in different African countries about Thomas Sankara. This is the refrain of the song 'Changement' by the Ivorian artist Naftaly, who praises Sankara's politics of national self-sufficiency in food. Self-sufficiency shines through in N'Dione et al.'s (1997) second characteristic of a PD society, which I named 'societal self-determination'. According to Jean Ziegler, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, revolutionary Burkina Faso succeeded to become self-sufficient in food production within the four years of Sankara's presidency (in Lepidi 2020). Such a self-sufficiency in food production on a nation-state level became realized via protectionist trade policies. According to Matthews (2006), trade relations are a concrete field where Post-Development can materialize in practice, as this is where severe processes of material impoverishment take place (pp. 62). Food sovereignty as defined by the international peasants' movement 'La Via Campesina' "prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and small-scale agriculture" (in Gutiérrez Escobar 2019, p. 186). The term 'prioritization' makes clear that the goal of food sovereignty is not necessarily a total autarchy, but rather a relatively high level of autonomy, which corresponds to the CNR's ambitions in trade policies (Sankara 1986b). To illustrate the point, Sankara defended the policy to restrict rather than to forbid importations of essential goods like food in order to support their production at place (ibid.).

Let us refer back to Ferguson (2006), who insists on the importance of the fact that national economies are mutually constitutive, that they depend on each other (p. 68). The African independences obscured that the relations between former coloniser and former colonised are still very unequal (ibid.). Mainstream economists usually overlook that their neoliberal concept

[23] "Africa demands change
She is fed up with these policies
Those hypocrites who preach in the wind
We are Selassie soldiers
We want concrete actions such as those taken by
The man known as Thomas Sankara
Food self-sufficiency
To eradicate famine and misery in Africa
Transforming our materials
So that they are no longer expensive on our plates." (tbm)

of comparative advantage is the result of historically created constellations (Frank in O'Brien & Williams 2020, p. 125). Our current global division of labour with former colonies usually exporting mineral and agricultural resources was introduced via slavery and colonialism (Biney 2018, p. 129). These historical systems built the basis of what was later called comparative advantage, or in other words, to produce and trade what you are comparatively good at producing. In my case study, the French colonisers in Upper Volta had introduced an export-oriented economy, where raw materials were supposed to be delivered from Burkina Faso to the French domestic market (Hammer 1992, p. 195). Much of the politics after the independence in 1960 continued to build on colonially introduced structures and politics, such as the SOFITEX (Société Burkinabè des Fibres Textiles), which developed out of a colonial company for the cotton exportation (ibid.). The cultivation of cotton was so much promoted during colonialism that this led to a neglect of the cultivation of food (ibid, p. 317). Periods of droughts during colonialism already led to severe hunger crises, which could have been mitigated through traditional collective grain silos (ibid.), a solidarity mechanism eroded by colonialism (p. 195). This example illustrates well how some of the traditional values and actions can provide concrete solutions to contemporary problems and thereby contribute to an endogenous way of a good life (cf. Sankara 1987b).

In fact, cash crops themselves seem to produce hunger as 70% out of the undernourished are farmers and agricultural labourers themselves (Vivero in Figueroa-Helland et al. 2018, p. 176). This is possible because of the degree of exploitation of farmers producing for the capitalist system. "Development" cooperation had played its part in the perpetuation of these colonial structures by financing the specialization on single export crops like cotton (McKeon 2018, p. 873). To put it in a nutshell, food instability in Burkina Faso can be considered a colonial continuity enduring through "development" "aid" and path dependencies until 1985, when food still needed to be imported (cf. Zeilig 2018, p. 55). These path dependencies of an economy geared towards the exportation of cash crops were broken by Sankara's commitment to fight both food instability and the dependence on food "aid" or imports going along with it via the anti-imperial guiding principle "produce and consume in Burkina" (Sankara 1987a, p. 195, tbm).

So, how were these politics of local production and consumption concretely designed? For this, we have to understand the contextual leeway for trade policies at the time and place first. At the time of Sankara, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was the multilateral

framework governing trade relations (O'Brien & Williams 2020, p. 126). The era is also called 'embedded liberalism' to describe the hegemony of liberal principles, which, however, could still include managed exceptions for the support of domestic policy goals (p. 131). The GATT articles offered a bigger leeway for protectionist measures than the WTO would offer later on (ibid, pp. 129). Only with the Uruguay Round (1986-94), which began at the end of Sankara's presidency, started a phasing out of the toleration of protection of farmers (ibid, p. 133). However, for those states participating in the SAPs, agricultural subsidies were already prohibited in the 80s, together with the condition to privatise land, agriculture and food production (Manji 2012, p. 5). As a corollary, Sankara's measures to protect and subsidize the agricultural production in order to realize food sovereignty was only possible because he had rigorously refused IMF assistance.

3) A group of Burkinabè women dressed in Faso Dan Fani*

Let us shortly have a look at the trade situation in Burkina Faso in the beginning of Sankara's presidency. In 1984, Burkina Faso imported more than it exported, with food as the biggest area of import (a third of all imports with nearly half out of it being grains, dairy and cooking oil) (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 52). Further in 1983, half of all imports came from the European Community (p. 53). As a corollary of the colonially introduced international division of labour, half of the European Community's imports originated from the former coloniser France, and Burkina's export products consisted of 90% primary sector products, with cotton and cotton products being the most important (ibid). In the dominant context of economies oriented towards the export of agricultural goods and neo-liberal SAP "development" policies throughout the global South, Sankara strikingly stands out with his policies aiming at the promotion of a local production in foods and equally in the clothing sector. He strengthened the local Burkinabè production by partial, seasonal import bans of fruits and vegetable, by defining a minimum share of local cereal for the production of bread and beer, by introducing taxes on luxury import products and by obligating civil servants to wear cloths made of local cotton and locally woven (Hammer 1992, p. 184). The latter had the objective of refocusing the cotton industry away from exports and towards a local processing (Jackson 2018, p. 117). This cloth, the Faso Dan Fani, boosted the traditional sector of weaving, where especially women worked in (Jaffré 2016, p. 176). Other policies directed at promoting the local production were targeted

at women, too, e.g. their formation in handicraft and the processing of agricultural products such as tomato paste and jam (ibid.). In sum, with the CNR's import substitution policies in the food and clothing sectors flanked by restrictions on imported goods and a land reform, Burkina Faso successfully emulated some of those economic policies which had led to economic success in the European countries and the USA (Hickel 2017, p. 150) – and please note that the global North prescribed quite the opposite than their own economic success story via their power in the Bretton Woods institutions implementing the SAPs. In any case, the Burkina Faso's eclectic emulation of some policies used by the global North followed a different societal goal. Clothed in Faso Dani, Sankara held a speech in front of the African Union and formulated this goal:

> Le Burkina Faso est venu vous exposer ici la cotonnade, produite au Burkina Faso, tissée au Burkina Faso, cousue au Burkina Faso pour habiller les Burkinabés. Ma délégation et moi-même, nous sommes habillés par nos tisserands, nos paysans. Il n'y a pas un seul fil qui vienne d'Europe ou d'Amérique. [Applaudissements] Je ne fais pas un défilé de mode mais je voudrais simplement dire que nous devons accepter de vivre africain. C'est la seule façon de vivre libre et de vivre digne.[24] (Sankara 1987b)

With this part of his speech, Sankara positioned himself against the third understanding of the term "development", namely the universalization of the societal model of the global North and encouraged Africans to find their own ways of good living, which would be the only way that guarantees dignity.

Under the CNR government, Burkina Faso in many aspects followed a (post-)development strategy of self-reliance (Hammer 1992, p. 70). Hammer (1992) understands self-reliance as trust in local agency and knowledge for improving life situations with the pre-condition that structural constraints are abolished (p. 74). In this, I see the role of the (post-)development state as the one to set the frame conditions in a way conducive to the self-determination and self-reliance of the people. The promotion of agriculture with the aim of self-sufficiency would be one out of various self-reliance strategies (p. 77).

Unfortunately, the CNR's far reaching self-sufficiency politics cannot be reproduced easily today as the international trade system altered and now prevents such protectionist approaches for the majority of countries. With the establishment of the WTO, agrarian subsidies were

[24] "Burkina Faso has come here to show you the cotton, produced in Burkina Faso, woven in Burkina Faso, sewn in Burkina Faso to dress the Burkinabè people. My delegation and me, we are dressed by our weavers, our peasants. Not a single thread comes from Europe or America. [Applause] I am not doing a fashion show, but I would simply like to say that we must accept to live an African lifestyle. This is the only way to live in freedom and dignity." (tbm)

finally prohibited even if the EU and the USA are still allowed to subsidise their farmers. These asymmetries of rules to apply cost the global South approximately 700 billion dollar a year (Sogge in Hickel 2017, p. 38). Asymmetries of power further cement free trade policies, which generally reinforce inequality and thus benefit above all the economically strong countries (cf. Bieler & Morton 2014, p. 35). Mies (1993a) regrets that the set of free trade policies ensuing the GATT negotiations "no longer respects the sovereignty of the South's nation-states, which might have opted for a policy of self-sufficiency and import control" (p. 122), thereby describing quite precisely the Sankarist trade policy option. Thus, nowadays, the option of self-sufficiency does not lie in the hands of states alone, but is restricted by the set international frame conditions, which are certainly difficult though not impossible to challenge.

Trade theories are of course ideological and thus political – despite the widespread self-description of the discipline of neoclassical economics as neutral and technical (O'Brien & Williams 2020, p. 126). Thus, the science called economics is just another 'anti-politics machine' and one influential sibling of "development" thought and cooperation. Both share a deeply political nature which is obscured by their presentation as neutral. When seeing trade relations as political decisions, the state appears as the main actor, yet its leeway is strongly regulated by international rules. In conclusion, political power asymmetries lying at the heart of trading rules designed to the detriment of the global South and limiting its autonomy need to be resolved (Sarr 2019, pp. 27, 56).

3.2 Popular Politics: Relation to the Grassroots

Before assessing the popular participatory structure of the Committees in Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) and their task of political education from a Post-Development perspective, I would like to provide some information about the context through which the National Council of the Revolution (CNR), the government under Sankara, came to power. I do not intend to finally judge on the coup d'état from a PD perspective, but rather I would like to open a debate full of pitfalls, namely how Post-Developmental states could be created.

> The leaders of the independence movements were eager to transform their devastated countries into modern nation-states, while the 'masses', who had often paid for the victories with their blood, were hoping to deliberate themselves from the old and the new forms of subjugation. (Rahnema 1997, p. ix)

Rahnema describes that new forms of oppression such as neo-colonialism, "expert"-based "development" and rulers speaking for the ruled without even consulting them arose in the post-

independence period (pp. ix). Sankara who came to power not directly after the African independences but about 20 years later, was able to learn from these various historical experiences in the region and make efforts to avoid at least many new and old forms of oppression, even if not all of them. The goals of his politics were equal rights, social justice, direct participation and independent (post-)development (Diallo 2015, p. 310). According to Otayek (1991), the period of revolutionary Burkina Faso (1983-87) signified a historical fracture from exclusionary politics in Upper Volta (in Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 25).

At the time Thomas Sankara became president of Upper Volta via a coup d'état carried through by the CNR (yet without the personal implication of Sankara who was imprisoned at that moment), the country's recent history was marked by several coup d'états (Ouedraogo 2017, p. 8). Thus, Upper Volta was considered one of the most politically unstable countries at the time (ibid.). Especially in Anglophone literature, Sankara is often denounced as an 'autocrat' (Murrey 2018b, p. 90) because of the coup d'état and due to the fact that the CNR introduced a one-party state and banned existing political parties (Williamson 2013, p. 44; Phelan 2018, p. 67). While the latter is true, the reality of the state of democracy in Burkina Faso at the time is far more multifaceted and complex.

Indeed, the model of representative democracy itself as predominant in the global North needs to be seen critically as well. Ndongo Samba Sylla, a Senegalese political economist, deconstructs liberal democracy as an imported system on the African continent which only pretends to symbolize a collective emancipation, while in reality benefitting the economic elite (in Murrey 2018b, p. 90). Sankara once called the short-lived multiparty system of Upper Volta in 1978 an illusion of democracy because nine political parties were controlled by 27 persons and followed the very same elitist interests (in ibid, p. 91). Sylla confirms that Sankara was not against a multiparty system "to pursue a career as a tyrant, but because he saw it as a major obstacle to the emergence of a genuine democracy" (in ibid, p. 90). How Sankara's alternative vision of democracy looks like is the focus of chapter 3.2.1.

Moreover, Ferguson (2006) indicates that even democratically elected governments could be forced to implement "policies that are in fact made and imposed by wholly unelected and unaccountable international bankers" and that democratic elections were just "another 'adjustment' being pushed for by international 'donors'" (p. 101) in order to legitimate the imposition of policies by the Bretton Woods organisations towards the global North (p. 85). As

a result, governments became more accountable to international financial institutions and aid agencies than to their citizens (Manji 2012, p. 9). There is no consensus on the definition or practice of democracy (O'Brien & Williams 2020, p. 145). Consequently, the actual content of what is called 'democracy' has to be analysed in detail in order to get an understanding of people's possibilities to take part in decision-making, hold their governments accountable and determine their own lives.

But let us get back to the coup d'état in 1983. Sankara himself repeatedly characterised the CNR's revolution as "democratic" and "popular" (Harsch 2018, p. 150; Sankara 1983, p. 10). Several other sources confirm that the coup in Upper Volta had considerable support by the Burkinabè population (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 21; Ouedraogo 2017, p. 6; Williamson 2013, p. 37). Popular support for coup d'états in African countries seems to be an aspect often ignored in Western media reports as most reports on the recent example of the coup d'état in Mali show, where large parts of the population support the rebels according to Malian civil society actors close to the Fokus Sahel network (2020). In a documentary by the Baraka collective, the Sankara biographer Jaffré (2011) underlines that civilians had also participated in the coup by leading the militaries way, cutting telephone lines, etc.. Overall, Jaffré judges the events on 4th August 1983 as a situation in between a military coup led by a small group and a popular insurrection where masses protested on the streets. There is no doubt that some parts of the population supported the coup whereas others did not. From a consensus-based radical democracy perspective this cannot be sufficient for a legitimation of a coup (nor would Western democracies be regarded as satisfying). In contrast, a more pragmatic and less anarchistic approach to PD could wonder whether a coup can be considered legitimate if the majority of the population was behind it and Post-Development goals were to be strived after – an argument which is hardly measurable in practice. Finally, I did not present these arguments to completely defend the coup d'état, but to shed light on its context. To be able to assess the coup d'état from a PD perspective, it would require a broader theoretical debate on how Post-Development governments can be installed in a way conform to (different strands of) PD.

Whatever the perspective on the coup d'état may be, "a wider continuum of social changes: a revolution" emerged out of it (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 24). Sankara understood the term revolution as "non-conformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future" (in Biney 2018, p. 127). This revolutionary era was characterised by a

political orientation towards the interests of the masses of the Burkinabè society and flanked by mass political activism (Botchway & Traore 2018, pp. 24).

This chapter on the CNR's popular politics firstly delves into the decentralization of state power, its structural design as well as its practical implementation in forms of the CDRs. Afterwards, one of the CDRs' task namely to deliver political education to the masses is analysed from a PD perspective touching on the PD controversy of the 'decolonization of the mind'.

3.2.1 The Popular Participatory Structure of Committees in Defence of the Revolution

This chapter looks at the realization of 'self-determination on the level of the people' in revolutionary Burkina Faso. I argue elsewhere that self-determination needs to be restrained by normative boundaries (ch. 2.2) and with this paper I try to find out if a PD state could be a setting which permits for both self-determination of the people (as far as possible) and simultaneously the respect of normative PD boundaries.

Ama Biney (2018) frames Sankara's determination as targeted towards a "genuine democratization of society – as opposed to the periodic election of individuals in so-called democratic societies that inadequately engage the masses in meaningful political and social participation in the affairs of their community and society" (p. 128). With this, she expresses appreciation for the participatory nature of revolutionary Burkina Faso, without criticising the fact that there still was a state at the top of the society. The idea of the creation of the CDRs preceded the revolution and originally came from Burkinabè leftist organisations including student and labour unions, politically organised soldiers as well as the civil society (Murrey 2018b, pp. 86). To Murrey, the structure of the CDRs resembles variants in Cuba, Ghana and Libya, which is why she assumes they have inspired also the CDRs in Burkina Faso (pp. 84). For comprehending the concrete design of the organisation and decision-making structures of revolutionary Burkina Faso, it is certainly worth it to look at the original statute of the CDRs as passed by the CNR in 1984. There, the word 'defence' in the term 'Committees in Defence of the Revolution' is defined as "sauvegarder les acquis, garantir la continuité, œuvrer en vue d'atteindre les objectifs visés sur tous les plans"[25] (CNR 1984, p. 5). The CNR decentralised the administration into 30 provinces to account for its focus on the promotion of the rural areas

[25] "Safeguarding achievements, ensuring continuity, working towards the achievement of objectives at all levels." (tbm)

(Hammer 1992, p. 184). Simultaneously, the government called for the creation of CDRs on village-, district- and workplace level in order to further decentralize state power and above all to institutionalize democratic participation at the grassroots level (Sankara 1983, p. 12).

I want to start my analysis with a quote from the 'Political Orientation Speech' laying the basis of how Burkina Faso will transform in the following four years and held a few weeks after seizing power through the CNR. Its great importance for the CDRs gets confirmed by Valère Somé, non-permanent member of the CNR and a companion of Sankara for many years (Somé 1990, p. 292). He also mentions that it is a text jointly written by the CNR, which points to something, which can easily be forgotten in the cult around the person Sankara: He was not acting alone, but as part of the CNR[26]. During the 'Political Orientation Speech', in representation of the CNR, Sankara (1983) pathetically speaks about the sovereignty of the people as the goal of the revolution:

> C'est une révolution faite par les masses populaires voltaïques elles-mêmes avec leurs mots d'ordre et leurs aspirations. L'objectif de cette révolution consiste à faire assumer le pouvoir par le peuple. C'est la raison pour laquelle le premier acte de la révolution, après la Proclamation du 4 août, fut l'appel adressé au peuple pour la création des Comités de défense de la révolution (CDR). Le CNR a la conviction que pour que cette révolution soit véritablement populaire, elle devra procéder à la destruction de la machine d'État néo-coloniale et organiser une nouvelle machine capable de garantir la souveraineté du peuple. La question de savoir comment ce pouvoir populaire sera exercé, comment ce pouvoir devra s'organiser, est une question essentielle pour le devenir de notre révolution.[27] (p. 11)

In this speech, the great relevance of the popular character of the revolution is recognized, which is deemed to radically transform the structures of the neo-colonial nation-state and replace it by structures allowing the people to govern. Sankara announces that the radical restructuring of the state will include laws, the administration, tribunals, the police and the army, which are all said to have served the interests of the reactionary classes (p. 12). The historians Botchway and Traore (2018) attest that people-centred institutions like public tribunals, people's vetting

[26] There were four (male) permanent members of the CNR with Thomas Sankara, Blaise Compaoré, Henri Zongo and Jean Boukari Lingani, the other members were changing at least once a year (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 315).
[27] "It is a revolution made by the voltaic masses themselves with their slogans and their aspirations. The objective of this revolution is to make the people assume power. That is why the first act of the revolution, after the Proclamation of August 4, was to call the people to create Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs). The CNR believes that for this to be a truly popular revolution, it will have to proceed with the destruction of the neo-colonial state machine and to organize a new machine capable of guaranteeing the sovereignty of the people. The question of how this popular power is exercised, how that power should be organized is a key issue for the future of our revolution." (tbm)

committees and national investigative commissions were created in the course of the Burkinabè revolution (p. 29).

After carrying out the coup, the CNR constituted a predominantly military-led government because Sankara and his companions believed in the necessity of such a government to ensure political cohesion and unity (p. 30). 'Democratic Centralism'[28] was the name given to the newly created state structure (CNR 1984, p. 12). Leading members of the CDRs were democratically elected on the grassroots level by the people in the respective district or workplace, whereas the high commissioner of the CDRs introduced on the provincial and national level were appointed by the CNR (pp. 11; p. 21). The CNR itself was not elected. Here are the principles of 'Democratic Centralism' as noted in the statute of the CDRs:

> - la subordination du militant à l'organisation
>
> - la subordination de la minorité à la majorité
>
> - la subordination de l'échelon inférieur à l'échelon supérieur
>
> - l'élection à tous les niveaux avec ratification par l'échelon immédiatement supérieur
>
> - l'autonomie des organisations locales pour les questions relevant de leur compétence
>
> - la nécessité pour les responsables de rendre compte régulièrement à leurs bases.[29]
>
> La subordination exige autant que possible de larges débats et confrontations d'idées à tous les échelons, en vue d'arrêter des positions et décisions communes qui engagent toute l'organisation. [...] La critique et l'autocritique doivent être pratiquées à tous les niveaux. (ibid.)

Democratic centralism embraced some principles typical of representative democracies like elections and the principle of majority. There is also one principle indicating a more radical democratic notion, namely a certain autonomy of local organizations in their areas of

[28] This term originates from Marxist terminology and goes back to Lenin (https://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/d/e.htm). Some scholars like Jackson (2018) speak of revolutionary Burkina Faso as a "Marxist-Leninist-inspired revolutionary project" (p. 309). As I do not have a background in Marxist theory, I cannot judge in which way the Burkinabè way of 'Democratic Centralism' differed from other assumingly Leninist-inspired experiences, but comparisons in this regard might provide additional insights.

[29] "- the subordination of the activist to the organisation
- the subordination of the minority to the majority
- the subordination of the lower to the upper level
- election at all levels with ratification by the next higher level
- the autonomy of local organisations in matters within their competence
- the need for leaders to report regularly to their bases.
Subordination requires as much as possible broad discussion and confrontation of ideas at all levels, with a view to reaching common positions and decisions that are binding for the entire organisation. [...] Criticism and self-criticism must be practised at all levels." (tbm)

competence. Article 39 of the statute clarifies that the competence of the general assemblies of each CDRs is to take sovereign decisions regarding the functioning and life of the CDRs (p. 13). In this way, the CDRs became spaces for the self-organisation of ordinary people (Harsch 2018, p. 151). Nevertheless, the system of democratic centralism is based on a highly hierarchical structure: the subordination of the lower to the upper levels. This is mitigated, but not overcome, through the emphasis on a critical discussion culture. As a corollary, the overall hierarchical structure can be presented in forms of a pyramid (cf. annex 1). To conclude, I perceive a certain divergence and incoherence between the discourse-level emphasizing that the CNR wants to "make the people assume power" (Sankara 1983, p. 11, tbm) and the structural design of the state, which is headed by a central authority, followed by different layers of hierarchy structuring democratic participation.

Radical democracy and thus the potential for a self-determination of the people was strongly compromised by the prioritization of national sovereignty and unity including the top-down implementation of coherent macroeconomic policies (Murrey 2018b, p. 86). Matthews' (2006) analysis of the decentralisation of the Senegalese (assumingly PD) NGO Enda Graf Sahel can help us to frame and shed light on the (assumed) pragmatic necessity of political cohesion (p. 64). When the subsections of Enda Graf Sahel were granted more and more autonomy in their work to avoid the central imposition of a specific agenda, a sense of unity and coherence was perceived as missing by its staff. Further, Matthews points to the eventuality that a political programme judged positive from a Post-Development perspective could get compromised without common normative orientations (ibid.). To illustrate the point, speaking on the state-level, redistribution politics as a characteristic of a PD state can only be radical if implemented on a macro, intra-class level. Consequently, all NGO workers of Enda Graf started an intensive process of elaborating "a common set of values and orientations" (p. 65) henceforth serving the NGO as a compass in their work. While such a time-consuming, but radical democratic approach seems doable on the grass-roots level, a comparable approach on the state level is extremely difficult to realise. Moreover, echoing Akhter (1986) (cf. ch. 2.2), the concrete necessities of people being impoverished after decades of colonialism followed by neo-colonial exploitation may call rather for an immediate alleviation of their situation by political means, e.g. via food sovereignty policies and a land reform (securing survival) than an immense and maybe utopian project of radical democracy at state level (enabling radical emancipation). This is even more valid in such an unstable situation such as directly after a coup with the purpose to realize a dignified living for all. In addition, sustainable policies of securing survival, for

instance the promotion of subsistence agriculture instead of food aid can provide conducive frame conditions for emancipation.

Does it make sense in such situations to entrust the development of a coherent PD policy set to a group of "experts" who credibly try their best to act in the interests of the masses and to serve the people? This proposal might seem strange, as in PD theory, a radical critique on the role of the "expert" in "development" "aid" appears to be a consensus (cf. Ziai 2004a, p. 187). Esteva (2020) applies this critique also to "professional dictatorships in which professionals assume legislative, executive, and judiciary powers in each field and prevent the participation of common people in the functions of government" (in Escobar 2020, p. 100). In the case of the CNR, it can be countered that first of all the transformation of state institutions enabled common people to take functions in various fields, e.g. vetting committees. In addition, according to Ganou (2019), Sankara invited women without formal education to apply for the position of the country's high commissioner, which proves that Esteva's critique is no automatism. In PD, horizontality in knowledge is highlighted to counteract paternalism through so-called "experts" which are an integral part of the "development" discourse. Ziai (2015) confirms that self-determination (which I interpret as part of co-creation) is not far away, although distinct from the participation discourse in development studies characterizing the 1990s (p. 848). Esteva (2020) insists that "[p]articipatory democracy fails to eliminate the verticality of democratic societies" (in Escobar 2020, p. 100). I agree with Esteva in that democracy with a low level of participation can mean implementing what the government imposes, whereas self-determination or in other words a co-creation would have meant to decide democratically on the concrete design of the revolution. However, there can also be a middle way, a way, which I 'see' at least partially in the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso: In a democracy with a 'deep'[30] level of participation, people define their needs themselves as in the case of the CDRs which either communicated these needs to the national level for a translation into national politics, integrated solutions in the form of concrete projects during collective planning processes or jointly implemented solutions like collective actions on the local level. This practice stands in sharp contrast to experts defining both other people's needs and the respective solutions to satisfy them (cf. Esteva in Escobar 2020, p. 6).

[30] The term 'deep participation' originates from the applied context of the Global Partnership Network (GPN), where I work, and where it signifies that participation should start already with the definition of the problem to be solved and further integrate all stages, including the design of the solution (https://www.uni-kassel.de/forschung/global-partnership-network/research).

Agreeing that radical horizontality is not a principle of a participatory democracy like the Burkinabè 'Democratic Centralism', I argue that there is a difference between, on the one hand, "development" "experts" telling people on the grass-roots level what they need and how to get there, and on the other, politicians in a PD state, who create the necessary frame conditions so that people on the grassroots can realize the solutions they have figured out to the problems they have defined themselves. In the latter regard, Murrey (2018b) 'sees' from her standpoint that the CNR's orientation was "to support the people as the people work to achieve their own fulfilment and well-being" (p. 93). At the time being, I would not think I have the skills to design reasonable macroeconomic policies to lead a country to food sovereignty and I doubt that many people do. For serving the citizens of a state as a lead politician, let us say on protectionist trade policies, having spent some time on critically acquiring knowledge on that precise topic (be it formal or informal) is certainly helpful. Unfortunately, the access to such knowledge and education is still shaped by various local and global power hierarchies and remains situated in niches.

So what would make of Sankara a reasonable "expert" of a PD state? Sankara regularly sought exchange and feedback from a plethora of different kinds of people, both intellectuals and practitioners from diverse areas (Murrey 2020, p. 201). Among many doctors, journalists, teachers, economists invited for such brainstorming sessions were individuals such as the Egyptian political economist Samir Amin (ibid.) and agroecologists such as the French in Algeria born Pierre Rabhi (Roger 2015). Sankara's radical modesty in lifestyle unique for an African president (cf. ch. 3.3.4), his readiness for self-sacrifice and his incorruptibility lent him credibility e.g. for his redistribution rhetoric and politics to the benefit of the poor (Harsch 2018, p. 148). Furthermore, Sankara (1986b) showed himself self-critically when propagating "humility in regards of our own mistakes" (tbm).

Let us for now leave these ambiguities behind and get back to the newly born Burkina Faso and the more concrete design of its decentralization of power. The administrative state institutions were not under the control of the government, but under the auspices of the public, in forms of the CDRs "as ways of introducing a direct popular voice in policymaking" (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 29; cf. CNR 1984, p. 6). According to Jaffré (2017), the CDRs were very powerful, permanently confronted the ministers and voted for the big budgetary lines of the state budget. With this institutional setting, both the respect of revolutionary norms as well as of the popular will was to be guaranteed (ibid.). However, it remains an unanswered question in the conception

of ‘Democratic Centralism’ and the CDRs what are the consequences of discrepancies between the popular will (or at least the opinion of some citizens) and the revolutionary norms as set by the CNR. Intensive discussions are envisaged to lead to consensus (CNR 1984, p. 12), but what if that unity cannot be reached? On an abstract level, ‘Democratic Centralism’ has the potential to resonate with my understanding of societal self-determination (the popular will[31]) which should be restrained by normative boundaries of PD (revolutionary norms) as discussed in chapter 2.4. In a nutshell, a post-developmental state could take the role of defending the normative boundaries of popular self-determination. Yet, this leads to two important questions: 1. How and by whom shall these norms be defined? In revolutionary Burkina Faso, the respective higher echelons, resuming in the CDR, decided on the norms and their interpretation which can be reproached for being hierarchical rather than radical democratic. 2. How can such normative boundaries be legitimately defended from a PD stance (cf. ch. 3.3.5)?

Let us now concentrate on the participatory character. The CDRs were foreseen to build a bridge between the people and the CNR, thereby becoming a mouthpiece of the people vis-a-vis the government:

> Les CDR se doivent d'être à l'écoute des masses afin de se rendre compte de leur état d'esprit, de leurs besoins, pour en informer à temps le CNR et faire à ce sujet des propositions concrètes. Ils sont invités à examiner les questions touchant l'amélioration des intérêts des masses populaires, en soutenant les initiatives prises par ces dernières.[32] (Sankara 1983, p. 13)

Very important to note from a PD perspective is that the CDRs were supposed to support existing grassroots initiatives. Further, Fahrenhorst (1988) confirms that a certain autonomy was wished for also on the level of the different regions. The 5-year plan of the political (post-)development of the country was adapted on the level of the different regions so that the specific local needs and contexts could be taken into account (p. 357). Thus, the population was called upon to organise themselves into planning councils (ibid.). As an example, the newly created structure of the Union des Femmes Burkinabès (UFB) was organised on several levels paralleling the CDRs (Ganou 2019). More than a platform for discussion, the UFB was meant

[31] If something like this exists at all. Hoping for a consensus among a whole society does not seem realistic to me, so pragmatically, I would rather understand this as the majority opinion.
[32] “The CDRs must listen to the masses in order to understand their state of mind and their needs, to inform the CNR about it in time and to make concrete proposals on this subject. They are invited to examine questions relating to the improvement of the interests of the popular masses, supporting the initiatives taken by the latter.” (tbm)

to develop a comprehensive action plan in order to ensure that discrimination based on gender was prevented in all structures of politics and administration (Sankara 1987a, p. 202).

In addition to the grassroots planning of (post-)development projects and politics, the CDRs were also the organs responsible for their mobilization and implementation (CNR 1984, p. 6). Similarily to the 'mingas', unpaid communitarian work in Ecuador and an element of buen vivir (Lang 2019, p. 182), communitarian work in Burkina Faso realized great success stories, which was made possible through mass mobilizations of citizens carried out on the level of the CDRs (Hammer 1992, p. 185). These actions organised and implemented by ordinary citizens included, among others, building of schools and health centres and the cleaning of districts (Ganou 2019). According to Miriam Lang (2019), communitarian work fosters reciprocity between governments and people and further offers a solution to budgetary constraints (p. 182).

I want to enrich this chapter with the voice of a contemporary. Camarade Damata Ganou as she wants to be called, was head of the 'CDR de service' and represented more than 400 enterprises on workplace-level. According to Ganou (2019), enterprises were democratised under the CDRs and all workers could join the CDRs at firm-level which then took democratic decisions concerning the enterprise, thereby disempowering the firms' directors. Thus, Manji's (2012) pledge for a democratisation of our societies beyond the ballot box including democratising control over production (p. 14) was made possible under the CNR.

In a video interview on Droit Libre TV, camarade Ganou (2017) explains the decision-making procedure illustrated by an example concerning especially women:

> At the time, we women [from the 'CDR de service'] said, we shall opt for monogamy. Sankara said, he is not against it, but we shall take our milieu into account. When people say Sankara was a dictator, this is not true. Really not true. He said, I am not against, but we will consult you women and I will apply the results. Let us call the women from the provinces, we will vote. (tbm)

The UFB's women from the different provinces voted for maintaining polygamy, explaining that they needed the other wives in the household to share the task of childcare, so that they can dedicate themselves to other economic activities. As a result, a compromise was decided for that polygamy, as an option, would be maintained although recommending monogamy (Ganou 2017). This anecdote illustrates quite well that concrete policy proposals were initiated by the CDRs and UFB and voted on by the affected marginalised groups. Ganou (2019) confirms: "Si

nous [les CDRs et UFB] décidions quelque chose, le gouvernement devait l'appliquer".[33] However, this is (formally) valid under the condition that the voted proposal was conforming with the normative framings of the revolution examined by the next superior instance:

> […] ce centralisme reste démocratique, car […] l'autonomie des organes locaux est reconnue pour toutes les questions relevant de leur ressort, toutefois *dans les limites et le respect des directives générales tracées par l'instance supérieure*.[34] (Sankara 1983, p. 14; accentuation by myself)

In the case of voting on the abolishment of polygamy, there was no conflict with the revolutionary goal of gender equality, otherwise no autonomous decision could have been taken on the grassroots level. Bendix & Ziai (2015) formulate three conditions for the decentralisation of democratic decision-making. Firstly, they assert that it is necessary to rule out that a central government decides for projects against the will of the concerned local communities (p. 167). Secondly, they propose to explicitly include marginalised groups often excluded from decision-making (e.g. women, migrants, children, prisoners, etc.) into this vital process (ibid.).Thirdly, they underline that any self-determination needs to start at the level of problem definition (ibid.). All three conditions are applicable to the example of camarade Damata Ganou: 1. The problem to treat was defined on a CDR (grassroots) level; 2. Women as one marginalised group and the one most affected by the problem – as their equal rights become cut in the practice of polygamy – voted on the proposed solution of the problem; 3. The government accepted the will of the affected grassroots. Yet, it is a weakness that Bendix & Ziai did not account for those cases, where unfortunately self-determination should be limited because the normative boundaries of PD, or in our case of a PD state, are reached. Concerning Ganou's testimony, it seems like it was within the power of the UFB, where any woman, including migrant women (cf. ch. 3.3.3) could become a member, to decide over polygamy – yet it is certainly a weakness that these areas of competence and their limitations were not made more transparent in the statute or elsewhere.

From a feminist perspective, both the CDRs as well as the Union of Burkinabè Women (UFB) provided powerful structures to get actively involved in politics. On 1-8 March 1987, several thousand female participants from different parts of the country gathered in order to work out a politics in favour of women (Jaffré 2016, p. 176). This assembly passed resolutions and

[33] "If we [the CDRs and UFB] decided something, the government had to implement it." (tbm)
[34] "[…] this centralism remains democratic, because the elective principle is obligatory at all levels and the autonomy of the local bodies is for all matters within their competence, however *within the limits and on the basis of the compliance with the general guidelines laid down by the higher authority*." (tbm)

recommendations, which, among others, concerned the economic life, reversed obligatory dowries and prohibited forced marriages and female genital mutilation[35] (ibid.). These bottom-up decisions were complemented by top-down policies on the feminist level, e.g. the prohibition of prostitution, the introduction of a day when men have to go to the market, special alphabetization programs for women and an obligatory military service for all gender (ibid.). Yet, Sankara and his government did not implement everything they personally considered good, but in case of strong objections, e.g. when Sankara proposed to transfer 50% of the men's salary directly to the account of their housewives to value their care work, the resistance to the proposal was accounted for and the respective measures were not implemented (ibid.; Fahrenhorst 1988, pp. 355). Unfortunately, both sources make not clear whose resistance stopped these policy plans of the CNR so that I consider it as likely that this rather happened informally.

Relevant to my PD perspective is the fact that the CDRs were designed to both support existing grassroots initiatives, to transfer and formulate concrete policy proposals to the central government and to take autonomous decisions in the area of their competence. This leads to decentralised, participatory policy-making: Both the grassroots (CDRs) and the government (CNR) could take decisions. However, with a central authority setting the revolutionary norms, this sort of structural apparatus nevertheless fails to live up to the ideal of radical democracy as proclaimed as an ultimate goal by 'sceptical' or anarchist PD scholars like Ziai (2004b, p. 1056). Instead, the CNR as central authority would function as a circle of Post-Development "experts", whose revolutionary knowledge is "superior" and who thus ensures the adherence of the submitted policy proposals to normative boundaries. This happened decentrally via the necessity for a ratification of any decision taken on the grassroots-level by appointed people heading the CDRs one level higher.

As a corollary, the assertion that power became radically democratized via the CDRs (Sankara 1983, p. 14) needs to be rejected. As the term 'participatory' demonstrates, the CDRs enabled the grassroots participation of the people in the concrete implementation of policies decided upon by the CNR as well as the proposal of new policies and projects, which, however, had to be in line with the revolutionary agenda of the CNR to be ratified by the next higher level. In

[35] Having compared several sources writing about the prohibition of FGM, I assume that it was in theory prohibited, but that in practice no penalties for misconduct were applied.

contrast, a CDR-based co-creation of the big lines of politics, the values and goals or, in other words, the normative orientations of Post-Development was not intended by the CNR.

On the village-level, the CDRs signified an especially rampant break with traditional authorities, as they took over most of the traditional authorities tasks (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 356). In the past, traditional authorities in Burkina Faso had been backed by colonialism and were thus seen as a threat for an independent post-colonial order by the CNR (p. 70). This new constellation meant a high potential for conflicts between old and new, often young authorities. The success or failure of this transformation depended much on the behaviour of each local CDR (ibid.). Finally, it can be asked, whether it would have been wiser to work with already existing groups and associations as "natural spaces for participation", as advocated by N'Dione et al. (1997) from Enda Graf Sahel in the context of their NGO work. They argue that 1. Already existing groups are more enduring and stable; 2. They already have their own agenda which can be built on (p. 365). On the other hand, the building of new groups might have been necessary to break local power structures[36] and bring about a revolution, which might go against usual habits.

Referring back to Esteva's critique (in Escobar 2020, p. 99; cf. ch. 2.3) on Leninist-inspired socialist state structures, it is correct in the case of the CDRs that state power remained vertically organized. Molyneux (1985) also criticises such a Leninist conception of mass organizations from a feminist viewpoint (p. 251). She emphasizes the need of these, including women's unions, for a certain independence of the state to exercise power over state politics – yet limited by necessary constraints (ibid.). In the course of the Burkinabè revolution, the CDRs became increasingly more autonomous. However, this also led to excesses: Some CDRs tried to enforce government directives while being armed (Harsch 2018, p. 154). Sankara admitted the CNR could not control the CDRs and guarantee the prevention of such excesses (Murrey 2018b, p. 88). He could only harshly and publicly criticise the excesses of violence, replace the responsible persons or in more severe cases put them on trial (ibid.). Jaffré (2017) asserts that even those people in Burkina Faso idealising Sankara would not want the CDRs back. Finally, the question on how exactly to limit the power of both the state and the CDRs remains a very

[36] To illustrate the point, I can imagine that when taking families as natural units of participation with common interests, it is likely that the interests of the family head, usually the patriarch, will be served best, whereas the interests more specific to women* or children will get a lower priority.

tricky one. As a reaction, Sankara urged the CDRs to work with methods of persuasion and education instead of violence (ibid.).

3.2.2 Political Education

> Notre anti-impérialisme concret et conséquent sera d'abord la toilette de nos mentalités pour nous débarrasser des réflexes de néo-colonisés préoccupés de se conformer à des normes culturelles que la domination étrangère nous a imposées. Sous-développés nous le sommes. Nous ne le sommes que dans notre esprit d'abord. Mais camarades par rapport à qui, par rapport à quoi sommes-nous sous-développés ? Nous ne devons pas nous laisser imposer un rythme de marche, un modèle de société que les censeurs impérialistes ont créé pour dompter notre peuple.[37] (Sankara 1986b)

In this quote, Sankara queried the very idea of "underdevelopment", which only functions, if set into relation with the former colonisers, the supposed civilised, and with the purpose to control the newly independent societies. Once the societal model of the global North is not set as the universal goal of "development", Sankara argued, "underdevelopment" exists first and foremost in the minds of the former colonised. This indoctrination of the minds can be countered through political education focusing on a decolonisation of the minds.

As stated in the preamble of the statut of the Committees in Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), one of their tasks was to participate "à la formation politique et idéologique du peuple ; ce qui présuppose que les C.D.R. se constituent en creusets permanents de formation, de diffusion des idées révolutionnaires"[38] (CNR 1984, p. 5). Thus, the CDRs were supposed to be melting pots of revolutionary ideas, spread revolutionary values and train people ideologically. Like this, Sankara wanted to give all Burkinabè the possibility to raise their political awareness (Sankara interviewed by Brécourt 1984a, tbm). He always emphasized the agency of the oppressed, no matter if women or peasants, and their potential to cultivate collective self-empowerment through struggles of liberation (Murrey 2018a, p. 13). Political education of the masses, for Sankara, was a pre-condition to destabilize established, normalised inequalities (Murrey 2020, p. 201, cf. ch. 3.3).

[37] "Our concrete and consequent anti-imperialism will first of all be the cleansing of our mentalities to get rid of the reflexes of neo-colonised people preoccupied with conforming to cultural norms that foreign domination has imposed on us. We are underdeveloped, but only in our minds first of all. However, comrades in relation to whom, in relation to what are we underdeveloped? We must not allow ourselves to be imposed a rhythm of march, a model of society that the imperialist censors have created in order to tame our people." (tbm)

[38] "in the political and ideological education of the people; this presupposes that the C.D.R. constitute themselves as permanent melting pots for the formation and dissemination of revolutionary ideas." (tbm)

According to Felwine Sarr (2019), the African continent lacks its own metaphors and visions of the future (pp. 12, 124). Such imaginaries are of utmost importance to create new pathways (pp. 12). The pre-condition is the eviction of the dream of "development", economic growth and progress, which the global North had exported with the help of violence and planted in the collective imaginaries of the colonised (ibid.). In other words, the imaginary space must be liberated before being able to radically rethink and reinvent the future. This contemporary stance is in line with older debates about the 'decolonization of the mind'. In 1970, Amilcar Cabral spoke about how colonialism oppressed the cultures of the colonised by aiming at an assimilation, which further led to divisions within the colonised societies: "The urban or peasant petite bourgeoisie assimilates the colonizer's mentality, considers itself culturally superior to its own people and ignores or looks down upon their cultural values" (in Nandy 1997, p. 171). Nandy (1997) brought to the fore the term of the 'colonization of the minds' (pp. 168; cf. also Lamming in wa Thiong'o 2008, pp. 168). Via this facet of colonialism, the global North has permeated the mind-sets of the colonised with a Western worldview dividing the world into superiorities of human over nature, men over women, modern over traditional and civilised over savage (Nandy 1997, p. 169). In psychoanalysis, the adoption of this foreign worldview is explained with the phenomenon of the "identification with the aggressor" (p. 175). While this second, mental colonization had legitimized the first, so-called "civilization mission", it survived the formal decolonizations (ibid.). As a corollary, Cabral (1970) calls for a "reAfricanization" of the minds in order to realize true liberation (in Nandy 1997, p. 171). The latter fits in well with Sankara's goal of educating the people so that they strive after an endogenous African way of a good and dignified life.

While Sarr, Cabral and Nandy do not indicate in their contributions where this decolonial political education shall come from, Brand and Wissen (2013) avail themselves of Gramsci (1996) to argue that the state indeed has the role of an "educator" with the intention to "make certain habits and practices disappear, while seeking to spread others" (Gramsci in Brand & Wissen 2013, p. 694; cf. also Eicker & Holfelder 2020, p. 12). Like knowledge, education is never neutral, but always ideological. Applied to a Post-Developmental state, the task would be to spread values and practices underlying PD (cf. N'Dione et al. 1997, p. 369) via political education while ruling out behaviour opposed to PD.

In this sense, the state of Burkina Faso can be understood as an educator supporting creative educational methods: Carlos Ouedraogo, a contemporary witness and an artist, speaks of

practical experience when stating that any kind of arts, music, cinema and theatre were supported and revalorised under Sankara's presidency (in Baraka Collective 2011). Above all popular theatres had the special role to contribute actively to the political education of the people (ibid.).

Mies (1993a) criticises the militarization of men in "capitalist patriarchal nation-state[s]" (p. 123). Burkina Faso at the time transformed into the direction of an anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal nation-state, but remained highly militarized[39]. Even if part of liberation struggles, men who only have learned to be a soldier would be dangerous according to Cynthia Enloe (in ibid, p. 124). Sankara confirms this danger in an original recording part of a documentary by Shuffield and Ridley (2006), when he states: "Un militaire sans formation politique ni idéologique est un criminel en puissance"[40] thereby highlighting the outstanding relevance of political education.

The CNR's vision of Burkina Faso was to enable a good living for all. For this, a revolutionary transformation of the country on social, political, economic and ecological grounds was deemed necessary. Therefore, literature about transformative education in the context of an aspired socio-ecological transformation[41] as a concept from the global North can help us to better understand and analyse political education in revolutionary Burkina Faso. If transformation shall happen democratically, political education needs to enable and motivate people to participate and co-create the process of transformation (Lingenfelder 2020, p. 25). Disseminating revolutionary ideas of a just and better world, the CDR's political education on grassroots-level fostered the motivation of the inhabitants of villages or districts to rely on their own skills, self-organise and contribute to the process of the revolution, e.g. through local collective cleaning actions or the joint construction of a school or health dispensary (Murrey 2020, p. 197).

Notwithstanding, there is a dilemma with political education in a Post-Development context: Participation in education translates in being the student whereas co-creation of education means jointly developing the curriculum – being the teacher or education minister. On the one

[39] However, shortly before his assassination, Sankara pledged for a disarmament in front of the African Union (Sankara 1987b).
[40] "A soldier with no political or ideological education is a potential criminal." (tbm)
[41] A socio-ecological transformation considering postcolonial perspectives would be a globally and historically conscious radical transformation of (power relations in) institutions (including education) and of systemic, imperial lifestyles exploiting nature and people so that a good life for *all*, globally, becomes possible (Faye et al. 2020, pp. 130).

hand, if few people (such as the CNR) take on the role of the PD "expert" and set the overall normative learning goals so that the citizens only participate, the tool of political education risks to be abused. In the extreme case, this setting could result in authoritarian teachings, which do not condone dissent. As a result, the component of exchange on eye-level and thereby co-creation would be missing, which Lang (2019) sets in a close relation with political education in a PD context, making the latter a mutual undertaking (p. 179).

On the other hand, if the normative direction of political education remains open in line with what we call in German 'plurale Lehre'[42] (pluralistic teaching), political education risks to contribute to another direction than one, which would be judged positively from a PD angle, e.g. a better adaption to the existing neo-colonial, capitalist, patriarchal system (cf. p. 29). Yet, a similar result could happen, if the PD "experts", in a PD state politicians, do not keep up to their PD promises, which finally translates to values opposed to PD being taught, so that we can end up with anti-emancipatory learnings in the case of the state setting the agenda, too.

I agree with Mezirow (2000) that transformative education ought to hope for making people critically reflect the thinking habits, reference frames and perspectives of meaning they got through their socialisation (in Lingenfelder 2020, p. 28). Such an emancipatory education is supposed to stimulate us to be irritated and inspired, to train us how to think critically, contradict, query and do things differently (Eicker & Holfelder 2020, p. 13). In post-colonial Africa, colonisation is one of those powerful reference frames, which shapes the way people think about themselves and the world. Therefore, many have been calling for a decolonization of the mind, as a necessary act to get rid of those imposed colonial values, spreading via education.

In the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso, a depatriarchalization of the mind as one part of decolonisation was focused on in particular in political education. In contrast to some tales about colonialism having boosted gender equality (Metzler 2018, p. 25), Nora McKeon (2018) exemplifies how colonialism introduced new patriarchal structures in the colonised societies with the example of the cash crops economy (p. 872). While men participated in the paid cash crops economy, women continued with an increased workload of domestic non-paid

[42] Most common is the teaching of 'plural economics', sometimes internationally called 'Real World Economics', which teaches the most widespread neo-classical economics, but as only one approach among many other, diverse approaches to economics, which are being taught as equals. Centrally, and in contrast to mainstream economics, there is being taught no claim to truth of one theory, but all theories are considered ideological.

subsistence agriculture (ibid.). Likewise, the Europeans exported forms of patriarchy to the respective colonies (Diop in Mayanja 2016, p. 212). Yet, this 'coloniality of gender' debate, which Wendy Harcourt (2020) situates also as part of Post-Development should rather not seduce us to make overall statements about pre-colonial gender relations on the African continent as one unity. Perversely, in the "development" logic, this history gets completely forgotten, when gender inequality (including the one exported from Europe before) gets defined as a sign of local "underdevelopment", which needs a technical "development" intervention from the global North (where the expertise on feminism is assumingly located) to get solved (cf. Klapeer 2016, p. 128). The idea that "expert" knowledge from outside is required to solve an Eurocentricly defined problem is of course highly problematic from a PD point of view. In the end, this resumes to another example where "development" thinking technically deals with a highly political issue. The CNR's feminist politics which defined gender inequality as a problem and set a process of women's emancipation in train prove that (little surprisingly) gender equality can be tackled within the concerned societies themselves.

Let us take the example of the CNR's feminist politics to illustrate the contribution of political education to the assumed (post-)developmental revolution. Sankara (1987a) pronounced himself as follows:

> The promises of the revolution have become reality for men. For women they remain rumours for the time being. […] From now on, the men and women of Burkina Faso are encouraged to change their self-image fundamentally, in a society, which not only redefines the nature of social interaction, but also brings along a cultural break by profoundly altering the power relations between man and woman and forces both to rethink the being of the other. (p. 178)

This rethinking of gender relations, on the level of the masses, both men and women, which is the pre-condition for the establishment of successful feminist politics, was supposed to be stimulated through political education. Sankara (1987a) considered the Union of the Burkinabè Women (UFB) "a democratic popular school, led by the principles of critique, self-critique and democratic centralism" (p. 202, tbm). In other words, the overall orientation, namely the complete emancipation of the women, was set by the CNR, whereas the concrete implementation and policies to reach this goal were to be discussed in a critical manner on the grassroots level. Politically and personally, I really would not want to see gender or racial equality to be questioned, but I expect it to be set as a basis of discussion in a PD state and in my education – in other words, gender and racial equality should be protected by normative

boundaries. Moreover, we should not underestimate the effect of legislation in influencing what people feel as morally good or bad in the long-term, as studies on the attitude towards prostitution propose[43] (cf. Jonsson & Jakobsson 2017). However, when trying to think pedagogically, and I am far away from being an "expert" on education, when in direct contact with opponents of PD normative orientations, I can imagine that it is important to take the views people have seriously (even if they are racist, sexist, etc.) in order to reach these people at all.

When taking the resistance to certain feminist politics by Burkinabè women themselves into account, I imagine that setting gender equality as a pre-defined goal, which is not allowed to be questioned within the (slightly authoritative) spaces of political education, probably was challenging for big parts of the population. Yet, I deeply admire this move especially in regards of the time and context and insist that we have to challenge ourselves in order to overcome power structures.

Concerning the topics of not only polygamy but also female genital mutilation (FGM), the CNR was surprised by the women's resistance, above all in rural areas (Diallo 2015, p. 311). As a reaction, the government agreed to compromises, hoping for a long-term solution through education and information (ibid). Thus, educational programs on female circumcision practices were developed and implemented (Williamson 2013, p. 48). As Diallo (2015) correctly states, this proves the respect Sankara and his government had towards the will of the people that they tried to convince instead to force (p. 311). Hence, as a learning out of my case study, I derive that, apart from exceptions[44], the will and self-determination of the people should triumph over top-down proposals. In the end, a balance must be found between the state setting a broad PD agenda and especially the right frame conditions for a PD society, and the people filling it with concrete content.

Part of the political formation and education of the people were discussions about the government's politics (Sankara 1983, p. 13). This idea is not free from contradictions neither:

[43] People living in countries, which criminalize buying sex are the most negative towards it, whereas people in a country which legalize both the purchase of sex and running a brothel are the most positive towards buying sex (Jonsson & Jakobsson 2017).

[44] At least provided that the will of the affected grassroots does not (severely) violate the normative boundaries of Post-Development, that is to act on the costs of the self-determination of other people including the future generations (cf. ch. 2.2). In more concrete matters, if I think this through, this would mean that FGM would only be permitted, if the concerned person gives her informed consent, but for example FGM on children would need to be outlawed. Before such a law could be implemented, information campaigns would need to provide the basis for informed consents or dissents of adults.

On the one hand, the CDRs were supposed to hold assemblies where they could critically discuss following their own agenda (ibid.). On the other, they should follow the directives of the CNR and explain the governmental decisions to the people (ibid.). The two latter explicit goals go far beyond the teaching of critical thinking about the socialised reference frames of colonialism and patriarchy: The CDRs should intend to convince the people to adhere to the CNR's politics (ibid.). Likewise, Sankara's companion Somé acknowledges that the CDRs could not be a place of free and creative discussions, because the direction was too much pre-determined by the CNR (in Harsch 2018, pp. 155). As a corollary of this self-critique, a stronger independence from the government would have been needed to foster a freer and more authentic exchange of opinions. Finally, public education, being obviously embedded in power relations, tends to limit the potential to question both the state itself and its concrete policies and actions (cf. Eicker & Holfelder 2020, p. 17). Out of this, I conclude that political education needs to have a certain independence from the state, if it expects to teach critical reflections and emancipation instead of simple adherence to state politics.

But how is the relationship between the PD orientation 'self-determination on the level of the people vis-à-vis the state' and political education? Kohn and McBride (2011) draw on the political theories of decolonization by Frantz Fanon and Ho Chi Minh to analyse self-determination in the context of revolutionary anticolonial liberation struggles. Both Fanon and Minh emphasize the need for a psychological transition in terms of a decolonisation of the minds of the formerly colonised in order to lay the foundation for self-determination (p. 56). This was supposed to happen through the political education of the masses in a post-colonial state as implemented by the CNR (p. 72).

An opposed, (post-)anarchistic concept of self-determination, however, would argue that people should not be told how to live, but that they need to decide this themselves (May in Neusiedl 2019, p. 2). This stance corresponds well with Sally Matthews' (2017) stance, who defends the position that it is impossible to determine one's life oneself under a nation-state, because power hierarchies are inherent in the reality of a state and that it is always paternalistic to tell "others" (and even more from a *white* position) that they need to decolonise their minds (p. 2655).

This critique animates me to get more personal and to talk about my *white*, German positionality. Moreover, both of my parents enjoyed higher education, which certainly enabled me to have a rather relaxed attitude towards higher and political education, which I knew I

could achieve. I can definitely say that I have profited immensely from political education. I would not be who I am without it. Of course as anyone else, I am still in the process of learning. I am very grateful to have had the great privilege to cultivate a state of mind critical of power relations in various disguises. This has happened first of all in formal ways: at the university and in workshops, conferences and the like. However, I have to acknowledge that both my Bachelor and Master program[45] are situated within rare niches in the German education landscape, similar to the extramural opportunities of political education I have chosen. Informal ways of politically educating myself have been among others the reading of feminist magazines as a teenager (my mother's idea), a constant exchange with politicised people from various backgrounds since I started studying and finally through my immense privilege as a person with a German passport (and a middle-class background): freedom of movement. Connected to the latter, I went through a process of a kind of "second socialization light" when living with a Senegalese host family for half a year and returning many times since. I learned and still learn a lot about sharing, hospitality and communality especially but not only from Senegalese friends. To conclude, I am very privileged despite my position as a cis woman and I comprehend political education as a great privilege, which I would want to see shared. This would then of course not mean telling other people what to think, but giving them the same chance I have: to reflect their own socialisation and its impact on their thinking.

Power relations are symbioses, which means that altering them requires a change on the level of the oppressed, but equally on the level of the oppressor (Spehr 1999, p. 51). As a corollary, the decolonisation of the mind is not only necessary for the people of the global South, but we former colonisers, we *white* people, need to get rid of our superiority complex as well (Fanon in Bendix & Ziai 2015, p. 169). Following this idea, the editors of 'Pluriverse : a post-development dictionary' (2019) invite *all* of their readers "to join in a deep process of intellectual, emotional, ethical, and spiritual decolonization" (p. xvii). Thus, I would like to invigorate all of us to work towards overcoming the manifold existing interpersonal and systemic power structures and cultivate our desires into a post-developmental direction (cf. Escobar 2020, p. 115).

Last but not least, for a PD state, critical-emancipatory political education constitutes an alternative to top-down disciplining, which respects the self-determination of the people and

[45] I have studied the B.A. 'African Development Studies in Geography' at the University of Bayreuth and the M.A. 'Global Political Economy and Development' at the University of Kassel.

still works towards disseminating PD values. Therefore, I consider it as especially adequate for bringing forward the normative orientations of PD (but probably less adequate for the protection of normative boundaries). Such an emancipatory education envisages querying power relations such as exploitations and discriminations and can support us to change our patterns of behaviour and thinking – if we decide to do so. Hierarchies between learners (the people) and teachers (in our case study the CDRs spreading the state's agenda) do exist, but can at least be diminished, if the teacher side comprehends itself as learners, too (Eicker & Holfelder 2020, p. 19). This insight could have been crucial for the CNR, where Somé's self-critique reveals that the type of political education implemented was too much top-down. Via an opening towards a generally more critical discussion culture, the decentralized CDRs could have been a place for emancipative learning and further for providing critical feedback on state structures and policies to the state.

3.3 Inclusion Politics: Towards Greater Equality

Inclusion politics treat the question with whom to show solidarity inside of a PD society and thus lead to the important question of inclusion versus exclusion. According to N'Dione et al. (1997), the "development" discourse is actively excluding people by devaluing their resources and abilities, so inclusiveness is the appreciative recognition of the people's knowledge, values and skills (p. 371). The rediscovery of these resources can lead to a feeling of liberation (ibid.). This chapter analyses the level of 'societal inclusion on the level of gender, class, ethnicity and generation' (cf. ch. 2.3). Although each category has their own sub-chapter, I try to link the different categories and their intersections (notably gender and class) where possible according to the relevant (situated) information I came across. The CNR's inclusion politics was brought forward via the provision of public goods and services for all, the CNR's feminist politics, the inclusion of all ethnic groups and finally the inclusion of the (rural) poor, though the attached redistribution provoked the discontent of the urban middle classes losing some of their privileges. This leads to the complex topic of exclusion and how to deal with political opponents to Post-Development in a PD state. Last but not least, the inclusion of future generations, which goes hand in hand with the respect for normative ecological boundaries of PD, is shortly shed light on. Although this chapter treats a variety of categories of inclusion and exclusion, the analysed categories including their operationalisations can never be exhaustive.[46] Finally,

[46] Other identity categories of analysis could have been e.g. ability, age, religion, the individual subcategories of LGBTIQ+ (but which can be framed differently according to the cultural context) and others plus their intersections.

inclusion is of course a longer process, and as the Burkinabè revolution only had four years, it should be no surprise that many processes of inclusion were started, but not brought to a complete achievement.

3.3.1 Public Goods and Services for Everyone

In an era when inequality was substantially deepening nearly everywhere due to the SAPs (Manji 2012, p. 5), Sankara's policies made huge efforts to reduce inequality. The SAPs of the 80s hit women more than men, because in the regional West African context, the provision of drinking water, rubbish collection, health care, etc. is their responsibility (Traoré & Meité 1995). Aminata Traoré criticizes that the laissez-faire logic of the market as promoted in the SAPs does not provide women with such essential goods and services (in Ly-Tall 2017, p. 107). This is due to the fact that private firms only invest where it is profitable, not where it is desirable but unprofitable. Thus, the public provision policies of Sankara's government in the areas of health, water and sanitation independent from profitability relieved especially women's daily work of fetching water, cleaning the surroundings from rubbish and being responsible of caring for the sick. Traoré's hypothesis for West Africa corresponds with a deeper, intersectional analysis of Maxine Molyneux (1985) on the effects of the (socialist) Sandinista Revolution on women in Nicaragua. For this, Molyneux analyses the intersection of the categories of class and gender and concludes that women of lower classes did especially profit from general welfare policies like the ones described above in their daily lives (pp. 248). In Burkina Faso, facilities for childcare and public canteens were further calculated to especially ease the daily life of women (Sankara 1987a, p. 202) and here too, especially of women of the lower classes who otherwise would not have afforded to pay for domestic support.

The policy fields of health and education would have certainly deserved more depth, especially with PD lenses (cf. Esteva 1992, p. 22), but are only shortly summarised here due to space limits. It is noteworthy that the CDRs increased the budgets for health and education and had schools, maternity wards and health dispensaries constructed, especially in the rural areas (Harsch 2018, p. 152; Hammer 1992, p. 184), in times where most other countries were forced to decrease these social budgets and privatize these services in order to fulfil the imposed SAPs. In addition, the CNR did not only transform schooling in terms of quantity and access especially for the rural population, but also in terms of quality and content. Sankara (1986a) criticised the existing curricula as neo-colonial and serving the interest of the higher classes. He said traditional values of community and solidarity were neglected and instead, egoism and

individualism flourished under such a neo-colonial school system (ibid.). One health project celebrated as a great success also internationally was a programme against child mortality that vaccinated over three million children against polio, measles and meningitis in just over a fortnight (Reza 2016, p. 98). Nevertheless, Sankara is also said to have supported traditional medicine (Hammer 1992, p. 196), which would be – along with the revolutionary schools – interesting to scrutinize further as a PD practice of weaving together indigenous and modern practices (Esteva in Escobar 2020, p. 106).

3.3.2 Feminist Politics or the Fight for Gender Equality

Corresponding to the clear PD statement in the introduction of 'Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary', "there is no decolonization without de-patriarchalization" (Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxxiv), Thomas Sankara (1983) was convinced from the beginning that "[t]he revolution is inseparably linked with the liberation of women" (tbm). In contrast to e.g. the Sandinista revolution, strategic gender interests (in differentiation to practical ones of public goods as elaborated in the last chapter), with women's emancipation explicitly set on the political agenda, played a huge role in revolutionary Burkina Faso (cf. Molyneux 1985, p. 249). According to the South African feminist Patricia McFadden's (2018) assessment "[t]here is no other black radical man – intellectual or political leader, or both – who has articulated and insisted upon the advanced gender-inclusive ideas and policies that Sankara advocated for *and implemented*" (p. 175, emphasis in the original). Sankara (1987a) repeatedly called women "partners with equal rights" (p. 178, 181, 193, tbm) and "equal duties" (p. 194, tbm) – and this in all domains of life (p. 193).

Intelligently, he elaborated on their double oppression: by imperialism and by men (p. 202). He even spoke about women being in the "colonial protectorate of men" (p. 198), thereby comparing colonialism and patriarchy as two highly oppressive systems – as if he had known intersectionality theory. Despite his radical politics, Sankara did not see himself as the saviour of women, but considered women as agents of their own liberation of both colonialism and patriarchy: "Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilise to win them" (Sankara in McFadden 2018, p. 174). This attitude corresponds well to Sylvia Tamale's (2008) view on women as agents transforming their own cultures into the direction of gender equality (p. 58).

Sankara's goal was to initiate a process of emancipation. The CNR provided the material frame conditions for women's emancipation. The plan for a nationwide coverage of childcare facilities and canteens, together with calling the men to take equal responsibility for the household (Sankara 1987a, p. 202) was certainly supposed to mitigate economic constraints to gender equality, such as brought forward in the debate about polygamy (cf. ch. 3.1.1) and bring about the needed economic independence of women, together with their access to the work market (p. 196).

Obviously, equality can never be just granted top-down, e.g. by the state, and will then happen automatically (Neusiedl 2019, p. 3), but also needs to be seized on the bottom level, in this case by women themselves. In his most famous feminist speech, Sankara (1987a) addressed the women of Burkina Faso and animated them to fight for their liberation:

> Here, dear comrades, is disclosed that the fight for the liberation of the woman is above all your fight for the strengthening of the democratic popular revolution. This revolution, which passes you from now on the floor and the power, in order to co-create with words and deeds a society, in which justice and equality reign, in which women and men have the same rights and the same duties. The democratic popular revolution has created the conditions for such a liberation fight. Now, it is up to you, to take on the responsibility and do your best, to on the one hand, break all chains and eliminate all obstacles, which subjugate the woman in backward societies like ours, and, on the other, to take your share of responsibility in politics for the creation of a new society to the benefit of Africa and humanity as a whole. (p. 194, tbm)

One action to facilitate that women take on responsibility was that "Sankara appointed more women to his cabinet than any other government did in Africa at the time – and more than most elsewhere in the world" (Harsch 2018, p. 150). Lang (2019) considers such a "feminization of politics", which also happened in Nabón, Ecuador, as vital to break the coloniality of power (p. 186). Apart from this, each grassroots CDR was supposed to have one person in charge of the mobilization of women, which should ensure that women got active in the revolution and were represented at all levels (CNR 1984, p. 8). In addition, the grassroots organizing of women was supported by the government, e.g. via the organisation of the big women's assembly in 1987 (cf. ch. 3.1.1).

Camerade Ganou (2019), head of the CDRs de service at the time, explains how hard it was for the women to assume their positions as equal partners:

> Nous avons été exploités à différents niveaux. […] Nous avons dû combattre les maris féodaux et tout ceux qui étaient rétrogrades. Au début, il y avait plus d'hommes que de femmes dans les assemblées générales. Les hommes ont dit aux femmes que si elles allaient à la réunion, elles trouveraient la valise à

> la porte à leur retour à la maison. C'était un combat. Mais petit à petit nous avons progressé. À la fin, vous avez vu les femmes se rebeller. Elles voulaient prendre le pouvoir. Si nous avions continué ainsi, je pense que les femmes auraient fini par renverser Sankara pour prendre elles-mêmes le pouvoir. [Rires.] Et il n'était pas contre, il a dit : "*Tant que nous pouvons nous organiser … Pas de problème*." Et il a ajouté qu'il irait travailler dans les champs.[47]

McFadden (2018) highlights that Sankara also comprehended men as indispensable actors in the liberation fight of women (p. 175). Further, his function as a role model in combination with his "rejection of patriarchy and male privilege provided a radical alternative to existing masculinist notions of African maleness" (p. 173). Finally, Sankara was concerned about inclusiveness within the group of women: He pledged against the societal exclusion of unmarried women and women without children (Sankara 1987a, p. 203) and mobilised women across all classes (McFadden 2018, p. 170).

Further research on other policy fields from a feminist PD perspective would be needed to get a more holistic picture and to assess for instance the situation of sexual and reproductive rights, which I did not come across in the literature yet. In addition, queer-feminist research could try to analyse the level of inclusion of cis and trans women, as well as inter, non-binary and queer persons. In a nutshell, my analysis so far shows that the discrimination of women was very seriously fought against and thus impressive efforts for the protection of the normative boundaries were undertaken in this regard under the presidency of Thomas Sankara.

3.3.3 Inclusion on the Level of Ethnicity

Notwithstanding the fact that any nation-state produces a "fictive ethnicity", which has the potential to be used for exclusionary purposes, most prominently, to prevent free movement of the people (Behr 2013, p. 54) – this is no automatism. In Burkina Faso, this is illustrated by the fact that foreigners residing in the country and sharing the values of the revolution could become members of the CDRs (CNR 1984, p. 21). Consequently, migrants had the opportunity to actively participate in and contribute to the shaping of a new society.

[47] "We have been exploited at different levels. [...] We had to fight feudal husbands and all those who were retrograde. In the beginning, there were more men than women in the general assemblies. The men told the women that if they went to the meeting, they would find a suitcase at the door when they come home. It was a fight. But little by little we made progress. In the end you saw the women rebelling. They wanted to take power. If we had continued like that, I think the women would have ended up overthrowing Sankara to take power themselves. [Laughter.] And he wasn't against it, he said, "*As long as we can organise... No problem*." And he added that he would go to work in the fields." (tbm)

In addition, we also have to see the inclusive component of a nation-state geared towards the interior. In this regard, post-developmental states are far more inclusive than many of the grassroots movements often homogenous in terms of religion, ethnicity or class (cf. Kothari 1997, p. 146). Especially in the rather newly independent African states, where a colonial definition of borders created artificial entities not long ago, the creation of a new, inclusive identity becomes necessary to create a common, radical project of a new society. Sankara was certainly aware of that, because one of his first acts as a president was to replace the colonial name 'Upper Volta' with Burkina Faso, meaning 'Land of the Upright People' (Diallo 2015, p. 310). Being composed of three local languages, the name is already a symbol for inclusion on the level of different ethnic groups of people. The new name was meant to underline that the colonial past as well as negative sides of tradition such as hierarchical social structures were to be overcome (ibid.). This includes traditional hierarchies like the domination of the nation's politics by the ethnic group of the Mossi before the revolution (Williamson 2013, p. 43; Harsch 2018, p. 151). To illustrate the point, literacy campaigns for the masses were held in different local languages (Reza 2016, p. 98). Overall, Ouedraogo (2017) assesses that Sankara succeeded in creating such a new national identity (p. 8).

3.3.4 Redistribution Politics or the Inclusion of the Rural Poor

As stated in chapter 2.3, "the capacity to redistribute" is another criterion for a post-developmental society (N'Dione et al. 1997, p. 369). In the following quote, N'Dione et al. (1997) explain this necessity for redistribution by confronting poverty with its other side of the medal, richness: "As the wealth of a few develops, the poverty of the majority increases […]. [This type of "development"] serves to create poverty and exclusion, when it is redistribution that should take precedence" (p. 368). As a corollary, redistribution politics is part of inclusion politics and its analysis therefore appears as a sub-chapter of the latter in this work despite being enumerated as a criterion on its own in the foundation quote with characteristics of a PD society by N'Dione et al. (cf. ch. 2.3).

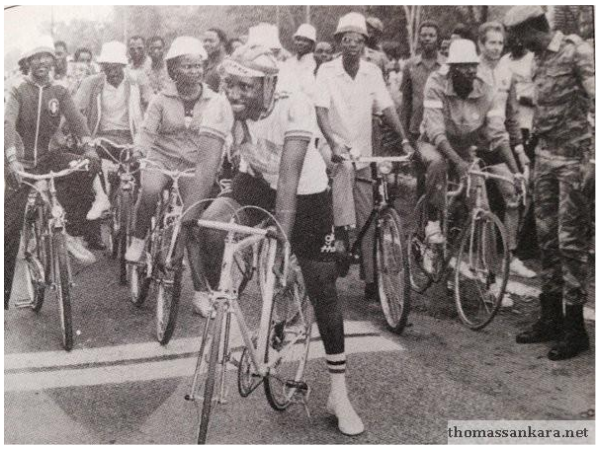
Indeed, redistribution was at the very core of the CNR's politics focusing on the promotion of those in the country being the most poor and exploited: peasants (and women). With radical redistribution politics, "Sankara […] confronted the material conditions of poverty" (Murrey 2018a, p. 13). While the provision of public goods and services was a more indirect redistribution mechanism (cf. ch. 3.3.1), a rigorous fight against corruption formed an integral and far more confronting part of the redistribution agenda (Harsch 2018, p. 151). In a context

where “aid” and debt were to be restrained as far as possible, this could not happen without others to step back. Sankara (1986a) appealed to the people’s sense of solidarity between the different classes. Notwithstanding, the CNR’s radical redistribution politics is probably the one which evoked the strongest inner resistance.

Zeilig (2018) shows himself impressed:

> Ministers were no longer overlords and gods, living in the dizzying heights of luxury, extravagance and conspicuous consumption. They received modest wages, while basic health and education was delivered to the poor. In an atmosphere of national austerity, implemented from above, but that included the highest office-holders in the executive, there was a genuine commitment in practice to the endeavour. (p. 56)

Most striking is probably how consequently Thomas Sankara himself lived as a role model. “[T]he virtues of simplicity and conviviality” (Rahnema 1997, p. x) can be easily found in the person of Sankara who was an exceptionally humble leader (Murrey 2018a, p. 12). He carried out the implementation of upper limits for civil servants’ salaries (about 230€) and set his own salary a bit below (Diallo 2015, p. 310). Thereby, Sankara changed the incentive for civil servants from getting a well-paid job and thereby a position of personal privilege to serving the society (cf. Lang 2019, p. 185). Further, Sankara participated at the regular cleaning sessions in the quarters (Diallo 2015, p. 311) and went to work firstly by bike and later on in the cheapest car available in Burkina Faso at the time (Murrey 2018b, p. 84). At the time of his death, he mainly owned four bicycles, three guitars, a car and a refrigerator (Murrey 2018a, p. 12).



4) President Thomas Sankara during a popular bike tour

In addition to the food sovereignty politics elaborated upon in chapter 3.1.3, several other of the CNR’s policies were destined to create dignified working conditions for the vast majority of the population:

> Au sein de cette grande majorité, il y a ces «damnés de la terre», ces paysans que l'on exproprie, que l'on spolie, que l'on moleste, que l'on emprisonne, que l'on bafoue et que l'on humilie chaque jour et qui, cependant, sont de ceux dont le travail est créateur de richesses[48]. (Sankara 1983, p. 5)

Similar to Traoré and Meité (1995), Sankara regards agriculture as the backbone of national economies. With 90% of the Burkinabè working in the agricultural sector (Sankara 1983, p. 5), this is self-evident. Sankara (1983) alludes to Frantz Fanon's (1961) "Les damnés de la terre" (The Wretched of the Earth) for describing the difficult situation of peasants before the 1983 revolution and signals thereby that both agriculture itself as well as the (post-)development of the rural areas in the forms of schools, sanitary and road infrastructures was an important area for change (ibid, p. 5).

Very prominently, in 1984, the CNR proclaimed an agrarian reform, which mainly nationalised all lands (Harsch 2018, p. 152). The goal of this was to block land appropriation by wealthy farmers or functionaries, but at the same time to "undercut the powers of traditional chiefs to allocate land and have authority to designate tenure rights to new commissions that included members of village CDR bureaux" (ibid.). Like this, the control over land should be handed over to the grassroots (CDRs), and the land rights for small-scale farmers should be strengthened (ibid.). Land leases for rural subsistence or local commerce were prioritized (Jackson 2018, p. 117). Further, women got access to land rights (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 355). In order to strengthen the self-representation of peasants, the Union Nationale des Paysans du Burkina (UNPB) was established by the state and provided a space for self-organisation for the formulation of shared needs leading into policy proposals (Hammer 1992, p. 186).

In addition, the CNR interfered into price politics and increased prices for agrarian products (Fahrenhorst 1988, pp. 353), thus responding to the critique of depressed prices for agricultural products as a consequence of "free" trade (Shiva 2019, p. 7). Beyond this, the CNR used tax policies for an internal redistribution via a tax on imported goods being mainly consumed by the higher classes (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 63).

Along with all other state servants, the income levels of teachers suffered under the revolutionary austerity politics trying to diminish dependence on foreign countries (Zeilig 2018, p. 55). This led to a teacher's strike in 1984, followed by the sacking of high numbers of striking

[48] "Within this majority, there are these "wretched of the earth", these peasants who are expropriated, robbed, molested, imprisoned, disregarded and humiliated every day and who, however, are those whose work is creating wealth." (tbm)

teachers (Chouli in Zeilig 2018, p. 54). Zeilig (2018) considers the saving in public salaries as understandable, asking "what other tools were available to achieve such [post-]development and to alleviate the country's terrible poverty?" (p. 55). Yet, the authoritarian handling with resistance to these redistribution policies needs to be criticised and deserves further scrutiny under the lens of exclusion.

3.3.5 Exclusion Politics or the Treatment of Political Opponents

A comprehensive inclusion means that nobody gets excluded. Exclusion can happen according to a number of different reasons, most prominently different forms of discrimination. Kothari et al. (2019) tested the alternatives to "development" in their book against criteria such as "traditional or modern discriminations of gender, class, ethnicity, race, caste, and sexuality" (pp. xix). To take stock of the inclusiveness of the revolutionary Burkina Faso, I conclude that as far as I can 'see', there was a relatively high inclusiveness in terms of gender, class and ethnicity, whereas race, caste and sexual orientation[49] remain blind spots. Yet, there are other reasons why certain kind of people can be excluded; in our case studies' case most notably political opponents.

How people should be dealt with who do not respect the normative boundaries of Post-Development? Who want to keep women in the household and peasants in exploitative working conditions? Who want a right to pollute and to fuel the climate crisis? Who want to enrich themselves on the costs of the poor and the earth? In sum, how should we deal with those who want to live a highly imperial style of living, thus normalising discrimination and oppression? These unconformable questions remain blind spots in Post-Development Theory, in which scholars cautiously started proposing normative criteria leading towards a post-developmental world, but without showing a way to scale this up beyond self-organized grassroots alternatives to "development" who already share these values. Thus, there is a dilemma between the will to refrain from disciplinary power as the consequence of a power-critical attitude predominant in PD theory and the will to create a post-developmental world based on equality and solidarity.

Let us examine this theoretical dilemma in the more concrete terms of our case study. In Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara, former politicians and high-level bureaucrats were tried and accused in front of people's courts for having enriched themselves with public

[49] According to McFadden (2018) Sankara has never talked about his stance on sexual orientation in public (p. 177).

monies (Harsch 2018, p. 154; Murrey 2020, p. 204). In 1986, Sankara was opposed to maintaining a monolithic party and wanted to open the CNR to a pluralist platform and integrate young activists of the CDRs and other grassroots organizations (Harsch 2018, pp. 156; Lalsaga 2017). In contrast, some Stalinist-oriented leftist groups like the Burkinabè Communist Union (UCB), "who tended to line up behind Compaoré" pledged for a radicalisation of the revolution, criticised the release of some political opponents and even called for executions – thus together with Blaise Compaoré, who will enable Sankara's assassination later on and replace him as a president, they defended a relatively more exclusionary politics (Harsch 2018, pp. 156).

Several different repressive measures were applied under the CNR government in order to defend the revolution. The freedom of press was restricted in order to avoid providing a platform for neo-imperial forces (Murrey 2018b, p. 87). Political activities deemed divisive to the common revolution's goal were prohibited (Botchway & Traore 2018, p. 28). A level of coercion was used to discipline the petty bourgeoisie and to act against misconduct (ibid.). Political opponents got imprisoned, yet some of them also released again in the course of the revolution (Harsch 2018, p. 154). In one of his late speeches, Sankara (1987c) made a plea to abolish prisons in the long-term and released 88 prisoners (p. 238). Zeilig (2018) criticises that "[c]ritics and opponents were branded 'enemies of the people'", which closed the potential for a dialogue with them (p. 59). Yet, in 1987, Sankara underlined that repression should be reserved to real "exploiters" and "enemies", while the masses shall be persuaded to follow the revolution's path (in Harsch 2018, p. 155). Thereby, Sankara pointed to political education as a tool to deal with dissidents (cf. ch. 3.2.2).

One concrete example, where the CNR collided with political opponents was its relation to trade unions. The trade unions in Burkina Faso have been on the one side an independent political actor organizing protest against all regimes, including that of Sankara, since independence (Phelan 2018, pp. 62). On the other hand, their wage-centred demands "privileged the salaried public sector workers rather than the peasants" (p. 64). As members of the trade unions worked in the formal and public sector, they represented only a tiny percentage of 4% of the Burkinabè population (p. 72) and were part of the petty bourgeoisie (Jackson 2018, p. 117). The CNR democratized workplaces by introducing CDRs on workplace level, meaning that decisions were not taken by the bosses anymore, but by the majority of CDR members (Ganou 2019). In the context of revolutionary austerity (cf. ch. 3.1), the CNR diminished state bureaucracy and cut wages of public servants – in order to concentrate on a politics in favour

of those oppressed more than the teachers, health workers, soldiers and administrators: the vast majority of peasants (p. 71). This redistribution politics caused the fear of many of the relatively privileged to lose these privileges (Murrey 2020, p. 2014). Thus, the trade union interests were also "to protect its own members, to secure their jobs and their salaries and to prevent a major redistribution" (Phelan 2018, p. 71). Along with the traditional authorities in the rural areas and the urban political elites, trade unionists were part of the more privileged parts of society whose interests collided with the CNR's fight for the interests of the masses of the people (ibid.). While it seems understandable that the CNR feared the trade unions would organize resistance to the revolution's ambitions for a redistribution, the repressive measures applied by it need to be observed from a highly critical angle.

The right to strike got undermined: While strikes were never formally forbidden, the incidence of a mass sacking of 1380 teachers after a teacher's union's strike in response to the imprisonment of three of their trade unions leaders accused of plotting against the state remained a big threat for future potential strikes (ibid, pp. 68). The CNR tried to integrate the trade unions into the newly formed 'CDRs de service' being created at all workplaces (p. 64). Craig Phelan (2018) criticizes this move as a tool "to transform autonomous trade unionism into a pliant tool of the ruling party" (p. 64). Repression against the trade unions included the imprisonment of 200 trade union leaders, prevention of union assemblies and even 47 cases of torture (Sandwidi in Phelan 2018, p. 68). There is certainly no excuse especially for the latter. The same applies to the executions of seven plotters after a failed counter coup in 1984 (Reza 2016, p. 98; Williamson 2013, p. 46). As a reaction, Phelan (2018) accuses the CNR of authoritarian impulses, intolerance towards dissent and a lack of dialogue (p. 72).

All these repressive and violent actions which I intuitively feel as bad can be condemned from a PD perspective by drawing on the concept of normative boundaries which considers oppression and likewise repression as beyond normatively legitimate limits.

Now, I would like to draw from Christoph Spehr's (1999) analysis of how to limit abuses of power inside of revolutionary fights and states. Spehr problematizes that those who manage to include such a big number of people in a common fight and who lead movements (such as Sankara and the CNR) get too much power (p. 74). Groups who want to leave the coalition immediately develop into the enemy, because no opposition is tolerated (ibid.). Thus, the means of pressure for change, which can take the shape of different oppositional forces, are eliminated

(ibid.). According to Spehr, critique can only be uttered in an influential way, if such a ruling coalition can be left and thus it can be threatened to leave it (ibid.). I conclude that a culture of critique and opposition is a prerequisite to limit the power of the government and to avoid abuses of power (p. 74). Even if governments pretend they need so much power in order to chase away the evil, actually, they are prone to the evil themselves, if defending their power privilege from dissidents and lacking mechanisms of self-limitation (p. 54). To refer back to Mies (1993b), the "right to resistance" is central to self-determination (p. 219), and therefore needs to be protected in any form of democracy.

3.3.6 Inclusion of Future Generations or Ecological Boundaries

According to Smockey, one of the founders of the Burkinabè social movement Balai Citoyen, Thomas Sankara wanted to "build a Burkina Faso of social justice and inclusive [post-]development that takes into account both the environment and future generations" (in Harsch 2018, p. 148). This long-term perspective gets confirmed in one of his speeches, when Sankara (1986b) refers to children as the future and underlines that their joy needs to be conserved until tomorrow.

In order to enable a good life for all and also for the future generations, an ecological component needs to be part of the criteria brought forward by N'Dione et al. (1997). Interpreting N'Dione et al.'s notion of 'inclusion', I speak of the inclusion of the future generations, which is necessarily also based on harmony with nature. Such an ecological component is very widespread in proposed alternatives to "development". Even though the way of arguing for it is diverse, and not seldom spiritual, the result is the same: We should strive after living in harmony with nature. We humans need to get "ecologically wise" (Kothari et al. 2019, p. xix), recognizing that our human emancipation needs to take place "within nature" (Salleh; Sousa Santos in ibid., p. xxviii). Or as Mies & Shiva (1993) put it, we need to stop the destruction and exploitation of nature and recognize that humans and nature are closely interconnected (cf. ch. 2.2). Sankara's understanding of human-nature relationships aligns well with such PD notions, when he states that desertification "is exclusively the problem of balance and harmony between individual, society, and nature" (in Biney 2018, p. 142).

In some regards, the CNR was a government pursuing radical ecological policies, which is best illustrated by the rigorous efforts for fighting desertification via the '10 million tree planting campaign' (Biney 2018, p. 127). Sankara was one of the most arduous supporters of the idea of

the African ‘Great Green Wall’ (Campbell 2018, p. xiv). In times of an ever more unfolding climate crisis, we remark that such a reforestation approach offers equally a great potential for its mitigation.

In some other regards however, the idea of practiced harmony with nature crumbles. Burkina Faso’s mineral wealth got nationalised (Biney 2018, p. 127), yet not to leave it in the ground, but to extract it. Gold mines were opened under the CNR (Zeilig 2018, p. 55), certainly in an effort to promote economic self-sufficiency (cf. ch. 3.1). This disregarded both that the waste would be toxic for nature and for the local population (Bassey in Biney 2018, p. 143). A deeper engagement with ideas of post-extractivism, which are especially popular in many areas of Latin America as parts of the various forms of buen vivir, could certainly enrich this debate and operationalize the notion of harmony with nature from a PD perspective (cf. e.g. Kothari et al. 2019, p. 111).

The CNR’s agricultural politics decisively changed their course as the revolution unfolded. With the goal of national food sovereignty, in the beginning, a modernization of agriculture was pursued (Hammer 1992, p. 195) including the use of mineral fertilizers, pesticides and the sedentarisation of nomadic livestock farmers (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 120). While the aspired goal of self-sufficiency in food did not change, the methods did. In 1986, the political focus was shifted to the promotion of subsistence production (Hammer 1992, p. 320) and agroecological methods such as agroforestry and agro-sylvo-pastoralism were promoted (Fahrenhorst 1988, p. 359). Agroecology is well appreciated in PD theory because of its approach of harmony with nature thereby for instance conserving or even improving the soil fertility for the future generations (cf. e.g. Shiva 2019, pp. 7; Toledo 2019, pp. 85; Figueroa-Helland et al. 2018). Environmental politics henceforth became an integral part of agricultural politics in Burkina Faso. In November 1986, Sankara entrusted the agroecologist Pierre Rabhi with the design of a comprehensive agroecological reform for Burkina Faso, which unfortunately was never implemented due to Sankara’s assassination (Roger 2015).

4. Burkina Faso under the Presidency of Thomas Sankara – A Post-Developmental State?

This chapter consolidates the main findings of the analysis carried through in chapter 3 in order to answer the research question, whether Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara can be considered a Post-Developmental state. For this sake, firstly, the active rejection of "development" "aid" and policiesis broken down to the most important actions. Secondly (post-)developmental policies implemented in revolutionary Burkina Faso are presented. Thirdly, tensions concerning one PD normative orientation and the protection of the normative boundaries of PD are outlined. Fourthly, some of the potentials and dangers specific to alternatives to "development" on state-level are elaborated on.

4.1 Sankara's Radical Rejection of "Development" "Aid" and Policies

When even a "development" researcher observes that there was an ideological detachment from the European ideology of progress with the presidency of Sankara, it must have been blatant (cf. Hammer 1992, p. 196). Indeed, Sankara (1984b) could not have been more explicit on this rupture when declaring in front of a UN General Assembly:

> We must state categorically that there is no salvation for our people unless we turn our backs on all the models that charlatans of all types have tried to sell us for twenty years. There is no salvation outside of this rejection. There is no [(post-)]development separate from a rupture of this kind. (p. 82, tbm)

Beyond the discourse-level, Sankara's[50] radical rejection of "development" "aid" and "development" policies materialises in

- the demand of an unconditional cancellation of all African debts;
- the refusal to accept the IMF imposed SAPs;
- the non-adherence to many of the neo-liberal economic policies promising so-called economic "development", such as "free" trade policies and
- the proclaimed goal to abolish "development" "aid" in the long run.

[50] As usual, this rejection does not only go back to Sankara, but other CNR members were certainly involved in formulating the ideological orientation and more concretely the speeches (cf. Somé 1980). Yet, it is impossible to clearly differentiate between the CNR as the government team and Sankara as a person, who is claimed to have sometimes decided alone according to a Burkinabè newspaper article (Lalsaga 2017).

Likewise, he rigorously rejects the neo-colonial and power-laden assumptions behind the "development" discourse – that the global South needs the help of the global North to improve its living conditions – as well as the ensuing (mostly neo-liberal) policy options. Further, Sankara calls for a politicization of debt and "aid". He discloses that poverty is nothing natural for the African continent, but that it was created politically and can further only be tackled politically. Such a politicization is diametrically opposed to the functioning of "aid", which works as an 'anti-politics machine'. Despite his clear rejection of "development" practice as outlined above, Sankara does not reject the term "development" in the overall. By using the term for instance in the context of Burkina Faso's national development plans, he appropriates it and changes its significance to a positive, national, popular project and action. An additional resignification of the term "development" as a societal goal of an African good and dignified way of living (Sankara 1987b) can equally be interpreted as appropriation and subversion of the "development" ideology. At the same time, this leads to a rejection of the Eurocentric teleological account behind the "development" discourse, which presupposes the societal model of the global North as the "developed" one and thus the one to be imitated. Both subversive appropriations of the project and politics of "development" as well as the envisaged goal of a "developed" society are marked in this paper as '(post-)development'.

4.2 Sankara and the CNR's Post-Developmental Politics

Judging from the normative PD orientations as suggested by N'Dione et al. (1997, p. 369), the CNR offered alternatives to "development" through a variety of post-developmental politics.

1. *"If we were to evaluate the wealth of a society by its level of independence or autonomy vis-à-vis the foreigner, the far-off, the unknown […]",* then Burkina Faso under the Presidency of Thomas Sankara would have been judged highly ambitious.

The CNR had big plans to become de facto independent from the former colonisers by renouncing to debts, "aid" and food imports. One key to this were the successful food sovereignty politics resisting neo-liberal trade regimes and instead promoting and protecting local production until the whole country could feed itself. The practiced alternative to debt and financial "aid" flows was to focus on domestic revenues in order to thrive after financial autonomy. In addition, instead of relying on foreign knowledge by "development" experts, the CNR counted on the skills of their own people and realized participative local planning processes and impressive infrastructure works via mass mobilizations of the CDRs.

However, the interconnectedness of the world prevented Burkina Faso from becoming fully independent from outside finance. Within the five years of Sankara's presidency, Burkina Faso still took new loans and accepted "aid" monies, otherwise the leeway for (post-)developmental politics such as the provision of public goods like health and education could not have been realized on the same scale. Thus, the systemic financial constraints prevented the full implementation of the radical paradigm shift towards autonomy clearly sought after according to the discursive level. On the whole, Burkina Faso as a state courageously exploited the potentials for autonomy within the existing systemic limits, but also with courageous attempts to challenge the established system, like in the case of debts.

Out of my aforementioned understanding of capitalism, I consider revolutionary Burkina Faso with its fight against neo-colonial capitalism on the global and a fight for a redistribution on the national scale as anti-capitalist. I do so despite the co-existence of interests for national economic growth – which I found legitimate if the specific areas of growth are steered in a PD direction (which is mostly but not absolutely the case). In my view, the failure to completely overcome financial dependence despite political determination proves that the established global capitalist, "developmentalist" system has systemic defaults: The newly independent nation-states did not start with fair conditions. And why competition anyway instead of solidarity? Through the "development" discourse, the historical roots of the poverty-inequality nexus, slavery and colonialism were disguised. Thus, I consider reparations for slavery and colonialism, and from what we know today, we should add for the causing of the climate crisis, as the indispensable alternative to "development" finance, which could have helped to realize the aspired goal of financial independence. Reparations would, at least financially, compensate for caused harm, establish (more) justice and end dependency on neo-colonial finance. Only with such an unconditional and just access to finance, which further does not need to be paid back, self-determination in the form of sovereign equality can become realized. In addition to reparations for past injustices, the still ongoing pauperization through e.g. unfair trading rules and a strong curtailment of the right to move freely needs to be stopped and international institutions revolutionised in order to enable self-determination on the state-level and beyond.

2. *"[I]f we were to assess [the wealth of a society] according to its capacity to integrate and 'include' the greatest number of people",* then revolutionary Burkina certainly belonged to an avant-garde of its time.

The inclusion politics of the CNR worked through feminist politics, the inclusion of all ethnic groups, of the (rural) poor and finally through the provision of public goods and services from

which especially poor women profit as an intersectional analyses show. By tremendously improving access to health care, formal education, clean drinking water and rural infrastructure, and planning to do so for childcare, too, especially the less privileged inhabitants like women, peasants and poor households profited immensely. Especially remarkable – even from a contemporary global perspective – was the CNR's feminist politics explicitly targeting the liberation of women from their subjugation to men. Equal rights and duties were promoted on the work market, in the household, in the CDRs and on the political scene. The government acknowledged that they could only deliver the frame conditions, which needed to be complemented by a bottom-up process of women themselves who take their liberty in their own hands. Political education was destined to facilitate this process of emancipation by encouraging people to reflect their (neo-)colonial, patriarchal socialisation. Noteworthy is further the level of inclusion on the level of ethnicity and even nationality. Migrants could become members of the CDRs and thereby participate in the policy-making process. Nationals of different ethnic groups were united in a new identity, the Burkinabè or Upright People, with the aim to overcome the domination of one ethnic group in politics as well as further traditional hierarchical structures. Concerning ecological boundaries being especially although not solely important for the future generations, the CNR impressed with extensive tree planting activities as well as with the political promotion of agro-ecology in agriculture.

3. *"[I]f we also assessed [the society's] capacity to redistribute",* then the CNR would have been heralded for its rigorous class politics promoting a greater equality.

The CNR's redistribution politics tackled poverty by politicising inequality and especially enrichment on the cost of others within their own society. While Sankara himself convinced as a shining role model of modesty and the salaries of state servants were cut, corruption as a tool for illicit enrichment was harshly fought against. Peasants as the poorest part of the society and the vast majority of the population were especially promoted via the CNR's food sovereignty politics, the promotion of public goods in the rural areas, the strengthening of land rights for small-scale farmers including women through the land reform, the increase of producer prices, a tax on imported goods and finally the provision of a space for the self-organization of farmers.

4.3 Revolutionary Burkina Faso and Tensions with Post-Development

The tensions which I perceive between the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso and PD theory become evident in view of the PD normative orientation 'self-determination on the level of the people vis-à-vis the state', but which shall get restrained by the normative boundaries of PD. It

becomes clear that the balance between granting autonomy and controlling is not easy to achieve for a PD state, as in revolutionary Burkina Faso at times policy-making can be reproached as too much top-down and at times the state itself harmed the normative boundaries as in the case of the CNR's oppressive politics geared towards dissidents or in other cases the state did not hinder that the CDRs harmed these boundaries. Other tensions appear in 'inclusiveness towards future generations' going along with the principle of harmony with nature.

Tensions with 'self-determination on the level of the people vis-à-vis the state'

The fourth normative PD orientation used as a frame of analysis for this thesis is the level of self-determination of the people vis-à-vis the state. In revolutionary Burkina Faso, one of the first acts of the revolution was to establish Committees in the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), thereby providing an institutional structure for supporting existing grassroots initiatives, encouraging self-organisation and enabling common people to actively participate in politics, define local problems and suggest solutions. Concerning the grassroots level CDRs, including enterprise-, village- and district-CDRs, representatives were elected and the majority principle was used for taking decisions in their areas of competence. National (Post-)Development Plans were written in a decentralised and participatory way. The options for a participation in politics for common people and thus the level of democratization in revolutionary Burkina Faso was much higher than it is the case in most representative democracies – even though the leadership was not democratically legitimized and there were tendencies to oppress dissidents.

The CNR-government assumed power through a coup d'état. In the Burkinabè model of 'Democratic Centralism', the representatives of the CDRs on the regional and national (hierarchically higher) levels were appointed by the CNR and had the task to check for each decision taken on the lower levels whether it conforms to the normative orientation of the revolution and approve it – a structure which seems to be able to serve for guaranteeing the respect of normative boundaries at least at the theoretical level. The state structure was thus hierarchical, even if participatory[51]. The government exploited their position of power when setting the normative orientations of the revolution in a top-down manner. Partially, it directly translated these into policies (while other parts were supposed to be worked out in participatory

[51] This is no contradiction, because power is not equally distributed in the notion of participation.

processes) and thus ensured coherent national policies. It is certainly difficult in practice to draw the line between what should reasonably be set from above and the free space for citizens' co-creation, for defining their own problems and planning their own solutions in a radically democratic way. In sum, there remain some critical aspects concerning the overall level of democratization.

In theory, there does not need to be a tension between self-determination and a PD state, at least not if the will of the people always triumphs over top-down proposals. Yet, I have argued for stronger interferences of the state into capitalist lifestyles and discriminating behaviour, because I doubt that people will voluntarily refrain from harming other people or the planet. Thus, there is a tension between a PD state and self-determination as soon as top-down rules are also implemented against the resistance of people. Consequently, defenders of a PD state would acknowledge that self-determination needs normative limits, which then need to be defended somehow – but how?

Inside of the CNR, there were controversial discussions on how to deal with political opponents. In practice, press freedom was cut, a one-party rule installed, plotters executed and political opponents defamed or imprisoned. Abuses of power led to severe human rights violations, which need to be condemned as violations of the normative boundaries of PD. Thus, we can learn from the case study that concrete mechanisms to limit power and to hold power accountable to the people are of utmost importance for any PD state. Moreover, the right to resistance needs to be protected for an opposition to be able to form, e.g. in terms of social movements, political parties or trade unions. Only then can a culture of critical dialogue develop, which is further crucial to limit power and to assure that the diverse interests of a society are heard and translated into politics.

But, how can the right to resistance as well as the normative boundaries of self-determination be protected at the same time? As is crucial for PD states, the transformation of state institutions was driven forward in revolutionary Burkina Faso, yet further research is needed to provide a deeper understanding of this transformation, to link it to existing discussions about post-developmental alternatives to the police, to tribunals, to prisons, etc. and to finally come up with suitable alternative tools and strategies in order to defend the normative boundaries of PD.

While it is easy to criticise such a model of a (post-)developmental state as revolutionary Burkina Faso as not horizontal, it is a lot more difficult to find and/or theorize horizontal, radical

democratic models of PD states – and even more to take into account their very creation. Moreover, while it is easy to criticise the very notion of a PD state from a radical power-critical or anarchist perspective, it is less easy to theorize PD alternatives to states, e.g. grassroots movements, in a way that takes into account their inherent power asymmetries as well as their interdependent embeddedness in a world structured by nation-states in a capitalist system. Certainly, revolutionary Burkina Faso was no ideal PD state, because the power privilege remained with the state. While the public administration was being controlled by the CDRs, I have not read of the same being valid for a control of the government itself. Out of this experience, I derive the importance of creating mechanisms for the people to better control the government to diminish the risk of power abuses and thus the risk of violation of the normative boundaries of PD.

In the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso, the PD state was a pragmatic approach, which had a predominantly very positive impact (cf. ch. 4.2) – although rare excesses of violence were unfortunately not prevented. In contrast, a democratization of power would have meant allowing for dissent for example in forms of a free press, trade unions and opposition parties. Yet, this can have the effect that transformative politics will be compromised and lose their radicalism (cf. Molyneux 1985, p. 243). To illustrate the point, the upper class would probably have opposed most of the redistribution policies, and conservative forces might have resisted gender emancipatory politics. In a nutshell, more democracy also means more compromises, a slower pace of transformation – but hopefully also a more sustainable transformation process, which lasts longer than an electoral cycle or until the assassination of a president. In the end, a careful weighing up needs to take place between the PD mean of radical democracy and PD ends of a PD world in harmony with nature and where nobody needs to suffer discrimination or oppression. In a PD state, such a weighing up would be brought about by politicians who dedicate their time to jointly searching for those policies which meet the (communicated) interests of the people in an inclusive way. Last but not least, whether a PD state makes sense, depends a lot on our understanding of power as either something inherently negative to be abandoned in any case or also as a positive potential for change.

Political education in Burkina Faso was an important tool to move closer to a PD society. For this, the state of Burkina Faso assigned the decentralized CDRs the role of “educators” of the masses, with the goal to contribute thereby to a decolonization and depatriarchalization of the minds. As an illustration, the state sought to make discriminations based on class or gender

disappear while instead spreading egalitarian values and behaviours of solidarity. From a PD perspective, the content of education was promising, but its structure and pedagogy were dangerous. Political education in Burkina Faso was constructed in a participative way, thus too much top-down from a radical democratic perspective and assuming the knowledge of the educator's side as superior. This inhibited a free and egalitarian discussion culture of creative exchange. Making political education more independent from the state could have helped to create a more emancipative and also more critical space. CDRs-led political education was further employed as an alternative to penalties, as the example of information campaigns on female genital mutilation shows. Finally, I am convinced that it is beneficial for anyone to enjoy the privilege of a good and political education, which can help us to critically reflect on our socialised reference frames. This can give us the necessary conscience to jointly work on a post-developmental future.

Tensions with 'harmony with nature'

A second line of tension with Post-Development appears when we shed light on the respect of normative boundaries in revolutionary Burkina Faso with regard to harmony with nature. Concerning ecological boundaries relevant to life sustaining practices at the time, but also for future generations, I assess the CNR's approach as ambivalent. On the one hand, there was a strong conscience for ecological boundaries, proved by impressive efforts to combat desertification via mass mobilizations for tree planting. After the initial promotion of a modernised agriculture including pesticides and mineral fertilizers as opposed to a long-term sustainability of the soil, a shift happened: In the late phase of the revolution, the CNR promoted agroecological methods and subsistence farming, which do well correspond to ideas of alternatives to "development". On the other hand, the extraction of gold exemplifies that compromises between different (post-)developmental goals had to be made. Here, the ecological aspect of national (post-)development was compromised for the sake of broadening national economic self-determination, which can of course be seen critical from a PD perspective. However, I do not have an information basis deep enough to judge on this specific political decision and weigh up the concrete contextual consequences of extracting or not extracting the gold, so that further research would be needed for me to build a grounded opinion. But in any case, this empirical example shows that conflicts between different normative orientations of Post-Development can happen, which make the reality more complex than what a tentative catalogue of criteria for alternatives to "development" might suggest. A more

concrete operationalization of the concept of normative boundaries could help to extract the overarching priorities of PD, whereas PD orientations, which have a more process-oriented character, would be subordinated to boundaries.

In the end, tacking stock of a in the tendency positive, but still mixed overall picture of PD in revolutionary Burkina Faso, I would call it a (post-)developmental state, thereby using the brackets to mark its ambiguity.

4.4 Potentials and Dangers of Post-Developmental States

The question of how to create PD states remains open. While in our case study, this happened through a coup d'état, which has the evident repercussion of a legitimacy problem, because even if large parts of the population might be supporting it, this remains an unchecked speculation. Yet, PD states as electoral democracies face different kinds of problems, as Lang (2019) elaborates: Electoral cycles threaten long-term processes of transformation by introducing short-term logics of political campaigning, which can easily disrupt a collective long-term transformation towards Post-Development (p. 185). Further, Lang highlights that in order to break with a coloniality of power inscribed into state structures, an alternative understanding of the public service as originating in indigenous, communitarian ontologies is necessary to break with logics of rent-seeking in the government (p. 186). Although with a limited insight, I perceive parallels between the indigenous understanding of public service she describes for Nabón, Ecuador, and the way Sankara firmly defended that "[l]e gouvernement est là pour servir et non pour se servir"[52] (in Awadi 2010). This brings us to the greatest potential of PD states, which in contrast to allegedly apolitical "aid" can deliver political solutions to political problems. Somé (1990) gets to the heart of this: "En Afrique, il nous faut des gouvernements qui soient constitués d'hommes intègres ayant un sentiment élevé de l'honneur, du respect de la chose publique et qui placent l'intérêt général au-dessus des intérêts particuliers, les leurs y compris"[53]. With the necessary political will, governments which do serve their people would be able to achieve what no "aid" program can achieve (ibid.). But how can we trust that those promising to serve the people will really do so once in power?

[52] "[t]he government is there to serve and not to serve itself" (tbm)
[53] "In Africa, we need governments that are made up of upright people with a high sense of honour and respect for public affairs and who place the general interest above vested interests, including their own." (tbm)

Another tricky question is of course how PD states can exactly serve the people. National interests shall be a compilation of local interests to be legitimate (cf. Mies & Shiva 1993, p. 10). At least my own imagination is not sufficient to imagine radical democracy on a state-level, but I would be happy if anyone proves me wrong. Instead, integrating structures of 'deep' participation according to the motto "govern as little as possible" (Lang 2019, p. 186) could give leeway to self-determination yet within certain normative boundaries and thus would be worth considering in more detail. Partially, this already happened in revolutionary Burkina Faso, where people jointly defined their own needs on the CDR-level and put in concrete form solutions in collective planning processes. In addition, Lang simultaneously pledges for a minimum of necessary regulations around equality and justice to be safeguarded by institutional PD actors (p. 187), in accordance with my own stance that the normative boundaries of PD have to be institutionally defended. As a result, PD states have an enormous potential to create an inclusive, diverse society and to achieve equal rights for people from different backgrounds and positionalities, as proven by the case study of revolutionary Burkina Faso.

However, it is certainly not sufficient to look solely at states (nor solely at grassroots movements) as if they were isolated, but PD states would be one actor out of many to bring about a post-developmental future, and in this process, they would be interdependent with other actors. Since "the global crisis is not manageable within existing institutional frameworks" (Kothari et al. 2019, pp. xxiii), PD needs to overcome thinking in isolated grassroots groups and concentrate its efforts rather towards challenging the international system. Schöneberg (2019) proposes PD scholars and activists to contest the world order both from the top and from the bottom. This view assigns PD grassroots organizations and movements and PD states a complementary role, as they can mutually reinforce their agendas and build coalitions for a post-developmental system change. Furthermore, a PD state would be top and bottom at the same time: the top for its citizens and the bottom (or rather something in between) for the international institutionalised system. Brand & Wissen (2013) affirm that "international institutions […] are both the outcome of strongly asymmetrical relations of forces and a medium through which this asymmetry unfolds its power effects" (p. 689). Sankara used his relatively powerful position as a president to act in a counter hegemonic way to the dominant international world order: He refused both the SAPs and to pay back the debts and thereby contested both international financial institutions and debtor countries (cf. Ferguson 2006, p. 100). In addition, he acted again as a kind of "bottom" to the international system when scandalizing the veto right in the UN Security Council and pledging for a democratization of the United Nations

system (Biney 2018, p. 128; Diallo 2015, p. 313). Even though this democratization is, unfortunately, not installed until today, I see a potential of (post-)developmental states and movements to lobby for such radical transformations of the international system with joint forces. Thus, a manifold international and interregional solidarity could be a powerful force of change (Manji 2012, p. 15; Kothari et al. 2019, p. xxxiv) working towards the transformation of the existing relations of dependence and exploitation between poor and rich regions (Ferguson 2006, p. 65). Mohanty (2003) emphasizes that the solidarity our world needs must have anti-capitalist, intersectional feminist traits (p. 503; 509) and, to put it in Sankara's words, the goal of our actions should be "to organize a genuinely new international system of economic relations" (in Murrey 2018a, p. 16). Reparations for slavery, colonialism and the causing of the climate crisis as well as the global right to freedom of movement are legitimate ways to push forward and could finally enable the financial autonomy for the global South Sankara and his government had envisaged (Bendix & Ziai 2015, p. 170).

In the end, the internationally planned assassination of Thomas Sankara shortly after his famous speech, where he called upon his fellow African presidents not to pay back the odious, neo-colonial debts, proves how much those profiting from the neo-colonial, neoliberal capitalist world order want to protect their privileges, and that they stop at nothing. Visionary and system-critical presidents evidently have a relatively high occupational hazard of becoming assassinated, as history has shown – and together with politicians who do not keep up to their promises as illustrated by the Nicaraguan revolution, this remains one of the biggest risks of pinning our hopes on Post-Developmental states. However, in the best case, a whole nation can largely profit from a state serving their interests of a good life.

5. Conclusion

From my partial perspective of situated knowledge based on what I could 'see' when reading, watching and listening to the corpus of knowledge I drew from for this thesis, I can only draw tentative conclusions. As PD scholars, the patriarchal, neo-colonial, capitalist state is certainly part of our concept of the enemy, yet analysing the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso (1983-87) has shown that the idea of a benevolent Post-Development state geared towards serving the interests of the masses instead of serving a politico-economic elite is not utopic. The CNR aimed at radically transforming the state and at overcoming its neo-colonial, patriarchal and

capitalist features and can demonstrate impressive successes in this regard. In this conclusion, I intend to provide an answer to my research question, whether Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara can be considered a Post-Developmental state. First of all, the CNR radically rejected "development" "aid" and neoliberal "development" policies by refusing both IMF assistance and the SAPs, by refraining from applying neo-liberal growth-promising trade policies, by demanding an unconditional debt cancellation and by announcing the plan to abolish "development" "aid" once and for all in the long-term. In order to assess the offered alternatives to "development" within the CNR's discourse and politics, I worked with the normative orientations of a PD society as suggested by N'Dione et al. (1997), which I slightly extended and complemented with the notion of the normative boundaries of PD as elaborated on extensively by Mies & Shiva (1993). Instead of relying on "aid" from abroad, the CNR's post-developmental politics comprised domestic resource creation for more financial autonomy, protectionist food sovereignty politics complemented by the promotion of agroecological methods and subsistence farming, the special promotion and inclusion of the underprivileged as equal members of the society, avant-gardist feminist politics in many different domains and impressive tree-planting projects to halt desertification. With a focus on local production and consumption with fair prices, the CNR installed a system aiming at a solidary instead of an imperial mode of living, in respect of the post-developmental normative boundaries of self-determination. Notably, the CNR's (national) post-developmental politics were even inclusive beyond state boundaries because of South-South solidarity and because non-nationals could become normal members of the CDRs and thereby participate in politics. Thus, the CNR broke with nationalist ideas of segregation and enclosures. Yet, the end result of my assessment through PD lenses is mixed, as the government can be reproached for a too authoritarian style, e.g. concerning its coming to power via a coup d'état, its top-down way of educating the people and above all its oppressive and in some cases very violent dealing with dissidents. From a socio-ecological perspective, the extraction of gold as well as the initial and later corrected moves to modernise agriculture via the use of pesticides remain questionable, too.

Until this point, the interpretative assessment for and against a PD alternative seemed rather clear to me. But let us come to the more complex core of the PD state debate. The Burkinabè model of 'Democratic Centralism' was a hybrid of a grassroots democracy happening through the CDRs and the UFB and a representative democracy, where the CNR credibly tried to design politics in the interests of the masses – and from my subjective perspective obviously did so

better than most elected governments. After seizing power, Sankara and his government promised to have the people steer the state. Yet indeed, the four years' experience of revolutionary Burkina Faso has shown that even if the CNR pursued ways of decentralizing and partially democratising power via the CDRs, their nation-state remained a hierarchical and paternalistic construct: Especially when it comes to politics on the macro-level, the CNR often decided for the people and their assumed best and thus took the steering "expert"-role harshly criticised in PD when it comes to "development" "experts". However, today's political economy gets more and more complex. We cannot expect each and everyone in this world – and not a few of us busy with surviving – to spend our time designing post-developmental macro-politics or making an effort to restructure and democratize the institutional world order. As a result, my own pledge would be that, above all in politics on the macro-level, we cannot avoid relying on people we trust to assume the role of a politician and translate diverse local needs into national and international politics. To make it more concrete, the consultation of the people's needs, which often but not consistently happened under the CNR, together with an orientation towards these needs would be a decisive pre-condition for post-developmental politics in the sense of societal self-determination. Where it happened under the CNR, the example of 'deep' participation on the grassroots-level illustrates how the state can support people to define their collective needs and visions. This is necessary both for the politicians' tasks of translating needs into politics as well as for the people themselves so that they can also design and implement local solutions independent from a centralized authority. While democratic procedures and a certain autonomy were introduced on the grassroots level, the government acted as a last instance to ensure that the decisions taken by the people adhered to the broader revolutionary (post-)developmental goal of an endogenous "African" way of a good and dignified life. While this could have been a great potential in regards of securing the respect of normative boundaries, it has to be criticized that under Sankara, the right to resistance including the right to build forms of opposition was unfortunately undermined. Learning from the shortcomings of my case study, I insist that people need to be able to hold their government accountable to avoid abuses of power, so that concrete procedures for controlling the government have to be created.

In contrast to anarchistic PD scholars, I argue that any alternative to "development", to be called as such, needs to respect certain normative boundaries beyond mere self-determination. Further reflection is needed to figure out where the right balance for a PD state lies between granting autonomy and top-down regulations. I think that the autonomy of the grassroots should be

granted as far as possible and only get restrained by the big lines of normative boundaries and thus where the principle of living in harmony with nature and people implying the prevention of discrimination, oppression and exploitation is harmed. If we consider such normative limits, by way of illustration the prevention of a deterioration of the climate crisis as a normative boundary to be protected, as indispensable, we have to deal with the tension that a certain disciplining necessary for protecting these boundaries brings along. This tension with PD thoughts consists of the idea "to know better", which can be criticised as paternalism. Or, don't we think that we maybe just really know better in some regards, if honest to ourselves? Otherwise, we PD scholars would not have proposed normative PD criteria anyway, right? Evidently, there are some paradoxes inherent in PD theory, which emphasizes horizontality of knowledge while simultaneously proposing a catalogue of normative criteria. As far as I know, the uncomfortable question of how to defend the normative boundaries we want to protect has been avoided in PD debates so far. Even if the design of mechanisms of control with as little disciplining as possible remains a big challenge, a post-developmental state, demilitarized and without prisons as dreamed by Sankara and without police violence[54] as we should have learned from the Black Lives Matter movement, could be one answer to this dilemma, if elaborated further.

On top of protecting the normative boundaries of PD, the second principal role of a PD state is to create the necessary political frame conditions for grassroots self-determination. In the case of revolutionary Burkina Faso these consisted of redistribution mechanisms such as the land reform, the provision of public goods, protectionist trade policies, a democratization of enterprises and the promotion of equal rights independent of gender, ethnicity or class. The normative orientations of redistribution and inclusion can thus be seen as constituent part of the frame conditions for realizing self-determination. Political education was promoted as one public service in order to provide spaces for the Burkinabè citizens to get conscious of the impact of colonialism, patriarchy and other forms of dominion on their thinking and acting. Such a decolonisation and depatriarchalization of the minds was seen as a pre-condition to free the way to emancipation. Inclusion was thus strived after beyond formally granting equal rights, but was also aspired to achieve via a process of education. I am convinced that in times of a multi-facetted crisis, political education if constructed in a critical way of knowledge exchange can help us to get ready to take on responsibility and contribute to steering our society into a

[54] excluding self-defence and preventing bigger harm

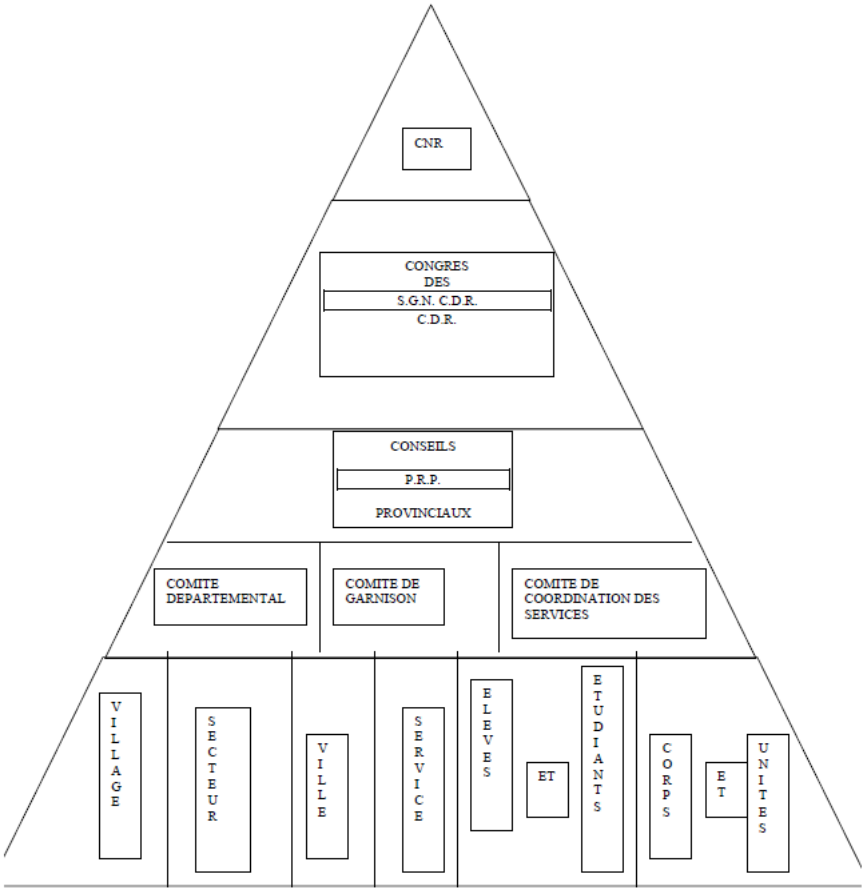
better future. Concerning the realization of equal rights as a frame condition for self-determination, (post-)developmental Burkina Faso succeeded to achieve greater equality among people - which is laudable from a feminist intersectional perspective - although it could not bring about total equality without abolishing itself as a state. Yet, struggles for a good life for all are never without contradictions (Ziai 2015, p. 849), no matter if on the grassroots or on the state level.

From this analysis, I conclude that revolutionary Burkina Faso followed the vision of a self-determined (national) *(post-)development*, with the 'post-' in brackets because 1. it is no self-description, thus the brackets. Instead, Sankara subversively appropriated the term "development" and gave it a different meaning in line with (many) PD thoughts, which gets marked by the 'post-'; 2. "developmental" and post-developmental politics are no mutually exclusive categories, but can partially overlap, e.g. in the promotion of women, despite striving after different societal goals in the overall. This hybridity of certain politics is taken into account through the brackets; and 3. As the picture remains mixed, with some authoritarian sides of the regime, there is an additional reason to keep the 'post-' in brackets, in order to mark the tensions of this empirical alternative to "development" with PD theory.

Finally, I do perceive the whole project of Burkina Faso under the presidency of Thomas Sankara as a courageous trial to build a PD state. Sankara's PD answer to problematizing "development" practice as neo-colonial and depoliticising consisted of a self-determined (national) (post-)development with the aim of an endogenous "African" (or rather Burkinabè) way of a good and dignified life for all. After scrutinising my case study, I argue that we should consider the (post-)developmental state as a temporary bridge, similar to a women's quota, to achieve more equality and, more broadly speaking, to get closer to a post-developmental future, until one day, it might be superfluous. Making mistakes is human, so failures of politics, which inspire us should not disillusion us too much, but rather encourage us to try ourselves and do better. In this sense, I wrote this paper to provide us with imperfect, but courageous inspirations to create another, post-developmental world in times of a manifold and undeniable crisis. Together, we can radically alter North-South relations, gender relations, human-nature relations, state-people relations and human relations in a broader sense. This one epic quote of Sankara concerning our collective task cannot be said too often: "We must dare to invent the future" (in Murrey 2018a, p. 11). For this to happen, I would like to make a pledge towards us PD scholars to think beyond small-scale local communities as alternatives to "development"

and to integrate a more global, critical political economy perspective into our post-development thinking. This can allow us to think bigger, to think transnational relations differently and to tackle system immanent asymmetries of power. I would like to situate Post-Developmental states as powerful actors who have the best potential to offer political solutions to "developmental" problems like poverty by an internal redistribution and beyond have good potential to challenge neo-colonial North-South relationships and thereby global inequalities together with civil society actors. We need to think of alternatives to our unfair international trading system and alternative, just and more radical redistribution mechanisms than "development" cooperation, such as reparations for slavery, colonialism, the causing of the climate crisis, and the granting of the right to freedom of movement for all. Last but not least, (post-)development finance appears to be a field deserving further research because only autonomy in finance can allow Post-Development states, whose self-determination and political leeway will become compromised otherwise, to do radically different politics.

Annex I



De la base au sommet et du sommet à la base, le pouvoir populaire selon le centralisme démocratique repose sur une structure organisationnelle efficace.

https://www.thomassankara.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/ORGANIGRAMME_CDR.pdf

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