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LANDSCAPES OF HOPE: URBAN EXPANSION IN OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

- MASTER THESIS -

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Abstract:

In my Master thesis I discuss the case of Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, West Africa to account for rapid urban expansion which is an important issue for many sub-Saharan cities. I ask (1) for the *processes that underlie and accompany the growth of the city* and (2) *how they relate to the lives of the urban dwellers in the so-called «non-lotis»* of Ouagadougou. During a three months field work from September to November 2014, I conducted 86 semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and participant observation. In the first part of my thesis I argue that the changing urban landscape can be examined and understood through the notion of infrastructuring; changing legal frameworks and planning schemes within a global marketisation of land and property are interwoven and co-constitute what is referred to as «lotissement» by the Burkinabé. In the second part of my thesis I focus more closely on how people deal with and navigate within the emerging and changing urban landscapes in their daily lives. Drawing together my ethnographic material with the anthropological literature on hope, I analyse daily practices of narrating, dwelling and waiting as effective engagements with uncertain futures. I argue that the hopes of the (peri-)urban dwellers are grounded in the urban landscape which is simultaneously shaped by these hopes. Hope in my account becomes a fruitful analytical tool to understand (a) way(s) of being in the world, connecting past, present and future and thus, keeping analyses open instead of ignoring or foreclosing possible futures. The latter potentially connects my own work to fields and discussions on lives in and under uncertain conditions beyond the regional context of and sub-Saharan Africa and the topic of rapid urban growth.

Keywords: Ouagadougou, urban expansion, infrastructuring, uncertainty, hope

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INTRODUCTION

My Master thesis is based on a three-month fieldwork in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, where I conducted research in two peri-urban areas, called «non-lotis»[1] by the Burkinabé, from September to November 2014. This research was concerned with the urban expansion and the processes that underpin the massive spatial growth of the city, which is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa (UIU 2013). *How do these processes shape the daily lives of the people living within the areas in question?* In order to approach this question, I pursued two lines of research: starting from the ground of the «non-lotis», where I conducted interviews and observations, I tried to grasp which processes are the most relevant for the people living there. In parallel, I went through texts and documents to reline my empirical findings and get a deeper understanding of the processes in question.
Basically there is a set of supra-national and national programmes that are meant to manage the urban growth. However, these programmes seem to have generated numerous unintended side effects. State laws on land tenure and property rights are challenged by the persistence of customary tenure practices; rules for the course of restructuration programmes are disregarded and municipal authorities seem to adopt their own development procedures to put it charitably; and in the global trend of commoditisation and marketisation of land and real estates the majority of the poorest is left behind. From within the discussions held in journals of international policy, urban planning or development studies (to name just a few) the situation seems quite deficient – that is due to a lack of organisation, lack of authority and lack of money – an almost failed state (FFP 2014). But on the further end, while experts from different backgrounds debate the most efficient solutions for the problems at hand, there are people who live their lives within these processes that are matters of discussion.
I received the strong impression that the people that I met in the peri-urban neighbourhoods navigated their daily lives in the city – despite the difficulties and deprivations they faced – with a perpetual orientation towards a potential future. Potential, because they were not naïve, in the sense that they would refuse to see the problems and causes for their immediate hardship. In fact, I was surprised how much they knew about the conflicts, contestations and corruption that encompassed and accompanied the

[1] The so-called «non-lotis» are unplanned city areas around the (re-)structured inner part of Ouagadougou. I will explain the term in detail in the next chapter.

processes underpinning the urban expansion of Ouagadougou, namely changing legal frameworks and planning schemes within a global marketisation of land and property. However, the people who had to deal with and live within the emerging and changing urban landscapes were not simply re-acting to these alterations, rather they were effectively *engaging the future*; they were *hoping* for their 'urban' lives to continue and improve. Asking how, in a continuous state of crisis, hope can emerge and be maintained, I came to think that their hopes were closely entangled in the various operations that underpin the urban expansion, or put differently, that shape the (peri-)urban landscape.

This is my argument: the hopes of the (peri-)urban dwellers are grounded in the urban landscape which is simultaneously shaped by these hopes. Hope in this account becomes a fruitful analytical tool to understand (a) way(s) of being in the world, connecting past, present and future and thus, keeping analyses open instead of ignoring or foreclosing possible futures.

The importance of openness in my analysis and space for contingencies was enhanced by the specific circumstances I encountered in the field. Halfway through my fieldwork unexpected events occurred: after 27 years of leadership Burkina's ex-president Blaise Compaoré together with some of his closest confidants were chased out of Ouagadougou and Burkina Faso after some days of protest against a referendum which aimed at changing the constitution in order to allow Compaoré for another presidential candidacy. The upcoming referendum was discussed everywhere: by the poor dwellers in the «non-lotis», in the better-off housing areas of Ouagadougou, among the workers of international organisations, diplomats and expatriates. People seemed to agree that as soon as the referendum was to be held, there was no doubt that Compaoré would run another period of presidency for sure. The opposition had been paid to vote for the referendum and so would the elections. The first manifestations and roadblocks were meant to convince Compaoré to abandon his plan, finish his presidency and leave the arena to others. However the referendum was scheduled and even antedated for October 30th, 2014. Before noon, by the time of the voting, the Parliament and the adjacent hotel Azalai, where most of the members of the parliament resided, were already crashed and burned down by the mostly young protestors (more than half of Burkina's population is under 25). No delegates were found in the buildings. Presumably, during the night, it had proved to be unlikely that the demonstrators would simply return home.

Compaoré resisted two more days until the raging crowd went off for the presidential palace. Compaoré resigned and escaped with the help of the presidential guard and

probably the Ivorian government while a transitional government was established in Ouagadougou. After one week everything was over.

Before these events took place I had lived alone in Somgande, a district in northern Ouagadougou. I inhabited a small, nearly unfurnished row house. Every morning one of my research assistants came to pick me up and we drove into our research areas where we conducted interviews and held conversations with the people living there. When the referendum was announced and the tension ascended, I followed the safety instructions of the German Federal Foreign Office and the university and left my small house, which was not equipped to spend some days inside[2]. I moved to a diplomat couple who had invited me as soon as it became apparent that there was an unsolvable conflict between the demonstrator's insistence on the abandonment of the constitutional revision and the government's position. We did not know what would happen or what to do, so we stayed inside the high walls around the house and garden, listened carefully to the radio and called people living in other areas of Ouagadougou to gather and exchange information (that were few) but most notably, we talked through best and worst case scenarios. It seemed as if everything was possible and nothing was certain.

The day of the referendum started calmly but soon it was clear that there was something going on in the streets of Ouagadougou. We did not see anything – we had been advised to stay inside the house by the German Federal Foreign Office and the husband of my hostess – but we heard crowds of people outside, probably heading toward the city centre. The voices and noises became louder and we listened carefully to the loud bangs at a distance without really knowing what caused them. Suddenly, the security guard who used to spend the day sitting in front of the gateway, listening to the radio, rushed into the garden where we were sitting on the terrace and instructed us in an agitated voice to go into the house and close all windows and doors. As quickly as possible we followed his orders. We heard cries and became really nervous because we had no idea what was actually happening. Were there combats outside? We were far from the city centre; it was not here in our area that the demonstrations took place. And what if this was some side event, people claiming justice at another point? We could do nothing but stay inside and hope that we would not become the target of whatsoever. And we did not. Some hours later we were again sitting in the garden. The parliament was burnt down and in the days to follow we learned about more devastation that seemed to have been precisely targeted. The object of the protests

[2] I had no possibility to build up reserves of water and food for example.

were single persons so it seemed, there were no large scale destructions. It was impressive that some days later, thousands and thousands of volunteers followed the invocation of a former mayor of Ouagadougou to clean up the traces of the roadblocks and burning wheels. The city centre was actually cleaner after this campaign than I had seen it before. An interim government was put in place during the next days and I changed my place again[3]. I continued fieldwork and returned to the «non-lotis». New elections should take around one year to be organised and the interim government was expected to clear up and pave the way for a new start. Obviously something big had happened, but after nearly one week of exceptional state, people were busy enough to find food and work and doing business. On a daily life level nothing had changed so far and until today, approximately one month before the elections, nobody is really able to say where Burkina Faso is going.

It is this space of uncertainty in between the daily routines and paths and the many potential futures that I refer to in this thesis, drawing on the notion of hope. Hope, in my account, enables me to analytically connect different dimensions of what constitutes urban Ouagadougou and simultaneously acknowledge the role of the people I met in the field. Hope and the urban landscape, I argue, are co-constructive, that is they must be analysed in relation to one another.

To start, I will give a more detailed description of the context in which my research and thesis were and are embedded. I will emphasise two particularities of my research: doing fieldwork with the help of research assistants and conducting research in a (post-)colonial setting. Moreover, I will present an inventory of my material on which my analyses are based.

In the second chapter I will go into detail of the urban expansion in Ouagadougou. I will begin by the city itself, and then give a brief summary of its history with a focus on land tenure. Then I will turn the attention to the so-called «lotissement» and the processes encompassed by that term, which dominates questions and discussions about land (tenure) in Ouagadougou and beyond. «Lotissement» basically refers to restructuration activities which, as I will argue, can be framed in terms of entangled processes of infrastructuring that – in the case of Ouagadougou – are highly uncertain.

It is along or within these intersecting processes of infrastructuring that hopeful practices occur. These practices co-constitute urban Ouagadougou – what I call *landscapes of hope* –

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[3] I did not move back to Somgande, but into the house of an Italian woman who had been living in Ouagadougou for many years already.

in chapter three. I will give an overview of different anthropological accounts on hope, each of which emphasises a different (analytical) aspect of the notion. I will then turn to some empirical examples. In “Narrating the future” I will argue, that through narratives people establish a link between the present and an anticipated future. I will show that these narratives are deeply entangled in the surrounding where they occur. This is interesting for two reasons: first, it advises ethnographers to re-consider the research situation and environment not only in terms of relations between researchers and researched, but also as constitutive for the accounts which they base their analyses on. Second, the material dimension of these narratives may behave as an anchor for the processes that it points to and helps to uphold them – through these narratives – at least for some time. In other words, narratives may persist and carry processes and institutions through times of crisis, therefore preventing their breakdown. In “Modes of Dwelling” I will refer to three forms of dwellings through which people engage differently with the potential urban future(s). These different forms are enabled and shaped by intersecting processes of infrastructuring and simultaneously shape the urban landscape. Juxtaposing these three forms I will show, how hope, depending on the possibilities to engage with these processes, is unevenly distributed and differently enacted. In the last chapter, “Waiting”, I will discuss the in-between-situation that dominates life in the «non-lotis» and what it can tell about the political dimensions inherent to the concept of hope.

Finally, instead of a conclusion, I will take up the openness inherent in the concept of hope and try to elicit its consequence for anthropological research and beyond.

Context, Challenges and Methods of Research

Call for Master Thesis

My thesis is based on empirical data gathered during a two-and-a-half month fieldwork period from September 12th to November 30th, 2014. The research trip was financed and supported by the Integrated Research Institute on Transformation of Human Environment Systems (IRI THESys) at the Humboldt-University Berlin and built on previous research in northern Burkina Faso and Ouagadougou by Jonas Ø. Nielsen and Sarah A. L. D'haen who have been working on climate change (Nielsen, D'haen, Reenberg 2012) and rural-to-urban migration reversal (Nielsen, D'haen 2014). The latter is based on qualitative research in the peri-urban belt of Ouagadougou. Through interviews and participant observation the authors identified a set of reasons for rural-to-urban migration, namely the Côte d'Ivoire Crisis, sorcery, marriage, divorce, climate variability and work. Literally at the edge of the research the observation arose 'that much of the spatial expansion is created by the establishment of uninhabited huts'[4].

Consequently, a Master thesis proposal was partly designed and predefined to provide a deeper 'understanding of the contemporary urban expansion of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso by means of ethnographic fieldwork'[5]. More precisely 'a detailed description of the spatio-temporal structures of urban expansion' was to be achieved by limiting the fieldwork to 'two particular neighbourhoods of Ouagadougou'[6]. I received this call, which asked for candidates that 'have knowledge in qualitative methods and should bring along a high interest in the region and the on-going developments in sub-Saharan Africa. Knowledge in French is essential.'[7] Whereas I met the criteria concerning knowledge of methods and language, I didn't know much about the region and had never been to West Africa (or any other part of Africa) before.

The preparation of the fieldwork lasted two months. During this time I read as much as I could about the region and sharpened the questions. I came to understand that the supposedly empty houses emerged in the informal areas of the city. They were apparently

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[4] Call for MA thesis, IRI THESys
(I will mark quotes from the call in single quotes, because it is not a published text.)

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

built as a means to access the city, a way of anticipating the restructuration and formalisation of the hitherto informal parts of Ouagadougou. I wanted to learn more about the relationship between these informal settlements and the formal, plotted parts of the city and the processes that underpinned a presumed transformation from the first to the latter. Furthermore, I was concerned with the effects of these processes for the daily lives of the people within these areas and vice versa. Drawing on Jonas Ø. Nielsen's experiences I planned to start with semi-structured spontaneous[8] interviews in two neighbourhoods that I was free to choose. To approach the questions I had formulated so far, I also intended to try to get inside or at least speak to people working in local administrations, such as the district's city halls that I thought at least partly in charge of the transformation processes I wanted to explore. As with the interviews I was advised to try to organise access once in Ouagadougou as personal encounters and connections seemed to be vital for such an endeavour. With a plan in my head I left for Ouagadougou on September 12th, 2014.

Assisted Research

My research connected to previous research projects not only in terms of focus. Moreover I could draw on already established personal ties. When I arrived at the airport and had successfully passed the temperature control (Ebola was a big issue during that period), Mamadou Kabré[9], geographer and geomatics at the Geographical Institute of Burkina (IGB) and his family received me. They helped me finding a house close to their own in Somgande in northern Ouagadougou and welcomed me regularly with a good meal. It was also Mamadou Kabré who introduced me to Inoussa Ramde and Martin Wêndngûudi Compaoré, both economy students. They translated during interviews and provided me with precious information concerning all kinds of aspects of daily life in Ouagadougou. The fact that I conducted my research with the help of research assistants deserves some further attention. Although working with assistants has, since its beginning, been part of (classical) anthropological research (Sanjek 1993) it is only marginally discussed in ethnographic writings. Rather discussions are limited to a (admittedly) growing body of specialised texts (Turner 2010; Middleton, Cons 2014; Gupta 2014). While both, Inoussa

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[8] Spontaneous in the sense that there were no pre-arrangements made but that I would simply look for people who were willing to talk to me in the areas in question. Interview questions were formulated in advance of course.

[9] With their approval I decided not to change the names and additional information of my supporters in Ouagadougou, namely Mamadou Kabré, Inoussa Ramde and Martin Wêndngûudi Compaoré. All other names were changed.

and Martin, had already assisted in previous research projects[10], working with assistants was entirely new to me in two respects: first as research experience as such and second as being the employer. Assistance was necessary in the first place to get around in Ouagadougou because the principal means of transportation was the motor scooter. I didn't and don't have any driving experience on two-wheelers (except a bike) and I hardly needed more than ten minutes to recognise that I would not try to learn it in Ouagadougou's road traffic[11]. Moreover I needed assistance to ensure my interviews. Although I speak French, which is the official language in Burkina Faso, approximately half of my interviews were at least partly conducted in Mooré or Dioula[12], the two mainly spoken local languages of the more than 60 regional languages in Burkina Faso. To a great extent French is learned at school, which starts late (related to age) and often lasts only a few years, because families cannot afford to send several children to school at once. Classes often comprise 80-120 students, what makes it impossible for teachers to ensure that all students follow their lessons. Thus, French remains a foreign language for a large part of the population. For these reasons many of my interviewees felt uncomfortable with the French language. I tried to conduct my interviews in French as often as possible but whenever my interviewees struggled with understanding[13] or felt uncomfortable they switched into Mooré (or other languages like Dioula). Quite often, although they understood me, they answered in Mooré addressing Inoussa or Martin. Interestingly this often changed during the course of the interview when we got deeper into conversation and left the 'question-answer-mode'. In Ouagadougou there are far more people who understand and speak French, than read and write it, but still assistance with translation was indispensable (limiting my interviews to people who understand and speak French well enough for an interview would essentially have limited my interview partners and the scope of my material).

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[10] Mamadou Kabré and Inoussa Ramde have already been working with Jonas Ø. Nielsen and Sarah D'haen as well as with other Master students: in 2011 Yonatan Kelder wrote his Master thesis "The Ecology of Urbanization: The Case of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso" based on fieldwork in Ouagadougou.
Martin Wêndngûudi Compaoré had already worked in other larger research projects in his university.

[11] To be less dependent I bought a bike to get around in Ouagadougou. However, because of the climate and the long distances I could not always go by bike.

[12] Mooré was spoken by 77.5 % and Dioula by 4.6 % of the population of Ouagadougou in 2006 according to the INSD (2008).

[13] I do not intend to say that their struggles arose because of a lack in their ability to understand or speak French. As French is not my mother tongue neither I am well aware that it was probably difficult for people to understand me. Besides – concerning the themes of interest for my research – there are many local as well as technical terms that I might not always have used correctly.

Translation is always more than "mechanical processes of simply exchanging the words of one language with their equivalents in the other" (Borchgrevink 2003: 105). Following Lévi-Strauss' assumption that language is a "*result*", "*part*" and "*condition*" of culture (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 68), translation in simple terms is always an illusion. Thus Inoussa's and Martin's role largely exceeded the task of assisting with language difficulties. They not only translated (in a simple sense) but also ensured conversations when people seemed reluctant to talk to me by taking speech and giving further explanation in Mooré. There might be many reasons why people didn't always talk to me easily. In the informal settlements of Ouagadougou my presence was totally unfamiliar and striking. However, I do not think that it would be useful to raise categories to explain this situation, because I believe that there were always more than one (and probably even more than two or three) distinctions in play. Their entanglement, as shifting and complex as it is, goes well beyond what I can capture, although it is surely an important discussion. For the purpose of this thesis I draw on Jennifer Robertson who warns to use the all-to-common categories in the name of reflexivity too easily. "Their usefulness must be articulated and demonstrated because such distinctions are not fixed points but emerge and shift in the contiguous processes of doing and writing about fieldwork." (Robertson 2002: 790f.) I could list a number of categories, but I do not think this is useful except in connection to specific situations in the field and only when it is of analytical relevance, that is, when it seems obvious *that* and *how* they played out.

Martin and Inoussa sometimes also initiated spontaneous conversations (and in one case a planned interview[14]). Especially Martin, with whom I worked most of the time after Inoussa accepted participating in a campaign of the Ministry of Health, which took him a great amount of time, became more and more interested in our research the longer we worked together. At some point we somehow started to think together, thus arrived at a "co-production, rather than a simple conveyance of data" (Middleton, Cons 2014: 183). He enriched the questions and reflections I voiced with precious comments, adding his local knowledge to my ideas that emerged from our fieldwork and my engagement with the literature.

I would like to add that although I could not always talk to my interview partners directly and thus relied on the translation/interpretation of their sayings by Inoussa and Martin, I

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[14] It was Martin who arranged the interview (07/11/2014) with an employee of the GUF – Guichet Unique du Foncier – the local public real estate administrative agency.

was always present and no data was gathered in my absence. Translations were done immediately and I often repeated the translated content in other words to make sure I grasped the meaning correctly. Although they preferred speaking in their mother tongue, the interviewees often understood (at least partly) what I was saying and interrupted me to give further explanation (again in their mother tongue) to my assistants. Over the course of our research Martin also became sensitive to the necessity of not only finding a French word, but he also called my attention to differences in the conception of certain terms. This happened after a discussion we had about the word 'lafi'. In the beginning he had translated it as 'santé' (health). After re-reading my field notes I came to see that the people we talked to were very much occupied with questions of health. By the time I became a little acquainted with some expressions, it became clear to me that 'lafi' did not exactly correspond to my understanding of 'health'. It had nothing to do with physical integrity or was at least not limited to it. Instead 'lafi' was used to refer to a state of well-being that integrates all aspects of life.

I want to outline one last point on the work with assistants, that will lead me to the even more complicated and challenging relationship with my informants.

> "The employer-employee dynamic mustn't be overlooked. If there is anything that clearly distinguishes research assistants from other informants and helpers it is this condition of employment. While these fieldworkers may become key informants, cultural brokers, co-authors, and even friends, they remain employees." (Ibid.: 284)

Howsoever problematic, at least the employer-employee relationship is relatively well defined; not in the sense of being good and unproblematic but in the sense of providing some kind of orientation. I was and am responsible for the course of the research project and its analysis, while I fully acknowledge the important contributions and precious hints given by Mamadou Kabré, Inoussa Ramde and Martin Wêndngûudi Compaoré.

Research in a Postcolonial Setting

In 1968, Clifford Geertz published an article in which he reflects on the challenges of doing research in "the New States", meaning postcolonial world(s), based on his own experiences in Indonesia and Morocco. Based on the work of the philosopher and pedagogue John Dewey he frames research as a form of conduct, and thinking as a social and thus moral act which consequently deserves more attention. The first point Geertz draws his readers' attention to concerns the more general dilemma of the anthropological

enterprise: “thinking about the new states and their problems […] is rather more effective in exposing the problems than it is in uncovering solutions for them” (Geertz 2000 [1968]: 24). This dilemma points to the question *what anthropological research actually aims at* and *to what extent it is or should be engaged*. Although the discussion occupies all branches of the discipline, it seems to be especially prevalent in (post-)colonial research settings. On a general level ethnography, commonly associated with more or less participating forms of being-there (Kaschuba 2003: 201), is always engaged. For a special issue on *Engaged Anthropology* the anthropologists Setha Low and Sally Engle Merry have provided an overview of different types of engaged anthropology. According to the authors engagement may arise at different steps of fieldwork and extend beyond the research situation. They distinguish between “everyday practices of sharing, support, and personal interaction” (Low, Merry 2010: S207), “social critique” that is “anthropological work that uses its methods and theories to uncover power relations and the structures of inequality” (ibid: S208) and “collaboration” (ibid: S209). My engagement in Ouagadougou and back in Berlin writing my thesis can be located between these three forms or at least aiming at them. This applies especially to collaboration as a form of engagement. I will show along my argumentation and analysis *that* and *how* a more collaborative approach to the field of inquiry I am dealing with would strengthen the relevance of the acquired knowledge.[15] But the question of whether to engage in the field and how is not only raised by academics with disciplinary discussions, it is also a question raised in the field.

I will take a closer look at the socio-economic profile of Burkina in the next chapter, but in order to make my point here the following figure seems sufficient: in the United Nation Human Development Report Germany is placed sixth of countries with a very high human development. Turning the index around Burkina Faso is placed sixth as well – from below (rank 181 of 187, according to UNDP 2014: 160). The research situation is thus essentially shaped by material inequality and inequality of possibilities that must be situated in a post-/ neo-colonial[16] context as Geertz has already pointed out in the article cited above. Geertz writes:

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[15] Low and Merry name further forms of engagement, all of which I did and do not espouse in the context of my own research: “teaching and public education” (ibid: S208), “advocacy” (ibid: S210) and “activism” (ibid: S211). I do not think that I have acquired any knowledge or competencies to promote any of these forms, although I admit that especially long-term ethnographic fieldwork may bring established academics into a position which allows for such forms of engagement.

[16] Postcolonial studies and theories are among others concerned with the long-time effects of the colonial era (Kerner 2012), however there is a persisting debate about the (un)productivity of the prefix ‘post’ and if it

"blunt demands for material help and personal services, though always tricky to handle, are fairly easily adjusted to. They never disappear, and they never tease to tempt the anthropologist into the easy (and useless) trinkets-and-beads way out of establishing relationships" (Geertz 2000 [1968]: 30).

In my research the 'adjustment' disembogued in long explanations about its framing and purpose. The peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou are continuously targeted by different humanitarian aid and development programmes. Repeated surveys and collection of data are part of such programmes. My appearance in these zones was often associated with the possibility of forthcoming help in one way or another that was directly claimed: 'can you give me money? Could you come back and bring food? Can you pay for the school?' I thus always specified that I did not work for an aid agency and that the university entirely paid for my research but that I did not have the means to fulfil their demands. The second level of inequality however was much harder to deal with. The following lines from my field notes may illustrate this point:

After a morning in the northern peri-urban neighbourhood where we had conducted interviews Inoussa and I drove back to Somgande where we both lived. On the way we met a group of young men who were friends of Inoussa. He stopped and introduced us. A conversation came up about what I did in Ouagadougou and what my research aimed at. While one of the men continued to ask questions, the other said, half to the third, half in my direction: 'so this is it, you come here to ask all your questions, go back to write an excellent thesis to advance in life and we will stay behind'. His friend was still talking to me and he didn't insist in a reaction. I think he assumed I haven't heard him, but once back home and writing his episode up I am troubled. (FN, 23/10/2014)

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would not be more adequate to talk and write about neocolonialism (Huggan 1997). Although their beginnings can certainly be traced back to colonial times, explaining today's structural dependencies of former colonies only in terms of persistence of former generation's acts, does not sufficiently highlight current subjections. Although I do not have systematical information or insights into the entanglements of the state of Burkina Faso, during and after the uprisings I heard several discussions from well-informed quarters of European diplomats. Apparently delegates from the European Union had been present when the interim government has been formed, although I completely ignore their role within this process. Furthermore funds for development, which had been discussed before these events, have been suspended shortly after Compaoré resigned (at least suspensions have been discussed). Foreign governments were reluctant to agree on programs with a government, which could not make any promises for the duration of the programs (3-5 years). These programs concerned for example professional trainings. Considering the very young and often unemployed population of Burkina Faso such programs are vital for the state of Burkina Faso. It would certainly be worth doing further research on the linkages and influences today's Burkina Faso (as one of the poorest countries worldwide) is faced with.

Again it is Geertz who puts it in a nutshell:

> "the posture is inherent in the situation, irrespective of what one does, thinks, feels or wishes, by virtue of the fact that the anthropologist is a member, however marginal, of the world's more privileged classes; and yet, unless he (she) is either incredible naïve or widely self-deceiving (or, as sometimes happens, both), he can hardly bring himself to believe that the informant, or the informant's children, are on the immediate verge of joining him as members of the transcultural elite." (Ibid.: 31)

Throughout my fieldwork, although never again that explicit, the question how the people would benefit from my study was repeatedly raised. Discussing Ouagadougou's informal settlements and elaborate concepts in an interdisciplinary laboratory in Berlin didn't seem a goal worth striving after. I couldn't refer to any person or institution who or that was directly part of or involved in shaping the processes I was researching on and thus potentially able to draw on my findings to improve people's situations. Ethnography or – as inquiry is usually not limited to (an) *ethnos* – praxiography (Knecht 2012) may provide precious insights into complex realities, "a sort of immersion in the world" (Fassin 2013: xviii) that contributes to deepen discussions about problems at hand. To achieve this goal however – and this refers to the gap in the here presented study that I would like to outline – collaboration, in the sense that George Marcus and others have established it (e.g. Holmes, Marcus 2008), must be brought forward in order to render ethnographically produced knowledge visible and available for those who plan, design and implement the processes that are in focus of anthropological inquiries.
In the subsequent chapter I will take a closer look at the processes that underpin the urban expansion of Ouagadougou and the occurring challenges in my research field and point to possible linkages for the kind of collaboration I think of.

The Data

Before doing so, I will briefly sketch an inventory of the gathered data and how I relate to it. In the beginning of my fieldwork I started with a request for on-the-ground-verifications[17] from the geography department at the Humboldt-University. With the help of Mamadou and Inoussa I located 10 GPS-coordinates. At each point I took photos and

[17] The collected data was used by Franz Schug, a Bachelor student in geography at this time for his Bachelor thesis: "Potential of a multi seasonal spectral mixture analysis using Landsat imagery for detecting urbanization patterns in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso".

notes on landscape, vegetation, site density and housing types. This task permitted me to get around different corners of the city.

I arrived at the end of the rainy season, so when the weather made it impossible for us to get out (as unpaved streets turned into muddy streams) I spent my days in the library of the CIRD (Centre d'Information sur la Recherche et le Développement) where I was looking at laws, newspaper articles and government communiqués of interest. After that period of orientation Inoussa and I started conducting interviews. Two weeks later I began to work with Martin whenever Inoussa had other obligations and gradually I came to work with Martin only. We usually left very early in the morning, around 6:30 am and drove into the peri-urban settlements. As designated by the research design we concentrated on two zones. The two areas were chosen for practical reasons: one sector was situated in the north[18], not far from where I lived; the second one was in the south where Martin lived. We conducted *45* semi-structured interviews in the first and *41* interviews in the second area. Half of the interviewees were men, half women. The people we spoke to were of different age, ranging from 18 to 85 according to their own statements. I should note here that many of the people did not know their age for sure. I remember a man telling me he was 30, and then saying that he had a son of 22. When I asked him, if I had well understood, he let me know that he wasn't quite sure about his age. 'Now you ask me, I'm probably older'.[19] Most of the interviewees were married. Polygamy is both legal and frequently practiced in Burkina Faso. Wives do not always live in the same courtyards, man and children do move between them, which sometimes made it difficult to grasp household structures (polygamy is but one example, extended families more generally and a huge mobility among family members, especially children are other reasons for such difficulties).

I asked people questions about their lives in the «non-loti»[20], how the transformation of «non-loti» to «loti» took place and how they dealt with it. Despite the focus of my

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[18] Ouagadougou, French-style, is divided into 12 arrondissements and 55 sectors. I conducted most of my interviews in the arrondissements 4 (sector 20) and 7 (sector 30).

[19] Especially in the rural areas of Burkina Faso most births are home births and as far as I know there is no central birth register. Therefore the exact birth date of a person is often of less importance and consequently not noted.

[20] «Loti» and «non-loti» are the French terms used by the Burkinabé (in French but also in other languages) to designate and distinguish the planned and unplanned neighbourhoods (Fournet, Meunier-Nikiema, Salem 2004: 12). Within the literature different terms are used for the «non-lotis» all of which I find misleading. They are called *illegal* or *non-legal* by Ouedraogo (2001). Others call them *spontaneous* (Beeker, Guiébo 1995; Prat 1996). However, I do not think that there is nothing *spontaneous* (1. "Performed or occurring as a result of a sudden impulse or inclination and without premeditation or external stimulus" or 2. "occurring

research, interviews often turned into conversations which – again – turned into all kinds of involvements into daily activities like cooking, playing with the children or building boundary walls. While some interviews were short (20-30 minutes only) others took several hours (at some point I stopped recording them, normally as soon as we stopped the interview mode and started moving around to do whatever was the task at hand). Interviewing thus was a way of achieving "non-participant observation" (Fassin 2013: 30). I use the term non-participant here not to emphasise some kind of objectivity, but rather to stay true to the mode of research I adopted: although I spent quite an amount of time with the people in the peri-urban areas and even participated in some of their daily activities, I didn't share their experiences (not even partially). I lived in a simple house during my stay in Ouagadougou, but still had access to running water, electricity and sanitary facilities, all of which most of my informants lacked completely. Moreover I didn't try to get access to land myself in order to live through the procedures I am writing about[21]. Nonetheless, during the hours I was walking through the «non-lotis», I collected many observations of what these areas were like and what the people were actually doing. At regular intervals I summed up my observations and ideas and sent them home to draw on Jonas Nielsen's previous experiences. Moreover, together with Jörg Niewöhner, we started discussing concepts while I was still in the field in order to sharpen the focus. Both, the intense discussion with my advisors and a "sharply focused dialog between research and theory" (Pink, Morgan 2013: 352) are necessary features of a short-term ethnography as the one presented in this thesis. Sarah Pink introduces the notion of "the ethnographic place" (ibid.: 354) to refer to "the[se] entanglements through which ethnographic knowing emerges" (ibid.). Elsewhere this mode of short-term fieldwork in combination with intense data collection and theory-driven analysis is referred to as "focused ethnography" (Knoblauch 2005). I want to give weight to this way of dealing with my data; many aspects of what additionally would have to be examined to shed light on my research questions I have to leave out simply because I do not know about them. Ongoing engagement with my data during fieldwork pointed to different pathways that I could and would necessarily have

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without apparent external cause" [Oxford Dictionary Online 2015] about migration (see also Nielsen, D'haen 2014). A third term used is *informal*. However, as ethnographic research has shown, there are many attempts of formalisation beneath statutory recognised property titles (Mathieu, Zongo, Paré 2004). Throughout my thesis I will thus use the French term «non-loti» or refer to peri-urban settlements/zones/areas.

[21] After my return to Berlin I went to a conference on *Property, Citizenship and Governance in the Global South* where a research group was presenting on land issues in West Africa. They noted that they had bought a plot in order to get inside the underlying procedures.

examined in long-time research. In order not to get lost in the field I had to stick to one line of inquiry, consciously knowing that important parts are left out.[22]

[22] I focused on the course of restructuration of peri-urban areas and how my interviewees perceived this process and referred to it. I did not follow for example the social networks, which had brought people to where they were, although it occurred at several occasions that there were complex processes going on when people decided where to settle and whom to turn to in order to do so. Another field of inquiry certainly would have been the relationships and conflicts between different authorities, often referred to as customary contrasted to state authority. However, in practice, people who worked for the city hall for example were still members of families and larger social groups; consequently the distinction can probably not be upheld. Rather it could be asked when and how it is of relevance.

FRAMING THE URBAN EXPANSION

> *While getting off the (air-conditioned) plane I got hit by the dusty heat. I landed in the late afternoon and the sun was already going down when I left the airport building […] and climbed into the black off-road vehicle that belonged to a local business man whom I had met during my flight and who prevented me from taking one of the once-green taxis that did not look promising to me with their scratches and bumps, taped driving mirrors (if they had any at all) and cracked windscreens. A driver took us through the city – first to the business man's office where he left us and then to the hotel where I would stay for the first three nights before moving into my house. While looking out of the open window, I quickly noticed that the area around the airport – with its multi-storey buildings currently under construction and its paved roads – was somehow exceptional. We left the main axes and drove across the so-called 6 meters, unpaved streets between rectangular plots with one- or two-storey buildings on them. The ride was rough because of the numerous holes in the ground which were filled with water – it was the rainy season – and the (plastic) rubbish – an all-season problem I guess. Through the reddish veil of the sinking sun and the reflects of the brownish-reddish walls and houses which seemed to grow directly from the same-coloured earth I heard and observed colourful dressed people involved in busy evening street life, chatting, cooking, trading. I heard music and prayers and from time to time the sound of steers, goats, donkeys, chickens or dogs that were present wherever there was a small open space in between the plots. When the car finally stopped in front of «La Rose des Sables» it was already dark. However, the night did not bring colder air. (FN, 12/09/2014)*

In this chapter I literally aim at approaching and navigating Ouagadougou, thereby I defer to some dimensions of what constitutes the city, or more specifically the edges of the city where the transformations in question do and do not occur. Underlying the task at hand is the assumption that the city-as-such doesn't exist, rather I would like to think of it as assemblage:

> "The notion of urban assemblages in the plural form offers a powerful foundation to grasp the city anew, as an object which is relentlessly being assembled at concrete sites of urban practice, or, to put it differently, as a multiplicity of processes of becoming, affixing sociotechnical networks, hybrid collectives and alternative topologies. From this perspective the city becomes a difficult and decentered object, which cannot anymore be taken for granted as a bounded object, specific context or

> delimited site. The city is rather an improbable ontological achievement that necessitates an elucidation." (Farías 2009: 2)

Consequently, what I will try to do, is to shed light on some of the processes which, taken together, contribute to the formation of (peri-)urban Ouagadougou. The city of Ouagadougou is not only the location of my research, rather it is itself part of my research interest. *What actually is it that constitutes (peri-)urban Ouagadougou?*
After a brief introduction of basic socio-economical and historical information about Burkina Faso and Ouagadougou I will take a closer look on contemporary relevant institutional settings, namely (the) legal framework(s) and planning scheme(s).

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a land-locked West African country. The name derives from two local languages, Mooré and Dioula, and signifies *Land of the Upright People* (Zongo 2004: 11). More than 60 ethnic groups live in Burkina Faso and just as many languages are spoken. Although there are a lot of interesting things to say about Burkina Faso and its lively natural/cultural landscape it is necessary for my purpose to sketch the problematic aspects the country faces.
Burkina Faso has approximately 17.5 Million inhabitants (World Bank 2015). The last confirmed data for Ouagadougou stems from 2006 when the total population of the city counted 1.475 Million people (RGPH Burkina Faso 2008). Projections from the United Nations estimated the population to grow to 2.696 Million people in 2015 (UNDESA 2012: 221). Ouagadougou's population experienced and continues to experience an increasing population growth. Between 1985 and 1996 the growth rate was about 4.4 %, between 1996 and 2006 already around 7.6 %, and counting (Boyer 2010: 48). Ouagadougou is supposed to be the African city with the highest population growth rate between 2010 and 2050 (UIU 2013). By 2045 the urban population of Burkina Faso will exceed half of the country's population (51.8 %); currently around 30 % live in urban areas (UNDESA 2012: 127). According to the United Nation's Human Development Index Burkina Faso belongs to the ten poorest countries in the world, with a low life expectancy (56.3 years), low level of education (average schooling time of 1.3 years) and low per capita income (1,602 US $) on the one hand and a high under-five mortality rate (102/1000) and adult illiteracy rate (71.3 %) on the other (UNDP 2014: 162).

The vocabulary of the United Nations, the World Bank (and so on) is concerned with differences, development and projections. To look at all these numbers helps to frame the life conditions in Burkina Faso and Ouagadougou (compared to those in Northern Europe for example), but doesn't say much about what it is like. This might be obvious for people who have already travelled to comparable parts of the Global South, but still I think it is worth noting. After having spent a week at a diplomat's house during the riots that led to the demission of President Blaise Compaoré and his government I wrote in an e-mail home:

> *The image presented of countries like Burkina Faso (I think there hardly ever is any image of Burkina Faso in the German reporting on whatsoever topics) is one of lack: having seen different parts of Ouagadougou and most different ways of life in this city I think what is always missing in the images and our imagination is that all (what we often call modernity) is there; only it isn't accessible for most of the people, but it's all in front of their doors and eyes.(04/11/2014)*

This state of affairs is of course deeply rooted in the colonial history of the region[23]. I will not go into detail here, but it is necessary to sketch some of the conjunctures that still play out in contemporary processes of urban expansion, that is colonial and postcolonial history of land tenure[24] systems.

A Brief History of Land Tenure

The Mossi, by far the biggest ethnic group in Burkina Faso until today, gained the ascendency in the region in the 15th century. However, they 'only' claimed the political 'leadership' and left the 'rights' over land and the rites tied to it to the autochthone population and thus constituted the

> "fundamental coexistence of two main powers: on the one hand the political power, a privilege that was held for long time exclusively by the descendants of the first conquerors, and on the other hand the power over land remained with the autochthones, first settlers whose land and religious laws have been respected" (Jaglin 1995: 30, my translation).

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[23] For a relatively short overview see Tinguiri 2013, for more detailed accounts see Jaglin 1995; Fourchard 2001; Fournet, Meunier-Nikiema, Salem 2004.
[24] See Bohannan (1973) for a critique of the notions of *land* and *tenure* in a postcolonial context.

In Mooré this division of power, which still is of relevance on a local level until today, is expressed in the terms *teng-naba/teng-naaba*, which denotes chief of the earth (tenga = land/earth, na[a]ba = chief) and *teng-soba/teng-soaba*, which denotes owner of the earth (so[a]ba = proprietor) (Tinguiri 2013: 41, see also Jaglin 1995: 30). As reported by Tinguiri (2013) this division of power means that newcomers to Ouagadougou expressed their demand for land to the *mogho-naaba* (the Mossi king who resided in Ouagadougou) who would refer them to the *teng-soaba* who would indicate them where to settle (ibid.: 42). In the beginning of my fieldwork this distinction led to some confusion during my interviews. When I tried to understand whom my interlocutors had turned to, to find an empty space to settle in the peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou, they sometimes referred to the *chefs terriens*, sometimes to the *propriétaires terriens.* But when I tried to figure out the difference and specific relationships in the neighbourhood, I got different explanations each time I asked. As the focus of my research laid somewhere else I did not try to figure out exactly who claimed to have which power, but still it shows that these configurations continue to exist and have relevance, which, for a different research question would have to be explored in detail[25].

Since the arrival of the French colonisers the co-existence of the political leadership on the one hand and the power over land and related religious practices on the other was supplemented and/or overlaid by the colonial ideas and techniques of land management which resulted in the superimposition of land laws. I think the vocabulary is somehow misleading, so I would like to add two points here: first, the colonisers did not completely extinguish existing power principles; rather they (forcibly) established ties between them and the colonised, because they needed the existing relationships to exercise their power. Second, both, so-called customary and colonial systems always influenced each other. Consequently, what is referred to in current accounts on legal pluralism (Merry 1988) in Burkina Faso and beyond is not to be confounded with a pre-colonial 'traditional' system opposed to a West-imported 'modern' system.

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[25] For examples from Burkina Faso discussing the role of affiliation and associated rights and conflicts see Gensler 2002, 2004; Werthmann 2004; Kirst, Engels 2012. My aim, however, was not so much the understanding of competing powers on a local scale but the transformation of so-called customary tenured areas into statutory planned and governed urban areas. Therefore it was only necessary to understand that newcomers to the peri-urban areas would first turn to a local (customary) authority to get land which they hoped would be transformed afterwards into (their) property.

> “[C]ustomary law did not consist of indigenous rules *per se* but was a product of colonization, whereby the colonial power accepted certain versions of the recorded indigenous traditions as customary law pertaining to native matters” (Benjaminsen, Lund 2003: 2).[26]

In short, the reach of colonial land law was more and more expanded. Private land ownership was introduced and land was divided into land governed by customary law, land belonging to the public domain and land belonging to the private domain. This distinction was held up beyond independency in 1960, until the first revolution in 1983. In 1983 Thomas Sankara came to power during a coup d’état with the help of his friend Blaise Compaoré. In 1984 and 1985 a radical land reform (Loi No 84-050/CNR/PRES) that resulted in the creation of a «Domaine du Foncier Nationale» was initiated under the leadership of Thomas Sankara. All land was declared state property and private landownership and customary land rights were abrogated. Private property was limited to constructions and people were accorded only usufruct. This law was meant to end competitive struggles of power and the dominating role of local elites. After the assassination of Thomas Sankara in 1987 Blaise Compaoré became Burkina Faso’s president. He stayed the country’s leading figure until his forced demission on 31st October, 2014.

From the beginning of the 1990s the World Bank and International Monetary Fund implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes in Burkina Faso and elsewhere. Key to these programmes was economic liberalisation and decentralisation. Compaoré followed the call of international investors and re-introduced private property (Bervoets, Loopmans 2013). The 1984 law was changed two times: in 1991 property titles were re-introduced but the state still kept the right of expropriation for public interest. Empty plots could not be sold. In 1996 the law was revised again (Loi No 014/96/ADP). This revision led to a restitution of land titles that had been removed earlier and a compensation for those who had lost their lands (Ouattara 2010). It is the 1996 version of the RAF (Réorganisation

[26] It is worth noting that this writing of ‘customary’ law has always been directed or at least accompanied by anthropologists: “Anthropologists, among others, have contributed both to the formation of these dichotomies and to the criticism of them. [… F]ar from being merely the writing down of a pre-existing oral system, “customary law,” along with “communal” tenure was profoundly shaped – though not determined – by the colonial situation, often serving state, private European, and elite African interests.” (Peters 2009: 1317)

Agraire et Foncière) that provides the context for contemporary land issues in Ouagadougou. According to that law

> “urban lands yet to be developed or suburban lands can only be occupied under exceptional circumstances and with the authorization of the State. Any settlement without legal deed is prohibited. As a result, any forced displacement of such residents shall not be compensated” (cited from Tinguiri 2013: 64).

Officially all peri-urban settlements are thus illegal. However, in practice, they do exist and are neither (always) demolished nor (completely) ignored. This deserves more attention. The restitution of land titles could only apply to those who have had land titles before 1984. But many areas had officially been customarily tenured. As the statistics of Ouagadougou’s urban growth reveal, the city has also expanded spatially. Former rural zones are now lying at the fringe of the capital. Moreover, land titling must be done. It requires offices and officers and a whole administrational network that in turn require money (that is – at least according to the statistics cited – rare in Burkina). Furthermore, illegality would have to be sanctioned, in order to be perceived as such. But forced displacement (as titling) requires people and bulldozers and so on. Thus, as long as there is no ‘need’ or alternative plan for an area, people live in ‘illegality’ without being bothered. However, and this is important, the threat is ever-present and contrary examples exist: the project ZACA led to massive displacements with disastrous consequences for the concerned persons (cf. Tinguiri 2013). Despite these examples people can (or must) live relatively long in the peri-urban areas. Not only are the «non-lotis» generally not suppressed, but they reference to customary *law* (Ouédraogo 2001: 2). Customary practices of accessing land are still of high relevance in the peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou. People cannot simply settle where they want but must engage with the local earth chief to be given a place to stay on. Instead of combating the settling in peri-urban Ouagadougou, the state - through the city - through the arrondissements - through the districts has adopted a different strategy to deal with the organisation of land tenure. I will now turn in detail to this transformation, referred to as «lotissement» all over the country.

«Lotissement»

Large-scale restructuration that aimed at the integration of the «non-lotis» was initiated in the 1980s by the socialist government under Thomas Sankara with the help and financial support of Dutch planners (Beeker, Guièbo 1995: 315). These Structural Adjustment

Programmes (SAPs) were meant to integrate the expanding peri-urban areas with better developed, infrastructured central urban Ouagadougou (Prat 1996: 18). A grid-based planning scheme, that is still used today, was supposed to guarantee equally sized plots, although in practice that meant relocation for around 70 % of the population (Beeker, Guièbo 1994).

The ideal course of this transition from peri-urban to urban – as prescribed by the planning scheme – consists of several steps. Step *one* is a population census initiated by the district city hall. It aims at counting the people that inhabit the area that is to be restructured. As soon as a district decides to carry out a plotting operation[27] the census is announced to the population in public. Announcement spreads fast through different channels. The most common means of communication in my research areas were the radio and the mobile phone. As soon as the communiqué is out, people inform each other by mobile phone (nearly every of my interviewees possessed one). The inspectors visit every house and ask the head of the household (the one being registered) for his or her name. Furthermore they note the number of people living on the land and information about the type of construction: «dur» which means cement, «semi-dur» and «banco» that is mud or clay. The number of metal sheets is registered as well. If a (future) plot is occupied by several households the commission who attributes the parcels can refer to this data, which partly constitutes the attribution criteria. The small pieces of paper that serve as certificates stay with the inspectors but there is a carbon copy for the head of the household. Not all of my interviewees possessed such a paper but those who did, were eagerly referring to it verbally. However, most were reluctant to give it off their hands to show it to me. I do not know whether registration papers were exceptionally not written or whether the people who didn't have one simply didn't know about it. In some cases people told me, that the paper was with another family member.

Moreover the houses are numbered. Almost all houses I observed had numbers sprayed[28] on them and people told me that they were made during the census. They were somehow meant to locate the households for a later attribution, I guess. But as I already mentioned

[27] Plotting operations, in turn, are preceded by various operations that are not exactly determined by the planning scheme. For example political and financial decisions – like where shall be restructured, why and who pays – must be taken. Moreover, personnel decisions, concerning the composition of the commissions in charge grant ample scopes.

[28] Some houses had two. While I first thought that there has been more than one census, I picked out of the interviews that some aid agencies seemingly put numbers on houses to organise the distribution of food and other things. For that reason, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, it is quite obvious why people regularly took me for somebody who might bring material aid.

the revolutionary events of end October made it impossible to get access and do research on the administrative sites concerned with the «lotissement».

In a *second* step the grid plan is made by the urban topographical service. This happens parallel to or after the census but independently[29] of it 'at the desk'. Just like the census this is not a simple operation. It requires the existence and functioning of computers, programmes and skilled experts to use them. I do not imply that these requirements do not exist in Ouagadougou. In fact, I did not have the chance to get into the Department for Urban Planning and Topography. But at several occasions I went to the Geographical Institute of Burkina which is responsible for the creation of maps of Burkina Faso. One of my first purchases in Ouagadougou was a map of the capital to help me finding my way through the city by bike. I quickly noticed that the map – from 2004 – was not very helpful, because most of the neighbourhoods I visited were beyond the city shown on the map. I asked for a newer map and got to know that it was still in the making because the service was the only one that was equipped for such projects and they simply were overloaded with work. I cannot present empirical evidence, but the absence of a contemporary map of Ouagadougou can at least be considered a hint at the technical requirements concerning the creation of grid plans and how their absence might play out.

Thirdly, marker stones are placed on site to indicate future parcels. This is a relatively simple operation but can cause damages. I met a man who showed me a marker stone right in the middle of his sleeping room and a woman who pointed to a breach in the wall of her yard that had been reclosed but was previously opened to place one of the 10-to-10 centimetres large square blocks that were inserted in the ground. Such things happen, because the grid plans, which are made in an office, do treat the surface to plot as an empty sheet, previous constructions are not taken into account.

After that the land parcels are allocated by a commission in a *forth* step. The commission is supposed to represent different actors and ensure a just distribution, to particular households or individuals. In an interview with an employee of the authority real estate office I tried to find out more about the composition of these commissions.

> *He told me that the district mayor was the president of the commission. Furthermore there was a representative of the tax service, of the land register service and of the*

[29] By independently I mean not only that the plans are made elsewhere 'at the desk' but also that existing structures and constructions are not considered.

urban topographical service. He added that other services can eventually assist the commission. (Conversation Protocol 08/11/2014)

Thus, there is an ample scope in the composition of the commissions that decide who gains a parcel and who does not. At other occasions in informal conversations with different people I understood that these eventual assistants were one of the reasons for conflicts: representatives for younger people, for autochthones and for women were mentioned.
The votes of these groups are highly important especially during election periods and I think this is how the commissions make use of their right to fix the criteria of attribution: asking young or female or other representatives to join the commission may strengthen the acceptance of the commission by the local population and it may also practically privilege the group in question regarding the attribution of parcels, although naming representatives and including them in the decisions may also be two very different animals.
After the attribution of parcels and within a period of one year households that do not fit the grid plan should relocate their houses. Water and electricity supply should then follow, so should schools, first-aid stations and so on.[30] However, the attribution of a parcel is not equivalent with a property title. There are different administrative steps to take, each of which requires papers, payments and requirements that concern for example construction rules. If these procedures are ignored it can lead – again – to the loss of the parcel (without compensation for already paid actions). By hearsays only around ten percent of the population of Ouagadougou possessed a property title.
But the «non-lotis» differ from the «lotis» in more respects than only their legal status. The differences are best grasped from the air:

From the windows of the ascendant microlight aircraft I saw the city expanding. From above, different types of areas were more easily distinguishable: big roofs surrounded by green flats, occasionally embedding blue rectangles upon of which reflecting surfaces the sunbeams got dispersed. The higher we flew, the smaller these little oases became. Around them less coloured rectangles appeared, residential areas designed at the drafting table within broad axes that cut the city and that ramify into smaller parallel streets. We flew westwards until the pattern beneath us changed. Suddenly the well-ordered mix of streets, rectangular plots and empty spaces ended and a denser and irregular pattern appeared. Red brown lines wiggled between small dark grey

[30] The "gradual development method" mainly focused on allotment and titling, infrastructuring and modernisation of the living areas were of secondary importance (Beeker, Guièbo 1994).

squares, the metallic roofs that covered the small clay houses, crowded together, framing the fringe of the city. We followed the line that divides the two patterns of Ouagadougou to the North. Occasionally we crossed a large axis that runs straight from the inner city through its surrounding frame into the periphery. The scope of the dense areas was immense. Even from above we were unable to see where it ended. My pilot remarked: 'it is a big thing your «non-lotis», in the strict sense of the word'. After some minutes the built-up areas became more spacious. There were fields and bushes; we had arrived to the outskirts of Ouagadougou. He led the airplane back; the built-up areas became denser again. They seemed to huddle against an invisible wall which separated them from the city which they surrounded, like a huge frame which simultaneously belonged to but wasn't part of the city. We followed the invisible frontier which was so easily crossed on the ground but seemed so clear-cut from above for another 40 minutes or so. We hadn't surrounded the whole city when my pilot decided that it was time to land. (FN, Saturday 07/11/2014)

Back on the ground the first difference I noticed, was the absence of long visual axes. Consequently, to keep my orientation was much harder than in the city centre where I could fix my view through and on distant points of orientation. The houses and yards in the «non-lotis» were smaller than in inner Ouagadougou; often they were not completely enclosed. Furthermore, there were fewer businesses. Goods were sold directly in front of the house door. During day time the «non-lotis» appeared relatively empty because the residents headed into the city centre to try to find a job on a daily basis (only few people had fix jobs).

Moreover, there are striking differences concerning the availability of public infrastructure services. Water in the «non-lotis» came from public water pipes (it was too dry for fountains) that were installed in regular intervals. Although not all of them were in operation, people frequently told me that their access to water had been considerably improved during the last three years. They still had to walk with plastic canisters or iron barrels to get water and bring it home, but usually their ways were not as long as they used to be. I was repeatedly told that formerly they had to walk several hours, usually departing at night to be back in the morning. In the very hot months before the rainy season water shortages still occurred and it seemed to affect the «non-lotis» much more than the central districts where gardens were green all over the year. Although water availability has improved, it was impossible in the «non-lotis» to pull water pipes into one's own yard. In parts of the northern arrondissements where I did half of my interviews people told me that

ONEA (Office national de l'eau et d'assainissement), the Public Water and Sanitation Utility Company, did already install water pipes from which people could theoretically pull a pipe in their yard (if they could pay for it), but they didn't allow for it so far. As the planning scheme described above has indicated, the «lotissements» that is the division of land into parcels and their attribution is made before public infrastructures are installed, but there it seems that the regular order has been reversed. I cannot go into detail here, but it seems obvious that already installed pipes may cause problems for further plotting activities because the pathway of pipes makes certain operations impossible without their destruction. There is another aspect that concerns water supply in the «non-lotis» that is interesting for my purpose. The women of a household go get water most of the time. But some people do live alone (most single males) and do not have the time (however near, it takes considerable time to go to the water pipe, wait until it is one's turn, fill the huge canisters or barrels and then go back to one's house), because losing time means losing the opportunity to earn money somewhere else. Others do not have the physical force to go and get water on their own. It is rare that elderly people live alone without younger family members but temporarily they may be on their own. In a third set of cases people were a little better off than their neighbours and could afford the service: there were people making a business of delivering water from the pipe to the house.

What is the case for water is also the case for power supply. In the «non-lotis» there is no electricity. As for water the lines are installed by the National Electricity Company of Burkina (SONABEL – Société Nationale Burkinabée d'Electricité). However, the lines end in the street that means that in order to have access to electricity in the house considerable investments have to be made (and of course the electricity used must be paid as well). Between a «lotissement» and the connecting of the area to the power-grid years may pass. And it might even take a long time until people can afford the necessary technical and administrational operations. To compensate the absence of public electricity supply some people use solar cells on their roofs. These are expensive and therefore few, but some households managed to provide enough electricity to charge their mobile phones, light for their houses and occasionally a small radio. For those who have a solar cell it may also serve as a source of income: neighbours pass by to charge their mobile phones if they cannot do that at work in the city or at family members' houses. When I first accompanied Martin to his house in the southern research area I was confused because power cords hanging on small crooked poles crisscrossed the whole neighbourhood. Martin together with the neighbours we were talking to explained me that some people had managed to get

the permission from SONABEL to pull a cable from the adjacent «loti». They used distribution boards to spread the cables all over the area. And they made a lot of money that way: people who wanted to affiliate their house paid 7500 FCFA (around 11.40 €) per month no matter what they consumed[31]. How much of that money went back to SONABEL I ignore, but certainly the company was aware of the practice and somehow implicated in it. I do not intend to condemn what I have observed; rather I would like to make a point on that example: in the absence of infrastructure people engage in means of sustaining their lives.

Infrastructure – Assemblage – Landscape

The notion of infrastructure itself deserves more attention. It is commonly applied to such physical devices as power and water supply lines, telephone and internet cables, roads and so on, that is as technical networks. Anthropologists have started to engage in the study of infrastructure in the 1980s, recognising that they were "not simply a technical artifact that supported social life" (Niewöhner 2015: 119). Since that time, numerous studies on different infrastructure(s) were and are conducted and the concept of infrastructure has been considerably widened; some even speak about an 'infrastructural turn' (Amin 2014: 2). What connects these studies – although they depart from quite different fields and theoretical backgrounds – is their view on infrastructures as "complex social and technological process[es]" (Graham, McFarlane 2014: 1) or, put differently "as the ongoing interweaving of embodied social and political choices, moral orders, and technical networks" (Niewöhner 2015: 119). Infrastructures thus permit or impede particular activities (Graham, McFarlane 2014: 1). "[A]s a part of human organization" (Star 1999: 380) infrastructure can be defined as having the following (widely cited) properties: they are *embedded* in other (infra)structure(s) that are framed by *standards*; they are *transparent* that is, we draw on them and may take them for granted; only a *breakdown* renders them *visible*; they *reach* beyond a single moment, site or practice; they are used in specific ways by *communities of practice* and they are connected to *conventions of practice*, that may shift from one group to another; finally, they are *fixed in modular increments* and *cannot be changed from above* (ibid.: 381f.; see also Niewöhner 2015: 120). Infrastructures in

[31] For comparison: I inhabited an apartment in a row house with five lights all together and two fans which I left turning during the nights. I also had a mobile phone and a computer in daily use that I recharged every day. Thus, I assume that I had much more devices than most of the households I went to. My bills were about 3000 FCFA (4.60 €) per month.

these terms constitute a useful point of reference for the understanding of the broader process of assembling current Ouagadougou.

Two related discussions within the vast field of infrastructure-focused research are illuminating here: The first concerns the scope of the concept of infrastructure. While research on trunk infrastructures still occupies a huge part of current research, especially in studies on the so-called global south where ethnographic research usually challenges the assumption of authority-led bottom-up urbanisation (Amin 2014; Graham, McFarlane 2014), the notion has been enlarged to grasp constellations that go beyond developing physical infrastructure. Drawing on fieldwork in Johannesburg AbdouMaliq Simone has extended the notion of infrastructure "directly to people's activities in the city" (Simone 2004a: 407). Seeing "people as infrastructure" he argues "emphasizes economic collaboration among residents seemingly marginalized from and immiserated by urban life" (ibid.) and "describes a tentative and often precarious process of remaking the inner city, especially now that the policies and economies that once moored it to the surrounding city have mostly worn away" (ibid: 411). Empirically he focuses on economic collaboration of urban residents that transcends functionally and socially bounded spaces. "[S]uch enterprises" he writes "parody a national or ethnic notion of belonging" (ibid: 420). Casting a glance on what is going on in Ouagadougou I think that the idea of "relational infrastructures" (Simone 2014) can be altered in a slightly different direction. Shortcomings within the physical infrastructure such as water supply can be carried out by people. Where water pipes are missing, people replace them. They go and get the water at the public water tap, fill it into barrels and deliver it to the houses where it is needed (as long as they are paid for) with the result that the public display of water supply is seemingly upheld. In other words, relational infrastructures prolong the water supply infrastructure or bridge gaps within it. To perceive people as infrastructure thus means to take them seriously in their efforts and leading part in maintaining every-day urban life. On the one hand, this theorisation sheds light on the shortcomings of urban policies, while on the other hand coping with rather than contesting them. In my example the concrete practice of bringing water from the tap to a house co-constitutes and sustains (water supply) infrastructure. Elsewhere other practices are carried out in order to achieve water supply. Pipes are laid, pumps installed; payments are collected and so on. Grasping infrastructures not as a thing but "a set of operations" (Graham, McFarlane 2014: 5) implies a shift from infrastructure to infrastructuring (Beck 2012: 320ff.).

> “Infrastructure then focuses the analytical attention on the partial connections between center and periphery, on the way one sees the other, on the exchanges, connections, collisions, and dependencies between center and periphery on different spatial and temporal scales.” (Niewöhner 2015: 121)

During the further course of my analysis I will show that and how the dwellers in the peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou, through their construction activities for example, contribute a good deal to the infrastructuration of the city. Consequently, the empirical examination of the infrastructure(s) of Ouagadougou reveals the multiple couplings and feedbacks between the planning level and the life in the (re-)planned areas.

There is a second point I want to underline here, departing from the criterion of embeddedness as formulated by Susan Leigh Star. “Infrastructure is sunk into and inside of other structures, social arrangements, and technologies.” (Star 1999: 381) Although it is useful to distinguish different infrastructure*s* for analytical purpose the emphasis on connectivity is of great importance to understand specific practices. Coping with gaps in water or electricity supply does not only refer to the network of pipes and cables. In my interviews the possibility of protest was repeatedly negated with reference to the law which denied official status to the «non-lotis» and the planning scheme which made the transformation of the settlement a pre-condition for the upgrading and connecting of single households to basic infrastructures. In other words, people understand and address the (missing) water and electricity supply in close connection to the momentary status of their neighbourhood as «non-loti», which, by definition is (at least partly) deprived of such services. This will only change in the course of restructuration. Such accounts directly hint to the intersection of infrastructures. Hence, what I am looking at, are the interconnected (processes of) infrastructuring within the broader process of assembling current Ouagadougou.

What I am suggesting then is to conceive the notion of infrastructuring (as a material-semiotic practice) as a means of ethnographically analysing “the city as assemblage” (McFarlane 2011) that is the city as a matter of analysis. While I understand the notion of assemblage as referring to a more general perspective on the processuality of the city and infrastructure/infrastructuring as providing empirically graspable starting points for ethnographic analyses, there is a third term, that I would like to bring up to delineate my field: *landscape*. Landscape emphasises the specific form taken by the assembled and infrastructured city of Ouagadougou, through specific – hopeful – practices.

The word landscape originates from the Dutch term *landscap* and entered the English vocabulary in the sixteenth century. It emerged in conjunction with a new type of painting, mostly showing 'natural' sceneries from a distance. (Hirsch 1995) Carefully arranged environmental features such as mountains, valleys, water and so on and traces of human activity such as harvesting were brought and put into balance (ibid.; see also Gandy 2011). In the introductory chapter to "The Anthropology of Landscape" Eric Hirsch points to the different dimensions of these idealised worlds, materialised in the pictures: "'landscape' entails a relationship between the 'foreground' and 'background' of social life." Foreground, he writes, alludes to "the concrete actuality of everyday social life" while background implies "the perceived potentiality thrown into relief by our foregrounded existence" (Hirsch 1995: 3). Foreground, in my analysis, refers to the lives of the urban dwellers and their concrete everyday practices. Background refers to the perceived potentiality of a future Ouagadougou and their place in. Hope then is what connects fore- and background.

It is this sort of "visual panorama" (Gandy 2011) that frames my field. In our first preparation meeting Jonas placed a hard copy of a satellite shot in front of us. It showed the junction or rather the boundary between a «loti» and a «non-loti» at the margin of Ouagadougou. We used this picture whenever we presented our subject. What it revealed with one view is what I have tried to describe earlier on in my field note about the flightseeing.

The «non-lotis» made up more than half of the city of Ouagadougou in terms of surface and population in 1980 (Boyer 2010: 51). Subsequent to various restructuration programmes more people got access to housing within the structured part of the city. In 2008 35 percent of Ouagadougou's housing was located in the «non-lotis» (Boyer, Delaunay 2009: 37). People in Ouagadougou who claimed to be well-informed concerning the peri-urban to urban transformation processes estimated the «non-lotis» to make up approximately 50 percent of the city. In a two-million people city this is a considerable part. Thus, within or below the picture there are processes going on, which shape and are shaped by the lives of many people.

By focusing on (parts of) the «non-lotis» I literally refer to landscape in the narrow sense of the sixteenth century's term. But I could simply have used the notion of frame if there

wasn't more about it than just a delimitation of reach[32]. Two more aspects are important to mention. The first concerns what landscape is *not* (Ingold 2000). To delineate landscape against its counter-notions will help to better grasp why I find it useful to talk about landscapes (of hope). According to Tim Ingold the notion of landscape must be distinguished from related but not entirely interchangeable concepts such as 'land', 'nature' and 'space'. Landscape is not *land* because land refers to a homogenous, quantitative amount of the earth's surface. Whereas one can add land to land without changing it (it still remains land, also more of it), as soon as one adds something to the landscape, it changes. (Ibid: 190f.) *Nature* often refers to an imagined 'out there' that exists prior to any meaningful engagement. Ingold rejects both: this understanding of nature and its equation with landscape[33]; "in a landscape, each component enfolds within its essence the totality of its relations with each and every other" (ibid: 191). Landscape is not *space* either. While space remains abstract, landscape always already refers to ways of being in it. "[W]hereas with space, meanings are *attached* to the world, with landscape they are *gathered from* it." (Ibid: 192)

Still the questions remains: what is landscape? "[L]andscape is the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them." (Ibid: 193) Furthermore, to speak of landscape rather than *environment* puts emphasis on the form(s) this world takes, not its functions (ibid.). In this thesis I refer to landscape as the specific form(s) through ways-of-being in the world within a limited field of vision. It is limited not in a locked sense or as a functioning unit, but limited through the way of seeing it, that it as an ethnographer undertaking an eighty-day field work under specific circumstances, which allowed for some things to do, data to gather (and so on) and not for others. Adding data to that landscape would mean to rework it (which is different from giving form or calling into existence of a new landscape). To approach the landscape (of peri-urban Ouagadougou) necessarily one must take into account that its form is an "accumulation of the past viewed to the concerns of the present" (Gandy 2010: 58). Past and ongoing interweaving of infrastructurings thus is part of that from-taking process. Therefore, I have referred to the precedent changings in land tenure management and

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[32] And because this is ethnographical qualitative research it is by definition limited in scope.

[33] This understanding is common for example in landscape architecture where landscape, as somehow prior to human attempts to shape it, is opposed to infrastructures, although there is a call for a historicisation of landscapes which are then recognised as already altered by infrastructures, thus becoming infrastructures themselves (cf. Bélanger 2009).

restructuration activities, as to the water and power supply systems (or rather their absence). This list is by far not complete, but it underpins the point that I would like to make here: landscape(s) and infrastructure(s) are co-constitutive.

The interrelated processes of infrastructuring – planning, tenure systems, social networks and so on – that co-constitute the (peri-)urban landscape of Ouagadougou "generate the ambient environment of everyday life" (Larkin 2013: 328). What characterises the (processes of) infrastructuring sketched above is their uncertainty. Land laws for example exist but are not by all means enforced and although the state law is meant to override customary practices of land allocation and tenure they continue to exist and play out in daily life: no one can settle in a «non-loti» without asking permission from the local earth chief. Land rights and its underlying laws are highly contested and a considerable amount of research aims at finding means to ensure land tenure security (Le Roy 1995; Brasselle, Gaspart, Platteau 2002; Mathieu et al. 2003). Although the planning scheme itself is usually not the source of conflict, its implementation is at various points.

In October 2013 after the suspension of all «lotissement» activities a sort of conference with more than 500 participants has been organised in Ouagadougou. The «Etats généraux sur les lotissements» have brought up a list of recommendations that tended to put a stop to the ongoing grievances in the procedures such as reversing the order of planning and implementation steps. For example people were attributed their piece of land before the whole area was parcelled, others were attributed more than one parcel while there was not enough space for all people in the area and so on. (Le Pays 28/10/2013) Although there is a set of regulations for how the «lotissement» is meant to function, these are often not carried out with the result that people do not understand and consequently cannot foresee how it is going to be done.

In my interviews these problems were frequently addressed, especially in connection to the attribution criteria which should take into account prior investments and indigence but was supposed to function primarily following first-pay first-served principles. Even if they had followed the rules so to speak, that is they had been registered during the census and built a house that was sufficiently big (the number of iron sheets is an equivalent for the value of the house), they still couldn't be sure to get a parcel. Uncertainty "has become a dominant trope […] in the subjective experience of life in contemporary African societies" (Cooper, Pratten 2015: 1). There are quite a number of concepts to make this point: insecurity, precariousness, crisis to name just a few. Benoît de l'Estoile suggests distinguishing uncertainty as a structural feature from crisis as referring to situations of acute hardship (de

l'Estoile 2014: S66). Moreover he relates uncertainty to unpredictability (ibid.) while elsewhere insecurity applies to the "repeated experience of failure" (Pedersen 2012: 137). Life in peri-urban Ouagadougou is characterised by unpredictability, repeated experiences of failure and uncertainty that come with the dys-appearing of infrastructuring. With dys-appearance I refer to the steady looming of infrastructuring through deficiency. The notion originally refers to the body, which for a long time – in anthropology – shared the fate of infrastructure of being largely unaddressed (Niewöhner 2015: 119). The body, as infrastructure, is "a permanent mediator in our way of seeing [or being-in] the world, but simultaneously in the background […]. [H]owever, it reappears as such when something disturbs the usual harmony" (Akrich, Pasveer 2004).[34] In peri-urban Ouagadougou infrastructures never really vanish completely. They remain latent within a continuous state of alternating crises that produce an enduring situation of uncertainty. However this does not lead to a complete breakdown. There is a productive potential in uncertainty (Cooper, Pratten 2015). Uncertainty generates practices that fundamentally transform the urban landscape. From the conditions of which uncertainty emerges, I will now shift to the ways it is lived with. This is where the notion of hope comes into the landscape of peri-urban Ouagadougou.

[34] for dys-appearing infrastructures see Niewöhner 2015

LANDSCAPES OF HOPE

THEORISING HOPE

> *Hope is one of the few things that people here have. (FN, 26/10/2014)*

I wrote this in my field notes after the first three weeks in Ouagadougou. When re-reading this some days later I started thinking about hope. Looking at the anthropological literature it seems that the notion of hope, long discussed in philosophy, theology and psychology, has entered the discipline about 15 years ago just after the proclamation of an "'emotional' turn within the human sciences" (Webb 2007: 66) that had stressed "the affective dimensions of human life" (ibid.).

In a conversation with the philosopher Mary Zournazi the anthropologist Ghassan Hage points to the difficulty that "fuzzy concepts" like hope pose for empirically working scholars. Following Pierre Bourdieu, Hage states that "philosophers are much better at asking the difficult questions than at actually working them through – because they work them at the level of ideas, rather than through empirical research" (Zournazi/Hage 2002: 160). Consequently he postulates "an anthropology of hope" and points to the necessity to operationalise the term, to "make an attempt to find categories with which you can empirically start studying something like [hope]" (ibid.: 160). Around the same time Vincent Crapanzo published an article titled "Reflections on Hope as a Category of Social and Psychological Analysis". He eludes the challenge formulated by Hage by using a panoramic approach, "in other words, to look critically […] at the discursive and metadiscursive range of "hope"" (Crapanzo 2003: 4). While providing interesting insights into a various range of works on hope from theology, psychology and philosophy Crapanzo's question *how hope might be studies ethnographically* remains untouched.

Hage's plea for an operationalisation and Crapanzo's panoramic approach mark the spectrum of attempts to deal with hope in anthropological research and writing. Many scholars have engaged in theoretical and empirical reflections on hope since its (re-) appearance on the sociological and anthropological agenda.

In this section I will first provide an overview of a number of works that have dealt with hope. Therefore I find it useful to differentiate between three distinct approaches, although this division is certainly simplifying and by no means complete: hope as subject, hope as practice and hope as method. Each approach of course entails the others to some extent,

but I think according to their setting of priorities and in favour of a systematic overview the threefold division is justified. I will present some examples for each approach and try to discuss them in relation to the initial question raised by Ghassan Hage, namely: how can hope be studied empirically?

Hope as Subject

To approach hope as a subject implies first and foremost a definition of the term or its characteristics and to distinguish it from other concepts of that it shares one or more of these characteristics.
While Crapanzo's engagement with different scholars provides a number of interesting (but only loosely connected) characteristics of hope, other scholars proceeded further in their attempt to clearly contour the notion of hope. There are two ways to do so: either to break the characteristics down into some common denominators or to unfold the range of grasps in order to categorise them.
In a recent article titled "Hope as Economic Affect"[35] the sociologist Urs Stäheli provides a minimal determination that emphasises four aspects: *First*, hope is directed to a future event of which the outcome is uncertain. *Second*, it is incalculable. It is about possibilities rather than probabilities. *Thirdly*, hope – in both, its outcome as much as the process itself – is positively connoted. *Fourthly*, Stäheli states that the positive connotation of hope leads to a "strange" splitting of the hoping subject. It points to a deficiency in the present. Hoping then is the active participation in the elimination of that deficiency (Stäheli 2014: 288). Going beyond this definition Stäheli also discusses its implications: the last aspect, the division of the hoping subject, points on the one hand to a space that becomes the object of political techniques – "affective techniques for the manipulation and formation of hope" (ibid: 290) – and on the other hand to the critical potential inherent in hope, the possibility to think the unexpected. To put it differently: related to economic systems

> "hope oscillates between an utopian moment, in which the non-economic flashes inside the economy, and an affirmative function: she can support the functioning of economic systems, she might perpetuate economic systems even though their functioning is not expectable anymore" (ibid: 285).

[35] Originally „Hoffnung als Ökonomischer Affekt"; the article is published in German, all translations are my own.

Hope, for Stäheli, can be analysed through cultural narratives, which make hope tangible and through rituals in which hope is repeated (ibid: 290f.).
In contrast, Darren Webb approaches hope differently. Like Crapanzo he draws on a broad corpus of literature from different contexts and disciplines. In his article "Modes of hoping" he proposes that hope be regarded "as a human universal that can be experienced in different modes" (Webb 2007: 65). He continues:

> "[e]xaming hope in this way, as a human capacity that can be experienced in different modes, may help us see the varying conceptions that presently exist within the human sciences not as conflicting, or even as competing, but rather as complementary." (Ibid.: 68)

He examines the conceptualisation of hope along three dimensions: the concrete objectives of the hope, its cognitive-affective dimension and its behavioural dimension and identifies two meta-modes that in turn can be further divided. Webb suggests that *open-ended hope*, which requires "an ontology of not-yet-being", is conceptualised as either *patient* or *critical*. The first tends to refer to a continuous becoming, a "being on route" (ibid.: 69) where "there is little for the hoper to *do* other than stand firm, abide and wait" (ibid.: 71). The latter, as the first "is characterized by an openness of spirit with respect to the future" (ibid.) but is more concerned with present deficiency. It manifests as suffering or longing. "[H]ope experienced in the critical mode compels us to do something other than merely preserve and stand firm." (Ibid.: 72) The counterpart to these open-ended modes of hoping is *goal-directed hope*. Goal-directed hopes are concerned with imagination and the "cognitive act of believing" (ibid.: 73). Webb distinguishes *estimative*, *resolute* and *utopian* hope. Estimative hope seems to be very close to expectancy (that is usually distinguished from hope). The difference, it seems to me, lies in its consequence: while expectation implies action, "[t]he relationship between estimative hope and action is […] uncertain and contingent" (ibid: 74). Estimative hope then tends to reproduce reality rather than to transform it (ibid.). Resolute hope according to Webb "is best understood as hope against the evidence" (ibid.: 75). Finally Webb introduces the notion of utopian hope. As resolute hope, it is "hoping against the evidence" (ibid.: 77), but it goes beyond resolute hope in the way that it is "collective, mutually efficacious and socially transformative" (ibid.: 78).
Webb's categorisation is very useful to provide an overarching framework that contours disparate approaches to hope. The three dimensions he implies to categorise the modes of

hoping, namely the concrete objectives of the hope, its cognitive-affective dimension and its behavioural dimension provide possible starting points for tracing hope empirically. However, in concrete situations of everyday life it may be difficult to distinguish different modes.

The anthropologist Simon Turner has recently drawn on Webb's categorisation to analyse "Ideas of Hope and Future among Clandestine Burundian Refugees in Nairobi" (Turner 2015: 173). His study focuses on Burundian refugees who live in the outskirts of Nairobi as opposed to those living in refugee camps. While the first (willingly) live in a precarious situation without any security in order to "keep[ing] their options open" (ibid.: 183), the latter – encouraged by the administration of the camps – prepared "for the day they would return to Burundi, enabling them to take up the place in society that they deserved" (ibid.: 179). Turner draws a line between the open-ended hope of the young men in Nairobi who navigate the city and engage in different activities while "wait[ing] for miracles" (ibid.: 176) and the people in the refugee camp who have utopian hopes (ibid.: 188). Although Turners account sheds light on a variety of ways of dealing with uncertainty and precariousness his descriptions of what he understands as hope remain somewhat vague. He uses the elements that characterise the modes of hoping he employs to refer to the different groups he observes. His empirical data then serves to prove that there are different modes of hoping in Nairobi. Webb's categorisation, lucid as it is, seduces researchers to 'find' different modes of hoping. At best such an approach reveals the limits of the concept as demonstrated by Turner as well (ibid.: 187). He refers to a third group of Burundians, stating that "[t]heir hopes for the future were very different from those of the Burundians living in Kawangware" (ibid: 187). In the course of his argument he further writes:

> "They were pursuing a life strategy that was a continuum of their past […] towards a more or less foreseeable future. [… F]irst and foremost, they were living in the present, trying to make ends meet and to improve their chances little by little, day by day. […T]hey act according to certain specific goals." (Ibid.: 188)

Although his description comprises all the dimensions of hope sketched by Webb, Turner concludes that "[t]his may not even qualify as hope" (ibid.). Subsequently he employs the notion of *work* by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel which according to Turner is opposed to hope (ibid.: 188). I do not aim at contesting Turner's analysis; rather I want to question the usefulness of applying a grid to the complex living situations (of refugees in

Nairobi in this specific case). From my point of view the analytical decision whether to speak about *hope* or *work* (in this case) is not primarily a decision of 'right' or 'wrong'. The question is not whether the Burundian refugees in Nairobi work or hope, rather the interesting point is what becomes analytically visible and discussable by employing the one or the other term.

A third way of defining hope is demarcating its boundaries. Notions that seem quite similar at first sight, but are designed as analytically different from hope are for example expectancy, optimism, desire, or fantasy to name just a few. These demarcations may serve to question the empirical material in order to grasp hope.

One notion that is often distinguished from hope is *expectancy*. "Expectancy [derived from economics] assumes continuity between the present and the future" (Stäheli 2014: 286). Arjun Appadurai, in the introduction of his collection of essays titled "The Future as a Cultural Fact" makes a similar point when he connects aspirations to what he calls "politics of possibilities" as opposed to "politics of probabilities" (Appadurai 2013: 1, see also Zounazi/Stengers 2002: 245). Expectation, as a term deeply anchored in economic thought, is a keyword that has contributed to the formation of economy as the "science of the future" (ibid.: 60). The question at hand then is about the (un)certainty of the future. Where expectations fail, hope might be an analytical alternative. That is why hope is often connected to terms that mark this disjunction between the present and the future such as crisis (Narotzky, Besnier 2014), precariousness (de l'Estoile 2014; Turner 2015), uncertainty (de l'Estoile 2014; Cooper, Pratten 2015; Turner 2015), insecurity (Pedersen 2012) and radical social change (Beyer 2013).

Hope must also not be confused with *optimism*.

> "[T]he distinction is that between a belief in a positive outcome (optimism) and a belief in the *possibility* of a positive outcome tinged with anxiety about the potential for a negative outcome (hope). Many now concur that to hope is to believe that one's desiderative objective is possible though uncertain." (Webb 2007: 73)

A third notion that is often differentiated from hope is *desire*. As with expectancy and optimism hope is "intimately related to desire. It is its passive counterpart […]." (Crapanzo 2003: 6) Passive in this context however is somehow misleading. It doesn't mean that hope is the absence of activity, a kind of doing nothing, although hope may turn out to have paralysing effects. Hope leads to action but still "depends on an other" (Zigon 2009: 256).

"You can do all you can to realize your hopes, but ultimately they depend on the fates – on someone else." (Crapanzo 2003: 6)
A last boundary I would like to draw (although there are certainly more notions that come close to hope) is that between hope and *fantasy*. Whereas hope is described as connecting different temporalities (Zigon 2009: 258), fantasy doesn't need to be connected to what has been or what is now: "what precedes fantasy is not reality but a hole in reality, its point of impossibility filled in with fantasy" (Žižek 2008: xiv).

Hope as Praxis

Anthropologists study people and their ways of being in the world. Although the characteristics of hope outlined above are probably plausible to most anthropologists, they do not directly refer to the question asked by Ghassan Hage earlier on, namely how can hope be studied empirically? Future events, possible positive outcomes and divided subjects cannot be observed. But if hope is indeed an "everyday feature of the human social world" (Pedersen, Liisberg 2015: 5), then it is in the everyday life of people and their practices that researchers have to look for hope. Hope as praxis[36] has no ontological status "but is something we continually have to establish" (ibid.: 11).
Anthropologist's first task then is to trace spaces that are most likely constituting (and being constituted by) hope. I have argued that the intersecting infrastructurings of "the city yet to come" (Simone 2004: b) are such spaces. In fact many scholars who have drawn their analyses from the concept of hope have undertaken research in fields which share uncertainty as a common feature: migration and fleeing, refugee camps, radical social change resulting in precarious economic and social situations.
I have chosen two examples for the treatment of hope as praxis, both of which I find illuminating and useful to understand how hope can be ethnographically grasped.
In his account "A Day in the Cadillac" Morten Axel Pedersen tells of a group of young men in Ulaanbaatar. Regularly they hang around "dusting, washing, cleaning, and polishing the car while expressing, with never wavering enthusiasm, hopes of future prosperity" (Pedersen 2012: 137) until one day they finally manage to get the missing piece and make a tour. They spent the day "visiting a series of bars, cafés, and restaurants"

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[36] Both terms can be found in the literature I refer to here: praxis and practice. I employ the term praxis to denote a more general level of acting in and enactment of the social world, while I use the notion of practice to refer to concrete forms of engaging the social world, for example narrating, dwelling and waiting.

(ibid.: 139) to do business. In the end, instead of earning money, “they were forced to give away parts of the Cadillac’s engine as collateral for an outstanding loan of their own” (ibid.: 140). This episode, he argues, can only be understood as “the shared activity of hope that momentarily calibrates otherwise disparate realms and scales of their lives by cutting overstretched socio-economic networks down to size” (ibid: 141). And he concludes: “[r]ather than demonstrating a lack of interest in the future, living for the moment involves an exalted awareness of the virtual potentials in the present – the tiny but innumerable cracks through which the promise of another world shines.” (Ibid: 145) Pedersen approaches the hope of his friends through their collective practices emerging around the Cadillac within the difficult social-economic conditions in post-socialist Mongolia and states that “hope […] clearly is something that must continually be put into the world through a concerted and collective effort” (ibid.: 146). What is important for Pedersen is how hope stretches out between the men in the network, connecting them to one-another and in this way becoming an essential part of it: “we might say that the surplus produced by hope is the continual existence of the social network as such” (ibid.: 147). But although the story starts with and in the Cadillac, neither the car nor the city that it drives through, seem to play an important role in Pedersen’s understanding of hope in Ulaanbaatar. While it becomes clear from his analysis how hope plays out in social terms, in my reading he limits his notion of the social to the specific group he engages with. In this perspective the city becomes a mere platform for what is going on.

A second example comes from Martin Demant Frederiksen who, in an article published with Anne Line Dalsgård, echoed the story of his informant Rezo, a young man living in Tbilisi, who was “walking around in the city in search of possibilities” (Dalsgård, Frederiksen 2013: 54) and who therefore, “proudly carried a business card in his pocket” (ibid.), of a business that, according to Rezo “did not actually exist yet” (ibid.). His interpretation then suggests that “the business card served as an intermediate stage, an imagined future that was yet to become concrete” (ibid.). Although we learn that Rezo had no office and that the web link on his card did not exist, the author(s) do not further relate to the business card, which seems to play an important role. For Frederiksen “the business card contained Rezo’s hope of something coming into being, a not yet that, although non-existent, provided him with an incentive to keep striving” (ibid.: 55). However, in a consequent understanding of hope as something continually established in praxis, hope cannot be cut off the business card. Thus, it does not simply contain hope, because this would imply that hope is something extrinsic to the specific situation sketched by the

authors. Rather, if one conceives hope as praxis, with no ontological status but something to be continually established, one has to be attentive to how exactly it is established. In other words, hope stretches out between people, things and their environment and puts them in specific but changing relations to one another.

Hope as Method

Hope as method is closely associated with the works of the anthropologist Hirokazu Miyazaki who explores, across different fields, the role of hope in knowledge formation. As a response to the crisis of ethnographical representation (Clifford, Marcus 1986; also Berg, Fuchs 1993) he departed from the hopes of the Suvavou people in Fiji (2004) and later the hopes of Japanese finance traders (2006) and connected them to the hope entailed in (his) ethnographical analyses. For "The Method of Hope" (2004) he conducted fieldwork among the Suvavou people in Fiji (southwestern Pacific) and followed their struggle for reparations from the government for the loss of their land at a time when it had persisted for more than 100 years. Through the examination of *writing letters* and *trawling archives*, specific "politics of self-knowledge" that is adhering and referring to a specific logic of *distributing rent* (depending on hierarchical structuration) and *rituals*, in other words different practices, he seeks to apprehend "hope as a common operative in all knowledge formation" (Miyazaki 2004: 9). Ultimately he inverted the treatment of hope as a subject because the

> "retrospective treatment of hope as a subject of description forecloses the possibility of a describing the prospective momentum inherent in hope. As soon as hope is approached as the end point of a process, the newness or freshness of the prospective moment that defines that moment as hopeful is lost" (ibid: 8).

His account can be read not only as a critique of retrospective analyses but also as an objection to anthropologist's concern with emergence.

> "The aesthetic of emergence therefore forecloses the possibility of pinpointing the end point of analysis […], and all knowledge remains provisional, contingent and, ongoing. […] In this scheme, anthropologists' task becomes simply to trace or track the world as it emerges. Here knowledge itself is rendered emergent in order to mirror an emergent world." (Ibid.: 138)

However, what his empirical accounts demonstrate is that “the inheritance of a past hope and its performative replication in the present” (ibid.: 139) enables “a conscious effort to reorient knowledge to the future” (ibid.). His concern, in other words, is the possibility for anthropology to make a contribution to the future instead of only saying something about the past and present.

This concern is also shared by Arjun Appadurai. He argues that anthropologists’ occupation with culture prevents them from seriously engaging with future matters. “For more than a century, culture has been viewed as a matter of one or other kind of pastness – the keywords here are habit, custom, heritage, tradition.” (Appadurai 2004: 60). In some way, while anthropology is concerned with backward-oriented analyses, economics has become the science of the future with keywords “such as wants, needs, expectations, calculations” (ibid.). For Appadurai the notion of hope or aspiration[37] is a means to bring back the future into cultural analysis.

> “Aspirations certainly have something to do with wants, preferences, choices and calculations. And because these factors have been assigned to the discipline of economics, to the domain of the market and to the level of the individual actor (all approximate characterizations), they have been large invisible to the study of culture.” (Ibid.)

Consequently, to focus them through ethnographical lenses requires anthropologists to engage in the study of markets and how they build or un-build “the capacity to aspire” (ibid.: 67). Moreover he considers the hopeful practices of the researched as docking site for an active engagement for scholars. Although I do not share Appadurai’s call for active engagement in the sense of empowerment, I agree with his more general concern for an anthropology that has to say something about the future and that actively engages in discussions and doesn’t leave the terrain to economists (and other disciplines) being only able to critically look at the consequences of the decisions they take.

INSIDE LANDSCAPES OF HOPE

Ensuing from these different theoretical approaches to hope I will now turn to some practices that I suggest to analyse as hopeful, because – as I will try to sketch – these practices relate present doings to potential but highly uncertain futures. In the eyes of the

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[37] In my understanding Appadurai uses them interchangeably.

people who navigate them, these futures are positively connoted (and thus hoped for). Moreover I will try to show that and how these practices are deeply grounded in their surroundings, which has important, methodological as well as analytical consequences for discussions about hope and hoping.

Narrating the Future

Hope was frequently articulated through talk by my interviewees. Hereby I do not (only) mean that people said they were hoping *for* or *to* something. As I have explained earlier, my interviews went through sometimes several steps of translation, between Mooré, French, English and German. Consequently, although my field notes are 'full of hope', it is not (only) the use of the word(s) that I would like to discuss here. Rather, it is the way how people related to the potential changes they supposed a «lotissement» to bring. What was most noticeable about the way people articulated these relations were the repeated references to the (built) environment. In other words, the materialised presence of elements of processes that, from the point of view of my interviewees, would shape the future were constantly invoked as an anchor for effective hopes for that future. Narratives, as I use the term for the analysis of the interviews and conversations I conducted in the «non-lotis» in Ouagadougou, refer to utterances that "encompass[es] all sorts of verbal and nonverbal interactions" (Zigon 2012: 204), in other words "a social form of speech" (ibid: 205). These narratives are not primarily meaning-making articulations which lead to coherence and mutual understanding, as they are commonly framed in anthropological analyses; rather

> "they are better understood as a means by which individuals attempt to intersubjectively live in and live through their world together. That is to say […] that words and utterances are first and foremost an existential ground for being-in-the-world with others" (ibid: 209).[38]

[38] Zigon's emphasis of narratives as an "existential ground for being-in-the-world with others" (Zigon 2012: 209) made me think of the problem of interviewing. There are many hints in my interviews that point indeed to the relevance of talking about the «lotissement» in daily life. People told me that the subject was raised before all upcoming elections. Furthermore, after the uprisings of end October new information were published daily and everybody I met during a day had already heard about what had been announced in the morning. Thus, there seems to be a lot of exchange. Presumably, if I would have been around in the «non-lotis» for a longer period, I would have observed several discussions concerning restructuration. However, the way I conducted research, it was me who brought up the subject. A more observing and participating research would have been more adequate to approach the question.

Taking Zigon's argument a step further I contend that the narratives surrounding the potential future of a completely accomplished «lotissement» (in general) and the potential attribution of a parcel of land (in particular) emerge and are articulated in close relation to the specific landscape which must be conceived, as I have already argued, as an assemblage of intersecting infrastructures.

Day after day Martin and I went into the peri-urban neighbourhoods that spread out into the surrounding plain of Ouagadougou. Usually we arrived around 7:30 to 8 am, wandered around and approached people we met at or around their homes. Although the «non-lotis» were characterised by their high population density, at that time of the day – in the early morning – they seemed very empty to us. I asked Martin where all the people went during the day and he answered that as soon as the sun arose, the people headed towards the city centre, trying to find a job, or to the fields within or around Ouagadougou, working there to have at least something to eat for them or for further selling. The people we found and talked to were home for different reasons: the women usually had little children to care for and therefore worked at home. Many of them weaved cloth for example, which was bought up by trade intermediaries who sold it for further processing to sewing rooms in the inner city. Others sold self-grown vegetables and self-made peanut cream or karité butter from little tables in front of their houses. Still others sold cooked rice. Additionally we met many older people who did not have the strength anymore to go out for work every day. We also met younger men who had no job for the moment but spent their time building or repairing their houses or simply going out later. That is to say that people in «non-lotis» were quite busy. Living of almost nothing is a hard business that requires a lot of movement to be in the right place at the right time to assure the next meal.

To open the conversations I presented my interest in the expansion of the city and the arising consequences for the daily lives of my interlocutors. Sometimes the people asked me directly which institution I was coming from and if I brought material help – what I denied. Although this was certainly deceiving for them, Martin and I were always well received. We were asked to sit down and talk to the people and during our conversations many of them expressed their surprise of me being interested in them 'just like that'. I asked people about the «lotissement» in general (what it was, how it was done and why) and in their neighbourhood in particular (what was the state of affairs, what happened next, how did they know and so on). Speaking about their current situation my interviewees often brought up ideas for the future that would be «loti». I was surprised; first, because after what I had read about restructuration programmes I did not expect to meet so many

people having lived in the «non-lotis» for such a long time (ten years were not uncommon) and second, because although they were there for such a long term, they still seemed convinced of a «lotissement» to come. Going through their accounts and my notes I realised that the repeated conviction that people shared with me, emerged immediately from elements of the peri-urban landscape.

> *Ibrahim said that he was in his 40s. He went to work in Ivory Coast for several months every year if possible but right now he didn't have the money to go and there was no concrete job waiting for him. His wife and four children were still in the village but he wanted them to move to Ouagadougou with him and therefore he had settled in the «non-loti»; he wanted his own parcel for him and his family. I asked him what made him think that this area was going to be parcelled. He looked around, then looked at me and then pointed to a neighbour's house in front of us on the other side of the narrow street. 'You see the number? – They have already started'. Martin reminded me that we had seen such numbers on other houses before. 'I see', I said, 'but what if they do not continue'? 'I have a paper' Ibrahim said. 'I do not have it here; it is with my elder brother.' He told me how a group of people had come, inspected his house and then painted a number similar to that of the neighbour on his house. 'I have shown my ID'. They had written down his name as well. This was approximately five years ago. 'They often speak about the attribution, it will be done in 1 year or six months, but they did not do it yet.' (FN, 07/10/2014)*

Similar narratives frequently occurred during fieldwork. To me it seemed that what he was telling me, was actually proving that the former intention of a «lotissement» had been abandoned, but Ibrahim seemed quite convinced that it was only a question of time. For him, as for many others, the number that had been written on his house during the census and the paper he had been given were witnesses of the proceeding of the «lotissement» and the therein comprised possibility of gaining his own parcel for him and his family. Ultimately this was what had brought him into this area and what had made him take considerable efforts: he had left his family in the village and was spending his money on construction materials to secure the place year after year in case of a further proceeding of the «lotissement». His articulation of his hope for the continuation of the «lotissement» did emerge directly from his surroundings. In my understanding this is crucial, because it points to the entanglement of hope and landscape. I think that a different surrounding would have changed this articulation, and thus the hope itself (or it would have prevented hope at all). The numbers on the houses as well as the paper (although not 'present' but

still existing somewhere) are part of, and inseparable from Ibrahim's articulation of a future in a neighbourhood that will be «loti» and where he might gain his own parcel. Let me present another example.

> *It was already around 2 pm. Martin and I had talked to four people/families, we had been handed around from one yard to another by curious neighbours who were wondering what we were doing in their area. Patricia led us into her yard, which was larger than the others we had been to that day (I guess approximately 10 to 15 meters long and large). We sat down under a porch in front of the house and started talking. As the size of the plot indicated, Patricia and her husband were living here for more than 10 years. (It seemed that, under the growing pressure, the pieces of land that were given to families became smaller and smaller the more people moved into the «non-lotis».) […] The census had been done years ago and her husband held a registration paper, but she did not know where he kept it. Patricia did not know why the «lotissement» was delayed year after year. I asked her, how she knew that it was not abandoned after all and that the procedure would continue. She pointed toward the wall that surrounded her yard. It seemed as if a breakthrough had been made and then reclosed. The crack was still visible. She stood up and prompted me to follow her. Near the breakthrough a rectangular stone was flushed into the loamy dry ground. 'They have put the marker stones some time ago' she explained. 'There is another one behind the wall. So the size of my terrain will change, but I hope we can stay where we are, we will only have to displace a bit.' She pointed to the items that were stored all over the yard. (FN, 13/11/2014)*

For Patricia the marker stone was an important hint to and part of the potential future she envisioned. It had taken years between the census and getting a registration paper and the emplacement of the marker stones, but there they were. Sooner or later the future already marked by these stones would be attributed to people and she and her family would eventually be some of them if they were lucky. As in the account of Ibrahim, Patricia's articulation of hope is inseparable from the (physical) environment that is shaped by the process of restructuration. Thus, the (peri-)urban landscape (co-)constitutes the hopes of Ibrahim and Patricia (and the others).

The repeated references to more or less concrete physical objects also show that the potential futures-in-talk and futures-at-stake sketched by my interviewees must not be taken as fantasies that have no basis in fact. Besides these physical traces of potential futures in the present landscape, my interviewees did also frequently talk about the

contestations and conflicts within the processes to which the physical objects hinted. Obviously people were well aware of the problems inherent in the restructuration process as it was practiced. But still my interviewees vehemently cherished the possibility for a future that was «loti». The same contradictions came up in many of my interviews and again the ways they were told were quite similar in distinct accounts.

> *We met Rasmane in his yard sitting on a wooden bench leaning his back on the wall of one of the two banco houses. Martin and I had already talked to his wife, who sat outside the yard behind a little wooden table with some lettuce heads, tomatoes, cucumbers and self-made peanut cream on it, which she sold to bypassing neighbours. She told us, that they had lived nearer to the centre before, but as they were growing old and her husband couldn't work anymore, they had left. The rent was becoming too expensive and they thought they should better try to get their own place as others had done before. Over there, they had water and electricity, she had said. 'There, it is the city. Here it isn't. I used to sell my vegetables on the market, but here, there is no market, so I have to sell it in front of my house'. She wasn't happy that they were still waiting for the «lotissement». 'I don't understand it' she said, 'but I hope there will be a «lotissement».' I ask her what a «lotissement» would do. 'I would rest assured'. 'If they do not continue the «lotissement» they will have to give us an explanation'. 'But you better ask my husband. Maybe the men have heard more about it.' So Martin and I entered the yard where Rasmane was already waiting for us. He had been outside half an hour ago and told us to come and see him once we had talked to his wife. When we came in, he got up, nodded in our direction and slowly moved toward one of the small banco houses. He held the grand drape aside for Martin and me to enter. Although the door was open, it was sticky inside. The sofa he offered to Martin and I exhaled a sharp smell. He took his seat in front of us in an armchair. Rasmane was born in 1941. In his younger days he had been to Ivory Coast, Morocco, Mauretania and Guinea but now he was in Ouagadougou for more than twenty years already. 'There were not many people living here at this time' he told us. He had bought this surface from the earth chiefs. Ever since, he was waiting for a «lotissement» to come. Why it would take so long, I asked: 'the people are too numerous nowadays. There isn't enough space for all of them'. What it would change, I asked, people live here for years now without it. 'Today' he says 'it isn't the same any more. Today they say that the land belongs to the state. So I cannot build, I am scared of building, because I am scared to be dispelled. According to information channels it can happen at the city hall. So they have to do a «lotissement»'. (FN, 05/11/2015)*

Many of the people I talked to – like Fatmata and Rasmane – were not born in Ouagadougou but had come there years ago. They did not move directly into the «non-lotis» but had lived for rent in a neighbourhood closer to the city centre where they have had access to infrastructures such as water, electricity, roads and markets. But they could not stay there any longer, either because they were living with relatives, or because they had lost their job or because paying the rent became harder as their age prevented them from earning enough money.

Two points are interesting in the accounts of Fatmata and Rasmane regarding my research question. They hope for a «lotissement» to come. They have moved into the «non-loti» because they could not pay the rent anymore. However the way they frame their situation is not resigning. It does not stop with their inability to pay the rent. It is not a story of having no choice. Rather they suggest a way out of their situation by confiding to the state and its laws: "all land belongs to state". Rasmane points to that law simultaneously accepting it and pinning his hope to it. He had moved into the «non-loti» with his wife, but he assumes that his current emplacement is only temporary. That is why his constructions are provisional. For him this is not really building, but rather providing shelter and making a visible claim, but still accepting the state authority over the land he is on. His hope is not determined by the law, but related to it. Hope does not occur independently from the legal context.

In an essay about migration (as hope) the anthropologist Frances Pine examines the changing hopes of Polish migrants. She states that, "the laws of the EU expansion provided a new vision of hope and new possibilities in imagining the future" (Pine 2014: S101). Such visions, as my example shows, were repeatedly articulated and simultaneously (re-) confirmed the state law as a reference point. Rasmane and his wife would adhere to that law and build of temporary construction materials in order to be ready to be displaced, but at the same time they expected their displacement to result in a permanent place to live and the attribution of an own parcel.

Fatmata had made the second interesting remark, when she said that others had left before them to settle in a «non-loti» and that they had gained a parcel already. Elsewhere the «lotissement» has been completely implemented and people's claims had been legally recognised. This reference to the already successfully restructured parts of Ouagadougou was very common in conversations about the problems and possibilities of a potentially upcoming «lotissement». Although Fatmata and her husband had not made the experience of successfully claiming a piece of land that was turned into a parcel, they draw on the

experiences of others. In her account, Fatmata did not speak about people she knew personally, at least not explicitly. Rather the visibility of restructured quarters and people living there was sufficient to anchor her hopes. If others had succeeded, why shouldn't she succeed, too? Moving through the restructured areas of Ouagadougou or talking to people who were already living there on their own parcels can be perceived as an intersubjective navigation-through and living-in the world. On the other hand there still was the risk of being dispelled not only from the particular plot on which her family currently lived but all together from the area without an indication where to settle. The law however, and the view of parts of the city and the people who had made a parcel through a «lotissement» become reference points that entail the possibility of finally being given a place to stay on. What the account of Fatmata and Rasmane shows, is how their hopes are anchored in the shared past experience of 'successful' restructuration activities on the one hand and the legal framework and its uncertain implementation procedure on the other hand.
Another hopeful account comes from Oumarou.

> *We met Oumarou in his concreted yard where he was building up a wall of concrete blocks (which is quite unusual). The iron door was open and as we walked by and looked at him he nodded in our direction and stopped his work and came out. While looking at me he talked to Martin in Mooré, obviously curious about our presence. A minute later we were sitting inside his small yard, not larger than maybe eight-to-eight meters with a house in the back. Oumarou had fetched three plastic chairs from inside and placed them under a porch in the shadow; 'to protect you from the sun' he said in French in my direction. Oumarou was 36 years old and lived here with his wife and their three children. 'Madame is on the market with the baby' he says, 'and the children are at school'. They lived on that land since nine years now. When I asked him about the «lotissement» he got up from his chair and indicated the remnants of a painting number on his house. 'The census had been made some years ago', he said. Additionally he had a registration paper. He hurried into his house and came back with a portfolio of patchy carton with a couple of papers in it. He dragged out a small blue (A6) certificate, which he showed in our direction. He pointed to his name on it and then explained line after line. 'Here is the number of persons living in the household'. It is marked '3'. He laughed and said that the census had been done some years ago and that his wife and he have had two more children in the meantime. The next line contained information about the type of construction. He added that he had first built of banco blocks but that the rain destroyed such constructions year after year and so he had decided to use concrete blocks. His certificate indicated that he*

had 14 iron sheets to cover his house. Proudly he said that he had now 30. (Iron windows, doors and roof sheets were the most costly pieces of the houses and they were noted to determine the value of a house.) He added that he had enlarged his constructions gradually because his family had grown and he wanted them to be comfortable. And he had better chances to gain a parcel because he had made considerable investments. I asked him if this was not risky because he might lose it all in the course of the «lotissement». He answered: 'People do not have any force against the city hall; we do not know what will happen.' With the «lotissement» he was not 100 % sure to have a parcel. 'But still I can try.' (FN, 10/11/2014)

As in the accounts of Ibrahim, Patricia, Fatmata and Rasmane, references that point to material artefacts of infrastructures that form the (peri-)urban landscape of Ouagadougou are crucial for Oumarou's articulation of hope. In order to make me understand how he could know that a «lotissement» was up to happen, he presented the traces of its initialisation – the census with a painting number on the wall and a blue registration paper – had already left on his house and in his hands. In his account they serve as means to bridge between the possible futures as his immediate experience of a life in a place to which he has no legitimised connection yet. In order to achieve such a connection Oumarou has extended his house. On the one hand he does so to be comfortable in the present but on the other hand he refers to the attribution criteria, which allow for consideration of the investments, which have already been done. He acted in a way that he thought in line with the legal framework and embedded restructuration procedure in order to accomplish and therefore most exactly confirm both, the land law and the restructuration scheme.

The exemplary narratives I have presented in this chapter reference to the narrow entanglement of verbal accounts and the urban landscape where they occur. Put differently, hope is brought into being, within a specific surrounding, a complex web of relations between processes that can be conceptualised as infrastructures. This is what Latour's notion of articulation – in my understanding – encompasses. In "Politics of Nature" (2002) he uses the term and states that

> "the connotations of the word (in anatomy, law, rhetoric, linguistics, and speech pathology) cover the range of meanings that I am attempting to bring together, meanings that no longer stress the distinction between the world and what is said about it, but rather the ways in which the world is loaded into discourse" (Latour 2004: 237).

Hope is not antecedent and simply expressed through speech; rather it is articulated in narratives, which, being a form of praxis, are not limited to their content but must be analysed within the setting where they occur. Understanding hope-in-a-specific-landscape as inseparable advises ethnographers to reconsider the research situation and environment. Although it is frequently discussed in anthropological texts, the research situation is often presented in terms of context. Ethnographers are constrained to design (especially) interview situations as comfortable as possible for the interviewees, to make them speak as free as possible and compensate unequal power relations inherent in the interview situation (see for example O'Reilly 2009: 129). More than only contextual, the research situation 'in situ', that is the peri-urban landscape I came to understand, was of direct analytical relevance, because it forms a crucial part of the hopes of my interlocutors.

Hope is continuously established within a specific surrounding. Elsewhere infrastructures may create different landscapes, which would or could be related to in a different manner. Hope in this regard is deeply grounded in the landscape in which it is articulated. I am not saying that the landscape itself is inherently hopeful. Rather I have tried to emphasise that hope cannot analytically be separated from its specific place in the world. Second, hope is not only a qualifying attribute to an immaterial, although maybe embodied feeling. Rather the hopeful narratives are part of the sketched processes. At the time when I met Oumarou for example it was already widely known that the pre-government of transition leader lieutenant-colonel Yacouba Isaac Zida had signed and published a communiqué that suspended all real estate activities in all municipalities of Burkina Faso. It was stated that '[t]he implementation of all real estate operations («lotissement», attribution of parcels) is suspended until new order' (Agence de presse Xinhua 07/11/2014). The suspension was meant to prevent real estate speculation and misappropriation. The measure was published in all print and online media and widely discussed on the radio. Although the suspension officially came into operation the 6th November, 2014 I had already written in my field notes from the previous day that people had talked about a suspension of «lotissement». And this was not the first suspension. During the last years such suspensions have repeatedly occurred. In 2011 the «lotissement» had already been suspended for the duration of one year (MHU 18/05/2011). However practically, this suspension was still effective until the «les premiers états généraux du lotissement», a kind of symposium that was meant to evaluate the procedures and make recommendations for their improvement (Traore 09/01/2014). I was often told that despite this suspension parcels had been attributed in the meantime and that as long as one puts enough money on the table one

could get a parcel where (and when) one wanted it to be. Nonetheless corruption is not my point here. Since 2011 it was clear that the procedure of «lotissement» was highly problematic and ineffective most of the time. But for my interviewees there was no doubt about the procedure and the future possibilities they might gain from it. Their narratives reveal that living in a landscape that is streaked by the material manifestations of a legal framework and a restructuration scheme, which are supposed to guarantee access to land, people take up so to speak in their narratives. Put differently, the material dimension of these narratives behaves as an anchor for the processes that they point to; and they help to uphold them – at least for a while. Narratives may persist and help to carry on and sustain processes and institutions through times of crisis and consequently prevent them from breakdown.

Modes of Dwelling

During my first excursions into the «non-lotis» I had serious difficulties not to lose my orientation between the small houses and entwined paths. The main reason for this, I think, was that everything looked quite alike to me. Only after some time I got used to the types of construction and started to think about the differences in the landscape architecture between unstructured and restructured parts of the city and also within the «non-lotis» where I spent my research time. The more time I spent with Inoussa and Martin in the «non-lotis», walking through the entwined paths, the more I started to see differences in the ways houses were built and inhabited. And the more we talked to the people, the more I came to understand that these differences did not emerge from personal preferences but rather pointed to different modes of engaging with the potential urban future. In an essay on "Housing and Hope" Appadurai emphasises the interconnection of processes in which housing is embedded: "politics, finance, crime, architecture, engineering, and real estate" (Appadurai 2013: 115). I started to ask myself how the different types of construction relate to these processes. Although Appadurai notes that "housing was not [always] generally a matter of law, private property, or speculative commoditization" (ibid.), it seemed to me that the modes of construction in the peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou were most likely linked to the legal framework of land tenure and property rights that is closely linked to the marketisation of land and the implemented planning scheme that is meant to operationalise them.

In the following I will refer to three different modes of dwelling and their entanglements with intersecting infrastructures: 'normal houses', 'empty houses' and 'concrete houses'. I will argue that each type relates differently to the underlying processes that literally shape it. Simultaneously the «non-lotis», as sites of massive construction activities, shape and fundamentally transform the peri-urban and urban landscape by their need for resources and the settlement patterns they induce. These patterns are not limited to the «non-lotis» but invade and persist within the urban areas after restructuration. The different modes of dwelling can be understood as different forms of enacting hope.

The majority of the houses in the «zones non-loties» is built of so-called «briques banco», that is mud bricks which were fabricated «sur place», in close vicinity to the building areas. The material necessary to produce the bricks is literally found right on the doorstep. In all areas I went to with Inoussa and Martin, we spotted the deep holes where men (and sometimes women) removed the soil, using their hands or a pickaxe when available, then retrieved it with carts, pulling and pushing themselves or with the help of donkeys. Once out of the quarry the material was mixed up with water. Therefore it was put on the ground, water was added and the two were intermingled by stepping through. Afterwards the mixture was filled into a wooden mould and then dried in the sun where it took some days to become solid.

The houses built of these bricks usually have one or two rooms and a size of approximately six to 12 square meters. They are covered with iron sheets that are fixed with stones. Especially during the rainy season these houses are all but rugged and must be mended continuously. If this is not done, they are simply washed away by the rain. Building a house «en banco» is not only the cheapest way of constructing a house and providing shelter and a place to store the few possessions. Rather it can be understood as a cautious claim, a sort of try of gaining a foothold. Getting an emplacement in a «non-loti» requires the authorisation of a local 'customary' chief («chef terrien»/ «propriétaire terrien»). When I asked people how they got the land they settled on, the answer was usually «par le propriétaire terrien». As I have noted earlier, what is often referred to as customary law or customary land tenure practices is still in place in the not-yet-restructured urban areas (and beyond in the rural areas of Burkina Faso). Actually it must be acknowledged that the empirical realities do not easily fit into the academically discussed opposition between customary/state law(s). Most of my interviewees had paid for their terrain in the «non-loti», although a "principle of inalienability of land within African customs" (Ouédraogo 2001: 5, my translation) within a customary system of land tenure and property rights

seems to persist in academic discourse. Beeker and Guièbo noted that “from 1975 this [customary] practice of gifts was more and more replaced by cash payments” (Beeker, Guièbo 1994: 311). Mathieu, Zongo and Paré identify “new land tenure practices: land withdrawals, land rentals with payment in money, permanent land acquisition by purchase in money” (Mathieu, Zongo, Paré 2003: 114). Moreover these authors observed a formalisation of land transactions, namely the utilisation of different kinds of papers that were used to secure informal transactions in order to get them translated more easily into a formal land title. Similar observations are described by Chimhowu and Woodhouse who speak of “vernacular land markets” to account for “processes of de facto commoditization of land” (Chimhowu, Woodhouse 2006: 348): “vernacular markets […] usually serve as an intermediate step into formal land markets, especially in peri-urban zones where municipal authorities may run ‘regularization’ schemes” (ibid.: 357).

From the interviews I learned that in most cases people paid the earth chiefs who indicated them a place to settle in return. However the payment did not secure the land as such. In order to keep the indicated surface it had to be built-up. Ultimately the house marked the authorised claim to that piece of land. A materialised claim to land was needed in both cases: to maintain the right to settle accorded by the earth chief and moreover as soon as the area was getting restructured.[39] The mud-brick houses, as I noted, were massive enough to make that claim, but they were not durable. They must constantly be mended. In a way these (re-)building activities can be understood as a repeated renewal of the hope for an own parcel in the future urban area. The urban dwellers oppose building «en banco» to building «en dur». From their point of view this type of construction is not meant to last *anymore*. Anymore here refers to a tempo-spatial reading of (modern) urbanity. In the villages, mud-bricks are (still) commonly used for the construction of houses and yards. Although, there too, they must continually be mended, they are not described as only temporary. For the city however, this type of construction seems inadequate from my interviewees’ viewpoints. The people who had settled in the «non-lotis» and inhabit their houses were of course permanently repairing them. An inhabited house thus was more likely to resist the time and the weather, which was as important before the census as it is afterwards. The customary authority over land seemed to stay effective until the

[39] Only people who were present in the moment when the agents who were in charge of the census passed, were registered and consequently held true the possibility of gaining a parcel in the further course of the process.

restructuration process had led to a reallocation of (plotted) parcels. By implication this means that earth chiefs might potentially re-claim the given land if it is not used (which means built-up) and re-distribute it to arriving migrants. Thereby it seems that the existence of built matter is seen as equivalent to presence of dwellers. As far as I understood it, as long as there was a house and a wall, nobody would dare giving it away (again). That means that in order to maintain a so-called customary right of settlement it was sufficient to build a house. Bearing in mind that all peri-urban areas are supposed to be restructured sooner or later this is what leads to the appearance of numerous empty houses: people see a possibility of gaining a parcel in the future and try to get themselves into a favourable position to increase their chances. I often asked people in our conversations about the many seemingly uninhabited «banco» houses. The explanation I received from Adama, a 32 years old father of a little girl, is exemplary.

> *We were sitting on a wooden bench on the street, leaned to the wall of the adjacent yard. We were almost at the exterior margin of the Northern district of peri-urban Ouagadougou. Here, the houses were not yet tightly packed; some small fields were located between the already inhabited (or built-up) houses. Over the way in front of us I spotted an apparently empty banco house of approximately eight square meters. Its walls had notches for a door and a window, but no door and window had been installed. However it had a roof of iron sheets. A little further there were more similar houses, some of them consisting of four walls only. 'What about these empty houses?' I said. 'It is rich people' Adama said. They live in villas in the city. They already have a parcel, or many but they always want more.' He explained that their 'owners' would move into the houses as soon as a census was announced on the radio. People called each other to share the information. 'They come during the night'. He added that people brought along family members and even metal pieces like doors and windows. They made cooking fires and hang out the laundry, so when the agents passed, they would even be considered to be 'real residents' and not only temporary residents (which was important to increase the chances to be attributed a parcel later on). 'They only want a number and then they move out again'. (FN, 19/11/2014)*

Adama was speaking generally about people who were better-off because they could afford to live elsewhere than in a «non-loti» and, in his view, decreased his chances of gaining a parcel by increasing the demand. Certainly some of the empty houses had been built by people who were not in need at all. Others, however, might have lived for rent in Ouagadougou and were uncertain about how long they would be able to pay the rent. The

empty houses are a form of enacting hope for a future, although this future might be imagined quite differently by different people depending on their degree of need for a parcel. Some might hope for a place to live, others for more money to earn, but this is not the point. Whatever people hope for, they build houses. Some are inhabited, others are not but their construction extents the (peri-)urban area of Ouagadougou. Although the «non-lotis» are deprived of much of technical support structures, a minimum is delivered nonetheless. For example the water delivery system has, according to my interviewees, considerably been improved during the last two to three years. Small businesses were established, in some areas people organise to get rid of the waste, although often this does only mean that exploited stone quarries are filled with plastic, compost and all kinds of things that people throw away. Different forms of dwelling like inhabited and empty houses shape the urban landscape differently and visibly contribute to the construction of urban infrastructures, which are often imagined as being top-down designed and implemented. Although the legal framework authorised the state to resettle people and ultimately dispose over the land, it still had to deal with the traces the people, by hoping for their activities to result in a final recognition of their right over a piece of land, had left in the urban landscape by participating directly and indirectly in infrastructuring the areas in question.

There was a third type of construction, which was much rarer but more strikingly: between all these small «banco» houses some people had built their houses of durable materials that is concrete blocks. These houses were bigger than the others, which surrounded them.

> *We drove through the narrow paths of the Northern «non-loti». When we were far enough inside Martin stopped and we continued by foot. It was Martin who turned my attention to a yard, which was surrounded by a massive concrete wall. It was unusual he said, because it was built of durable construction materials. He suggested knocking on the gate and seeing if somebody was at home and if we could see how it was inside. A woman opened. She was preparing food inside her yard, but asked us to come in. We could talk to her while she was cooking. We went inside and sat down on white plastic chairs, which she had taken out of the house. Her name was Rachida, she was in her thirties and lived here with her husband and their two sons. The house inside was made of concrete, too. It had at least three rooms and two doors and there was a second smaller building on the opposite side of the yard so that the yard itself took only a small surface between the two buildings. Even the ground was paved. On the roof of the house solar cells had been installed. I noticed them only because there*

were electric light over the doors and I was wondering where the electricity came from, because usually in «non-lotis» there was no electricity and this area was no exception. Her house did not look like the others in the neighbourhood I told her. I had not seen many houses built like that. She answered that this was because her husband had used concrete bricks and not mud-bricks like the neighbours. Her husband had found this place, because he did not earn well-enough to buy a parcel in the inner parts of Ouagadougou but then he had decided to build like that, because he hoped that during a «lotissement» the authorities would decide to preserve their house because of the considerable investments they had made. 'He has built like in a «loti».' If this was to become a «loti» one day, they would already adhere to the construction norms and therefore should be attributed the parcel. However they knew that they risked to be dispelled and lose their entire investments. 'But we are living here for so long now and we do not know how long it will take the city hall to finish the «lotissement».' So they wanted to be comfortable in the meantime. 'We have installed solar cells, so we can supply enough electricity for the lights, a television and to charge the phones.' She regretted that they could not pull water directly in their yard. She had to walk nearly every day to the near-by «zone lotie» to get water. That took a lot of time and it would be much easier if they would simply have them water in their yard. (FN 02/10/2014)

Instead of confirming the state's authority over land by building temporary habitations, Rachida and her husband referred to the rules for construction in plotted areas. In order to keep a parcel once they were attributed one people had to build of durable construction material within a period of five years. If they failed to do so the parcel could be sold or attributed to somebody else (although this was not consequently done as I was told at the city hall of the Southern «non-loti» where I conducted part of my research). Besides they referred to (the highly contested) attribution criterion, which considered past investments in course of the attribution. They had invested more than their neighbours and should therefore be allowed to keep their lot. Besides they were already fulfilling the standards of a plotted parcel in terms of construction, which should improve their chances to win a parcel. The Danish anthropologist Morten Nielsen has observed similar strategies in informal settlements in Maputo, Mozambique. People constructed their houses adhering to rules; however, as he found out through his research, these rules did not officially exist. Instead people built according to rules that they supposed to be applied once that rules for construction were established. Nielsen underlined the necessity to examine "anticipatory action which takes seriously those 'possible worlds' which, although not yet realized,

inform people’s everyday actions” (Nielsen 2011: 398). For him, the anticipatory actions of urban dwellers in Maputo reversed the progression of past(s), present(s) and future(s). “The surprising result is [...], that linearity is potentially turned around so that (assumed) effects are revealed to be the causes” (ibid: 399). In Ouagadougou the rules of construction that Rachida and her husband and others referred to already existed, but they existed for other areas of the city, areas that were ‘not yet’ where I met them and other people who hoped that through living like in a «loti» they would possibly be able to realise their hopes. The appearance of restructured areas then is not only the consequence of the processes and rules, which designed and regulated them. In the «non-lotis» it became visible that the anticipation of rules through hope might contribute to cause what appears as a mere effect of top-down regulation. In the logic of planners rules are meant to form people’s actions but in the absence of rules, imagined or – as in this case – anticipated rules may be applied. That is what we see from above: scattered hard-edged concrete dwellings within a mosaic of inhabited and uninhabited «banco» houses. By building them their constructors engage in the co-construction of urban infrastructures. Each mode of dwelling can be grasped as an enactment of different hopes. People relate their ways of dwelling to different temporal horizons. Empty houses reserve a piece of land, which might be turned into a claim for a plot if it is inhabited in the moment of the census, but it can also be abandoned. Often their owner’s existence does not depend on that piece of land. The peri-urban dwellers in their small banco houses however do not have another place to go in most cases, so they orient their hopes to the restructuration which they hope will secure their existence, at least in terms of having a place to live. People, who can afford it, built with concrete. They reference to an even more distant future which potentially is «loti» and will bring them their own parcel. Each mode of dwelling contributes differently to the co-constitution of the urban landscape. The pieces of land with empty houses, temporarily inhabited in order to claim a parcel, are often turned into empty parcels and consequently drive the spatial urban expansion enormously. In 2010 there were 380.000 estimated parcels and among them 196.000 that were not valorised (MHU, 21/04/2015). In another press release there is talk of even more parcels than households in Ouagadougou in 2006; 331.914 parcels compared to 308.393 households (Ouedraogo, 22/12/2014). To build the banco houses which are by far the most numerous type of construction in the «non-lotis» lots of clay is needed, which is usually taken directly in these areas. Its exploitation leaves large sinkholes all over the outer districts of Ouagadougou, devastations that need to be repaired to build roads or water and electricity supply lines for example. Moreover, in order to

secure water and electricity demands needed for daily life, people find ways to access water and power supply even in the absence of public services. Whereas in order to construct concrete houses a network of construction material traders and businesses is needed.

Dwelling in peri-urban Ouagadougou, then, can be understood as a set of future oriented practices that fundamentally transform the urban landscape. These practices anticipate a future, which is not yet, in other words, which is hoped for. In the final section I would like to move from "the concrete infrastructure of waiting" (Löfgren, Ehn 2010: 10), that is the «non-lotis», to the waiting itself.

Waiting

> *"We do not know when they will continue. We will wait and continue to do what we do." (Interview 003, 01/10/2014)*

All my interviewees raised the topic of their experience of waiting. Most of the people had been living in the «non-lotis» for years already when I met them. Seven to ten years in the «non-lotis» was more rule than exception. Of course there have always been villages in the areas that make up the peri-urban zones of Ouagadougou today. Thus, some dwellers had been living there all their life, which had nothing to do with the city's intention to restructure these areas. However, the majority had moved there in the attempt to anticipate a «lotissement». It is important to highlight that while through the lens of planners and politicians the «non-lotis» are a temporary phenomenon; the experiences of the people living there are these of waiting as encompassing whole life periods (and maybe even whole lives). Even the ones, who had spent all their lives in the places where I met them, were now waiting. Josiane, whom I cited above, was about 65 years old and had lived in her yard for approximately fifty years since the day of her marriage. At this time the area had belonged to the rural domain and thus came under customary tenure. After the decree of the RAF in 1984 her land was officially declared state property but effectively continued being managed by the earth chiefs. Even when the gradual expansion of Ouagadougou incorporated her village, it did not immediately affect her, although she had noticed that more and more people were coming. The growing population led to the gradual transformation of fields to yards.

'People came and constructed everywhere. We used to cultivate, but now there is no more space for the fields have gone. We cannot earn our living anymore'. Then people came

from the city hall and took her name and put a number on her house. She did not know anything about a small paper, but she noted that her husband might have gotten one. He was dead already and one of her sons probably took it. But even without a paper, she was now waiting for a proceeding of the «lotissement». When I asked her if she was scared that she would have to leave her yard, she just replied: 'I have always lived here.' I left it at that and asked how she felt about the «lotissement»: 'I would appreciate it. It will make things better. If there are more people and water and electricity, there will also be work. We do not know when they will continue. We will wait and continue to do what we do.' (Interview 003, 01/10/2014)

What I am referring to here, concerning the experience of waiting in the «non-lotis» in Ouagadougou is not the mundane task of waiting for this or that, "waiting as a mode of doing nothing" as Orvar Löfgren and Billy Ehn (2010) term it, but rather a kind of "existential waiting" (Dwyer 2009). Waiting becomes a state of being for the people who dwell in the peri-urban neighbourhoods of Ouagadougou. Josiane's existence and that of her family are merged with the place where they make their living. Although most of the people I met had come from other places into the «non-lotis», the majority of them did not have anywhere else to go, except maybe another «non-loti» somewhere around Ouagadougou. Only few people still had a yard in their village or possessed already one or more parcels in the inner city. Although, they too, were waiting for a «lotissement» to come, their existence was not as such dependent from gaining a parcel. For Ghassan Hage "[w]aiting is such a pervasive phenomenon in social life that it can be seen, and indeed has been seen, as almost synonymous to social being" (Hage 2009: 1). But because it is ubiquitous there is no analytical value in stating that waiting is a crucial part of a social situation or process. Rather, Hage continues, waiting is a "unique object of politics" (ibid: 2). Asking who can make people wait and how, or who waits when and for what (or whom) are possible starting points for the exploration of agency and power. In the 1970s the sociologist Barry Schwartz had undertaken a number of studies of people waiting. His main proposition was "that the distribution of waiting time coincides with the distribution of power" (Schwartz 1974: 841; see also Löfgren, Ehn 2010: 10). According to Schwartz "the distribution affirms and even reinforces [the] system's power arrangements" (ibid: 843). In this view the repeated procrastinations between the census, the planning, the installation of the marker stones and the distribution of parcels – especially the delay of that last action, as it had not been done in any of my research areas, although the initiation

of the process partly dated back to more than ten years – can be read as a technology to regulate waiting. (Hage 2009: 3)

Javier Auyero has made a similar argument in his account of people waiting in a welfare office in Buenos Aires. In the welfare office the people wait without really knowing for how long and what for, because often the only thing they get in the end is the announcement that some information or paper is missing in order to treat their case or that they simply have to come back another day. Through the bureaucratised procedures and the choreography that is arranged by and inside the waiting room the welfare clients are disciplined, they "become not citizens but patients of the state" (Auyero 2011: 6). What connects the people in the waiting areas is the equal distribution of the not knowing (ibid: 17). This pertains for my interviewees as well. Although they all had general ideas about the wrong-goings along the restructuration process, nobody knew exactly at which point a conflict had arisen that had to be settled first in order to continue the procedures. The people in the «non-lotis», in this perspective, seem to be at the authorities' mercy. They can only wait.

"How do people experience and handle that kind of time in different situations?" ask Orvar Löfgren and Billy Ehn (2010) in a chapter on 'Waiting' in "The Secret World of Doing Nothing". The title indicates that there is an inherent contradiction in their conception of waiting. While waiting itself seems to be a passive reaction to external forces, "[m]en and women resort to all kinds of mundane activities while waiting, as if to deny that they are waiting or to try to forget the fact" (Löfgren, Ehn 2010: 13). In other words, waiting, in their account seems to be an empty timeframe that is filled up with all kinds of activities within "the choreography of waiting" (ibid.). Auyero also highlights this conception of waiting as opposed to compensatory activities that occur in the meantime. With a research team he conducted participant observation in the welfare office in Buenos Aires for about half a year. Apparently people were doing nothing there but waiting. The researcher's observations and analyses however revealed that the waiting time served as a time for exchanging information on possibilities to override the time without financial aid; where were soup kitchens located, what other welfare programmes existed and where and what paperwork was necessary to get access to them (Auyero 2011: 15). But although in his account he highlighted the broad range of activities and busyness in the waiting room, higher forces, which the welfare clients had to deal with, induced waiting itself. Waiting was an "effect of power" (ibid: 5). And power, in Auyeros account, is located at the state level. With reference to Michel Foucault he states: "[i]t is through that practice, through

that “governing technique,” that the state seems to be aiming for the creation of a docile body of welfare clients” (ibid: 25).

However, power is not so easily located in the case of Ouagadougou. People are kept waiting within the intersecting infrastructures that underpin the expanding city: without a property title, which is the only means to live on a piece of land legally, most people relied on the planning and restructuration activities. Auyero certainly gave an interesting and meaningful analysis of how “waiting links to power” (Löfgren, Ehn 2010: 10), but I think it is worth to look at waiting itself not only as a passive reaction to authority but a powerful practice. This is what Appadurai (2013) calls a “politics of patience”. Drawing on his research among slum dwellers in Mumbai he notes that

> “[o]ne strategy, especially relevant to the politics of hope, is to be found in the ways that these communities oppose the politics of catastrophe, exception, and emergency with their own politics, which is frequently the politics of patience, which can even more accurately be called the politics of waiting” (Appadurai 2013: 126).

In my reading Appadurai turns around the argument that I have presented exemplarily with reference to Barry Schwartz and Javier Auyero. Instead of conceptualising *making people wait* as *powerful*, while *waiting* as *powerless*, he refers to waiting as a form of resistance. On the one hand there is the powerful state that makes poor people wait. On the other hand these people employ patience and waiting as a means to make a claim. What my findings from Ouagadougou suggest is that it is both. First, the ongoing and often renewed promise of a continuation of the «lotissement» activities can certainly be grasped as a technique that is meant to calm people down and to make them endure patiently a little bit longer. My interviewees often told me that the topic of a proceeding of the «lotissement» came up especially during the election periods. Access to housing is existential and so it is an effective means to run an election campaign. This is how hope is held up at a local level: mayors or members of the city hall were around in the «non-lotis» confirming that the process would continue. On a state level there was the device of ‘suspension’, which is per definition temporal. It circumvented a break down. A suspension would end at some undefined point in the future. What was suspended would be adjusted but it would be preserved. Suspensions can be interpreted as a technique of government. Rather than evicting or ignoring and excluding the «non-lotis» they are stalled by an ongoing promise-suspension-sequence. However, second, the people in the «non-lotis» persevere where they are.

> "The unhoused or underhoused millions […] mobilize themselves to demand better housing under more favorable and secure conditions. They know that they are always entering an unknown period of waiting: waiting for policymakers to agree on the plan, waiting for funders to shake up the complacency of local and national governments, waiting for builders and contractors to fulfill their promises to build new housing, and waiting for their own turn at the head of the queue. In most cases, the numbers are such that individual families and communities must prepare to wait years, even decades, for even a reasonable chance to see that their time has come. This requires them to learn to regard their own temporary dwellings as themselves parts of a temporary condition which is sure to change." (Appadurai 2013: 127)

Framing their waiting as a mere act of no choice would mean to overlook how, through their presence, they actively and effectively shape the urban landscape. Although the peri-urban dwellers are temporised by repeated promises, announcements and suspensions, they cannot and are neither completely ignored nor dispelled.

In Ouagadougou the expansion of the peri-urban settlements has led to considerable reforms, that is an enlargement of the urban area with the reorganisation of old and the establishment of new administration units. In October 2013 a symposium has been organised to discuss the problems and possible solution strategies for the «lotissements» activities. Put it differently, their waiting *does* something. The city is not a welfare office; it cannot simply close its doors. The dwellers while claiming a right or services are not somewhere else. They cannot go anywhere and thus by their physical presence and by the infrastructures they co-constitute, such as their houses for example, they create precedents. The urban landscape cannot be shut down; at least it would cost massive efforts and resources to get people out. So while the dwellers are there, they must somehow be referred to (in a manner that minimises breakdown for the state as well). I do not intend to suggest that power is evenly distributed between those who may design or decide who has to wait, for how long, for what and so on. But I think it is necessary to consider that there might be more to say about it than simply that the powerful can make others wait while the powerless cannot. "The patient model", as Auyero terms it – referring to a mode of government, which is meant to discipline people by exercising power over their time – and the "politics of patience/waiting" – referring to people being patient as a means to enforce their claims – Appadurai writes about, are two sides of the same coin and as such both merit attention. Making people wait and waiting itself can be seen as forms of 'chronopolitics' (Fabian 2014; Klinke 2012), that is politics that aim at time. While the

local (state) authorities continually delay the proceeding of the «lotissement» and keep people anxiously about their future, for a lack of resources to restructure enough surface for all dwellers or for a lack of solutions where to resettle them, the dwellers themselves patiently wait. There is rarely any protest[40] against the «lotissement» in general or its delay and suspension. The people it seems do not have any other means to enforce their claim but spending their time. They feel that they have nothing (productive) to do in the villages neither, so they settle at the edge of the city patiently waiting for entry so to speak. But while they do this, they live their lives, including all kinds of activities like building houses, establishing relationships with neighbours, doing business and so on. That is where further research could affiliate. As I already said, I did not have the time to follow the social networks that led into the «non-lotis» or that unfold from within these zones. However, it would be really interesting and probably revealing to further examine the role of the peri-urban dwellers for example in terms of their role for the urban economy. Most of them work informally and temporarily but thereby they might sustain whole sectors. On the other hand the family ties into the villages of origin continue to play an important role. How do the peri-urban, waiting dwellers contribute to the sustainability of rural areas would be another interesting point for further research. Through living their lives while waiting, the (peri-)urban dwellers transform the urban landscape and engage in processes of infrastructuring that have effects on the top-down infrastructurings as performed by planners and politicians. It is the hope for a positive outcome, in the sense that people assume that somehow the time spent in their precarious situations in the peri-urban, will pay out for them. They might gain a parcel and achieve to have a property title, which would secure their existence.

> "Hope in this context is the force that converts the passive condition of "waiting for" to the active condition of "waiting to": waiting to move, waiting to claim full rights, waiting to make the next move in the process that will assure that the queue keeps moving and that the end of the rainbow is not a broken promise." (Appadurai 2013: 127)

[40] For examples of studies of (rare) urban protest in Burkina Faso see Harsch 2009; Hilgers 2009.

PROSPECTS

In this Master thesis I have argued that hope is articulated and enacted in different practices that are shaped by and in turn shape the urban landscape of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Moreover I have suggested that the notion of infrastructure, understood as constituted in and through hopeful practices, provides a useful tool to orient ethnographic inquiry of and in urban landscapes. I have drawn on the concept of hope as a "means to bring back the future into […] analysis" (Appadurai 2004). Hope, as an ongoing accomplishment does not allow for a final conclusion, rather it invites anthropologists to engage in continuous research in order to examine changing constellations and contingencies. By employing hope, "open-endedness can be incorporated into ethnographic analysis and writing" (Dalsgård, Frederiksen 2013: 50). Hope entails "the possibility, as in any mystery story, that factors will emerge and come into play of which one has no inkling, and that these unforeseen factors will free the future from the impress of the past" (Jackson cited from Dalsgård, Frederiksen 2013: 52). I have tried to sketch landscapes of hope as continuous processes that extend into the future. According to Dalsgård and Frederiksen "the writing of ethnography is a provisional endeavor in the sense that our understanding of what took place during fieldwork is likely to change over time" (ibid.: 60). They conclude that "[r]ather than seeing [this] instability as a troublesome aspect of knowledge production, we […] find it to be an inescapable condition to be met and explored creatively" (ibid.: 60). Such a perspective is especially relevant and productive for the case of Ouagadougou where the upcoming elections are supposed to bring change for one of the poorest countries in the world. Nearly one year after the revolutionary uprisings, which led to the resignation of the former president Blaise Compaoré and the assignment of an interim government all hopes are oriented toward what may be a new start, although it is uncertain that there will be fast and tangible progress. This new government will have to face multiple challenges like expected improvements in the education and health sector, fighting corruption, providing access to basic public infrastructure and so on. Regarding the massive urban expansion of not only Ouagadougou, but all urban areas in Burkina Faso, the problem of urban restructuration through infrastructuring is part of these challenges. Researchers of any discipline that is concerned with the lives of people within (urban and rural) landscapes in Burkina Faso should not let pass the upcoming events and wait until their first effects become visible.

Critical accounts are of course much easier in retrospect, especially if one was not involved in whatever it is that is criticised. I hope to have shown in my analysis, that ethnographic fieldwork can contribute eminently to the understanding of the ongoing processes but collaboration is needed in order to follow these processes inside the institutions that are in charge of them. While daily life practices of people may be accessed and observed, examining the infrastructurings they are embedded in, calls for interdisciplinary and collaborative research. Hence, it could be a way to integrate ethnographically gained knowledge into broader discussions, and to make it relevant for others than discipline-intern colleagues and librarians. There is more to talk and write about than the people living (wheresoever); in Ouagadougou their struggle for land and their daily ways of life within can only be understood by taking into account the larger processes of infrastructuring which are beyond the scope of this specific case.

For Burkina Faso in general and Ouagadougou in particular the Burkinabé uprisings in October 2014 have shown the potential of the uncertain conditions and effects of such infrastructurings that I have tried to sketch here. Despite the juridical confirmation of the suspension of all allotment activities in April 2015 the Burkinabé I talked to, were still referring to a future on an own parcel of land. The elections to come in October 2015, they said, might finally bring somebody to power that will be able to solve the problems they encounter in their struggle for a permanent place to live. In the meantime – and within the complicated intersecting processes of infrastructuring – people move into the peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou where they hope-through-narrating, -dwelling and -waiting, shaped by and simultaneously shaping landscapes of hope.

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