



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN AFRICA: BURKINA FASO DESK STUDY

MAY 2010

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by ARD, Inc.

Authored by: Pierre Englebert  
Pomona College  
Claremont California

And

Nestorine Sangare  
University of Ouagadougou  
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Report prepared for the United States Agency for International Development. Contract: DFD-I-00-04-00227-00, Task Order 15

Implemented by:

ARD, Inc.  
PO Box 1397  
Burlington, Vermont 05401  
Telephone: 802-658-3890  
Fax: 802-658-4247  
Email: [ardinc@ardinc.com](mailto:ardinc@ardinc.com)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is one of 16 reports on decentralization in 10 African countries undertaken on behalf of the Conflict, Peacebuilding, and Governance Division of USAID's Bureau for Africa and the Office of Democracy and Governance of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. The reports include a desk study for each of the 10 selected countries, an in-country study for 5 of the 10 selected countries, and a single comparative report of the findings from all 10 countries. All reports were completed between May 1 and September 27, 2010.

The following titles and authors are included in the USAID series:

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Botswana Desk Study* by Amy R. Poteete and Bashi Mothusi

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Burkina Faso Desk Study* by Pierre Englebert and Nestorine Sangare

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Ethiopia Desk Study* by J. Tyler Dickovick and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Ghana Desk Study* by J. Tyler Dickovick and Joseph Ayee

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Mali Desk Study* by Susanna Wing and Brehima Kassibo

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Mozambique Desk Study* by Beatrice Reaud and Bernhard Weimer

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Nigeria Desk Study* by James Wunsch and Bamidele Olowu

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: South Africa Desk Study* by Louis Picard and Thomas Mogale

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Tanzania Desk Study* by Per Tidemand and Nazar Sola

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Uganda Desk Study* by Paul Smoke, William Muhumuza and Emmanuel Mugalaasi Ssewankambo

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Botswana In-Country Assessment Report*  
by Amy R. Poteete, Bashi Mothusi and Daniel Molaodi

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Mali In-Country Assessment Report* by  
Chéibane Coulibaly, J. Tyler Dickovick and James T. Thomson

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Mozambique In-Country Assessment Report* by Barry Ames, Domingos do Rosario, Edwin Connerley, Eduardo Nguenha and Laudemiro Francisco

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Nigeria In-Country Assessment Report*  
by Bamidele Olowu, John Erero, Rosemary Soetan and Rotimi Suberu

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Tanzania In-Country Assessment Report*  
by Amon Chaligha, Nazar Sola, Per Tidemand, Peter Bofin

*Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Final Report and Summary of Findings*  
by J. Tyler Dickovick and Rachel Beatty Riedl

# COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN AFRICA: BURKINA FASO DESK STUDY

MAY 2010

## **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

# CONTENTS

- ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....iii**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... v**
- 1.0 THE COUNTRY CONTEXT ..... 1**
  - 1.1 POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE ..... 1
  - 1.2 HISTORY OF DECENTRALIZATION ..... 2
  - 1.3 CURRENT STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION ..... 5
- 2.0 INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES ..... 7**
  - 2.1 AUTHORITY..... 7
  - 2.2 AUTONOMY..... 9
  - 2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY .....13
  - 2.4 CAPACITY .....15
- 3.0 POLITICAL ECONOMY .....17**
  - 3.1 POLITICAL INCENTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS: PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS...17
  - 3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE NATIONAL ARENA .....18
  - 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE SUBNATIONAL ARENA .....19
  - 3.4 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE CIVIL SOCIETY ARENA .....20
  - 3.5 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE DONOR ARENA.....22
- 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS .....25**
  - 4.1 VARIATIONS.....25
  - 4.2 COMPARATIVE LESSONS .....26
  - 4.3 FINAL QUESTIONS.....27
- APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY .....29**
- APPENDIX 2: MAP OF BURKINA FASO’S 13 REGIONS.....31**
- APPENDIX 3: MAP OF BURKINA FASO’S 302 DEPARTMENTS/COMMUNES .....33**



# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMBF	Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso
CCTP	<i>Cadres de Concertation Technique Provinciaux</i>
CDP	<i>Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès</i>
CDR	Revolutionary Defense Committee
CND	National Commission for Decentralization
CONACOD	National Commission for Decentralized Cooperation
CONAD	National Conference on Decentralization
CSMOD	<i>Cadre Stratégique pour la Mise en Oeuvre de la Décentralisation</i> (Strategic Compact for the Implementation of Decentralization)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVD	<i>Comités Villageois de Développement</i>
FPDCT	Permanent Fund for the Development of Territorial Collectivities.
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MATD	Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
MEF	Minister of Economy and Finance
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ODP-MT	<i>Organisation pour la Démocratie et le Progrès—Mouvement du Travail</i>
TDC	Tax for Communal Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although it is still a relatively new process, Burkina Faso's decentralization has become an essential element of the country's political system, on which there is a broad national consensus. A large body of legislation underpins it, and provides for several layers of new local institutions at the core of which lies the commune, the basic unit of territorial collectivity. Burkina's 351 communes elect their municipal councils every five years, which in turn choose their mayors. They are legally responsible for a wide swath of public policy, including primary education, health care, water and sanitation, and local economic development, and have the authority to raise taxes.

Despite these achievements, Burkina's decentralization suffers from several significant weaknesses which undermine its transformative and democratic potential. First, its achievements are much less sweeping in reality than they are on paper. Because of a top-down gradual approach, it was not until 2006 that communes were finally installed throughout the territory and not until 2009 that they were transferred effective authority.

Second, decentralization in Burkina is a highly urban-biased process. Not only were the 49 urban communes created more than 10 years before the rural ones, but they also monopolize between 70 percent and 90 percent of available resources. As such, decentralization benefits the more centralized urban areas.

Third, the lack of financial means and autonomy dramatically reduces the effective scope of decentralization. Outside large urban areas, communal taxes have low yields. Because municipal councilors are unpaid, their duties compete with their need for income and suffer as a result. Most communes do not have the means to launch their development plans.

Fourth, decentralized structures have little effective authority. They remain under the tutelage of numerous layers of deconcentrated authority, including regional governors, provincial high-commissioners and departmental prefects. Despite recent transfers of authority, they continue to rely on centralized administrative services for the daily performance of their duties.

Finally, capacity is very low, many councilors are illiterate, there are few professionally trained staff at local levels, basic equipment is lacking, and understanding of decentralization is limited. All these features conspire to undermine the degree to which Burkina's decentralization is capable of reaching the intermediate goals of authority, autonomy, accountability, and capacity. There is a long way to go.

Some of the above limitations no doubt derive from the nature of the country's regime. Although it has a capable administration apparently dedicated to decentralization, Burkina remains an authoritarian regime at heart, based on personal rule, patron-client relationship, and the domination of the ruling party, the *Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* (CDP). It is expecting too much of decentralization to think it can provide good governance and democracy in such a context. More often, it serves as the vector through which the ruling coalition spreads its influence throughout the country. Yet, the work of institutional creation that accompanies

decentralization no doubt lays the foundation for a more participative future, contingent on an eventual transformation of the Burkinabe national political system.

# 1.0 THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

## 1.1 POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Despite several episodes of deconcentration and the creation of numerous local layers of state institutions over time, Burkina Faso (known until 1984 as Upper Volta) has had, until recently, little historical experience with genuine decentralization. Under colonialism, the French system of direct administration prevailed, characterized by a high degree of centralization. Ultimate colonial authority resided in Dakar, Senegal. There was a local governor in Ouagadougou with a skeletal administration. At the local level, a handful of French *commandants de cercle* exercised colonial authority, most frequently through delegation to existing or appointed “traditional” chiefs. There was a brief experience with municipal councils and mayors in the 1920s, which ended when the colony was partitioned among its neighbors in 1933, before being briefly revived, with elected members, in the mid-1950s (Upper Volta was again put together after World War II). Yet these councils carried little authority (Sawadogo, 2001).

After independence in 1960, 20 urban communes were recognized and elected their council members from a single-party list until the coup of January 1966, which ushered in a system of centrally appointed delegations to manage urban communes (Englebert, 1996, page 44; Harsch, 2009, p. 266). Over the next two decades, a dual system evolved, with official state delegations and prefects competing or collaborating with traditional chiefs, who usually were the main representatives of the state in the villages where they collected taxes.

The revolution of 1983, under the leadership of Thomas Sankara, brought about some radical changes and, generally, still has considerable ripple effects on Burkinabe politics to this day. A 1984 reform converted the existing 11 departments into 30 provinces, divided into 300 departments, 7,000 villages, and 30 urban communes (established in each provincial capital). Appointed delegations continued to run the provinces. The mayors of all urban communes (except Ouagadougou) were elected by members of the Revolutionary Defense Committees (CDRs), themselves composed of self-appointed members. CDRs were also formally in charge of Burkina’s villages, where they tended to exercise their authority in very significant conflict with traditional chiefs (Englebert, 1996). The departments were managed by councils selected by their constituent villages and urban communes (Kambou, 1988; Harsch, 2009, p. 268). In practice, the CDRs were very powerful, particularly in urban settings. They supervised markets, provided neighborhood security, organized collective forced labor, and built some limited infrastructure. Most importantly, they were in charge of allocating residential land parcels in the cities. Many of the new neighborhoods of Ouagadougou today find their origins in these revolutionary days.

Sankara was killed in the coup of October 1987 which brought Blaise Compaoré, his regime’s number two, to power. Compaoré has ruled uninterruptedly since then, and has presided over a 180-degree “rectification” of the country’s political course. Although it is under Compaoré that the country renounced the revolution, adopted a democratic constitution, moved to multi-party

politics, abandoned the practice of military takeovers, and embarked upon decentralization, his rule can nevertheless be characterized as largely authoritarian, with more formal than real democracy, and based on “big man” politics and neo-patrimonialism (Hilgers and Mazzocchi, 2006).<sup>1</sup> Under Compaoré, almost all the structures of the revolution were abandoned and traditional chiefs have regained considerable leverage in politics, most of them as established clients of the regime. The executive branch, and particularly the office of the president, dominates policy making. The national assembly is completely under the control of the dominant party, originally the *Organisation pour la Démocratie et le Progrès—Mouvement du Travail* (ODP-MT), later renamed *Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* (CDP). As the following sections discuss in greater detail, decentralized governance structures are also largely dominated by the CDP, which generally exercises hegemony over the entire political system.

Although Burkina’s neo-patrimonial rule is similar to that of many other countries in the region, the country stands in stark contrast to its African counterparts with respect to the low saliency of ethnicity in politics. In general, ethnicity is far from being the most important factor in Burkinabe politics, whether national or local. And when it does manifest itself, it is usually in nuanced ways. This does not mean, however, that ethnicity never matters. People identify with ethnic groups and are aware of the ethnicity of politicians, which is one of many factors they take into account as they vote. But it is not a monolithic category of identity. Sometimes lineage families matter more than ethnic groups (as is frequently the case with the Mossi, the largest group at about half the country’s population). In decentralized arenas, several ethnic groups might share some salient supra-ethnic identity (such as being “first comers” in a region) that matters more politically. This is increasingly common in the western part of the country where many small ethnic groups co-exist.

While there is no particular history of ethnic polarization, in-country migrations over the last couple of decades have given rise to a cleavage between western indigenous groups and migrants of Mossi descent who have moved to the western region in pursuit of land. These migrants have sometimes established their own villages (known as “cultural hamlets”), which might exist in ambiguous relations with pre-existing neighboring villages on whose chiefs they depend for access to land. As discussed later, decentralization has had certain effects on the relations between these groups.

## 1.2 HISTORY OF DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization in Burkina is an ongoing process whose history is still unfolding. It has been a very incremental process, which continues to be marked by the principle of gradualism.<sup>2</sup> Aside from the brief experiment with urban communes from 1960 to 1963, Burkina, like most Francophone African countries (except Senegal), had no experience with decentralization until the 1990s. On the contrary, its political history was characterized by recurrent attempts by central

---

<sup>1</sup> Neo-patrimonialism is a system where a formal rational bureaucratic state coexists with a parallel structure of power based on a patron-client relationship, and where state institutions and resources are redistributed for private and political gain. As a result, neo-patrimonial regimes blur the distinction between the public and private purses and provide fertile ground for corruption and vertical social relations based on the exchange of state resources for political loyalty.

<sup>2</sup> The succession of small steps implied by gradualism reflects in part a desire to learn and adapt on the part of implementing authorities. However, it can also be a convenient excuse for a tepid rate of implementation and an occasional lack of commitment.

governments to further centralize and concentrate powers. In this respect, territorial reforms in 1970, 1974, 1984, and 1989 all involved deconcentration rather than decentralization and promoted the territorial expansion of the state rather than serving the interests of local populations. This was particularly true of the revolutionary years, during which the number of administrative circumscriptions and “territorial collectivities” multiplied but under tight control of the central government (Sawadogo and Sabahara, 2004, p. 68).

The original impetus to decentralize arose in the early 1990s, largely as a result of pressure from donors who pushed for a new paradigm of decentralized democratic governance, and in the wake of some retrenchment of state centralization demanded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of Burkina’s first structural adjustment program in 1991. Burkina adopted a new constitution (it had not had one since 1980) on June 2, 1991, which not only ushered in an era of multi-party competitive elections and guaranteed individual civil liberties and political rights, but also organized the country into “territorial collectivities” (art. 143) and provided for the democratic management of these collectivities by local populations (art. 145). Yet, it was not until 1993 that the first decentralization laws (for the practical implementation of the principles enunciated in the Constitution) were adopted, and they fell well short of the ambitions of the constitution (and the donor community), being largely limited to a mere administrative reorganization of the territory.

Lacking a clear idea of what decentralized governance should look like, the government set up a National Commission for Decentralization (CND) in 1994, attached to the prime minister’s office, and charged it with “considering what Burkinabe decentralization might be” (Ouédraogo, 2003, p. 99). The work of the commission led to the adoption of a series of decentralization guidelines in 1998. The same year, a succession of four laws translated the Commission’s guidelines into legal reality and allocated responsibilities and powers between central and local governments (see Section 2 for more details). The laws established two levels of decentralization. The most local was the commune (municipality), territorially divided into urban and rural communes. Between the communes and the central state lay the provinces. Municipal authorities and provincial councils were to be elected by universal suffrage.

Donors joined efforts with the government and among themselves to facilitate the process and established a “common basket” of funds to accompany this first phase of decentralization.<sup>3</sup> While some donors were in favor of a rapid transition to municipal rule at the local level, the government resisted and maintained its gradual approach, based in part on experimenting first at the urban level and then expanding practices to rural communes. Hence, while the CND was doing its research, the government went ahead and organized municipal elections in 33 urban municipalities in 1995. Some 1,760 seats for municipal councilors were contested in February of 1995. These councilors went on to elect 33 mayors. The ruling party ODP-MT won 65 percent of the votes. In 1996, the number of provinces was increased from 30 to 45, which led to new towns being designated as provincial capitals and recognized as municipalities, together with a few others because of their size. By the time of the September 2000 municipal elections, the number of urban communes had increased to 49 (42 of which were won by the CDP).

---

<sup>3</sup> See more on this under the “Donors’ Arena” heading below.

The apparent implication of the presidential entourage in the assassination of Norbert Zongo, an independent journalist, in 1998, threw the regime off balance for a considerable time and prevented the adoption of any significant reform, including a deepening of decentralization (see Section 3 for more details).<sup>4</sup> It was not until 2003 that the regime, having made some concessions to the opposition by adopting some of the political reforms recommended by a “Council of Wise Men,” was able to resume progress on decentralization. A series of new laws were adopted on 6 August 2003 (followed by a decree in December 2004) which modified the 1998 legislation, with the main effect that decentralization was for the first time extended to rural areas. In the April 2006 municipal elections (in which the ODP-MT won 12,854 seats out of 17,786), rural voters elected councilors in 302 new rural communes, in addition to the 49 existing urban ones.

At the same time, a 2004 decree of the national assembly created 13 regions and regional councils, which replaced the 45 provinces of the 1998 legislation as the intermediate decentralized institutions (the provinces continue to exist as part of the territorial division of the country and as units of deconcentration of government services, but not as organs of democratic decentralization). Representatives to regional councils were elected by the urban and rural municipal councilors of their region.

Although the elections of 2006 seemed to suggest a certain degree of completion of decentralization, politically, the process continued to suffer from a lack of effective transfer of administrative and professional competence to the communes. Thus, urban and rural communities had both the formal tools of self-rule and the elected officials to carry it out, but the practical implementation decrees transferring effective authority to them in the domains legally under their control were still largely missing. Possibly indicating some reluctance towards decentralization by elements in the central administration, these shortcomings were not immediately addressed. Instead, the government set up a new centralized structure of inter-ministerial coordination to facilitate the decentralization. In March 2007, it adopted a Strategic Compact for the Implementation of Decentralization (*Cadre Stratégique pour la Mise en Oeuvre de la Décentralisation* [CSMOD]), with the goal to increase coordination among all the branches of government and donors, and to establish specific goals for continued progress. This process led to the creation of yet another (centralized) institution in July 2007, the National Conference on Decentralization (CONAD), which was placed under the Prime Minister with the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD), and the Minister of Economy and Finance (MEF) as vice-presidents. CONAD adopted its first three-year plan for the implementation of the decentralization compact in 2008.

One of CONAD’s goals was to follow through with the transfer of competence and this milestone was finally partially achieved in March 2009 when the government adopted five decrees of transfer of competences and resources to rural and urban communes in the fields of health, primary education, water, youth, culture, and sports (see more details below under “Authority”). However, there remain several fields covered by the 1998 decentralization laws for which communes still do not have effective authority.

---

<sup>4</sup> On the Zongo affair and its political impact, see Hilgers and Mazzochetti (2006).

### 1.3 CURRENT STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION

As of May 2010, Burkina has a grand total of 351 communes, with 359 mayors because the main cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso together have eight “arrondissements” (sub-sectors), each with its own municipal council and mayor. Of these, 57 are urban communes, which correspond to cities and neighboring villages, and 302 are rural communes which include all the villages belonging to a department (a unit of territorial administration previously administered by a prefect delegated from the central government—see maps in the appendices). Since 2006, all of these communes have elected municipal councilors who, in turn, elect among themselves the commune’s mayor, his/her two deputies and the chairs of two permanent commissions (Economy and Finance, and General Affairs), and join with other municipal councilors in their region (of which there are 13) to elect regional councilors. Altogether, there are 17,976 municipal and regional councilors, 6,435 of whom are women. The municipal councils are elected for five years. They are the deliberative power; the mayor is the executive power. The next municipal elections are scheduled for April or May 2011. The next three-year plan for the implementation of the strategic compact begins in 2010. Its objectives will include the adoption of additional decrees to complete the transfer of competences to communes and regions.



# 2.0 INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

## 2.1 AUTHORITY

Beginning with the Constitution of 1991, the legal framework for decentralization has been laid out in a series of laws and implementation decrees that have occurred in waves in 1993, 1998, 2003, 2006, and 2009. Elected layers of government in Burkina now include the Presidency and the National Assembly, together with the urban and rural communes. The regional councils are elected by the members of the relevant municipal councils, who are in turn elected by universal suffrage within their department. There are 302 departments.

Although the law provides for a very substantive devolution of authority to the local level, in reality this process has been slowed down considerably for two main reasons. First, as discussed above, it has taken a considerable amount of time to translate the broad decentralization laws into practical decrees and thus to effectively transfer authority to communes and regions. Although there has been progress recently on this account, the second obstacle is more structural and might represent a permanent hurdle to full-fledged decentralization. It is the simultaneous process of deconcentration of the state which, while supposed to assist decentralization, represents in practice a parallel and centralized process creating authority structures which might well supersede the communes in cases of conflict. We discuss these two issues in sequence in the following paragraphs.

De jure, Burkina's decentralization is impressive and its municipalities enjoy considerable devolution of powers. Their responsibilities fall into several broad categories, each of which includes multiple competences.<sup>5</sup> In the category of management of land, territory, and urbanism, they are responsible for dividing land into parcels and attributing them for: residency; delivering land titles; authorizing construction; creating, maintaining, and managing roads; and enforcing public safety and traffic regulations. In the category of environment and management of natural resources, they are responsible for: creating, repairing, and maintaining public parks; basic sanitation and refuse removal; authorizing the cutting of wood; prevention and response to bush fires; and management of animal and forestry resources.

In the category of economic development and planning, municipalities are responsible for putting together a communal development plan in accordance with the national development plan. In matters of health and hygiene, they are responsible for: the construction and maintenance of primary health care centers; the pharmaceutical supply of the commune; and the adoption of public health and public hygiene measures as necessary. In the field of education, they are

---

<sup>5</sup> The following lists are not exhaustive and include only the most representative and/or important responsibilities of communes.

responsible for preschools and the construction, acquisition, and management of primary and secondary schools. In the category of culture, leisure, and sports, they build and manage infrastructure, activities promotion, and promote tourism and traditional crafts. In civil protection, they participate in the protection of human rights, the social promotion of individuals and groups, the organization of assistance to the most vulnerable populations, and the struggle against fires. In the category of funeral services, they regulate funeral houses and cemeteries, deliver inhumation permits, and build and manage morgues. In the category of water and electricity, they create and manage energy infrastructure, are responsible for wells and public fountains, provide public lighting, and participate in the design of the regional electricity network. And, finally, in the category of markets and slaughterhouses, they create, maintain, and manage markets, and build and manage slaughterhouses.

The regions have considerably less power and are conceived more as subsidiaries or support to the communes. Their responsibilities are the same (except for funeral services and cemeteries), but in each case they tend to be defined as consultative, in support of the central state or the communes, or subsidiary, activities such as clearing bush paths, delivering wood-cutting permits in regional forests, designing regional development plans, etc.

Until 2009, however, the powers of the communes were severely limited by the absence of effective transfer of authority from the central government, whose agencies remained therefore by default in charge of formally devolved responsibilities. As a result, communes have essentially limited themselves so far to activities they could manage without legal transfer. In practice, the allocation of land parcels, the management of markets, and the delivery of permits for multiple activities have probably become the communes' most important and visible areas of activity, because these are also the ones where they can generate local revenue. These actions can be controversial as they involve allocating scarce resources, collecting fees, and imposing regulations on people. The communes have begun testing the practical limits of these powers. In 2006 the Ouagadougou municipal council was forced to backtrack on regulations requiring riders of motorbikes to wear safety helmets because of widespread popular resistance (Harsch, 2009, p. 282).

Beyond this, the degree of local authority of communes has been very low, with an occasional bump from the participation of donors in specific projects, such as school constructions, which can sometimes result in greater effective authority. With the decrees of 2009, communes are now legally and practically in charge of four of the 11 fields legally devolved to them in 1998: health care; preschools, primary schools, and literacy programs; drinkable water and sanitation programs; and culture, youth, sports, and leisure. In order to facilitate the transfer, the government has also delegated civil servants from the respective ministries to the communes. Yet, so far only a few communes have signed the necessary "operation protocols" with the governors, and the accompanying financial transfers have been limited to urban communes alone (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 33). In other words, rural communes are not yet actually in charge of these questions. Thus, much remains to be done here.

A second limitation to the authority of decentralized structures lies in the parallel existence of deconcentrated institutions of governance which tend to stand in hierarchical relation to the elected organs of the communes and regions. The organs of decentralization are the "territorial collectivities": the communes run by elected municipal councils which, in turn, elect mayors who have executive authority; and the regions whose regional councils are elected by the

municipal councils. Simultaneously, the organs of deconcentration are known as “administrative circumscriptions”: the regions and their appointed governors, the provinces administered by High-Commissioners, the departments run by prefects (whose territories are identical to those of the communes), and the villages (where authority is diffuse). Table 1 summarizes these overlapping layers of decentralized and deconcentrated authority.

**Table 1. Overlapping Decentralization and Deconcentration**

Unit	Decentralized	Deconcentrated	Who has executive authority?
Village	No	Yes	Village Development Committees
Commune	Yes	Yes (=department)	Mayor, appointed prefect
Province	No	Yes	Appointed high-commissioner
Regions	Yes	Yes	Appointed governors*

\* Regions also have elected regional councils, but these are deliberative, not executive, organs.

To some extent, this overlap is not necessarily problematic. In fact, many of the deconcentrated organs were set up recently with the goal to facilitate and support decentralization. The law stresses indeed that “decentralization is accompanied by a deconcentration of the services of the state with the aim of reinforcing the capacities for action of territorial collectivities.” Yet, the parallel existence of these two sets of institutions produces unwelcome complexity. In addition, a different side of the law provides for the oversight and tutelage of the state over communes, which translates into governors, high-commissioners, and prefects exercising authority over the communes. A 2004 decree, for example, stipulates, in a manner that exists in many Francophone African countries, that administrative circumscriptions “represent the state” and “insure the unity of the representation of the state.” As such they enforce the law and exercise the tutelage of the state over the local collectivities (see more on this under “Autonomy”). This situation is compounded by the incomplete nature of decentralization which de facto maintains authority in deconcentrated structures. Moreover, because municipal councilors are not paid, their mandate does not amount to employment and they pursue therefore separate careers (farming for the majority of rural ones). Thus, communes tend to have no permanent administration, which puts them at a considerable disadvantage compared to administrative circumscriptions. Although the 2009 transfer decrees also provided for the delegation of “secretary generals” from the MATD to 169 of the 302 rural communes (Burkina Faso. 2009, p. 34), the actual transfer of these civil servants was only beginning to trickle in 2010 (and might also represent additional control of the central state over the communes). From the village to the region, the super-imposition of these different institutions creates a significant potential for conflict (not to mention a considerable budgetary burden).

## 2.2 AUTONOMY

Autonomy issues parallel the problems of authority discussed above. There is first a lack of administrative autonomy because of the oversight of deconcentrated institutions. More fundamentally, however, communes (particularly rural ones) suffer from a very significant lack of financial autonomy for which there seems to be few credible fixes in the future.

Although the law defines a broad field of authority for communes, it also limits their political and administrative autonomy. Indeed, *la tutelle de l’Etat* (state tutelage) is an essential principle of Burkina’s decentralization inherited from the colonial period. This tutelage manifests itself

first and foremost through administrative control: many communal decisions must be submitted for the approval or authorization of the state representative in the local collectivity (usually the prefect at the department level). In practice, this tutelage applies almost exclusively to local decisions that have a financial component. In other words, the central state keeps control over the overall budgetary implications of the actions of the communes. Moreover, MATD keeps a tight leash on the communes and has oversight over almost all delegated and deconcentrated local personnel whom it recruits, assigns, and pays.

Non-transferred competences also continue to be managed by their respective national ministries at the local level with the consequences that the lines between decentralized and deconcentrated authority are blurred for many citizens. In Ziniaré, for example, in the country's central region, it is the Provincial Service of Domain and taxes which managed the operations of "parcelization" (*lotissement*) of land for private residence (which raised the essential part of the commune's budget) in the late 1990s. The collection of taxes from informal market traders is also managed by the Provincial Service of Taxation. National Police and gendarmerie provide public safety as the commune does not yet have its own municipal police. As Sebehara puts it, "deconcentrated services intervene in the management of most municipal policies, either through technical assistance or through the exercise of tutelage and control [...] they play a non-negligible role in the production of rules and norms for the communal space, the implementation, and control." (Sebehara, 2004, pp. 334–335). In addition, the freedom of deconcentrated services is very limited and they usually tend to take their orders from their headquarters in Ouagadougou. Decentralization has thus brought about no noticeable change in this respect. Even when there has been transfer (in primary education, health, water, and sports/culture), the only full-time personnel in communes are the secretary generals who are public administrators delegated by the central government to assist with the establishment of local administrations and the functioning of their institutions. These agents are appointed by MATD.

The communes' lack of financial autonomy has been even more fundamental. Although communes adopt their budgets on their own, once voted, these budgets must still be approved jointly by MATD and the MEF. In practice, the two ministries can delegate this authority to the prefects. More importantly, the local revenue base of communes remains exceedingly limited and they are, therefore, dependent on subsidies from the central government. In general, they are significantly under-funded, and under-staffed relative to their vast legal responsibilities.

Table 2 makes clear the dearth of local fiscal resources for the majority of communes. Although the amount of local revenues, at CFA15bn, seems to approximate the amount of government transfers (at some CFA21bn), this comparison is highly misleading, for it includes the local revenues generated in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, which account for no less than 64 percent of the total for all communes. The other urban communes combine for 11.81 percent. In contrast, all 302 rural communes are only able to generate 13.11 percent of the total, on average CFA 6,930,475 by rural commune, or \$14,143. Obviously, very little can be achieved with such paltry resources.

**Table 2. Revenues of Territorial Collectivities (2008) (CFA490=\$1)**

<b>Local revenues</b>	<b>15,969,215,465<sup>6</sup></b>
Ouagadougou	8,417,445,500
Bobo-Dioulasso	1,831,792,586
Other urban communes (47)	3,626,973,841
Rural communes (302)	2,093,003,535
<b>Transfers from national budget</b>	<b>20,660,748,407</b>
<b>External resources<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>10,721,841,315</b>
Of which urban communes	10,292,968,000

Source: Burkina Faso (2010b)

In fact, for the majority of communes, locally generated resources are insufficient to cover functioning expenses and minimal investment. Of 351 communes in 2008, 86 had no investment based on their own resources at all and 121 of the remaining ones had less than CFA5m, or \$10,204, for public investments. As a result, 207 out of 351 communes were unable to launch their communal development plan (Burkina Faso, 2010b).

Clearly, the prevailing level of poverty among Burkinabe and the lack of sufficient local economic fabric outside the main urban areas undermine the autonomy and very functioning of the communes. They have, of course, tried to increase their rate of local extraction, but there is very little to extract and there have been political consequences. The law allows the communes to raise taxes, to charge service fees and to obtain receipts from administration of their domains (e.g., use of forests). Yet, the taxes they are allowed to levy generate little income. They are allowed a tax on the informal sector (which is, almost by definition, hard to administer), a residency tax (which applies only to people living in “parcelized” zones and thus benefits mostly urban areas), a parcel tax for all persons being allocated a parcel (which is thus a one-time tax), a corporation tax (effectively limited to urban communes), a market tax, and a tax on weapons (which produces very little income). Ironically, although the communes derive little revenue from these taxes, citizens feel their burden and tend to experience decentralization as an increase in taxation (Sawadogo, 2001). Increases in market taxes have been a frequent complaint in demonstrations and riots since 1995, according to Harsch (2009).

The national government has tried to alleviate this problem by suggesting a new Tax for Communal Development (TDC) to be levied at the national level, and whose annual expected revenue amounts to CFA3bn. The tentative announcement of such a tax met with a barrage of popular opposition, however. Nation-wide demonstrations were held against its perceived injustice and called attention to how little is known about how communes manage their current tax revenues. Facing this kind of opposition in an electoral year (presidential elections are scheduled for November 2010), the government seems to have relented for now.

---

<sup>6</sup> Of this amount, about CFA 1.2bn was transferred from the communes to the regional councils.

<sup>7</sup> Loans, grants, and resources from “decentralized cooperation” from international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs).

**Table 3. National Budget: Allocations to Decentralization (2007-2010) in CFA ‘000s**

	2007	2008	2009	2010 <sup>*</sup>
<b>General Subsidies</b>	<b>6,849,873</b>	<b>6,850,000</b>	<b>6,819,991</b>	<b>6,819,991</b>
Current expenses	1,240,229	1,529,471	1,529,471	1,529,471
Equipment	5,116,979	5,120,528	5,120,528	5,120,528
Deconcentrated structures	492,664	200,000	170,000	170,000
<b>Transfers to institutions</b>	<b>77,500</b>		<b>224,665</b>	<b>288,500</b>
CONAD		15,465	31,000	50,000
AMBF <sup>8</sup>	30,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
FPDCT <sup>9</sup>		90,700	85,000	270,000
<b>Support for Construction</b>		<b>5,988,732</b>	<b>2,200,000</b>	<b>2,370,456</b>
Governors' offices		1,114,332	1,000,000	669,996
Governors' residences		1,576,417	200,000	770,000
Sec-Gen's residences		125,000		140,000
Commune headquarters		3,144,982	1,000,000	669,996
<b>Resources for transferred Competences</b>			<b>3,951,382</b>	<b>10,775,395</b>
Primary education			3,751,382	9,100,315
Water supply <sup>10</sup>			200,000	804,000
Health				871,079
<b>Subsidies from Petroleum Tax</b>	<b>2,341,841</b>	<b>2,597,351</b>	<b>2,590,723</b>	<b>2,590,723</b>
Budgets of urban communes <sup>11</sup>	777,567	925,615	925,615	925,615
Commune headquarters	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
<b>Salaries of former provincial agents</b>			<b>310,000</b>	<b>305,219</b>
<b>Priority investments in six communes<sup>12</sup></b>		<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,269,214</b>	<b>20,660,748</b>	<b>21,160,596</b>	<b>25,749,561</b>

Source: Burkina Faso (2010a); \* Forecast

As a result, with the exceptions of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, communes remain vastly dependent on the national budget and donors for their finance (see Table 3), which hampers their autonomy. Allocations from the national budget have grown steadily over the years, however, and, with some CFA25bn in 2010, amounted to about 2.3 percent of the country's entire budget (of CFA1.083trillion). These figures are, however, somewhat misleading because they include the financing of deconcentrated authorities (declining figures, however) and, as has been noted, hide an overwhelming bias in favor of urban communes. For example, more than 90 percent of the resources for transferred competences in the 2009 and 2010 budgets (some CFA10bn in 2010) were directed at urban communes, a bias the government declares is part of decentralization gradualism. The only rural expenses in this category were for the rehabilitation of wells. In addition, CFA5bn were allocated both years for specific anti-poverty programs in six urban communes. These two entries alone account for 15 of the 25bn in the 2010 budget.

<sup>8</sup> Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso (communes' lobbying arm).

<sup>9</sup> Permanent Fund for the development of territorial Collectivities.

<sup>10</sup> Rehabilitation of wells.

<sup>11</sup> Support to current expenses.

<sup>12</sup> Limited to Banfora, Bobo-Dioulasso, Kaya, Koudougou, Ouagadougou, and Ouahigouya.

Another billion and a half goes to deconcentrated units, about one billion to the current expenses of urban communes, and about half a billion to several intermediary institutions. Only 7bn are left to be shared by all communes for other purposes, most of which are the purchase of equipment goods. This amounts to \$40,700 per commune. Thus, under-financing probably constitutes the most significant problem of Burkina's decentralization.

The urban bias is, unfortunately, only more pronounced in external financing, most of which is accounted for by donor grants and "decentralized cooperation" or direct aid arrangements with communes, mostly by foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Of the CFA10.7bn of external financing in 2008, 96 percent went to the urban communes (Burkina Faso, 2010b).

## 2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY

The main mechanism of political accountability at the local level is the municipal elections. Such elections were held in 1995 and 2000 for urban communes and in 2006 for all communes, including rural ones. The next ones are scheduled for April or May 2011 (presidential elections are scheduled for November 2010—thus, municipal and national elections take place at different times). For the purpose of elections, communes are divided into sectors. Each sector elects three councilors. All the elected councilors form the municipal council for a given commune. The elections are held in a single proportional round with closed lists, without preferential voting or "*panachage*" (the option to vote across lists and/or strike out candidates). In other words, voters vote for a party, not for specific candidates. Political parties determine the order of their candidates on the list. The electoral quotient (the number of votes required for a seat) is obtained by dividing the number of votes by the number of councilors to be elected in the commune, which is a function of its number of sectors. Below the quotient, seats are allocated as a function of number of votes ("plus fort reste").<sup>13</sup>

From an electoral point of view, decentralization has favored the spread of democratic values throughout the territory. Yet, there are two important features of the political system that considerably undermine its accountability to local populations and its democratic nature. The first one is the patronage nature of Burkina's political system, which has been exported to the communes. The second is the domination of national political parties, and particularly the ruling CDP, which is reproduced at the local level and reduces the degree to which municipal elections address local issues and concerns.

Because Burkina's decentralization has largely been the decentralization of patronage, accountability to local populations has been limited. "Popular participation" is more a slogan than a reality, and tends to refer to the payment of local taxes or to the reliance on NGOs for primary schools or health clinics. As Sebahara and Sindogo (2004, p. 386) suggest with respect to the town of Ziniaré (the president's home town), "participation in decision making or in selecting priorities does not seem to be recognized as a possible form of participation for the population."

Moreover, because the law does not allow independent candidacies in municipal elections, candidates must belong to political parties. As a result, national politics plays a significant role in

---

<sup>13</sup> See articles 236–239 of electoral code of 2001 (LOI N°014-2001/AN PORTANT CODE ELECTORAL).

local elections. In fact, the control of the ruling party over communes is nothing short of overwhelming (as it is over all other levels and instances of public authority). In the 2006 elections, the CDP won in 320 communes out of 359, 49 out of 57 urban ones, and 271 out of 302 rural ones. The CDP, as well as other national parties in areas where they are popular, tightly controls the nomination of candidates to the elections, to the extent that most of its nominees win. Hence, these nominations have become one of the main tools in the distribution of state patronage. Hilgers and Jacob (2008) note, however, that these nominations are very careful not to upset local equilibria. As such, rather than opening the political space, decentralization reproduces the established order at the local level. In its selection of candidates, the CDP is first cognizant of the ethnicity of local candidates, which must correspond to the dominant local group (most communes, especially in the West, are multiethnic). Then it considers the “local historical and political equilibria” (Hilgers and Jacob, 2008, p. 174). Thus, the leading candidates typically are heads of local dominant lineages.<sup>14</sup> In practice, long-time members of the ruling party benefit from a priority in nominations. Many of them, however, although they originally come from the commune, actually live in Ouagadougou, and typically work for the government or state enterprises (Hilgers and Jacob, 2008, p. 177).

The second stage at which the central state intervenes is in the election of mayors and their deputies after the election of the municipal councils by its members. Considerable jockeying takes place here with delegates from party headquarters coming to adjudicate disputes between contenders. The election of the mayor itself takes place with secret balloting and under the supervision of the department’s prefect (also usually a member of the CDP). It is the CDP’s explicit goal to exercise a monopoly on the positions of mayors, first and second deputies, presidents of important commissions, and delegates to regional councils. Hence, it is not unusual for the mayors to be members of the CDP, head of an important local lineage, and a resident of Ouagadougou. As summarized by Hilgers and Jacob (2008, p. 180), “all the efforts of the party in power tend to neutralize the potentially devastating effects [of decentralization] on the established social order.”

Because of these features, the extent of local accountability of local governance structures is severely limited. The democratic nature of Burkina’s decentralization is the worse for it. The extent to which decentralization has failed to empower local citizens outside established local structures of power might be reflected in the increase in abstention rates in municipal elections over time: from 69.61 percent participation in 1995, to 66.02 percent in 2000, and 49.12 percent in 2006. However, the 2006 drop might also be due to a structurally weaker participation in rural areas given difficulties of transportation and the demands of agricultural labor, which can make voting appear to be a luxury.

There is also an interesting phenomenon by which decentralization seems to undermine or displace village governance and accountability. A 2004 decree set up the *Comités Villageois de Développement* (CVD). Each village held a constitutive assembly, under the authority of the municipal council, of all its voting-age inhabitants, which elected the members of the CVD. The CVD help prepare the communal development plan, mobilize village resources, and “animate”

---

<sup>14</sup> Local elections are based on the “list” system, in which parties offer multiple candidates. Voters can elect to vote for the party as a whole (which then distributes these votes down the list) or for specific candidates. The heads of lists are the most likely to be elected as they benefit from both party votes and their own specific votes. Hence, the nomination of candidates by political parties to head a list is a paramount importance.

village development. Each CVD has a bureau with a president, vice-president, etc., and is elected for five years. Although they are elected structures, they are not considered part of the decentralized state. The CVDs' authority is limited to development and they do not directly control the affairs of the village, which remain under the mixed authority of chiefs and government appointees.

Despite their elected status, the CVDs have less legitimacy than the previous village structures, which had grown from the self-organization of rural communities. Now, the CVDs represent villages in higher-up structures instead of the pre-existing youth, women or socio-professional associations. This has triggered conflicts for leadership between these associations and the CVDs. There are also frequent conflicts between the CVDs and the municipal councilors from a same village as to who can best represent the interests of the villagers. Yet, despite being elected, the CVDs are also agents of the administration, while the councilors represent devolved authority. The CVDs thus end up undermining the accountability of local structures of governance.

The CVD problem hints at the extent to which decentralization has potentially reduced institutional accountability to associative structures. Local civil society associations and NGOs seem to be held at a distance and to be marginalized to the benefit of new institutional actors set up for the implementation of decentralization. Before decentralization, the providers of different local services (often non-state actors) were by and large accountable to the local populations for which they existed. But citizens are more reticent to demand accountability from perceived sovereign structures, whether because of cultural norms or fears of reprisal. Yet, some civil society organizations (CSOs) have focused on good governance, such as the National Cell for Reinforcement of Capacity of CSOs (*Cellule Nationale de Renforcement des Capacités des OSC*), and have begun to call more explicitly for creating mechanisms of local accountability.

## 2.4 CAPACITY

In general, as can be inferred from previous arguments, the fiscal, administrative, and political capacity of communes and regions is minimal. The lack of local revenue is the main cause of weak fiscal capacity, and was brought up as part of the discussion on financial autonomy. This section focuses on administrative capacity.

There is a significant imbalance between the administrative capacity and managerial competence of the central government, which is rather high by West African standards (Englebert, 1996, p. 109), and the institutional weakness of the communes and regions. One factor of low capacity among communes, especially the rural ones, is the lack of permanent salaried staff. Communal councils meet once every three months and delegate executive authority to the mayor and his deputies. Being unpaid, the latter frequently experience conflicts between their municipal obligations and their work. As a result, in rural areas, there is absenteeism among councilors who cannot always afford to go to their area. In addition, although they are not salaried, municipal councilors are de facto local big men and must therefore allocate large amounts of their time to social functions. For example, they must attend funerals in their commune, and at each occasion they will be expected to make some financial donation (Sebahare and Sindogo, 2004, p. 384). Where will that money come from? Despite the commitment of many councilors to public service, their lack of payment, while quite understandable in Burkina's budgetary environment,

has negative consequences on their capacity and might occasionally create incentives for corruption.

Low literacy levels among municipal councilors are also a serious problem. Even literate councilors tend to have low levels of education. According to Gerster (n.d.), “many elected individuals are lacking a basic understanding of a community’s tasks as well as their own role. Technical capacities needed for project planning and implementation hardly exist.” Although the number seems high, Gerster contends that four out of five municipal councilors cannot read or write. Even in a relatively large city like Koudougou, Sebahara (2000) indicates that 10 out of 30 municipal councilors were illiterate in 2000. The *Programme d’Action Triennal* of CONAD for 2008–2010 acknowledges that more than half the municipal councilors in rural communes cannot read or write and that their rather advanced age likely precludes them from making much progress in the future (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 26). Thus, a new alphabetization program begun in 2008 might have limited impact. It comes as no surprise therefore that most effective administration, when it exists, is performed by the secretary-generals delegated to the communes by MADT.

These issues affect the quality of local governance. For example, the determination and distribution of land parcels has been one of the most important areas of activities of municipalities (in part because it represents the greatest opportunity for local revenue generation, which is crucial both for the functioning of the communes and for the fulfillment of clientelistic obligations). To be eligible to get a parcel, one needs to purchase a card. In many communes, however, more cards were sold than parcels were available because of mismanagement, incompetence and in some cases corruption.

On a more positive note, municipal economic development planning has registered certain successes, with the design of 191 rural communal development plans as of 2009 and the initiation of the remaining 111. Three regions had also already completed their regional development plans by mid-2009 (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 17). However, lack of financing (discussed earlier) and administrative capacity prevents many communes from actually beginning to implement their plans.

## 3.0 POLITICAL ECONOMY

### 3.1 POLITICAL INCENTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS: PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS

Why did Burkina's authorities embark upon decentralization, beginning in 1991? Plainly, because donors wanted it. Of course, there was a continent-wide, and maybe near-universal, movement towards democracy and decentralization at the time, but it was primarily the donors' agenda that exported these ideas to Africa where many governments, like that of Burkina, responded out of political realism. In this context, it is not surprising that there was some resistance at first among some power holders. Many politicians in Parliament and in the ruling party were nervous about the potential of decentralization to create new loci of power and to strengthen the opposition, and dragged their feet accordingly on designing the necessary legal architecture. Similarly, Burkina's central administrative services also dragged their feet as they were suspicious of the capacity of local devolved authorities to carry out their task. According to Loada and Otayek (1995, p. 142), staff at the Ministry for Territorial Administration experienced decentralized devolution as a "dispossession." This situation partly explains why it took 15 years from the adoption of decentralization in the constitution of 1991 to the first nation-wide municipal elections of 2006.

None of this was too surprising, however, nor did it represent an insurmountable obstacle as subsequent developments have illustrated (yet, some administrative resistance continues, as illustrated in next section). A more significant and more political reason for the slow pace of decentralization came instead from the upheaval that was unleashed on the national stage with the assassination of journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998, and the subsequent "*trop, c'est trop*" (enough is enough) opposition movement, which coalesced in response. The crisis seriously undermined the legitimacy of the Compaoré regime, which was widely believed responsible for it, and put it in a defensive posture for a few years. Most large political initiatives were suspended while the government focused on staying in power and containing public outrage. As a result, progress on decentralization stalled until 2003.

However, while initial resistance to decentralization eased up, there is a more insidious constraint to decentralization which has so far largely succeeded in preventing it from being effective and democratic. This fundamental constraint, as discussed earlier, is the neo-patrimonial nature of the regime and the monopolistic domination of the ruling party CDP on all the organs of the state. The Compaoré-CDP regime is an authoritarian system opposed at its core to democratic competition and decentralization of power. It is unwilling to share power and authority with non-clients and to surrender control of the political process. However, while democracy takes a back seat, this hijacking of decentralization by patron-client relationships and by the CDP machinery is not altogether antithetical to the end goal of stability. By using communes and regions as instruments of patronage and penetration into the countryside, the CDP has reinforced its stability. Ironically, although the decentralization sequence was slowed down by the political upheaval of the Zongo crisis which shook the regime to its core, it is

decentralization in the end that might have saved the government and restored its social foundations.

### 3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE NATIONAL ARENA

There is a certain symbiosis between politics at the national and at the decentralized levels. The domination of the local elections of 2006 by the CDP mimics its domination of national politics (it obtained 73 percent of the votes at the 2005 legislative elections).<sup>15</sup> As a result, and with the understanding that decentralization does not truly represent a redistribution of power away from the national incumbents, it is not a particularly controversial national political topic.<sup>16</sup>

Simon Ouédraogo, the mayor of Ouagadougou, nicely illustrates the connection between national and decentralized politics. For a long time, he was the chairman of the ODP-MT, the ancestor to the CDP. He was appointed candidate of the ODP-MT for Ouagadougou mayor (and, hence, all but promised the job) as reward for political loyalty. Similar appointments of “barons” of the party and other important patrons have occurred throughout the country at different levels of authority. Such practices help explain why there is general support for decentralization within the party. The neo-patrimonial nature of the regime, predicated upon the handing out of parcels of sovereignty to big clients of the president, who are in turn patrons of their own followers, has found in decentralization a wonderful opportunity for the creation of additional patronage opportunities. It is hard to win in an urban commune against a representative of the ruling regime. And, in rural communes, loyal chiefs are in turn rewarded. Hence, there is little resistance to decentralization from within the ranks of power but at the same time, as suggested earlier, there is relatively little democratization taking place through decentralization. It reproduces and spreads the domination of the ruling party through the country more than it opens new avenues for local expressions of governance. The influence of national political parties on local politics prevents the emergence of local parties that might better represent the concerns of the inhabitants of their electoral circumscription. This pattern somewhat undermines the eventual objective of decentralization to promote local participative democracy.

While there is limited *political* opposition to decentralization at the national level, there remains a certain but not critical amount of *administrative* opposition, mainly in the form of passive resistance. For example, the different ministries involved in the implementation of the decentralization in the CONAD three-year plan failed to budget for their planned interventions, guaranteeing thereby that they would not initially be implemented. The plan’s appraisal report also notes that deconcentration services work with limited enthusiasm and have little commitment to the success of decentralization. The report notes a “Jacobinist” reluctance to adapt to the new institutional environment (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 24). As such, the report also notes that decentralized ministries, like health and education, continue to display organizational structures (such as health districts and circumscriptions for basic education) that do not match the new territorial collectivities. Moreover, the deconcentrated structures have little local level

---

<sup>15</sup> The CDP’s domination is probably greater even at the communal level. With some 70% of the votes in 2006, the CDP ended up winning almost 90% of the mayorships.

<sup>16</sup> We do not directly address the issue of “The Decentralization Sequence,” apart from a brief reference in the conclusion. This is largely because, in Burkina, the lack of effective transfers of power reduces the relative impact of sequencing.

accountability, little local authority and amount to little more than relay stations for centralized decision-making (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 24).

Finally, it is worth touching upon the dynamics of CONAD in this section. Its adoption in 2007, together with the strategic compact for the implementation of decentralization (CSMOD), marked a significant push in the commitment of the national government to decentralization. After endless tergiversations on the question of the effective transfer of competence, the CSMOD finally set the momentum for the passing of the 2009 decrees on health care, education, water, and sports/culture. Yet, at the same time, both CONAD and the CSMOD mark a re-centralization of the decentralization process. By reinforcing the leading role of centralized structures (under the direct authority of the prime minister!) over the local dynamics of communes and regions, they represent, to a certain degree, a dispossession of these local structures (albeit not an intentional one). As such, they embody the strong centralized tradition of the Burkinabe state and its propensity for a top-down approach to policy, which decentralization has so far done little to erode.

### 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE SUBNATIONAL ARENA

Relations between deconcentrated and decentralized authorities make up a large part of the sub-national arena and are characterized by the continued ascendancy of the former. The lack of local financial resources and the resulting recourse by communes to the services of secretaries general appointed by MATD only compounds the problem. We have amply discussed these dynamics earlier.

Aside from deconcentrated and delegated state agencies, the other level of governance that communes interact with at the local level is the customary chiefdom. Traditional chiefs are by themselves a complex institution in Burkina, which varies between regions. It is common, however, for villages to have a political/administrative chief and a land chief, who typically come from different lineages (Laurent, 1995, pp. 34–43). Some interesting dynamics have unfolded, since the beginning of decentralization, with these indigenous authorities. Historically, before the Compaoré regime, chiefs were frequently repressed by the central government, and some appear to have seen in decentralization a possibility to add a legal dimension to their “traditional” legitimacy to prevent such adversity in the future (Ouédraogo, 2003, p. 101). Thus, some traditional chiefs have run successfully for local office. While this may seem to provide some indigenous representation to the state, it can also sometimes result in problems as communes are in charge of people of different ethnic groups, whereas the authority of chiefs might be more conscribed to certain communities or domains such as the distribution of land for agriculture and livestock. As a result, local elected officials who also happen to be traditional chiefs have at times found themselves on shaky legal grounds (Ouédraogo, 2003, p. 101).

Since many chiefs are co-opted by the ruling party, it is not surprising that they tend to run on the government’s list, and their elections represent as much the local extension of national neo-patrimonial politics as the representation of local interests. For example, the *Larlé Naba*, a top-ranking Mossi chief, was also elected municipal counselor of Ouagadougou in 1995, in addition to his post as member of the National Assembly (Loada and Otayek, 1995, p. 137). The holding of multiple offices (in the French style) are not uncommon in Burkina Faso.

Sometimes, however, decentralization perturbs the established way of things at the local level and can undermine or reshuffle existing structures of authority and social relations. This is essentially due to the fact that decentralization empowers communes, which are aggregations of several villages, whereas indigenous authority typically resides at the village level. From this perspective, decentralization itself means in fact a certain degree of centralization. This displacement of authority to the level of the communes involves a loss of control by village hierarchies and populations. This relocation of authority can sometimes clash with local social dynamics. In the West, for example, “cultural hamlets” formed by migrants from the Mossi plateau are typically in a relation of subordination with the indigenous villages from whom they borrow land. Yet, the aggregation of their votes at the level of the commune dissolves this relationship and reduces accountability among these groups, which can occasionally trigger grievances from indigenous communities, increasingly couched in a language of autochthony (Hilgers and Jacob, 2008, pp. 182–183). If such trends generalize, decentralization may end up being associated with increased social polarization, undermining its long-term goal of stability.

There is no widespread evidence so far, however, that this is indeed a large trend. But there is new evidence that decentralization has promoted the rise of localized political contention. In a recent paper, Ernest Harsch documented 207 reported instances of demonstrations, mass rallies, marches, sit-ins, strikes, and riots in more than 30 of Burkina’s 49 urban communes (he did not research rural ones, which were only created in 2003 and had their first elections in 2006). Harsch argues that many of these events contest the “goals and process of decentralization” (2009, p. 265), particularly the allocation of urban land titles, corruption, “rivalries among local elites,” and limited effective democratization. Some of these also pitched “indigenous” communities against perceived newcomers and challenged the results of the elections or subsequent manipulation in the installation of mayors and their deputies by municipal councilors. As we have seen, much politics (and occasional corruption) takes place at this stage, with the frequent intervention of national political figures or representatives of the CDP to adjudicate disputes among candidates and promote certain individuals. More worryingly, perhaps, Harsch’s data show that instances of contention have increased over time and peak in years following municipal elections (32 instances in 2001 and 49 in 2007)

### **3.4 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE CIVIL SOCIETY ARENA<sup>17</sup>**

Burkina has a comparatively weak civil society and, relative to some other African countries (particularly Mali), it has had limited civil society involvement in decentralization (Ouédraogo, 2003). Yet, this is not to say that civil society is irrelevant. In fact, the president of the CND, Antoine Raogo Sawadogo, began his public career as president of a large agricultural CSO network called Naam. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the decentralization process, which was initiated and implemented with very little CSO involvement, may in fact be hurting the interests of CSOs and altogether weaken local civil society. As discussed earlier, decentralization has allowed for the emergence of new political actors (e.g., CVDs, political parties, etc.) which might have lesser capacity than CSOs for the promotion of the interests of local populations. These new actors become legitimate local institutions while not necessarily benefiting from any

---

<sup>17</sup> In Burkina as in many African countries, traditional authorities are better understood as representatives of the state than as members of civil society. Thus, their role was discussed in the preceding section.

particular social capital and social trust. There is particularly a certain degree of competition between CSOs and political parties.

The penetration of the local development arena by the new decentralized and deconcentrated institutions of the state has pushed back NGOs, despite their comparative advantage at the local level. One would have expected that decentralization would have acted as a multiplier on their influence. However, in some areas, an opposite effect seems to have happened. The penetration of political parties at the local level, through municipal elections, has brought politics to the communes and the villages and squeezed out associative life. NGOs shy from participating in structures which replicate locally the national political game. As such they might have lost some local influence (Sebahara and Sindogo, 2004, p. 388). Further researching this paradoxical dynamic might provide motivation for possible future field work, if this is an area of particular interest to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or other donors.

In addition to conventional notions of civil society, it is important to include here a discussion of the effects of decentralization on identity. Decentralization can reshape the local public arenas in which local struggles for power, resources, and influences are being waged. Such reshuffles have consequences which can be positive or negative in terms of the intermediate and final goals of decentralization. One important consequence, linked to dynamics of civil society, is that decentralization, by changing the local institutional context, also contributes to reshaping and altering the salience of identity. Although ethnic politics is not as dominant in Burkina as in many other African countries, tensions do exist among some ethnic groups, particularly in the West, where recent migratory patterns have pitted “indigenous” communities, like the Bobo, Dioula or Senoufo, against “newcomers” like the Fulbe (who are semi-nomadic) and the Mossi, many of whom have acquired land in the West in response to demographic pressures in the central Mossi plateau.

The increased prerogatives of local authorities under decentralized rule have made the notion of who is a “indigenous” and who is not more important than before and have thus somewhat contributed to increasing social polarization among ethnic groups, as mentioned earlier. The Senoufo, in particular, have claimed “autochthonous” status in some districts like Comoé and Léraba provinces. Writing about them, Sten Hagberg (2004, p. 52) suggests that “through decentralized political institutions and structures, politicians have come to use local collective identities in rallying electoral campaigns, leading to situations in which first-comers (or “autochthons”) are opposed to latecomers (or “strangers”).”

This type of social dynamics challenges the idea that decentralized political structures are necessarily “closer to the people.” In multiethnic environments, where ethnicity can represent a powerful factor of mobilization, the decentralization of authority increases the stakes of social competition and allows latent divisions to surface. As it nears full-fledged federalism, it can also lead to discourses of autochthony and allochthony (indigenous vs. non-indigenous) through which established elites try to reduce competition for office and resources by declaring some groups legally ineligible (Nigeria’s concept of what it calls “indigeneity” provides a worrisome example of what can lie ahead for countries that follow this trajectory). Hence, it is the very liberal notion of citizenship, the very foundation of democracy, which can find itself challenged through decentralization, although one of its ultimate purposes is to foster democracy.

### 3.5 INSTITUTIONAL ARENAS: THE DONOR ARENA

In general, donors were originally very enthusiastic about decentralization and ready to commit funds in its support, but the lack of tangible progress has led to an erosion of their commitment over time. The devolution of authority to communes in the fields of education, health, water, and sports/culture since March 2009 might have helped restore some donor enthusiasm. At the very least, official documents suggest that the government is counting on such a resurgence to help finance the next phases of the process.

Several smaller donors (the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, and Switzerland) have formed a “collective of donors” or “common basket” early in the decentralization process and pooled their resources in support of deconcentrated agencies initially set up to facilitate decentralization by providing extension services and targeted interventions at the local level. The collective lasted until 2003. France and Germany have also been active partners in decentralization but with their own bilateral projects. The *Agence Française de Développement* financed projects in several large urban communes, micro-projects in communes and villages, and provided institutional support for MATD. Germany has financed infrastructure and equipment in 47 urban communes (all but Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso), and supports MATD, the CND (when it existed), and the *Association des Municipalités du Burkina Faso*. In addition, it sponsors several decentralized rural projects, as does Belgium. As for the African Development Bank (AfDB), it has endowed a Fund for Communal Development with the goal of poverty reduction in the poorest communes. Finally, a series of NGOs and other international partners work directly with some communes in what has become known as “decentralized cooperation” (Harsch, 2009, p. 284). In 2001, the Burkina government set up a National Commission for Decentralized Cooperation (CONACOD) to “harmonize” their interventions (in typical centralizing fashion!). Altogether, MATD estimates that foreign financing accounts for more than 70 percent of the investments of local collectivities, and that project ownership by local groups and populations is weak. Hence, interestingly and somewhat paradoxically, decentralization also seems to further aid dependency across the territory.

**Table 4. A Selection of Donor-Sponsored Decentralization Projects (amounts in CFA mn)**

Donor	Project	Where	Date	Amount
Germany	Support for decentralization	Nation-wide	1997–2003	3,689
Canada	Institutional support and capacity-building	Nation-wide	1997–2002	1,300
France	Institutional Support	Nation-wide	2000–2003	800
Netherlands	Technical support	Three regions	2001–2004	250
Denmark	Institutional and local development support	Sagedecom, Fodecom	1994–2003	243
AfDB	Poverty reduction	15 poorest urban communes	N.A.	14,376
UNDP	Capacity-building	Urban communes	N.A.	803
Switzerland	Construction assistance	Fodecol	N.A.	3,339
Denmark, Netherlands, Canada	Capacity-building	Agedecol	N.A.	1,415

Source: *Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et Décentralisation*. Sagedecom, Fodecom, Agedecol and Fodecol were institutions set up early on in the decentralization process to help local collectives raise the necessary funds and acquire the necessary technological competence.

Since the creation of CONAD and CSMOD in 2007, the government has again encouraged donors to contribute to a “common basket” to finance the three-year plan together with the government. A mixed committee of government-donors was set up in 2009 to this effect. Yet, there is some evidence of donors’ cold feet. Donors appear weary of the lack of effective dialogue with the government. Some donors also seem to believe that the MATD should be more committed before asking them for additional help (Burkina Faso, 2009, p. 9).



# 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Despite the problems associated with decentralization, particularly the extent to which it is in fact a centralized process, there is nevertheless a remarkable national momentum in favor of it and it is certainly at the center of the political debate. For better or worse, decentralization is now fully part of the Burkinabe institutional and political landscape. Yet, although it is now well established and heavily legislated, Burkina's decentralization is also rather limited in scope and effectiveness. The extent to which it serves the ultimate goals of decentralization—stability, democracy, and development—is somewhat unclear. There is little doubt that it has contributed to placating donors and to reducing domestic political tensions, contributing thereby to domestic stability. Yet, such stability might have come at the expense of genuine democratic decentralized governance.

It is, of course, somewhat unreasonable to expect good local governance in a political system characterized by authoritarianism, patronage, corruption, and factional politics. To a large extent, local governance reflects national politics. As Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan once wrote in the context of Senegal, decentralization brings politics into the village, but lets power seep out of it. While politics is indeed closer to the citizen than it used to be, it is unclear whether this corresponds to any improvement in actual governance in the aggregate. Finally, the link between decentralization and development is at best tenuous in Burkina. Decentralization might actually have disempowered local village development associations, and the lack of local resources makes communal development plans more theoretical than practical exercises. It is thus far from certain, in the present circumstances, whether Burkina's decentralization balance sheet comes out in favor of democracy and development.

## 4.1 VARIATIONS

An important dimension of Burkina's decentralization, and one of its main liabilities, remains the imbalance of power between deconcentrated and decentralized units. The salience of deconcentration probably reflects a bit of a commitment problem from central authorities. Decentralization is alright as long as it does not effectively displace power. In practice, the significant parallel structure of deconcentrated institutions is redundant and might undermine the substance of decentralization.

The problem of an effective transfer of power is related to the sequencing of the administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions of decentralization in Burkina. Tulia Falleti (2005) has suggested that implementing political and fiscal decentralization first tends to increase the power of local governance structures, while early administrative decentralization (which transfers administration and delivery of social services without changing the rule of selection of local authorities and without giving them fiscal autonomy) tends to have the opposite effect. In

Burkina, for sure, the lack of effective decentralization of power is linked to the effective limits on all three types of decentralization, none of which is complete. But it also derives from the fact that the government has tended to privilege administrative decentralization at the expense of the two other dimensions until very recently. The principle of delegation of authority over the provision of public goods was established as early as 1993. Yet, the first nation-wide municipal elections (which still do not fully provide for political decentralization as discussed elsewhere in this report) did not take place until 2006, and a serious (albeit still very partial) step towards fiscal decentralization was not achieved until the adoption of the March 2009 decrees.

In addition, the decision to use administrative circumscriptions, such as the department and the region, as units of decentralization, is somewhat unfortunate as it promotes a dual system that undermines the autonomy of the communes and regions. It was probably well intentioned to have deconcentrated and decentralized units at the same level, for the state is supposed to provide support to the communes, but in practice it has led to a lack of clarity with respect to what institution is in charge of what (reinforced by the lack of financial means of the communes and regions) and a dilution of communes as organs of local governance.

At the same time, the most basic unit of social, political, and economic life—the village—finds itself largely excluded from the decentralization. Communes include several villages in a top-down process, according to whether they belong to the same department. Contrast this with the experience of Mali where villages were given the opportunity to come together on a voluntary basis to form communes. Villages in Burkina are not without institutions but they are either traditional (chiefs) or largely deconcentrated (like the CVDs). Thus, the essential building block for development finds itself somewhat excluded from the decentralization process, one of the aims of which was to increase local ownership of the development process.

Variations over time in the institutional and legal landscape are also somewhat problematic, as they reduce local ownership of the process and send a signal of wavering government commitment and unpredictability, all of which reduce the incentives to participate. For example, provinces were first territorial collectivities, then they were no longer. Villages first had their delegates, then they had CDVs. Communes were first supposed to take over 11 domains of competence, then they effectively got none until they finally received four of them. It appears that this unstable process is ongoing rather than abating. There are discussions in Ouagadougou of changing the electoral circumscriptions for the next round of municipal elections in 2011.

The entrenched urban bias of Burkina's decentralization represents another problematic variation, a geographic one this time. For all practical purpose, decentralization is largely limited to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, whether in terms of institutional innovations or finances. The other urban communes, while not as advantaged as the two large cities, also benefit disproportionately from decentralization. Meanwhile, the 302 rural communes and their populations continue to be largely neglected. This bias largely deprives decentralization of its purpose of bringing government closer to the people, for the people of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso already were closest to government and its services and more influential in the system.

## 4.2 COMPARATIVE LESSONS

A few simple lessons arise from Burkina's decentralization experience. First, top-down decentralization is probably not an ideal process, nor is gradualism. A more radical transition to

decentralized governance earlier in the process, as several donors unsuccessfully pushed for, might have had better effects. A more endogenous process, like Mali's, also appears more capable of effectively transferring power and accountability to local communities.

A second crucial lesson is that decentralization can only be as democratic as the regime that presides over it. The penetration of authoritarian neo-patrimonialism in the villages and the hegemony of the CDP in municipal elections have emptied much of the process of its democratic potential. The law should allow for local candidates unrelated to national parties or even ban explicit party affiliations in communal elections in order to increase local ownership of governance institutions. Mechanisms should also be found by which mayors would be elected by universal suffrage rather than by municipal councilors, which is a process that is excessively liable to manipulation. In general, donors should think hard about the usefulness of their efforts towards decentralization if they are unable to encourage or constrain the national regime to democratize.

Third, there might be a threshold of income below which decentralization is practically unfeasible. Burkina is testing these limits. It might indeed be possible for a country to be too poor to decentralize. If there is insufficient creation of wealth in the villages to offer some basis for taxation, communes will remain under-financed and at the mercy of the national government. Similarly, local villagers will not develop a sense of ownership of their commune if they do not participate more significantly in its financing. At the national level, decentralization also represents a fiscal burden, particularly in the transition period when there might be considerable overlap among old and new agencies. In a country as poor as Burkina, such fiscal burden implies difficult trade-offs. (See report on taxation in Burkina Faso at [http://www.fiscalreform.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=919&Itemid=161](http://www.fiscalreform.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=919&Itemid=161)).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind the relationship between decentralization and development, which is one of its ultimate goals. It is only under a certain set of conditions that decentralization will promote development. In Burkina, before decentralization, there were provincial technical exchange committees (*cadres de concertation technique provinciaux* [CCTP]) which brought together all the actors of local development, such as technical services from ministries, public administration, and CSOs. With the decline of the province, these committees have disappeared and governors have not so far successfully recreated these institutions at the regional level. The governor of the Sahel region told us that he deplored the difficulties in bringing together these different actors. He mentioned existing conflicts between mayors and department prefects, whose roles in development are not adequately differentiated by law. In short, the problem lies in the fact that the new institutional architecture does not put local development—and local ownership of development—at its core, with the consequence that ad hoc solutions are invented, which do not so far perform as well as the structures that existed beforehand.

### 4.3 FINAL QUESTIONS

What gaps remain in our knowledge? Although we were able to collect a large amount of quantitative and qualitative information about Burkina's decentralization, there remains a general lack of information about the manner in which decentralization is lived and the way that local politics plays out on the ground especially among rural communities. Beyond their elections and their budgets, how do municipal councils really work? What do mayors really do? How do local

populations interact with these structures on a daily basis? How has the transfer of competencies to communes changed the manner in which the decentralized public services are performed and the degree to which local populations are involved in the design and implementation of policies in these fields?

It would be very worthwhile to be able to do fieldwork to address these questions. Such fieldwork could combine quantitative instruments such as random user surveys in a random set of communes, together with qualitative case study narratives from a couple of different rural communes and small urban communes (Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso already get all the attention and do not need more). To spend time with local municipal councilors, populations, local associations, traditional authorities, and businesses; to understand how decentralization affects their life; and understand how it can be made to improve them more would be a very fruitful exercise.

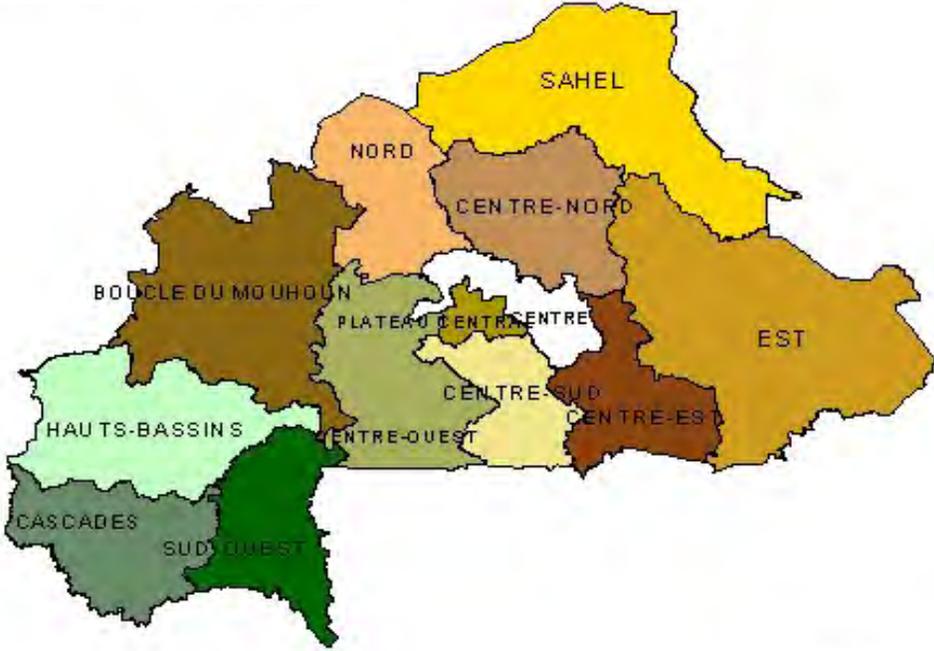
There is also a greater need for comparable data collection on the ways in which communes raise their local funds (what taxes? administered how?) and spend them. What is the rate of project implementation at the municipal level? What is the comparative degree of direct involvement of donors with communes across the country? Finding answers to these and other similar questions would complete our knowledge of Burkina's decentralization process.

# APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Burkina Faso. (1991). "Constitution. Adoptée par référendum du 2 juin 1991." [revised in 1997, 2000 and 2002]
- Burkina Faso. (2001). "Les Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation (TOD) du Burkina Faso. Modifiés. Ouagadougou: Commission Nationale de la Décentralisation.
- Burkina Faso. (2009). "Rapport d'Activités 2008-2009 du Plan d'Action Triennal 2008-2010 du Cadre Stratégique de Mise en Oeuvre de la Décentralisation. Ouagadougou: Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation. May.
- Burkina Faso. (2010a). "Financement de la Décentralisation au Burkina Faso: La Contribution du Budget de l'Etat. » Unpublished document.
- Burkina Faso. (2010b). "Analyse du Financement de la Décentralisation au Burkina Faso." Unpublished document.
- Hagberg, Sten. 2004. "Political Decentralization and Traditional Leadership in the Benkadi Hunters' Association in Western Burkina Faso," *Africa Today*, ...
- Engberg-Pederson, Lars and Mikael Erbs-Jorgensen. (2006). "Political and Institutional Factors Influencing decentralization in Burkina Faso." February. Unpublished document.
- Englebert, Pierre. (1996). *Burkina Faso: Unsteady Statehood in West Africa*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press.
- Faletti, Tulia. (2005). "A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective," *American Political Science Review*, 99 (3):327-346.
- Gerster, Richard. (n.d.). "Decentralisation in Burkina Faso: On the Way to Autonomy." 4p.
- Harsch, Ernest. (2009). "Urban Protest in Burkina Faso," *African Affairs*, April, 108(431): 263-288.
- Hilgers, M. (2006). "Voter à Koudougou : la soumission d'une ville rebelle?", *Politique Africaine*, 101, 42-62.
- Hilgers, M. and J. Mazzocchetti. (2006). "L'après Zongo : entre ouverture politique et fermeture des possibles," *Politique Africaine*, 101, 5-18.
- Hilgers, Mathieu and Jean-Pierre Jacob. (2008). "Anthropologie de la candidature électorale au Burkina Faso," *Afrique Contemporaine*, 2008, 4, 228, 171-190.
- Hilgers, Mathieu. (2008). "Politiques urbaines, contestation et decentralization: Lotissement et representations sociales au Burkina Faso," *Autrepart* (47):209-226.
- Kambou, G. Benoit. (1988). "La décentralisation au Burkina Faso: Mythe ou Réalité?" *Revue Burkinabè de Droit*, 379-389.

- Laurent, P.-J. (1995). Les pouvoirs politiques locaux et la décentralisation au Burkina Faso, Académia - L'Harmattan, Louvain-la-Neuve - Paris.
- Laurent, P.-J., et al. (2004). *Décentralisation et citoyenneté au Burkina Faso. Le cas de Ziniaré*, L'Harmattan - Académia Bruylant, Paris -Louvain-la-Neuve.
- Loada, Augustin and René Otayek. (1995). « Les élections municipales du 12 février 1995 au Burkina Faso », in *Politique africaine*, n° 58, pp. 135-142.
- Ouédraogo, Hubert M. (2003). "Decentralization and Local Governance: Experiences from Francophone West Africa," *Public Administration and Development*, 23:97-103. Sawadogo, A. R. 2001. *L'Etat africain face a la décentralisation*. Paris: Karthala
- Sawadogo, B. and P. Sebahara. (2004). "Historique de la décentralisation au Burkina Faso." In Laurent, J-P et al. *Décentralisation ...*, 59-78.
- Sebahara, Pamphile. (2000). *Acteurs et enjeux de la décentralisation et du développement local : Expériences d'une commune du Burkina Faso*. Document de réflexion ECDPM 21. Maastricht : ECDPM, November.
- Sebahara, Pamphile. (2004). "Pluralisme Institutionnel et Politiques de Développement Communal," In Laurent et al., *Décentralisation...*
- Sebahara, Pamphile and Flore Sindogo. (2004). "Décentralisation et citoyenneté communale: Réflexions sur la construction de l'espace public municipal." In Laurent et al. *Décentralisation*.
- Totté, M., T. Dahou & R. Billaz (eds.). (n.d.). *La Décentralisation en Afrique de l'Ouest: Entre Politique et Développement*. Paris: Karthala.
- Jacob, J-P. (1998). "La décentralisation comme distance. Réflexions sur la mise en place des collectivités territoriales en milieu rural ouest-africain," *Politique Africaine*, 71:133, 147.

# APPENDIX 2: MAP OF BURKINA FASO'S 13 REGIONS





# APPENDIX 3: MAP OF BURKINA FASO'S 302 DEPARTMENTS/COMMUNES





**U.S. Agency for International Development**

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

Tel: (202) 712-0000

Fax: (202) 216-3524

**[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)**