

BREAK HOSTILITY — CREATE UNITY

DECOLONIALISM IN TRANSCULTURAL DESIGN PROJECTS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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SUNRISE¹

//PREFACE

INTRODUCTION²

Since I've been studying Integrated Design for more than three years, I could now concentrate fully on doing aesthetic and beautiful things, surrounding myself with creativity, and bringing this creativity and aesthetic into other people's lives. That would have been the easy choice. I would probably have found a job somewhere, earning money by creating, doing and selling aesthetics and beauty. But I can't. I cannot ignore all the horrible things happening in the world. I cannot ignore the fact that our world is still so damned unfair and unequal. Perhaps it is the experiences I gained in the Ghanaian vocational training school that won't let me go. Under any circumstances, this has led me to wanting to contribute to fighting global inequality and power imbalance. But since I am a designer per study and a privileged white* woman, I am confronted with two problems: How can I as a white person help to reduce these inequalities and shape decolonial* processes? And how can I contribute as a designer? Can design methods and techniques be helpful for decolonial processes?

To end the global injustice and power imbalance, we must integrate decolonialism into all our thoughts and actions. Therefore, I investigate how transcultural* design projects in the Global South* implement decolonialism. I want to understand whether the transculturality and the creativity of design projects help them to achieve decolonialism. How can decolonialism evolve and be brought into a lived reality? Moreover, I am interested in exploring if the fulfilling of decolonialism can contribute to more connectivity and cooperation between Global South and North. Can the global implementation of decolonialism thereby contribute to an equal and fair, thus a decolonial world? Because what we urgently need is a decolonial future!

» Here, I will give a short overview, so the reader roughly knows the steps and key points I want to achieve with this thesis to contribute to the process of decolonialism. I will start with a preface consisting of an introduction and a short explanation of nondiscriminatory language.

The first chapter is an analysis of theories on the implementation of decolonialism. Then some background knowledge and the legacies of colonialism on today's world are discussed. To round off I will try to contribute to helping understand why we need a discourse on decolonialism and implementation of it in all thoughts and actions.

The second chapter is based on interviews with creative projects in the Global South and focuses on their experiences with decolonialisation. The interviews and the empirical results will repeatedly be drawn upon when analysing their experiences with decolonising, the impact of design on society and how a decolonial world could look like and be achieved.

Thereafter I will present some conclusions of my research: a utopia of a decolonial socially sustainable* world and how this may become reality. However, before wondering too much about that, let's focus on where we are at the moment: at the beginning.

NON-DISCRIMINATING LANGUAGE

Some might wonder why I write a specific paragraph on our use of language. Language is powerful since it does shape our thinking and by that our society. Especially in the context of decolonialism language is a very sensitive topic since the marginalisation of

- 1 The colourful symbols I use for the larger headings are *Bantu* symbols. The *Bantu* symbol language was originally developed to pass on information to the next generation, but at the same time to make this information available not to everyone, but only to insiders. Thus, only medicine men, elders and wise men could read and write this language on Calabash pumpkins, mats, drums, ceramics and houses. Nowadays it is mainly women who continue to use this language. Each symbol of the *Bantu* symbol language represents a whole word or a complex idea. I have written the headlines with *Bantu* symbols, but for comprehensibility I wrote the English translation next to the symbols. See: Saki Mafundikwa, *Afrikan Alphabets: The story of writing in Afrika* (New York: Mark Batty Publisher, 2007), 37–45.
- 2 So that you can better follow the work, my thoughts and structure:
» These are notes to the readers on the structure of the work.
The more subjectively written paragraphs can be recognised this way.
Terms* being explained in the glossary are marked with this orange cross.
Explanations in the footnotes that supplement the body text are marked in bold.

people from former colonies happened and is still happening, among other things, through language. The colonisers classified and named the former colonies. As Sow states, foreign definition also means foreign determination.³ To classify and name other groups is always a gesture of exercising power over 'the others'⁴. Probably you cannot quite see what I mean, because one first recognises discrimination when affected negatively by it, but maybe you can guess roughly what I mean. In order to give a more detailed explanation I decided to write about the language used. This will hopefully bring some more awareness for the language we use in daily life and motivate to use a more non-discriminating language.

I will use gender-neutral-language in order to reject the existence of a binary sex system, thus, to include all sexes and genders, and moreover avoid reproducing the superiority of males through language. English is a language that has no grammatical gender and so most nouns, adjectives and pronouns are not gender specific.⁴ But there are still some details to be aware of in order to use gender-neutral-language. Writing and speaking gender-neutral means using gender neutral job descriptions (*flight attendant* instead of *steward/stewardess*). For job descriptions that are not explicitly masculine (for example not having *man* in the word) but have a feminine form, the basic form should still be used for all genders (*actor* instead of *actress*). In gender-neutral-language one should prefer *human(s)*, *humankind*, *humanity* instead of *men*, *mankind*. I will use the gender-neutral pronouns *s/he*. Generally accepted alternatives are *(s)he*, *he/she*, *he or she* and singular *they*.

Additionally, language is not just gender exclusive but also discriminatory in other ways. To prevent that, I use *Black*⁵ as the politically correct and most importantly self-designated term, chosen by Black people. Referring to Sow⁵, Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah⁶ I use *Black* with a capital *B* as a political self-designation by Black people and *white*, with a small *w* as a social positioning of white people. Be aware that *Black* and *white* do not describe biological aspects (like skin colour) but describe the socio-political reality of each individual.

Moreover, I will use the political self-designation *Person/People of Colour (PoC)*⁵ to describe everyone of any race that is not white. The term acknowledges that people who are not white have similar experiences in predominantly white societies.

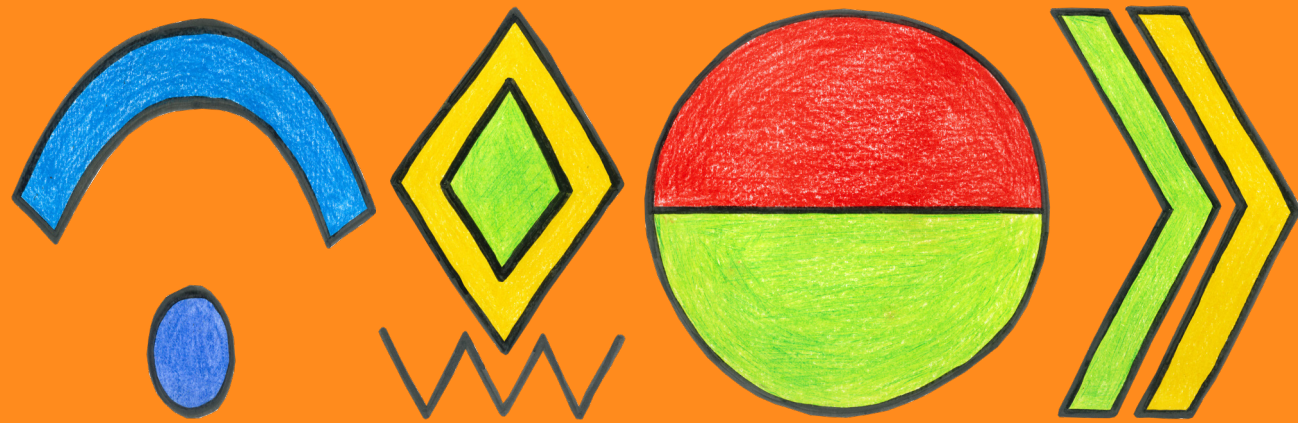
Finally, I would like to state that I never intent to or assume to know and write the only truth. I will just try to answer my questions on the implementation of decolonialism with best knowledge and conscience.

³ For the following see: Noah Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß: Der alltägliche Rassismus* (München: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 2008), 29.

⁴ For the following see: "Gender neutrality in English: Problems and their resolution," Wikipedia, accessed January 19, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_neutrality_in_English#Problems_and_their_resolution.

⁵ Noah Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß: Der alltägliche Rassismus* (München: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 2008).

⁶ Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, ed., *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 2019).



BRAIN CREATES FUTURE UNITY

//THEORY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECO-
LONIALISM

When analysing the historical background knowledges of (neo*)colonialism* a suitable *Adinkra*⁷ symbol is *Epa*: a symbol for servitude, law, justice, slavery and captivity.⁸ By saying “You are the slave of him whose handcuffs you wear” *Epa* emphasises the inescapable nature of law and a rejection of all forms of slavery.

ABOUT GLOBAL SOUTH AND NORTH

The Term *Global South* is the antithesis of *Global North** (Fig. 1) and was developed as an alternative term to *developing countries* or *third world*. With these terms people, especially economists and politicians, are trying to categorise the world according to the development of countries. In the past, development was measured by the gross domestic product (GDP) of each country (Fig. 2). However, this only takes factors of economic development into account. Therefore, the Human Development Index (HDI) was introduced by the United Nations in order to additionally measure unquantifiable aspects of human life such as life expectancy and education (Figs. 3 & 4).⁹ The older terms *developing countries* and *third world* assumed that every country has to pass through certain stages of development, which the western world has already accomplished, in order to become as ‘well developed’ as the Global North. However, this extremely western-centered view has been (at least officially) abandoned.

Still the question remains if and how the terms *Global South* and *Global North*, the divisions of the world in these two hemispheres show the legacies of (neo)colonialism. Even though the terms were introduced as less western-centered alternatives to *developing countries* or *third world*, it is difficult to say whether it is possible to overcome (neo)colonialism and our conception of development only through changing terms. The *Global South* should attempt to develop a critical attitude towards the hegemonic position and universalism of the Global North. The terms clarify that there are indeed differences between the countries and regions of the world. However, they also try to embrace and accept that there is not one level of development that is better than the other and thus not one ‘good’ development path for all. In my perspective the terms *Global North* and *Global South* try to embrace the differences and to acknowledge the western world’s responsibility for these differences, without pretending there is a universal and ‘right’ way. Embracing differences and celebrating diversity — just as this wonderful world map (Fig. 5) turns our perspective on the world upside down and uses not only Latin script but the script of the respective countries.

Despite this linguistic theoretical reflection and therefore the use of the terms *Global South* and *Global North* our imagination of how a society should develop and what a good society consists of are deeply embedded in our subconscious. I do not believe that it is as easy as changing terms to overcome the legacies of (neo)colonialism in our assessment of different development processes. The change of terms is just one of various steps necessary to overcome (neo)colonialism. Like Felwine Sarr describes, the western understanding of development processes, their interpretative sovereignty of reality and their hegemony, are denying ‘the others’ their potential to develop their own vision of the future and imposes the western interpretation patterns onto foreign cultures.¹⁰ Sarr further explains that the assumption of the Global South simply having to adapt to the pace and rhythm of the rest of the world¹¹ and adopt the supposedly already established forms of western politics, urbanism, social, legal and economic practices is numbing the Global South.¹² This will mean the end of creativity and possibility to create a unique future identity in the respective country. Imposing the structures of one society on ano-

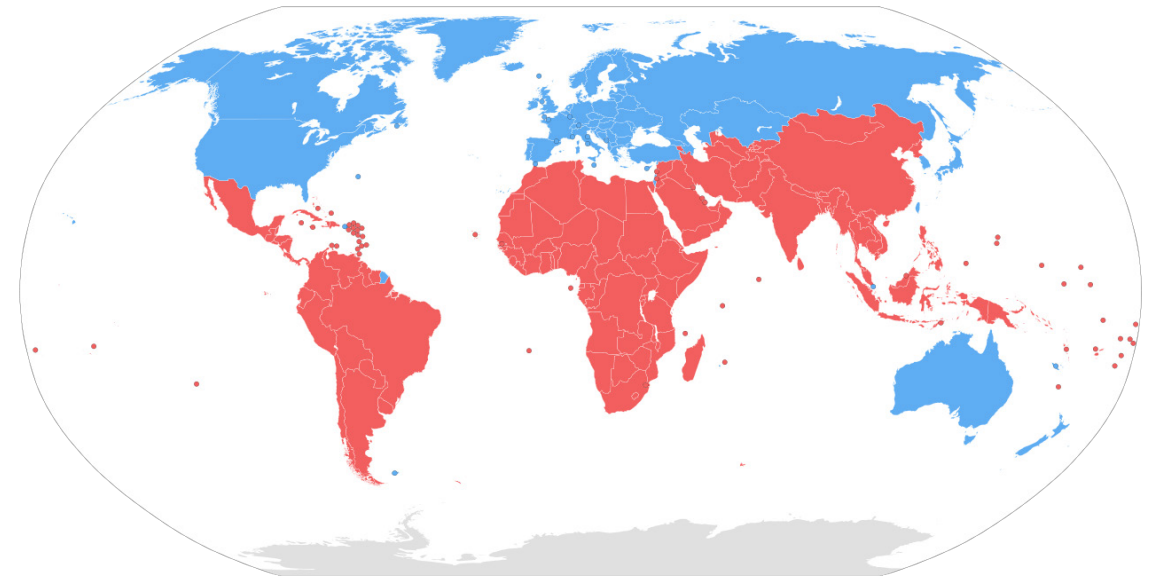


Fig. 1: World map showing a traditional definition of the North-South divide. Red countries belong to the *Global South*, whereas blue is the *Global North*.

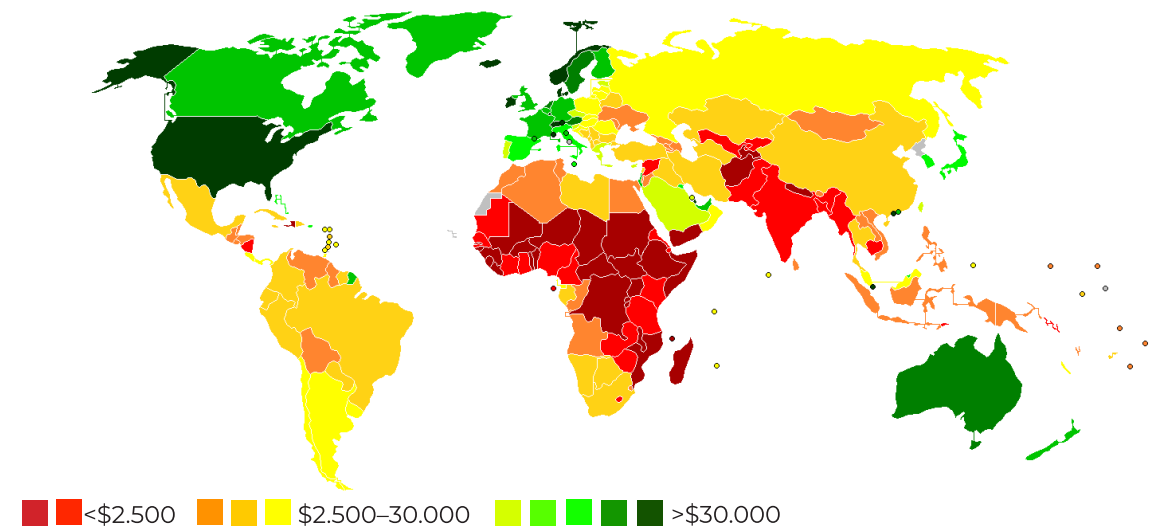


Fig. 2: Countries by 2018 GDP (nominal) per capita, Based on the IMF data. The map shows that measuring ‘development’ of countries based on the GDP wrongly concludes that a large part of the Global South is ‘underdeveloped’.

- 7 *Adinkra* is the symbol script of the Akan peoples of Ghana and the Ivory Coast and was created about 400 years ago. They symbolise proverbs, historical events, attitudes, objects, animals and plants. In Akan languages *Adinkra* means goodbye, because originally the fabrics printed with *Adinkra* symbols were worn at funerals. When using *Adinkra* symbols, one refers to the history, philosophy and beliefs of the Akan peoples. See: Mafundikwa, *Afrikan Alphabets*, 32–35.
- 8 For the following see: “EPA,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/epa.htm>.
- 9 See: “Human Development Index,” Wikipedia, accessed January 22, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Development_Index.
- 10 See: Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia*. (Berlin: MSB Matthes & Seitz Berlin Verlagsgesellschaft, 2019), 17.
- 11 See: Aimé Césaire, “Notizen von einer Rückkehr in die Heimat,” in *Ein Mensch, der schreit: 98 Gedichte aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Aimé Césaire (Berlin: 2019), cited after: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 128.
- 12 For the following see: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 128.

ther does not work that easily because of all external and internal differences. Moreover, according to Sarr, it even hinders the development of an independent, authentic, socially appropriate and therefore successful development.

» **Back to the terms Global South and Global North:** even though they are trying to overcome legacies of (neo)colonialism and a universalistic western judgement of right/wrong development, Sarr criticises the fact that it is impossible to measure the quality of life within a country on the basis of national wealth like GNP or HDI are trying to.¹³ Measuring and comparing the lives of humans on the basis of national wealth can never take the essence of life into account. Among other things, measuring national wealth does not consider the quality of social relations, the extent of social alienation, the cultural and the spiritual life in a society. Thus, Sarr concludes, one cannot measure the quality of life of a population on the basis of national prosperity, because it does not say anything about life itself, i.e. about its purpose and meaning.

Thus, with the current predominant assessment of development it is not possible to judge whether the quality of life is better or not within a certain country. This is where we could learn some lessons from Felwine Sarr, according to whom we should stop misjudging individual and social life. Because life cannot be measured in units, since it is an experience, not an achievement.¹⁴

After realising that the division of the world in the two hemispheres Global South and North is still characterised by (neo)colonialism and western universalism one question remains: How do we put an end to the continuing inequality and power imbalance between Global South and North despite the aforementioned connection of these terms to (neo)colonialism? The terms *Global South* and *Global North* make one understand that solving this imbalance is also a task of decolonialism. We need decolonialism to overcome the legacies of (neo)colonialism and by that also overcoming the differences between Global South and North.

» I will get deeper into the necessity of realising decolonialism later. First, a reflexion on my own background and positioning in order to understand where my perspectives, opinions and experiences developed from.

MY OWN WHITENESS

Honestly, I saw and called myself 'skin coloured' until a few years ago. Just like Noah Sow describes, I and most other white people have never considered ourselves as being white and belonging to a specific group in society because of our skin colour.¹⁵ This is due to the fact of growing up and living in a predominantly white society. So being white was 'normal'. Yet white being 'normal' is not the truth but a white universalism I am now trying to get rid of.

» **To better understand what white is defined as, I will refer to the aforementioned book by Sow.** She defines *white* as a socio-political term, not related to either biology or culture, but simply saying: This person is part of the group of white people.¹⁶ Yet it is not that simple to be counted by society as white: only those who look like only having white ancestors are accepted and classified by society as white.¹⁷ However, this classification depends strongly on the geographical, socio-cultural and historical context thus, the region and country in which it is made. In some regions a certain individual is perceived as white but in other regions not. For example, a Tunisian might be seen as a Person of Colour in Germany whereas in Ghana s/he will most likely be perceived as a white person.

A further aspect is that whiteness* is always connected with power since the border of

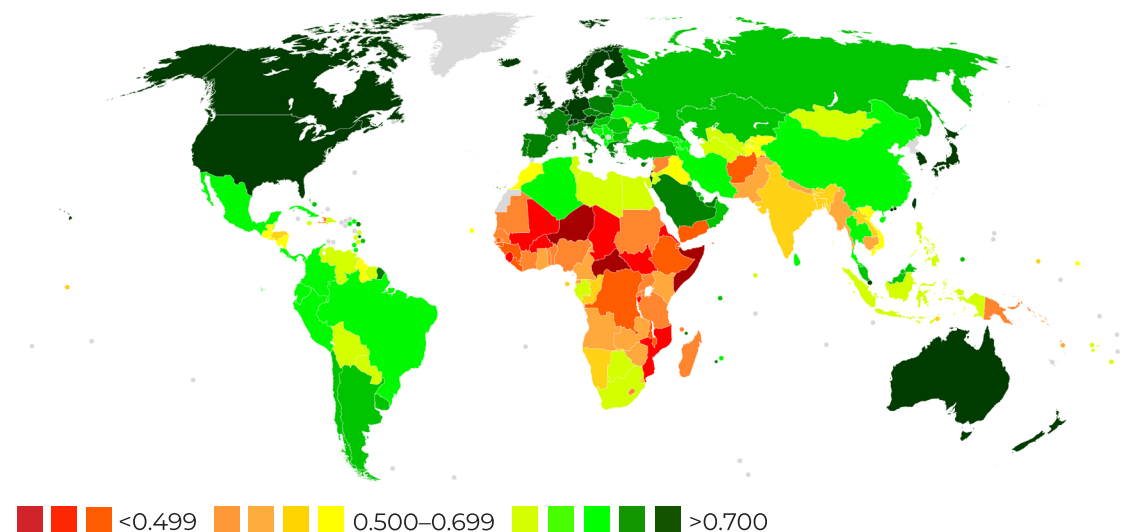


Fig. 3: World map of countries by Human Development Index categories in increments of 0.050 (based on 2018 data, published in 2019). Here one can see that measuring global development with the HDI by including life expectancy and education is less pessimistic than only the GDP. Nevertheless, the problematic hierarchy of 'good' and 'less good' development is still visible.

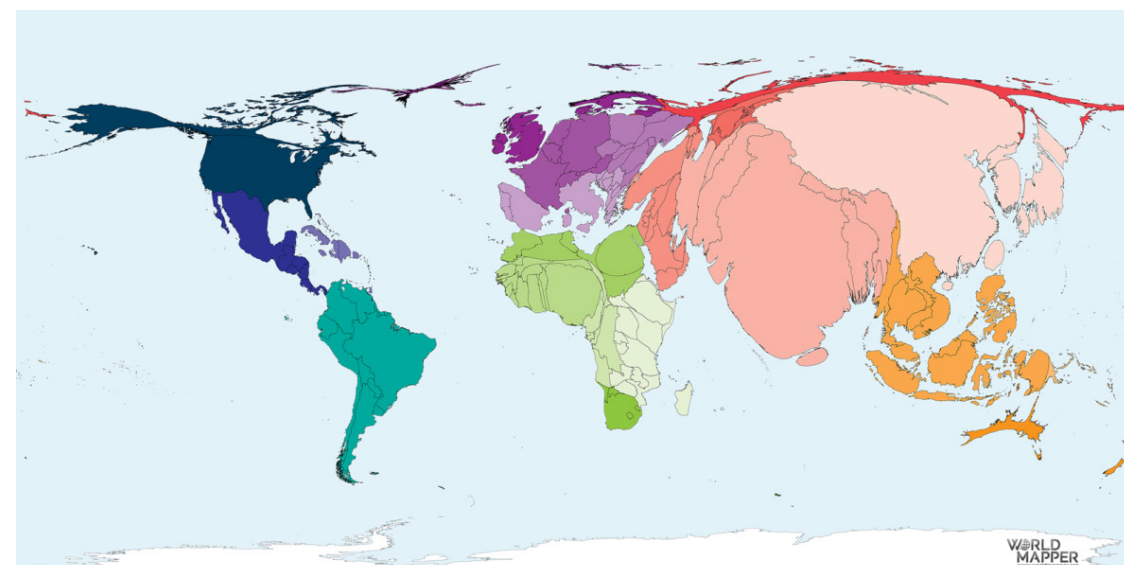


Fig. 4: Human Development 2015. The worldmappers develop maps that make certain factors, like here the HDI, more visible by the distortion of the world map. To achieve that the population of each country is multiplied by the HDI. The countries that have been downsized have an HDI below the global average, while the inflated countries have an above-average HDI.

¹³ For the following see: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 18.
¹⁴ See: *Ibid.*, 19.
¹⁵ See: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 29.
¹⁶ See: *Ibid.*, 27.
¹⁷ See: *Ibid.*, 28.

whiteness goes alongside the power structures of society.¹⁸ The border between white people and People of Colour makes visible who has or doesn't have power in a society.

Thus, I define whiteness socio-political, as a term for a social group being seen and accepted by society as *white*, depending on the geographical, socio-cultural and historical context. In general, white people are a group that neither define themselves or are seen as Black or People of Colour. Whiteness is especially characterised by having white privileges.

» **But what are white privileges?** — Most white people do not think they are profiting from privileges. We naïvely believe the western world developed that prosperously which affords ourselves such a comfortable, well educated, healthy and luxurious life because we white westerners worked so hard. However, that is only one side of the coin. It is a very basic fact of economy and especially of capitalism that if one wins another loses. Thus, the other side of the coin is consequently the disadvantages other countries experience due to our wealth and privileges. Our whiteness and the hegemony of white people justified by racial theories effective from the 15th till 20th century has given us great advantages¹⁹ which we still exploit excessively in order to multiply our wealth even more. White privilege was first mentioned and defined by the (white) US-American Theodore W. Allen in the 1960s as *White-skin privilege*.²⁰ White privilege means having privileges in life because of your skin colour, especially if you are living in a mainly white society. But even in those countries where white people are a minority, they experience enormous privileges. In her recently published book Reni Eddo-Lodge defines white privilege as

“an absence of the negative consequences of racism. An absence of structural discrimination, an absence of your race being viewed as a problem first and foremost, an absence of ‘less likely to succeed because of my race’. It is an absence of funny looks directed at you because you’re believed to be in the wrong place, an absence of cultural expectations, an absence of violence enacted on your ancestors because of the colour of their skin, an absence of a lifetime of subtle marginalisation and *Othering* — exclusion from the narrative of being human.”²¹

However, she certainly does not claim that white people automatically have it easy, never struggle or never live in poverty. “But white privilege is the fact that if you’re white, your race will almost certainly positively impact your life’s trajectory in some way. And you probably won’t even notice it.”²²

I spent my childhood as one of four children of a white German family that had emigrated to Copenhagen. Growing up in a not so popular former working-class area my childhood neighbourhood was culturally quite mixed. Not as mixed as other areas of Copenhagen but still not totally white. The neighbourhood was inhabited by Danish families, my own ‘foreign’ family and other ‘foreign’ families, for example from West, East and Southeast Asia. They had most probably lived longer in Denmark than my family but were less privileged. Looking back, I assume that these differences were due to my family being white and therefore more privileged, whereas the other ‘foreigners’ were not white and thus less privileged. When starting in school my environment and friends became mainly white. I went to an international school, which explains why mainly (white) children from well-educated and relatively good earning families visited the school. But although the school in fact was predominantly white, it was still a culturally mixed, international school community. Due to this school and neighbourhood it was very normal for me to be in a cultural mixed surrounding and I learned to be open, and welcome everybody from an early age.

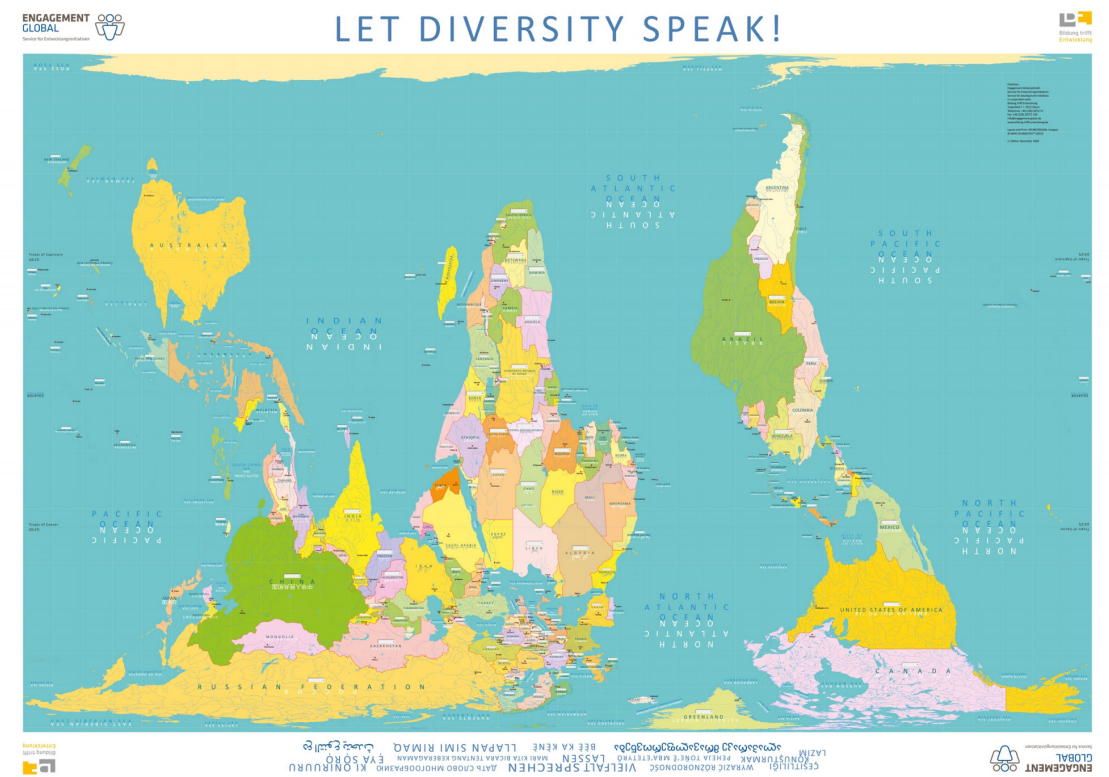


Fig. 5: World map “Let diversity speak!” questions the orientation of maps, and thus of global society, towards the Global North.

¹⁸ See: Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah, *Eure Heimat*, 71.

¹⁹ See: Judith H. Katz, *White awareness: Handbook for anti-racism training* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 10, cited after: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 43.

²⁰ See: Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 86–87.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

²² *Ibid.*, 87.

When my family moved to Germany to a small Bavarian town my environment both in terms of neighbourhood and school changed to be almost monocultural and mainly white. The only 'foreigners' in my school, a *Gymnasium* (highest secondary school) were children of East-Asian families. Most 'foreign' families lived on the other side of the river and visited the middle or lower secondary school. There was an unconscious segregation that made it almost impossible to get to know 'the others'. Unconsciously me and my friends thought of them being less good, clever, intelligent etc. because they mainly went to other schools. Since I visited a *Gymnasium* I was predominantly surrounded by white people. Actually, it was not something I paid attention to or recognised, since everybody looked like me — white. I first became aware of it when I talked years later with a good friend, who made me realise that she and her siblings were the only Black children in school back then.

After graduating I moved to Ghana for one year which had been a sincere wish since childhood. As far as I remember, my interest in the African continent developed when hearing about a colleague of my father working and living in Tanzania. Another aspect that really boosted my interest in Africa was the fact that the sister of my great-great grandmother and her husband emigrated to today's Namibia when it was still the German colony 'Deutsch-Südwestafrika'. They settled there and established a farm where their relatives still live and work (Figs. 6–8). I have to add that this is nothing I am proud of at all. I only tell this and show the pictures to illustrate the absurdity of these (neo)colonial legacies we as former colonisers have to become aware of.

I have to acknowledge that my interest in Africa and for going there was probably developed from these beautifying conceptions influenced by former (racist) colonial images and the (neo)colonial activities of my wider environment. It made me feel connected with the African continent even though I had never been there, and it made me want to go there to 'help'. I have to acknowledge that I only to some extent reflected on my questionable motivation before I went to Ghana. That is something I begun to reflect upon later. Nevertheless, I had a wonderful year in Ghana working in a vocational training school close to Cape Coast. It was the first time I experienced my skin colour as something unusual, deviating from the norm, and it was the first time I got a hint of awareness about my white privileges. But honestly, I was not thinking that much about (neo)colonialism, postcolonialism* and racism back then. In my consciousness at the time, these were only historical facts that had shaped the Ghanaian society and left visible signs like the slave castles. For instance, I worked just a few meters from the Cape Coast castle, one of the oldest and biggest slave castles of the so called 'Gold Coast'. Despite this, (neo)colonialism, postcolonialism and racism were not something I thought and reflected upon more deeply.

It was first when I came back to Germany that all my experiences from Ghana slowly trickled down in my consciousness. I began putting question marks on consumerism, capitalism, (neo)colonialism and design maintaining the global inequalities.

And now? — Yes, I am aware of me being a privileged white woman coming from a financially and educationally supportive background. I have got the opportunities to travel wherever I want and to experience different parts of the world. I am very aware of that only being possible due to my German passport and the financial security I have through my family. And yes, I have these privileges because of mine and my family's whiteness.

Yet I had and still have moments of guilt about being white. My family can tell you a few stories about me trying to become less white. If I would be asked what I would want to change about my body when growing up I always answered: my skin colour. I even black-faced myself — in retrospect, this is, from me as a white person, an ignorant cul-



Fig. 6–8: Photos of the 6800-ha farm *Hohenau*, located close to Namibia's capital Windhoek. The farm was founded by Otto Halenke and Emma Kuffer and is now run as a hunting farm by their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



tural appropriation. I now realise that I tried to appropriate a 'culture' that was not mine and will never be. When I look back and try to reconstruct where my wish to be less white came from, as well as my wish to travel to an African country, it leads me back to my fascination for cultures foreign to me. This fascination is based, as I now realise, on (neo)colonial images through which the colonisers constructed the former colonies as fascinating, foreign, different and 'exotic'. My naïve interest in cultures foreign to me thus arose from these (neo)colonial, idealised and euphemistic images, although I have never actively seen such images. By 'images' I thus do not mean illustrations, drawings or photographs, but rather the 'conceptions' that the society I grew up in had of former colonies. These social 'conceptions' of the former colonies were transferred to me and awakened my interest in foreign cultures. I adopted these euphemistic, (neo)colonial conceptions without reflection, as one does as a child, and let myself be guided by my fascination for foreign cultures. I was drawn to Ghana, influenced in the development of my further interests and tempted to such cultural appropriations like the blackfacing.

In the socio-political context, my white guilt, the blackfacing and my fascination with foreign cultures thus arose from euphemised (neo)colonial conceptions of the former colonies. On a personal level, however, it was above all a girl with a strong urge and interest in going far away and struggling with her own 'boring white normality'. This does not excuse my behaviour, but it explains that there are several levels involved. Of course, as a young girl I was not aware of any of these. Looking back, it is, however, clarifying and helpful to reflect upon — especially when it comes to developing a better approach to my whiteness. I have now come to a point where I am trying to learn to accept my whiteness since I cannot deny it and my whiteness did and still does give me privileges. I have to be aware of these privileges as much as of my own whiteness. In accepting and talking honestly about my whiteness and privileges I try to develop a critical perspective.

Despite my whiteness, I want to contribute to the implementation of decolonialism and the overcoming of inequalities between Global South and North. Of course, the challenge of decolonising former colonies is nothing I and other (white) people from outside should interfere in. Decolonial processes should be led by people affected by the legacies of (neo)colonialism.²³ Nevertheless, white people who recognise the (neo)colonial structures can contribute, for example by providing financial or organisational support for decolonial work and advocating for anti-racist issues in completely white contexts. Eddo-Lodge writes „white people, you need to talk to other white people about race. (...) If you feel burdened by your unearned privilege, try to use it for something, and use it where it counts.”²⁴ In order to make a decolonial world reality, it is essential that we white people question our privileges and overcome them. To actually achieve a decolonial world we additionally need to decolonise the former colonisers countries. One important step is questioning our own whiteness and white privileges. It is important that people in the Global South and North work intensively on overcoming the legacies of (neo) colonialism in order to achieve decolonialism. That is a possibility how white people can support the challenge of decolonising. As white people we should learn and understand our position in the collective fight against (neo)colonialism and contribute to decolonising the world. And that is exactly what I would like to do by writing this thesis. I write this despite my whiteness but due to my incomprehensibility and anger about the ongoing inequalities between Global South and North and an idealistic wish of a decolonial future.

Here *Epa* symbolises the colonial past, its legacies influencing today's system of Global South vs. North and the ongoing racism. Thus, *Epa* reminds us of the (neo)colonial past which causes the continued existence of inequality. Therefore, we must strive for a decolonial world.



²³ For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 215–216.
²⁴ Ibid.

We have to become aware and overcome the legacies of (neo)colonialism since they prevent decolonialism. In this process of heading towards a decolonial future, it is important to learn from the past. That is what the goose of the *Adinkra* Symbol *Sankofa* is telling us by heading towards the future but looking back in order to learn from the past.²⁵ *Sankofa* means “Return and get it” and tells us thus to learn from the past when striving for a decolonial future.

COLONIALISM AND OTHERING

Othering is, generally speaking, the process that occurs when someone deviates only slightly from the appearance of the majority and thus from the ‘norm’. Whenever othering is based on concrete aspects, this process is also referred to as racialisation.²⁶ Othering is experienced not only by people affected by racism, but by all those who are exposed to any form of discrimination, for example, queer, trans, disabled, poor or fat people.²⁷ Othering thus happens to people whose body, appearance or life does not fit into the other people’s conception of society. Therefore, they are perceived as different, as deviating from what is defined as ‘norm’. Characteristic of othering is the perception and construction of ‘the other’ as a threatening object, instead of a human being like oneself.²⁸

Othering presumably has been present since humans have existed. Accordingly, othering has also influenced and justified colonialism, among other things, since colonialism made humans a thing, a commodity, a disposable article.²⁹ Thus, othering and (neo)colonialism are directly connected. By distancing oneself from ‘the other’, by denying ‘the other’ any humanity and by objectifying ‘the other’, the process of othering favours exploitative, inhuman, violent and egocentric behaviour like that of (neo)colonialism. The construction of the Global South as ‘the other’ deviating from the Global North has raised the Global North, its form of society, culture, way of life, politics, religion, economy, etc. to ‘the global norm’. The Global South has thereby been devalued to a deviation that apparently still has to ‘develop’, and has been denied any form of progress, humanity, knowledge and ability.

White universalism identifies itself with the idealised ‘other’, according to Sharma & Sharma³⁰, in order to maintain its own universalism.³¹ The Global North thus absorbs ‘the other’, but not in order to become like ‘the other’, but better than ‘the other’. This enables the Global North to ensure that ‘the other’ is what and where s/he, in the conception of the Global North, is supposed to be. Thus, the Global North establishes itself as ‘the genuine part’ through the construction and definition of ‘the other’. In this way the Global North, by constructing and defining the foreign, ‘the other’, confirms and justifies itself and its universalism.

Illustrative for this absorption of ‘the other’ are processes of cultural appropriation in, for example, the fashion industry.³² Fashion, according to Lehnert, is a very good example of what Edward Said has analysed as *European Orientalism*. This means the cultural appropriation of the foreign in order to distance oneself from it and thus to define oneself more clearly as the most genuine. In the process of cultural appropriation, the socio-political and economic circumstances of production and the power relations between the Global North (colonisers) and the Global South (colonised) are always inscribed in the resulting product. These power relations are usually ignored, although they are always part of cultural appropriation. The problem is that the Global South usually remains ‘the others’.³³ Only rarely it is realised and reflected on that the situation in the Global South is

²⁵ For the following see: “SANKOFA,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/sank.htm>.

²⁶ See: Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah, *Eure Heimat*, 70.

²⁷ For the following see: Ibid., 79–80.

²⁸ See: Achille Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014), 27.

²⁹ See: Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), cited after: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 28.

³⁰ See: Ashwani Sharma and Sanjay Sharma, “White Paranoia: Orientalism in the Age of Empire,” in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* VI. 7, Issues 3 and 4, ed. Nirmal Puwar and Nandi Bathia (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2003), 301-317, cited after: Gertrude Lehnert, *Mode: Theorie, Geschichte und Ästhetik einer kulturellen Praxis* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013), 150–151.

³¹ For the following see: Gertrude Lehnert, “Fokus 2: Das fremde Anderen,” in *Mode: Theorie, Geschichte und Ästhetik einer kulturellen Praxis*, Gertrude Lehnert (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013), 150–151.

³² For the following see: Ibid., 151.

³³ For the following see: María Do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie: Eine kritische Einführung* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), 318.

directly related to the conditions of exploitation accepted as unavoidable misfortune by the Global North. By accepting the cultural appropriations, justified by our unreflected universalism, we accept and thus support the continuing of the global socio-political, economic circumstances and the power relations between Global North and South.

However, for a new, better and equal relationship with the Global South, we must question these conditions, because they are (neo)colonial legacies. We have to reflect on the effects of othering on the global system of Global North vs. South. Because, according to Mbembe, by changing our perception of 'the other', a liberation from these (neo)colonial thinking and behaving structures is possible.³⁴

Achille Mbembe moreover explains that we all have to acknowledge and accept the so-called *other's part* in us, because whether we like it or not, we are the guarantee of each other's differences.³⁵ I as an individual am the proof of your otherness and vice versa you confirm my otherness of you through your individuality. We have to accept this part of 'the other' in us, because it is inevitably and uncontrollably a part of us. Mbembe concludes that refusing to accept the part of 'the other' in us would have fatal consequences both for the self-image, humanity, rightness and justice. For a fair, decolonial world, we must, according to Mbembe, accept the part of 'the other' in ourselves. We have to reflect upon and overcome othering in order to achieve a world without it and thereby make a decolonial future possible.

RACISM TODAY

If we are striving for a decolonial world, it is helpful to reflect on and learn from the past and the legacies of (neo)colonialism. There are many historical aspects and areas, but also many effects of (neo)colonialism that are noticeable today and could be studied. One area in which (neo)colonial thought and behavioural structures become clearly visible is racism. Through racism (neo)colonialism is still strongly anchored in society and therefore one of the essential areas that must be addressed in decolonial processes. Combating racism, as Noah Sow writes, requires that it must first be understood.³⁶ Thus, in order to achieve decolonialism it is necessary to first understand and analyse racism and then overcome racist thoughts and behaviours.

» We will take a closer look at racism in the following. We analyse why racist structures continue to be effective today, why racism prevents the development of a common and therefore decolonial understanding of the world and why racist structures urgently need to be tackled in the course of decolonising.

» **First of all, what is racism?** Racism has arisen from societal developments of capitalism and globalisation, where the categorisation into races was invented for the purpose of exclusion and degradation.³⁷ Since the beginning of the 18th century, racial categorisation has been the basis and core of the knowledge and governance of European societies.³⁸ The historical development of racist structures can be divided into three phases.³⁹ The first phase of organised denial of rights from the 15th to the 19th century was marked by the transatlantic slave trade and the objectification of people into commodities. The independence movement phase from the end of the 18th till the 20th century began with the first demands of the enslaved for human dignity and led to the abolition of the slave trade, the decolonisation of Africa, the civil rights movement in the USA, and the abolition of apartheid. The last phase of racism since the beginning of the 21st century is neoliberalism. This phase is characterised by globalisation, privatisation, digitalisation, rationalisation and increasingly giving things, events, conditions and humans market value and judging them by that.

³⁴ See: "Achille Mbembe. Kritik der Schwarzen Vernunft," Schleichers Buchhandlung, accessed November 28, 2019, <https://www.sleichersbuch.de/empfehlungen/sachbücher.html>.

³⁵ For the following see: Mbembe, *Kritik der Schwarzen Vernunft*, 331.

³⁶ See: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 12.

³⁷ See: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 22.

³⁸ See: *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹ For the following see: *Ibid.*, 14–15.

Racism can be defined as discrimination or prejudice plus power.⁴⁰ Thus, racism means to be exposed to a situation that most likely will have a negative influence on the trajectory of a person's life. The categorisation into Black and white, on which racism is based, is the result of a racial differentiation by white people. It divides society into 'white' and 'not white', making whiteness 'the norm' and constructing anything else as deviations from that 'norm'. Whiteness is hence the centre and the 'highest level' of this world. Consequently, white people believe we are allowed to determine who is assigned to which race, who 'belongs' and who does not. Sow therefore pleads, that the fact that white people (unconsciously) have this power of naming and defining should be addressed in order to change such racist structures.⁴¹

Due to racism the expectations, prejudices and disadvantages are one-sidedly distributed among certain people in society.⁴² However, it is important to be aware that racism does not proceed equally in both directions. For example, the experiences of white people in predominantly Black societies are not comparable to the (racist) experience of Black people in predominantly white societies.⁴³ This is because racism is an explicit form of discrimination, which is reinforced by structural disadvantages and power differentials.⁴⁴ It primarily ensures that the status quo of white supremacy is maintained. We must recognise this in order to change these structures of racism. The racism that Black people experience in predominantly white societies is the constant judgement based on their appearance:⁴⁵ without being asked, they are assigned to certain groups, regardless of how they identify themselves. It is assumed that one knows who and how they are. For example, it is self-evidently presumed that Black people cannot be experts, even on issues such as discrimination and racism.

Noah Sow also explains that racist thought and behaviour structures are based on the inconsistent remains of racist propaganda from the past.⁴⁶ Here we are not only talking about the racism that sets people on fire, but also the racism that insults or categorises them. Because these are exactly the same just showing themselves differently. That is why it is extremely important, both for overcoming racist structures and for a decolonial future, that we identify racism as a problem for society as a whole. Because it is the consequence of our unjust power and recognition relationships between Black and white people.⁴⁷ Thus, in order to overcome racist and (neo)colonial structures we have to fight these deeply rooted thinking and behaving structures together. A first step is, as Noah Sow suggests, that we must understand racism in order to be able to fight it successfully.

» **Therefore, we now examine how racism works.** In order to study and understand how racism works we need to perceive racism as a structural phenomenon and observe how it seeps through all aspects and areas of our societies.⁴⁸ That is the reason why racism has become difficult to grasp and is not visible at first glance.

Instead of using 'biology' to explain racist thought and behaviour structures, 'cultural' and 'religious' arguments are now applied for the further justification of racism.⁴⁹ However, racism is usually not addressed directly out of fear of the racist status quo of our societies, even by those who perceive themselves as non-racist.⁵⁰ The intention is to hide this racist reality, to ignore it, but nevertheless this hiding only maintains, even supports the further existence of a racist reality.

What also supports racist structures is the fact that the global power to name, evaluate and decide lies with white people.⁵¹ Through these privileges, white people also learn that we can name and judge same things differently. For example, it is paradoxical that we reject so-called 'economic refugees' in Europe, while we are impressed by the 'heroic courage' of white 'adventurers' who travel to foreign countries with the same motives as people from the Global South. Namely a more prosperous and happier life.

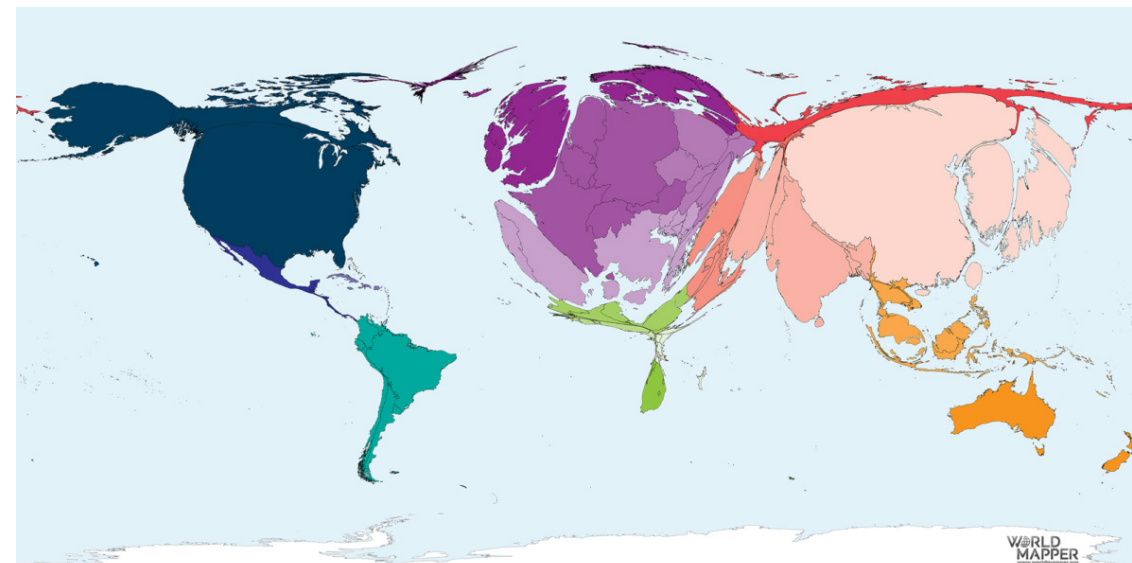


Fig. 9: Science Papers published 2016. This world map shows clearly that scientific papers are predominant published in North America, Europa, East- and South Asia. This centrism of the Global North prevailing in science is a neo-colonial structure. However, it is just as neo-colonial to expect that all parts of the world should publish scientific papers in the same way as the Global North. Because considering scientific papers as one of the highest levels of education that everyone has to achieve is an equally neo-colonial expectation. We have to stop judging and categorising the world in 'less' or 'more developed' according to our western-centered ideas of education and science.

40 For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 2.
 41 See: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 28.
 42 See: Ibid., 39.
 43 See: Ibid., 66.
 44 For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 98.
 45 For the following see: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 48.
 46 For the following see: Ibid., 58–59.
 47 See: Ibid., 69.
 48 See: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 222.
 49 See: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 23.
 50 See: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 30.
 51 For the following see: Ibid., 44–45.

The centrism of the Global North in science also shapes contemporary racism.⁵² It is assumed that science is general and universal, but it is indeed characterised by a strong centrism (Fig. 9). One aspect of its universalism is that if no white scientist has yet discovered something or confirmed its existence, apparently ‘no scientist at all’ knows it. For example, it is assumed that a large part of Brazil’s fish species are ‘unknown’. However, this neglects the fact that the fish are most likely well known to the local and indigenous people, but the existence of many fish species has only not been confirmed by western scientists. Furthermore, it is obvious in academic fields that these are mainly shaped by white men and that this continues in most cases. Philosophy, for example, is not the philosophy of humanity, as is assumed, but actually a white western male philosophy.

As a consequence of this western-centered world view, white perspectives from the Global North, historical persons, knowledges, traditions and mentalities are perceived as the only ‘correct’ and ‘important’ ones.⁵³ However, the fact that this centrism of the Global North is hardly ever questioned means that a large part of the Global North thinks that these exaggerated universalism and centrism are due to justified causes, not megalomania or lack of interest in others.

The consequences of racism affect all subaltern people, meaning those who are excluded from all forms of hegemony.⁵⁴ Indeed, there is a danger that the imperial, racist practices of capturing, occupying, exploiting and dispossessing will spread to all subaltern societies. This would deprive the majority of humanity of self-determination over their own future and time.⁵⁵

The analysed racist thought and behaviour structures shaped by slavery, colonialism and apartheid have three forms of consequences for contemporary societies.⁵⁶ First, the separation from oneself: the loss of familiarity with oneself, being a stranger to oneself and therefore constituting oneself in otherness. In addition, racism leads to legal, material and economic expropriation, subjugation through impoverishment of the basic structures of human existence. The third societal consequence of racism is the degradation through enslavement which resulted in humiliation, degradation, suffering and the denial of human dignity.

» Yet how is it possible that racist patterns of thought and behaviour are still effective in our societies despite slavery being abolished two centuries ago? A decisive factor is that we usually do not even notice racism and can’t imagine that we are racist, although we (unconsciously) still are.⁵⁷ This disregard for racist structures is due to the deep-rooted belief in our societies that white are superior to Black people. This racist certainty of white superiority is anchored so deep within us that it does not need to be articulated. As a result, racism has become such a normality in our societies that we don’t notice the racist patterns of thought and behaviour in our everyday lives.⁵⁸ That is why Eddo-Lodge also demands that we must finally acknowledge that we live in a racist society.⁵⁹ Because despite increasing socio-cultural diversity in societies due to globalisation, the problem of racism is not solved alone or automatically by increasingly diverse societies.

Additionally, in predominantly white societies, we usually assume that Black and People of Colour, have only recently moved to the country, without realising that this socio-cultural diversity has partly been caused by colonialism.⁶⁰ We usually do not ask ourselves why and when people from former colonies moved to the Global North. Instead of reflecting on the connection with (neo)colonialism, white people wrongly tend to consider Black people and PoC as foreigners who have just moved to the country and are therefore not really part of the society.

A further aspect responsible for the continued existence of racism in today’s societies



Fig. 10: The photographs by Chris Buck address racism by questioning widespread stereotypes. They break with the common racist representations and depiction of Black people and PoC in clichéd roles like waitress or masseuse, Buck changes the perspectives and roles. He thereby demonstrates the extent to which today’s societies are persistently influenced by racism. Racist and hierarchical relationships are reproduced and thus appear to be self-evident. We all grow up in a racist world with these racist perceptions. Chris Buck, Let’s talk about race, Part 2, in: O Magazine, May 2017.

52 For the following see: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 45–46.

53 For the following see: *Ibid.*, 46.

54 For the following see: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 18–21.

55 See: *Ibid.*, 20.

56 For the following see: *Ibid.*, 151.

57 For the following see: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 58.

58 See: *Ibid.*, 44.

59 For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I’m no longer talking about race*, 111–112.

60 For the following see: *Ibid.*, 9.

is the racist images, ideas and beliefs we grow up with and which are presented to us as 'truths' (Figs. 10 & 11).⁶¹ Therefore, nobody can claim to be free of racist thought and behaviour patterns. The fact that none of us is free of racism is mainly due to having learned in school to say that all people are equal, without learning what real equality actually implies and how this could actively be internalised.⁶² Most people are reluctant to acknowledge their individual (unconscious) racist thought and behaviour patterns to themselves.⁶³ However, these defensive reflexes are more likely to sustain racism in society rather than fighting it.

Another obstacle to acknowledging the existence of racism in our societies is that only those who openly call themselves 'racists' are racists to society, but not all those who behave racially.⁶⁴ This can further repress the own (unconscious) racist patterns of thought and behaviour that are within each of us and confirm that it is okay to continue to ignore individual and societal racism. But it is not if we want to finally achieve a decolonial and non-discriminatory world.

Furthermore, contributing to the maintenance of racist structures in society is the (unconscious) attitude of white people to 'know better' — even in areas such as racism, white expertise is so self-evident that it is not questioned.⁶⁵ Thus, white people do not consider to ask true experts on the subject but consider themselves experts as a matter of course. Another example is the continued use of offensive, unobjective or discriminatory terms that helps to maintain the status quo of white superiority.⁶⁶ Fighting racism is left to any person, regardless of (missing) qualification, because politics and society do not fight racism consistently enough.⁶⁷ We do not approach racism as a problem of society as a whole, not as our problem, but as the problem of others, of specific groups. However, we have no chance of overcoming racist patterns of thought and behaviour in society as long as we do not fight racism together as a problem of society as a whole. Racism is a problem of the society as a whole and therefore a structural problem.⁶⁸ Structures are made out of people; thus, structural racism is the accumulation of personal racial prejudices that are spread throughout all societies. Racism is therefore a problem of everybody. Instead of being paralysed by the demanding task of overcoming racism in society as a whole Eddo-Lodge believes that we should see the fight against racism as an opportunity to create a better society. After all, in the process of overcoming racist patterns of thought and behaviour there are opportunities to shape a better, fairer, decolonial world.

» Now the question remains as to what prevents the overcoming of racist patterns of thought and behaviour? Slave trade and colonialism have caused a lack of self-esteem and inferiority complexes in the Global South.⁶⁹ This disturbed relationship to 'the other', which is particularly evident in a disturbed relationship to the former coloniser, prevents the global development of equivalence and reciprocity. Additionally, Achille Mbembe doubts that the Global North can develop a different relationship to the Global South than that between masters and servants, since the disturbed self-image of the Global South prevents it from regaining self-confidence and overcome the self-images of 'servants'. It makes the Global South dream of a return to its 'essential' identity, which, however, often involves this inequality.⁷⁰ The distorted self-image of the Global South as 'servants' is, according to Mbembe, too strongly rooted in the subconscious to be overcome that easily. Nevertheless, nobody, neither the former colonised nor the former colonisers, really wants to be seen and treated in a racially discriminating and devaluating way.⁷¹



Fig. 11: Through the eyes of a white girl in front of a shelf of exclusively Black dolls we become aware of how a Black girl in search of a doll might be feeling. Chris Buck emphasises the persisting, highly problematic racist structures in our society, such as the ideal of a white doll, by inverting the perspectives. He thematises the persistence of racism through images and beliefs which are presented to us as 'truths' when growing up. Thus, when growing up surrounded only by white dolls, whiteness will to some extent be internalised as 'better'. Chris Buck, Let's talk about race, Part 1, in: O Magazine, May 2017.

61 For the following see: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 59.

62 See: Ibid., 41.

63 For the following see: Ibid., 48.

64 See: Ibid., 60.

65 For the following see: Ibid., 64–65.

66 See: Ibid., 58.

67 For the following see: Ibid., 66.

68 For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 222.

69 See: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 89.

70 See: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 24.

71 See: Ibid., 13.

» Thus, how is it possible that racist thought and behaviour structures continue to exist? First of all, it can be observed that Western education and the (unconsciously) communicated conviction of the superiority of the Global North prevents white people from perceiving and treating all people as truly equal.⁷² Moreover, racism is ignored and suppressed from the core of societies.⁷³ Thus, it is automatically assumed that all racist or xenophobic incidents are committed by right-wing extremists. Discriminatory acts are thus exclusively attributed to so-called 'peripheral groups' and are thus not verbally connected with the 'normal' society. The majority of the remaining, non-right-wing society therefore does not have to perceive and deal with its own everyday discriminatory thought and behaviour structures. It is pretended that the 'normal' society is free of discrimination and assumed that there are no racist behaviour patterns. However, this is fatal, because ignoring and hiding racist thought and behaviour structures prevents the overcoming of these structures.⁷⁴ We must be willing to acknowledge and realise that discriminatory patterns of behaviour are (unconsciously) widespread in all parts of society and in the entire political landscape. If we continue to blindly believe in the illusions of a post-racist society that has overcome racism, or an antiracist utopia assuming that racism has come to an end, we cannot successfully overcome the currently still existing racial structures.⁷⁵ Both illusions prevent a purposeful reflection and overcoming of racism. Change is essential, however, but in working to overcome racism we must be aware that it will be a lengthy and exhausting process.

In dealing with and overcoming racist patterns of thought and behaviour we cannot ignore the legacies of the past, but we can use them to shape the future. Eddo-Lodge reminds us that it is yours, mine and all our responsibility to uncover the racial thoughts, pictures and structures we have so long accepted as 'truths'.⁷⁶ In order to overcome these racist legacies of (neo)colonialism, we must use all means at our disposal to change the narratives in society. We have to question, think through and understand the (neo) colonial structures and thus the racist patterns of thought and behaviour in order to finally overcome them. Only then will a truly decolonial world be possible.

As *Sankofa* tells us: learning from the past when striving for a decolonial future.

⁷² See: Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß*, 39.

⁷³ For the following see: Ibid., 33–34.

⁷⁴ See: Ibid., 31.

⁷⁵ For the following see: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 214.

⁷⁶ For the following see: Ibid., 223.

In the process of decolonialism we have to remember to strive for a peaceful, harmonious reconciliation. The *Adinkra* symbol *Mpatapo*, meaning the “knot of reconciliation”, shows the interconnection or knot connecting the parties in dispute.⁷⁷ *Mpatapo* reminds us of peace-making after a fight.

SHORT INTRO TO DECOLONIALISM

The presumable origins of decolonial theories possibly originated from the colonial era. In the late 20th century, decolonial theories developed in Latin America to a scientific, clearly defined and recognised theory and are mainly based on the efforts of the Argentinean literary scholar Walter D. Mignolo and the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano Obregón.⁷⁸ Decolonialism is the demand to decolonise both the former colonies as well as the countries of the former colonisers, thus decolonialising the whole world. Decolonial studies focus primarily on the processes of early colonisation of Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷⁹ Thereby the focus of decolonial studies, especially with reference to Quijano, is on the structures and processes that emerged from the conditions of colonialism and which still shape global power and dominance relations today.⁸⁰

Therefore, the basic assumptions on which decolonialism is based and develops its action-oriented theory are the assumptions that global societal and economic development, such as capitalism and the Western idea of ‘modernity’ were only possible through colonialism. Capitalism emerged in the period of the Industrial Revolution, which was strongly based on the exploitation of resources and labour from the Global South. In addition, it is argued that capitalism can only exist through colonialism, because in the capitalist system prosperity on one hand is only possible through impoverishment and exploitation on the other. The second basic assumption to which decolonialism refers is the critique of the Western idea of ‘modernity’ as a result of colonialism. According to decolonial theory, ‘modern’ societies can only exist as opposed to subaltern societies. Without these subordinated societies and thus without colonialism, the western countries would never have understood, defined and developed themselves as ‘modern’ societies. Decolonialism criticises the attitude of colonialism in the basic assumption of differentiating oneself from ‘the other’. This othering and the stigmatisation of ‘the other’ as subaltern and impoverished made it possible for the Global North to perceive itself as ‘modern’ and ‘developed’. Through this othering and the perception of ‘the other’ as ‘inferior’, the justification for the exploitation of the Global South was established. Thereby the foundations were laid for the economic development of the Global North on which our current prosperity is still based.

Through the critique of Western modernity and capitalism, decolonialism fundamentally questions the political, social, economic and cultural theories of knowledge of the West. Therefore, decolonial theories demand the development of epistemologies from the Global South. Accordingly, decolonialism is strongly anchored in concrete proposals for action and focuses on the realistic action-oriented transformation into a decolonial world. Because of this strong embeddedness in concrete action, African thinkers such as Achille Mbembe and Felwine Sarr also tend to refer to decolonial theories. The action-oriented approach is also the reason why it was useful for this work on the implementation of decolonialism in design projects to rely on decolonial theories.

It quickly happens that decolonialism is confused with postcolonialism, since both deal with the legacies of colonialism and with the continuing existence of (neo)colonial struc-

⁷⁷ For the following see: “MPATAPO,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/mpat.htm>.

⁷⁸ For the following see: “What is the difference between post-colonial and decolonial thinking?” Diego Ramírez, accessed January 26, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_is_the_difference_between_post-colonial_and_decolonial_thinking.

⁷⁹ See: Castro Varela and Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie*, 319.

⁸⁰ See: *Ibid.*, 318.

tures, like the global division of labour and distribution of wealth, despite the official end of colonialism. In both theories decolonising particularly implies the disqualification of racist legitimisation strategies.⁸¹

However, de- and postcolonialism originate from different geographical, historical and socio-political contexts. Postcolonialism developed in the middle of the 20th century in Arabian and South Asian regions in particular through the Indian literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the Indian theorist Homi K. Bhabha and the Palestinian literary theorist Edward Said, whose book “Orientalism” from 1978 can be understood as the origin document of postcolonial studies.⁸² However, postcolonialism has never, as sometimes claimed, been restricted exclusively to these geographical, socio-cultural areas.⁸³

Postcolonialism is characterised by questioning, reflecting and restructuring Western thought and action.⁸⁴ It is particularly concerned with the repositioning of European systems of knowledge, the reflection of colonialism and imperialism, and the consequences of this (neo)colonialism for the Global South. Ultimately, postcolonial theory seeks to analyse and question these global socio-political injustices and inequalities and to make them visible.⁸⁵ However, common to both de- and postcolonial studies is that they focus on specific temporal, geographical and socio-political situations and (de)colonial processes.⁸⁶ The differences between the two theories are due to the different pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial contexts that naturally confront the countries with different processes, needs, challenges and problems in the processes of decolonising.

Decolonialism, as mentioned above, comes from Latin America, and is thus in its critique and theory based on a completely different geographical and socio-political situation, both in terms of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial time. Decolonial theory is defined, among other things, by a conscious differentiation and critique of postcolonial studies.⁸⁷ Compared to postcolonialism, it is usually more action-oriented and takes a more critical view on capitalism. Decolonialism for instance mainly refers to neo-Marxist theories, specially the theory of dependence and the theory of world systems.⁸⁸ The theory of dependence, which originated in the 1960s, focuses in particular on the different levels of development, which are largely the result of the global conditions of exploitation.⁸⁹ Theorists on decolonialism criticise postcolonialism for its reference to and rootedness in Western systems of thought and analysis. Because postcolonial studies have benefited from the use of English as the language of academia and have relied on epistemological theories of the Global North, postcolonialism has been criticised for putting Western epistemological production back onto former colonies when investigating (neo)colonial contexts there.⁹⁰ Due to the anchoring of postcolonialism in the Western academic world, it is assumed that postcolonial theorists cannot and do not really want to decolonise all thoughts and actions. Therefore, decolonialism demands to decolonise postcolonial theory and to develop epistemologies from the Global South. On the other hand, decolonial theorists have not yet proved that they use other sources of knowledge and theory that are less western-centered than those they criticise in postcolonial studies.

» **Summing up** — decolonialism, in contrast to postcolonialism, focuses more on concrete actions that could follow from decolonial theory in order to achieve its aim of a decolonial world.

It is, according to Castro Varela and Dhawan, wrong to simplistically claim that decolonialism is more radical than postcolonial theory, just because it is more critical of capitalism, closer to reality and apparently relies less on epistemological theories of the Global North compared to postcolonialism, which is focused on theory and literature and is

⁸¹ See: Castro Varela and Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie*, 300.

⁸² See: *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸³ See: *Ibid.*, 319.

⁸⁴ For the following see: *Ibid.*, 339.

⁸⁵ See: *Ibid.*, 299.

⁸⁶ For the following see: *Ibid.*, 319.

⁸⁷ See: *Ibid.*, 318.

⁸⁸ See: *Ibid.*, 325.

⁸⁹ See: *Ibid.*, 323.

⁹⁰ For the following see: *Ibid.*, 320.

thus apparently unrealistic.⁹¹ It is rather incomprehensible that there is a differentiating and mutual criticism, since basically it seems that both are predominantly concerned with the continuity of (neo)colonial power and domination relations.⁹² It is a difficult balancing act to take into account the significant socio-political differences between post- and decolonial studies, without weakening the mutual solidarity that is necessary for successfully decolonising the world.⁹³ If it is actually the goal to realise a decolonial world, the theoretical discussion cannot be about criticising each other and thus undermining each other's credibility and persuasiveness.⁹⁴ This would not facilitate the implementation of decolonialism. Therefore, we urgently need mutual solidarity to successfully establish a decolonial world. As the philosopher Luis Manuel Sánchez Martínez formulated, it is essential to finally understand that for the non-violent resolution of the current conflicts in the world, cooperation rather than confrontation of different perspectives is particularly important.⁹⁵ Thus, it is urgent that both decolonial and postcolonial theories are indispensable and that they need to cooperate for achieving a decolonial world.

» In the following we will therefore take a brief look on why we need the implementation of and discourse on decolonialism.

WHY WE NEED DECOLONIALISM

The above analysed legacies of (neo)colonialism are just a few effects on societies nowadays. But even though we are just touching on the topic of the legacies of (neo)colonialism it is very clear that they still have a strong impact on our societies. If we really want to overcome colonialism and live in a world where everybody is equal and thus being treated equally both on a local and global level, we need to dig deeper than abandoning slavery and officially ban racism. We need to become aware of and reflect on all legacies of (neo)colonialism in order to overcome them. Although the abolition of slavery is a few centuries ago, and the independence of the last colonies is more than half a century ago, one can understand from the recurring struggle for justice, equality and dignity of Black and People of Colour how long and persistent the fight against the legacies of (neo)colonialism continues to be. Despite the abolition of slavery, the American civil rights movement, the independence of the former colonies and the abolition of apartheid (neo)colonialism is still influencing the global system of economics, culture, politics and society. We must continue these efforts of gradually eliminating the consequences of (neo)colonialism. It will probably take decades, as it has done so far, since it is a lengthy struggle to overcome such deep-rooted social structures out of the global collective consciousness. So, let us continue the fight of overcoming (neo)colonialism to make the future world decolonial.

We need decolonialism because since the 15th century the Global North, through its technical superiority, force and power, has engraved its definition of social progress into the global collective consciousness and imagination.⁹⁶ In order to provide space for others and thus enable the development of others, however, it is necessary to withdraw the Global North from this position of power. According to Sarr, we need decolonialism to question and limit the power of definition and determination of the Global North, so that other parts of the world have the possibility of a prosperous development. In addition, the former colonies need decolonialism, since they lack autonomous thinkers and visions of the future, independent and self-reliant social goals for future development. This is preventing social determination that should arise from reflections on their own present, fate and future.⁹⁷ This means that decolonialism is absolutely necessary to enable former colonies to develop their own visions of their future and thus to make a prosperous future possible at all. Therefore, reflections on the present, and future of the former colonies are indispensable for the further development of societies.⁹⁸ After

⁹¹ See: Castro Varela and Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie*, 322.

⁹² See: *Ibid.*, 318–319.

⁹³ See: *Ibid.*, 303.

⁹⁴ See: *Ibid.*, 324.

⁹⁵ See: Luis Manuel Sánchez Martínez, *Warum kann (und darf) der ›Andere‹ nicht verstanden werden? Sinnkritische historisch-philosophische Rekonstruktion der Befreiungsethik von Enrique Dussel* (Aachen: Verlagsgruppe Mainz, 2006), 1, cited after: Castro Varela and Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie*, 325–326.

⁹⁶ For the following see: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 14.

⁹⁷ See: *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁸ For the following see: *Ibid.*, 12–13.

all, societies continue to develop among other things by projecting themselves into the future, by reflecting on the future, and by passing on intellectual and symbolic capital to future generations. Societies of the present can thus communicate their idea of the societal future, their human ideal and the purposes of social life to future generations. That is why it is essential that societies can develop ideas for their own future politics, economy and society that are based on their own culture and conception of the world.⁹⁹

For Felwine Sarr, it is understandable that in developing their own metaphors for the future, the former colonies are tempted to rely on established forms and procedures.¹⁰⁰ Since these countries also want to be part of the collective intellectual and cultural heritage of humanity they too have helped create. On the other hand, it is important to refer proudly to the local specificity, because in the global heritage of humanity all local specificities must be included, so that universalism is not alien to some but can be recognised by all humans.¹⁰¹ That is why we need decolonialism: so that not only the Western human heritage is recognised, but all the various socio-cultures and all local characteristics can be found in the heritage of humanity. Decolonising is consequently necessary so that the former colonies, too, can help to shape the global human heritage, to contribute to a responsible global future.¹⁰² For example in areas such as environment, harmony and balance, future generations, common welfare and human dignity.

In the process of decolonising it is important to remember the commonalities as a global society and the explicit wish to inhabit this world together as humanity.¹⁰³ Hence it is fundamental to ask ourselves where we want to go together. Because, as Mbembe also emphasises, there is only one world as a whole, although it consists of many different pieces.¹⁰⁴ Thus, when we deal with the future of the world, as in decolonialism, we must remember that there is only one *All-World*, according to Édouard Glissant. Mbembe explains that questions about the world are always questions about humanity. Because the world only exists in this way: by people naming it and by human reciprocity. For a common and thus decolonial world it is therefore necessary to understand the world as a whole, with which humanity as a unity, despite all its diversities, is inevitably connected. Furthermore, Mbembe argues that in the conception of the world as an *All-world* it is not possible to classify, hierarchise, exclude and devalue, because all people have an equal right to the one single world that exists.¹⁰⁵ All are equally the heirs of this world and it therefore belongs to everyone, even though we live differently in it. This is indeed where the wonderful diversity of cultures and societies comes from. The accompanying process of the interconnectedness of cultures and societies, despite their differences, is an inevitable development since the beginning of modernity. We must remember this increasing entanglement and connection of societies in the process of decolonising. Despite all differences, we are united by the desire to be fully human. Mbembe concludes “Critique of Black Reason” by reminding us that we have this world, which is all that exists, and all that we have, whether we like it or not. From this he concludes that for the creation of a world common to all of us, that is, for the implementation of decolonialism, the possibility for everyone to be fully human is crucial. Therefore, it is indispensable to give back humanity to those who have been disadvantaged, exploited and drained in the past.

THE DISCOURSE OF DECOLONIALISM

There has already been a lot of research and reflexion on the legacies of (neo)colonialism and possibilities for a future decolonial world. Even though decolonialism is differentiating itself from postcolonialism the two also benefit and fertilise each other. Thus, the three most famous authors of postcolonialism, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, are inspiring and insightful when dealing with the question of implementing decolonialism. The three of them have contributed significantly to the

⁹⁹ See: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ For the following see: Ibid., 126–127.

¹⁰¹ See: Ibid., 128.

¹⁰² See: Ibid., 153.

¹⁰³ For the following see: Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah, *Eure Heimat*, 121.

¹⁰⁴ For the following see: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 326–327.

¹⁰⁵ For the following see: Ibid., 329–330.

discourse on decolonising Asia, especially Arabia and India. In Latin America, as already mentioned, theorists distanced themselves from the postcolonial discourse and developed their own theory of decolonialism. On the third formerly colonised continent, Africa, a dynamic and independent discourse on decolonising Africa has developed in recent decades. This African discourse is inspired by decolonialism and postcolonialism and draws from both theories of thought. Since I strongly believe that working on decolonialism one can learn from all theorists, no matter what theory or continent they come from it would be enriching to study all de- and postcolonialists. But it would go beyond the framework of this work to present all the important intellectuals working on a decolonial world.

» In the following, I will present the two theorists who have been particularly inspiring and instructive for this work on the implementation of decolonialism in design projects.

I consciously chose authors coming from and working in the Global South because I find it really important to hear their own opinion, instead of an external. I focused on the most outstanding African writers on decolonialism Achille Mbembe and Felwine Sarr because it is inspirational and impressive how they have contributed to developing an independent discourse on decolonising Africa. The African discourse is the most recent among the decolonialism discourses and thus the most dynamic and contemporary. Furthermore, the focus on concrete actions, the active embedding of decolonialism in culture, society and politics¹⁰⁶ was particularly suitable for my research on the concrete implementation of decolonialism. Crucial to my focus on African decolonialism, primarily through the works of Mbembe and Sarr, was thus its currentness and anchoring in actual socio-political life.

Achille Mbembe is a Cameroonian born writer and academic in history, philosophy and political science.¹⁰⁷ He was born 1957 in the so called 'French Cameroons'. Mbembe studied history and political science in Paris. He worked in several institutions worldwide, to name a few, Columbia University, Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., University of Pennsylvania and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa in Dakar, Senegal. At the moment he is working at the Witts Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. The focus of Mbembe's work lies on African history, Postcolonial Studies, politics and social science. He has become well known for his philosophical analyses of African history and politics. Some of his important works are "De La Postcolonie, essai sur l'imagination politique dans l'Afrique contemporaine" (2000), "Sortir de la grande nuit — Essai sur l'Afrique décolonisée" (2010) and "Critique de la raison nègre" (2013). The main intention of "Critique de la raison nègre" is analysing the topic of *Afropolitanism* with the question of how we can harmonise and reconcile equality and inequality, quarrels and the desire of all for life, excessive self-centredness and common societies.¹⁰⁸

Felwine Sarr is a Senegalese academic and writer on economy.¹⁰⁹ He was born 1972 in Senegal and later studied economics in France. Afterwards he worked at the University Gaston Berger of Saint-Luis, Senegal. Economic politics, development, economy, history of religious ideas and decolonialism are the main focus of Sarr's work. Additionally, he is a musician and has published three CDs. He became well known for his writing, especially through the publication "Afrotopia" (2016). More recently Sarr and the art historian Bénédicte Savoy were asked by the French president Emmanuel Macron to examine the African heritage in French museums. That resulted in the "Rapport sur la restitution du patrimoine culturel africain" published in 2018.

106 For instance, Sarr's involvement in the restitution of African art and cultural from Europe.

107 For the following see: "Achille Mbembe," Wikipedia, accessed January 19, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achille_Mbembe.

108 See: Mbembe, *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*, 24.

109 For the following see: "Felwine Sarr," Wikipedia, accessed January 19, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felwine_Sarr.

Together Achille Mbembe and Felwine Sarr established the “Ateliers de la Pensée” 2016 in Senegal. It is an annual workshop bringing afro-diasporic scholars and artists together in Dakar and Saint-Louis to discuss the transformation of today’s world, especially with regard to decolonising Africa.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECOLONIALISM

While researching for this thesis, I learned that the discourse of decolonialism has been going on for a couple of years. That made me realise that we really need to push the implementation of decolonialism further in order to successfully achieve a decolonial future. There have been numerous reflections, talks and publications about decolonialism, but we finally need to make it reality.

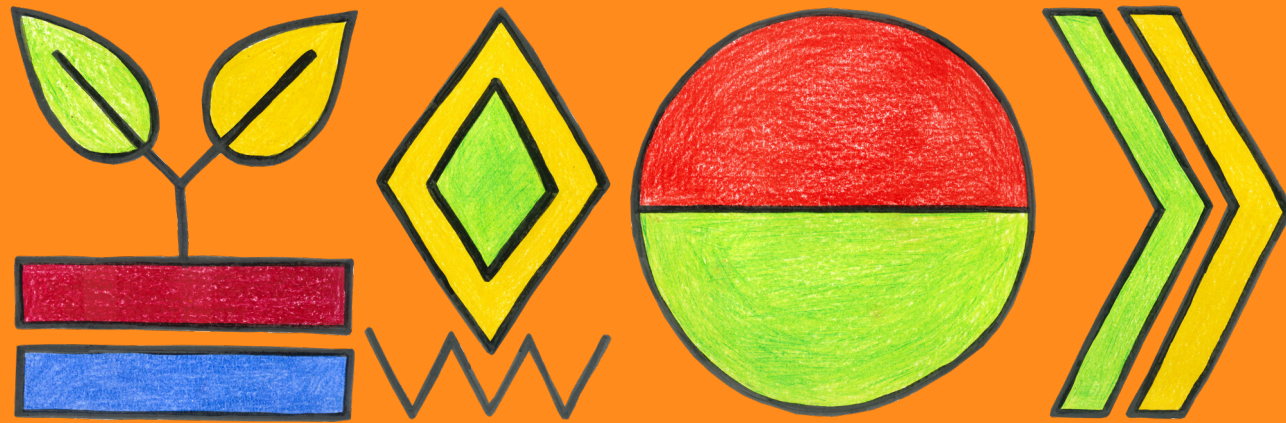
The implementation of decolonialism includes a critique of the previous definition of development, which was based on a development according to the Western scheme, primarily intended to satisfy the needs of the Global North.¹¹⁰ In order to achieve a decolonial future we need not only to analyse these greater connections between power and (neo)colonialism but to bring decolonialism into people’s daily life. That is the reason why we urgently need an implementation of decolonialism in our individual, social, economic and political life.

This research on the implementation of decolonialism in practical projects is motivated by the challenge of making decolonialism reality. I want to understand how existing projects are dealing with and achieving the realisation of decolonialism within their projects. Hereby the questions have been: How is it possible to make decolonialism reality? How can one integrate decolonialism in all thoughts and actions? How can a project or institution thematise, commonly reflect on and overcome (neo)colonialism in order to become decolonial? What is important to consider in the process of decolonising? What experiences have existing projects made on the implementation of decolonialism? Does the transculturality of a team or the creative-practical way of working help to implement decolonialism? Is more connectivity between Global South and North enabled through the realisation of decolonialism? Is decolonialism mainly a political, economic and social struggle or can the creative sector also contribute to developing a decolonial world?

» In the following chapter I interviewed creative projects in the Global South. On the basis of these interviews we will try to understand how a realistic decolonialism can be made possible.

When striving for this decolonial future we should keep *Mpatapo* in the back of our mind — the knot of reconciliation that guides us to a peaceful, harmonious reconciliation.

¹¹⁰ For the following see: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 26–27.



**SKILLFUL PERSON
CREATES FUTURE
UNITY**

//EXPERIENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
DECOLONIALISM

WHY TRANSCULTURAL, CREATIVE PROJECTS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In this work I am trying to understand how decolonialism can be implemented in design projects in the Global South. Of course (neo)colonialism is affecting all areas of human life and society. I focus specifically on projects working creatively or in the broadest sense dealing with creative work, because I believe that there is a chance of actually bringing decolonialism into reality through creative, practical work.

The transcultural projects presented in the following are all based in the Global South because most academic research and writing is about and published in the Global North. Since the process of decolonialism is about the Global South, I find it crucial to ask the people there how they deal with the struggle of decolonising. I believe we can learn a lot from these projects in the Global South because decolonialism is an issue they have to deal with daily.

The examined projects are all transcultural thus people from different cultures and nations work together. I believe that especially in a transcultural context it is possible to investigate and hopefully understand how (neo)colonialism shape their working structures, how they try to overcome these structures and integrate decolonialism in all their thoughts and actions.

THE PROJECTS INTERVIEWED

NI EN MORE — CIUDAD JUÁREZ (MEXICO)

» <https://www.nienmore.com>

Ni en more is a social project and clothing brand in Ciudad Juárez, northern Mexico (Figs. 12 & 13). It combines fashion and art with political activism with the goal of creating a sustainable, impactful business. *Ni en more* uses education, craft and fashion (Figs. 14–18) in the collective fight for women’s rights by creating a network and empowering the women. The heart of *Ni en more* is the women’s sewing workshop offering “a safe environment, fair wages, education and training to women living in vulnerable conditions.”¹¹¹ The name of the project is inspired by the poet Susana Chávez Castillo and her fight against femicides. The name *Ni en more* combines the core aim in Spanish, Norwegian and English: *Ni uno más, Ikke en til, Not one more* (Fig. 19).



Fig. 12: Ciudad Juárez is situated at the northern Mexican border.



Fig. 13: A part of Ciudad Juárez.

¹¹¹ “About,” *Ni en more*, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.nienmore.com/home>.

PRODUCTION PROCESS



Fig. 14: Dyeing fabric with avocados.



Fig. 15: Dyeing with dried flowers.



Fig. 16: Testing out the different colours possible with natural dyeing.



Fig. 17: Detail of a naturally dyed sleeve.



Fig. 18: The first collection of *Ni en more* was dyed with plants, flowers and vegetables from the surrounding district of Ciudad Juárez. The plants both give the dresses and shirts unique colours and prints. Dying with plants is sustainable, eco-friendly and free of any dangerous chemicals.

ACTIVISM¹¹²

Ni en more uses its creative work on fashion to promote women's rights especially the activism against femicides (Figs. 19–23). The focus is to empower women in Ciudad Juárez “to create a political resistance and spread a message that dignifies the struggle against violence towards women, without re-victimizing.”¹¹³ *Ni en more* particularly honours and supports the activism against femicides with their unique hand embroidered protest badges (Fig. 25) produced in workshops on eliminating violence against women. Each badge is formed as a flower with a pink cross in the middle. The pink cross comes from the ongoing action of painting pink crosses at junctions all over the city of Ciudad Juárez (Fig. 24), in order to raise awareness of femicides. The flower on the badges symbolises the hope through empowerment and economic independence and refers to *Ni en more* dyeing their garments with flowers (Fig. 26). Each garment by *Ni en more* comes with a protest badge and information sheet (Fig. 27) in order to globally spread the word of diminishing violence against women and femicides. Through their garments and protest badges *Ni en more* hopes to start a domino effect of consciousness on the fight against femicides.

INITIATORS¹¹⁴

Veronica Corchado, a Mexican human rights activist, who has organised numerous platforms and strategies putting an end to violence against women and femicides. Besides being one of the initiators of *Ni en more* she is “currently Director of the Municipal Institute of Women in Ciudad Juárez and founder of the non-profit organization Colectiva Arte Comunidad, an umbrella organization for various projects empowering women through arts and culture. She is co-founder of the Cultural Community La Promesa.”¹¹⁵

The founder and second initiator of *Ni en more* is Lise Bjørne Linnert, a Norwegian visual artist. The focus of her creative practice is raising awareness on social and political issues. The beginning of *Ni en more* was in 2006 when Lise “initiated Desconocida Unknown Ukjent, an ongoing international mass collaboration, embroidering nametags to protest the continuing murder of women.”¹¹⁶ Now Lise follows various aspects of *Ni en more*, and has a focus on the fundraising.

The third initiator of *Ni en more* is Janette Terrazas, alias Mustang Jane. Jane is a Mexican visual artist and cultural activist. Through textile art and cultural initiatives, she addresses issues of gender, women's rights, the rights of indigenous people and transgender rights. In *Ni en more* she is currently working as project coordinator and on the natural dyeing team.



Fig. 19: The name of *Ni en more* and pink crosses in the surrounding of Ciudad Juárez to commemorate the women who have already been murdered and plead for the end of femicides.

¹¹² For the following see: “Activism,” *Ni en more*, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.nienmore.com/ourmission>.

¹¹³ “Home,” *Ni en more*, accessed January 18, 2020, <https://www.nienmore.com>.

¹¹⁴ For the following see: “The Team,” *Ni en more*, accessed January 18, 2020, <https://www.nienmore.com/our-team>.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*



Fig. 20: Mural in Ciudad Juárez in remembrance of the murdered women.



Fig. 21: Pink crosses in the surrounding of Ciudad Juárez in protest against and remembrance of the femicides.



Fig. 22: Pink cross saying "Ni una más" at the border to the USA.



Fig. 23: A demonstration against femicides in Mexico.



Fig. 24: Pink crosses at junctions in Juárez as a protest against femicides.



Fig. 26: Dried flowers used to dye the fabric with in *Ni en more*.



Fig. 25: The *Ni en more* protest badge against femicides, inspired by the pink crosses and the dried flowers they use when dyeing.



Fig. 27: Every *Ni en more* garment comes with a protest badge and an information sheet about the ongoing fight against femicides.

EL WARCHA — TUNIS, NAFTA (TUNISIA), LONDON (UNITED KINGDOM), DAVIS (USA)

» <https://www.elwarcha.org>

El Warcha was founded 2016 in Tunis as a collaborative design studio.¹¹⁷ Inspired by all the workshops and people doing things in the medina of Tunis, they wanted to make a “workshop about making things that relate to the space, to the neighbourhood, the street (...) a space open to the streets that provides people with the tools they need to change their environment.”¹¹⁸ Thus, *El Warcha* is now a collaborative design studio based in Tunis (Figs. 28 & 29), Nafta (Figs. 32 & 33), London and Davis. The main focus is on developing urban design with and for the neighbouring community. Being part of the community is essential to develop exchange with and for the neighbourhood (Fig. 34). It is important that *El Warcha* belongs to the neighbourhood, hence everything *El Warcha* develops belongs there.

The dynamic of *El Warcha* has changed over the years. Whereas at the beginning it was quite mixed who participated in the workshops it is now mainly children. Also, topic wise things have changed: to start with they did have themes, for example light or sustainability. Now the defining factor is the limited material they have, thus the starting point in the workshops is always the available material (Figs. 30, 31, 36 & 42). In the creative process *El Warcha* is focusing on an intuitive way of working practically on mostly temporary projects (Fig. 39) without discussing it beforehand in order to “establish a dialogue between people from different cultures, different ages.”¹¹⁹

Enabling exchange is also key in *El Warcha* in London (Figs. 42 & 43). Here they are situated in Tottenham, a culturally mixed area of London¹²⁰, where they focus on making workshops with older people in shelter homes. Additionally, *El Warcha* London also does workshops with young people and children once in a while. *El Warcha* furthermore has two smaller branches in Nafta (Tunisia) and most recently also in Davis (USA).



Fig. 28: The *El Warcha*. Collaborative Design Studio in Tunis seen from outside.

¹¹⁷ For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*) and Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

¹¹⁸ Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

¹¹⁹ Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

¹²⁰ **South Tottenham is said to be the most ethnically mixed area in Europe.** See: “Tottenham,” Wikipedia, accessed January 5, 2020. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tottenham>.

THE TEAM

The staff of *El Warcha* now consist of 6–7 people, mainly in Tunisia. “Most of them are product designers, one of them is an urban designer, one of them is working on informal living in the medina.”¹²¹ The team is quite transcultural: people come from France, the USA and Tunisia. Moreover, the structure of *El Warcha*, is not that hierarchic, but more dynamic and organic.

El Warcha was founded by the French architect Benjamin Perrot as part of a residency he did in Tunisia. He has a background in public space and engagement which was the basis for the founding of *El Warcha*. Since then *El Warcha* has grown and therefore Benjamin moved to London two years ago to focus on *El Warcha* in Tottenham. But of course, he stays in contact weekly with his colleagues in Tunisia.

Marlène Halbgewachs with whom I had the second interview was trained in France in architecture, political science and urban planning, with a focus on inhabitant processes. She worked as one of the project managers in *El Warcha* Tunis and is now responsible for fundraising and other administrative things.

A characteristic of *El Warcha* is that it mainly attracts foreigners when doing calls for open positions, since socially engaged projects like *El Warcha* do not seem to appeal to Tunisian creatives. However, among designers and architects from the Global North, it is increasingly popular to engage socially, which is why predominantly foreigners are joining *El Warcha*. This internationality is really valuable in Tunisia where people cannot travel abroad that easily. Thus, *El Warcha* “creates an opening to other cultures”¹²² through being an exchange platform within Tunisia and also outside for example when contributing to the Ghanaian Street Art Festival 2018 in Accra (Figs. 37 & 38). *El Warcha* has become a space for bringing people together to build things collectively and has thus created a place for exchange. They for example also initiate various collaborations with local artists and institutions (Figs. 35, 40 & 41).



Fig. 29: This picture of the wood workshop of *El Warcha* gives a small insight into how *El Warcha* looks inside.

¹²¹ Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

¹²² Ibid.

THE PROCESS



Fig. 30: Workshop building plant pots out of leftover wood inside of the studio of *El Warcha* in Tunis.



Fig. 31: "Le grand nettoyage", cleaning the streets together and building public bins out of broom sticks.



Fig. 32: In Nafta they made public benches out of bricks and wood.



Fig. 33: Public space seatings build commonly in *El Warcha* in Nafta.



Fig. 34: *El Warcha* build a hydroponic project in the courtyard of the studio in Tunis together with the neighbourhood.



Fig. 35: Collaboration with students from the *National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia* and *Collectif Creatif* on experimenting on urban gardening and building a new hydroponic system on the roof of a coworking space in Tunis.

SOME PRODUCTS

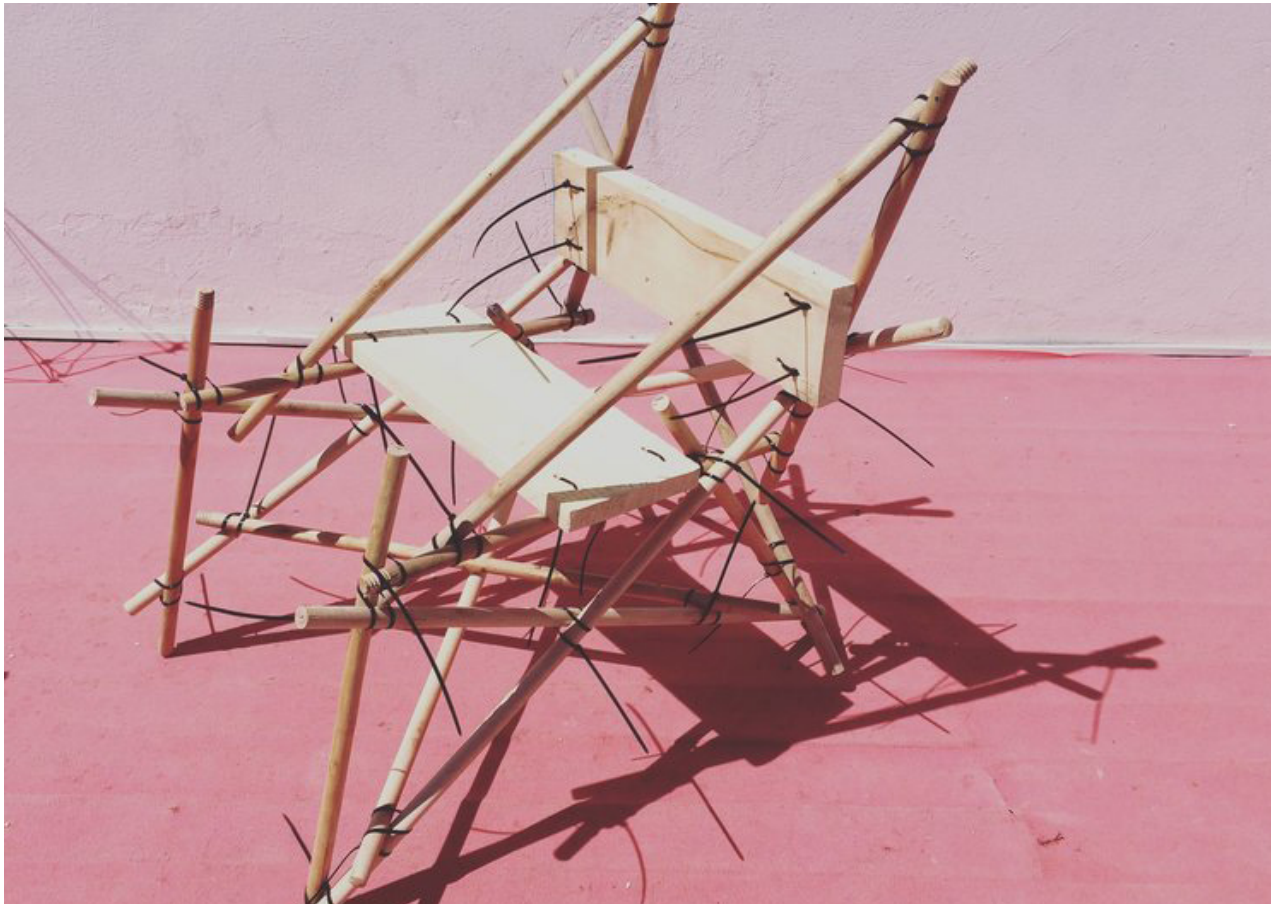


Fig. 36: A Chair made mainly from leftover broom stick in the “Kursi” (Arabic for chair) workshop in *El Warcha* Tunis.



Fig. 37: *El Warcha* prepared for going to Ghana by building a temporary pavilion out of plastic chairs.



Fig. 38: For the street art festival “Chale Wote” in Accra in 2018 *El Warcha* build a temporary pavilion out of bamboo.



Fig. 39: A pavilion and bench made by *El Warcha* outside the studio.



Fig. 40: A collaboration with *Maison de L'image* on plant pots to beautify a wall in Tunis.



Fig. 41: A temporary hut, called "Sukka", is being constructed in collaboration with the artist Rafram Chaddad for the festival of *Sukkot*. For this case the municipality of Tunis gives out palm leaves to everyone wanting to build a sukka in front of their house.



Fig. 42: A weekly workshop by *El Warcha* London for children on creating temporary art installations and furniture out of recycled plastic, aiming to inspire new usage of local parks through the temporary installations.

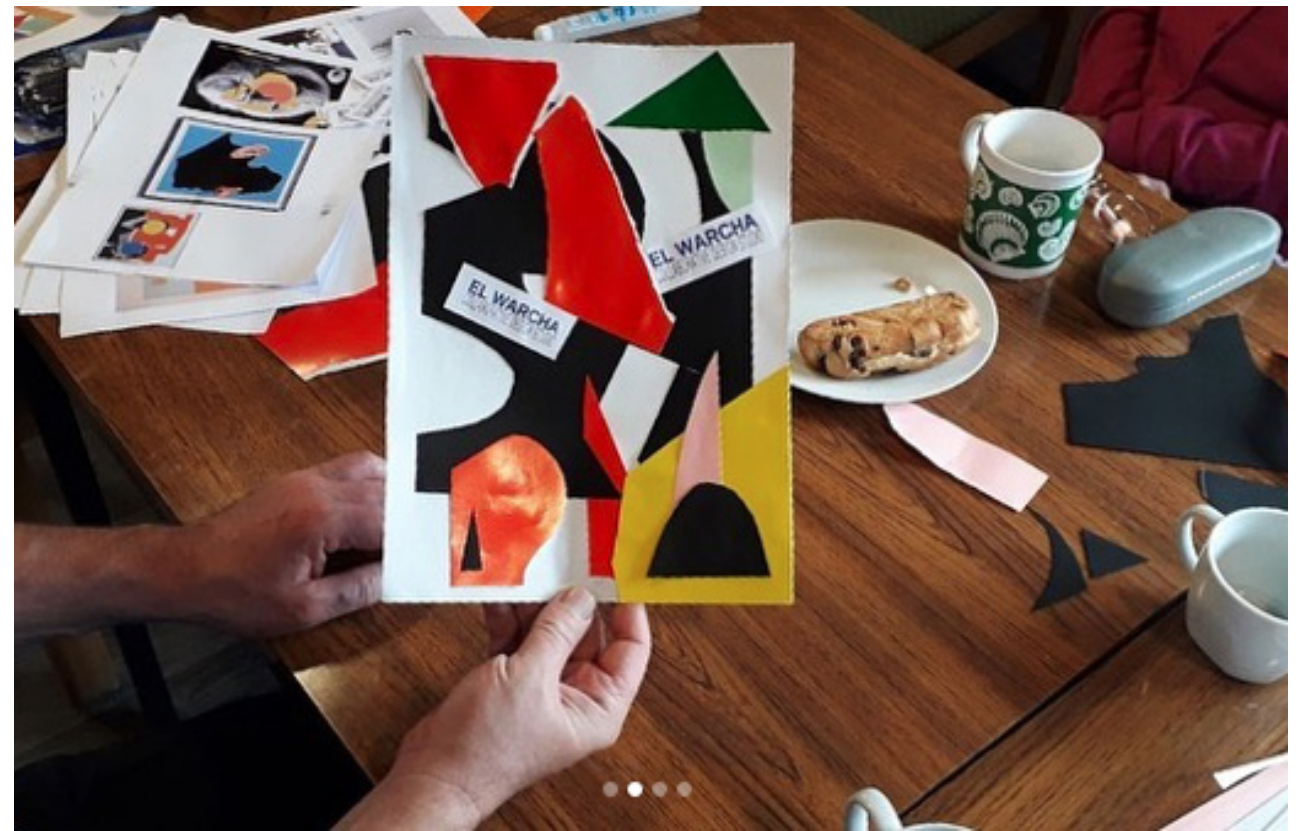


Fig. 43: A studios day in *El Warcha* London making cutout posters for the next workshop sessions.

THE CENTRE FOR THE LESS GOOD IDEA — JOHANNESBURG (SOUTH AFRICA)

» <https://lessgoodidea.com>

The Centre for the Less Good Idea (Fig. 44) in an interdisciplinary incubator space for the arts.¹²³ *The Centre* was founded 2016 in Johannesburg with the idea of creating a space that “would serve the Johannesburg art community across the disciplines.”¹²⁴ When establishing *The Centre*, they realised that what was missing in Johannesburg was a place where artists were supported in experimenting, testing, making mistakes and taking risks. A place where artist could try out what they have been wanting to but have not been able to do. So, *The Centre* was founded aiming to “find the less good idea by creating and supporting experimental, collaborative and cross-disciplinary arts projects”¹²⁵ (Fig. 45). *The Centre for the Less Good Idea* became a “lab space that invites artists in without expectation”¹²⁶ trusting that artists who are supported and given time, resources and feedback will develop interesting work. It is especially important not to be assuming to “know what the topics of these works will be or what the forms will be.”¹²⁷ Thus, *The Centre* is a space for artists without expectations! There are no limitations in the topics chosen or in the understanding of contemporary art.

STRUCTURE AND TEAM

The artist William Kentridge is a draughtsman, performer, filmmaker and the founder of *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*.¹²⁸ As an artist, William is best known for free charcoal, ink and animation drawings. Thereby, William relies strongly on collaboration and experimentation with other artists. At *The Centre*, William holds the role of performer, collaborator, facilitator and much more. Among other things, he works together with the artists and curators of *The Centre* to develop ideas and concepts.

When founding *The Centre for the Less Good Idea* William teamed up with the visual artist Bronwyn Lace, whom I got the chance to interview.¹²⁹ In her own artistic practice, Bronwyn explores the relationship between art and other fields such as physics, museum practice and education. Therefore, as an animator at *The Centre*, Bronwyn ensures that the various media, artists, thought processes and the collaborative chaos that evolves from them are encouraged, supported and brought to life.

The third member of the decision-making team of *The Centre* is the dramaturg, director, play writer Phala Ookeditse Phala.¹³⁰ As an artist Phala is mainly interested in the different ways in which work can exist in space: as physicality, purpose, smell, sound and form. Phala was co-curator of the fifth *Season* of *The Centre* and continues now to work as an animator at *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*. He supports the participating artists in shaping thoughts, emotions, activities and experiments, and in finally staging and exhibiting them.

The Centre is organised in an informal way, and states that it is important for them to stay mobile, flexible and experimental — even in terms of structural or administrative aspects “we treat ourselves the same way as you would treat an artwork: we try things one bit at a time but knowing that it might work, it might not. We take risks with that. We build on what has momentum and what is interesting, and we let go what doesn’t.”¹³¹

The staff and the artists engaged at *The Centre* are quite diverse and as multicultural as the South African society is. It consists of the decision-making team, artistic advisors who circle them loosely, a lighting, sound, engineer, video, editing, camera team, and a writer to document the work of *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*.



Fig. 44: The poster and logo of *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*.



Fig. 45: Collaboratively working in the former industrial facilities of *The Centre for the Less Good Idea* on one of the common artistic projects.

¹²³ For the following see: Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “About,” *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://lessgoodidea.com/about>.

¹²⁶ Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ For the following see: “William Kentridge,” *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://lessgoodidea.com/the-team#/william-kentridge-3/>.

¹²⁹ For the following see: “Bronwyn Lace,” *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://lessgoodidea.com/the-team#/bronwyn-lace-1/>.

¹³⁰ For the following see: “Phala Ookeditse Phala,” *The Centre for the Less Good Idea*, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://lessgoodidea.com/the-team#/new-gallery-44/>.

¹³¹ Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

SEASONS

The main focus of *The Centre for the Less Good Idea* is making two *Seasons* a year, each lasting six months. For each *Season* a curatorial team is selected which then selects the participating 50–90 South African artists all interested in working outside their respective disciplines and together in a collaborative manner. Since they do not assume knowing what topics the artists want to work on, the specific topic develops out of the participating artists. Generally, they focus on the embodied and any kind of performativity (Fig. 47). Thus, all artistic disciplines can contribute. From singing, vocalising, music (Fig. 46) dance, performance and storytelling, everything is included. That enables an authentic and truly interdisciplinary practice. Additionally, *The Centre* enables multiplicity by giving room for testing out all kinds of other projects. Each *Season* is manifested in a public festival showing what they have been working on.

FOR ONCE

Due to their initial motivation of testing out and seeding ideas they also established the platform *For Once*, a one-night performance every month at *The Centre* showing what they have been incubating over the past weeks (Figs. 48–51). *For Once* was especially founded to test out and show the experiments to an audience. In this platform artists from all over the world participate since another intention of *The Centre* is to enable more collaborations. *The Centre* created *For Once* as a platform for South African artwork being shown in South Africa, instead of mainly in the Global North, “as well as facilitating the dialogues and conversations between artists and other countries.”¹³²

The artistic work at *The Centre* is quite focused on “practice and site-specific responsiveness”¹³³. They emphasise that their focus is never on the output but rather on the process of the making. It is about encouraging artists to quickly go from dialoguing, writing, planning into making and testing out. To enable that *The Centre* has developed “strategies to immediately move us out of that format of conceptually talking and to start playing”¹³⁴. Thus, the focus of *The Centre* is to get out of the theory into real life. For the upcoming *Season 07* they have established a new format, the *So Academy* enabling mentorships with established artists, like Greta Goiris (Fig 52).



Fig. 46: The Blind Mass Orchestra rehearsing the experimental compositions by João Renato Orecchia Zúñiga based primarily on instruction and animated scores. *Season 01*, 2017.



Fig. 47: Nhlanhla Mahlangu and choir rehearsing extracts from Wole Soyinka's “The Trails of Brother Jero”. The piece was directed by Khayelihle Dominique Gumede. *Season 01*, 2017.

¹³² Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.



Fig. 48: Via Katlehong Dance cooperated with Gregory Maqoma on the piece "Via Kanana" thematising fear, light and hope. *For Once*, 2018.



Fig. 49: The performance "CLONE" by Louise Coetzer, performed by Darkroom Contemporary and Brydon Bolton. *For Once*, 2018.



Fig. 50: "Artist With No Title". Directed by Teresa Phuti Mojela and Shanell Winlock Pailman. *For Once*, 2018.



Fig. 51: Conversation between the British Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE & William Kentridge. *For Once*, 2018.



Fig. 52: Since 2020 the new format *So Academy* enables artists from any discipline to receive mentorship from costume designer Greta Goiris. Together the selected artists will work with Greta on the costume design for the upcoming *Season 07*.

The *Adinkra* symbol for wisdom, creativity and the complexities of life shows *Ananse*, the spider from folktales spinning his web.¹³⁵ *Ananse Ntontan* means “spiders’s web”. For this chapter on the impact of design on society, we draw inspiration from this symbol for creativity: *Ananse Ntontan*.

DESIGN AND SOCIETY

Most people associate design with high-quality, often quite expensive products, concepts and systems, predominantly concerned with aesthetics and sometimes also with function. Therefore, many people, for example in Germany, consider them to be luxury goods that do not suit everyone’s taste and are bought for beauty and prestige rather than for everyday use. We do not need to discuss that this is a very narrowminded understanding of design. Furthermore, the appreciation and thus the integration of design as ‘normal’ in everyday life strongly depends on the socio-cultural context. For example, in Denmark it is not explicitly associated with prestige and luxury to invest in design, but design is rather products, concepts and systems that are actually used and valued for their quality and aesthetics: whether it is designing future welfare systems¹³⁶, furniture, graphic design or mobility concepts for our future cities¹³⁷.

Design is situated somewhere between art, industry and craftsmanship according to my perspective and observation of the subject over the last couple of years. Although design also has artistic aspects, it is different from art. Design requires craftsmanship, but is not arts and crafts. Furthermore, design includes (mass) production and industrial aspects. Yet design is neither industry, art nor craft, but is located at the intersection of these areas. Additionally, design is characterised by a critical analysis and reflection on society. Thus, designers work with a combination of problem solving and aesthetics, at the intersection of economy, creativity and society — an interface I have not met in any other field so far.

» However, I do not want to dwell on that too long. I do not want to spend time pondering about whether design is meaningful or not, how it is received and what function it has, because design exists and will continue to exist. Instead, the question remaining is rather: what impact does design have on our societies? Can design shape society?

To Felwine Sarr, culture encompasses everything from various art forms to artistic and literary culture and the art of living, all intellectual work that demands creativity.¹³⁸ These are thus linked to intellectual education and the production and communication of symbolic contexts. Culture is thus a field of constant creation through which reality can be comprehended. It is therefore both fact and process, which can be value-creating, but its primary task is to produce meaning and significance in societies. Thus, one of the main tasks of culture and creativity is to shape society.

Design combines problem solving with aesthetics and draws on elements from art, industry and craftsmanship. But what makes design stand out is the social component, the critical analysis and reflection of society. Design deals more actively with society than other creative-artistic approaches and is therefore deeply rooted in both creativity and society. Through the reflective and creating tools of design, society can be shaped by design. Designers also work more intuitively than other social sciences, allowing those

¹³⁵ For the following see: “ANANSE NTONTAN,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed February 4, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/anant.htm>.

¹³⁶ **For example the project “Future Welfare” of the Danish Design Centre using design methods, tools and concepts to design the future welfare system of Denmark.** See: “Future Welfare,” Dansk Design Center, accessed February 18, 2020, <https://danskdesigncenter.dk/en/future-welfare>.

¹³⁷ **The Danish Design Centre is also working on designing mobility concepts of cities to make sustainable mobility more attractive and thus to increase the quality of life in the cities.** See: “Design Cities,” Dansk Design Center, accessed February 18, 2020, <https://danskdesigncenter.dk/en/design-cities>.

¹³⁸ For the following see: Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 68.

involved to meet and work together as equals. Intuitive rather than cognitive work could mean that (neo)colonialism matters less in creative fields. Many studies, e.g. the theories referred to in the first chapters, have proven, and critical people might realise, that (neo)colonialism is still deeply anchored in our minds, hearts and bodies — also when working creatively. We cannot conceal the fact that art and design are very exclusionary knowledge systems created by the Global North. Still, I see potential in design to create social changes, like overcoming (neo)colonialism due to its intuitive way of working, the communication of creativity not bound to language or location and the anchoring of design in society.

» **So, in summary** — Design can make important, but complicated, unpleasant, complex topics understandable without pointing fingers, not over-didacticized and without long theoretical texts, but through visual communication and with an emotional comprehension.¹³⁹ Thus, design can make incomprehensible topics understandable through this different kind of explanation. Designers could be ‘translators’ between theoreticians and society at large. Therefore, design shapes society and initiates social changes. Since design is working at the interface of creativity and society, we can also use design working spaces and methods to overcome (neo)colonialism and thereby shape a decolonial society.

» I will go into this more detailed in the following chapter. First, however, I will reflect on the chances of design to bring about social changes like decolonialism.

THE POTENTIAL OF DESIGN TO CREATE SOCIAL CHANGES

Design works, as just explained, at the interface of art, society and industry. Designers are not only concerned with the development of aesthetic concepts, things, strategies, methods and products, but also with how this can be implemented in the industry and how this relates to social developments and changes. Design can therefore play a significant role in shaping social change. Design is able to develop strategies, methods, techniques and concepts for shaping society, since design always creates something that is part of the daily life of individuals or collectives. For example a chair, an advertising video, a concept to promote urban bicycle traffic, illustrations of the consequences of the climate crisis or an explanation of the socio-political situation in Chile. Therefore, design always has an influence on individual and collective life. Design as social shaping is much more powerful than most people realise. Through the combination of creative, social and economic aspects, all areas of society can be shaped consciously and explicitly but also unconsciously and subtly through design. Thus, designers shape society. Accordingly, design can help to influence and form significant social changes.

» To find out how people in real practical, creative projects actually think about design shaping society, I asked the projects I spoke to how they think that design and practical, creative work contribute to social changes.

Marlène from **El Warcha** is convinced that the creative sector has an impact on society.¹⁴⁰ She says, however, that practical creativity is unlikely to solve social problems, but that it rather contributes to the solutions. Above all, the creative sector can make social problems a subject of discussion and generate attention. In *El Warcha* it is also the case that practical, creative collaboration allows for a more equivalent approach and disregards differences. Marlène is aware that this cannot solve complex global problems, but she

¹³⁹ See: Interview Gina Schöler (*Glücksministerium*).

¹⁴⁰ For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

believes that communicating at eye level with each other and language-independently can be helpful in solving some social challenges. This way of interacting equivalent with each other could be transferred from the creative, practical to other areas of society and thus contribute there to more equality. In this way, social changes are indirectly shaped through design.

» **So how can design contribute to social changes? Summarising** — Design is part of our everyday life; it has an impact on individual and collective life. Therefore, design can also shape social changes and developments. Design helps to shape society. One of the reasons for this is that creative and practical work makes statements outwards, thus creates attention for topics and moreover addresses people directly, often in a less didactic way. Thus, design enables much faster changes than other areas of society. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that design cannot be used alone but should rather be used as a complement to these other areas since the creative sector might not be able to solve all social problems but can contribute very well to the solutions. In this way, the areas that shape society complement each other to solve social challenges. However, it should not be forgotten that it is precisely the design sector that is particularly helpful through the visualisation and communication of the topics to the public. In addition, the language-independent communication at eye level used in practical, creative work can be helpful in solving challenges of society. Because this enables an equivalent encounter design may also lead to more equality in society.

If the creativity of *Ananse Ntontan*, design and creative, practical work have an impact on, shaping society, contribute to social changes and developments, then there is also the possibility of design being helpful for the implementation of decolonialism.

» Therefore, we will look at how a decolonial world could look like and how we can achieve this in the following chapter.

When striving for a decolonial world the *Adinkra* symbol of cooperation and interdependence reminds us of helping each other, cooperating — *boa me na me mmoa wo* can be translated to “help me and let me help you”.¹⁴¹

A DECOLONIAL WORLD

A decolonial world is for me a world that enables a fair and equal life to all living beings on this planet. It means that all humans are seen and treated equally despite all differences — especially despite different national, geographical, socio-political, cultural and racial identities. Thus, a decolonial world enables everybody the same chances for a dignified, independent life being able to care for oneself and one's family. A decolonial world means that the legacies and consequences of colonialism are not influencing the system of the world and by that the individual's life anymore. It means that (neo)colonial structures are not continuing anymore. A decolonial world means that colonialism is not forgotten but kept in memory in order to learn from it, just as we do now with the Holocaust. The realisation of decolonialism means that (neo)colonialism is not influencing how individuals see and judge other individuals and thereby also not influencing transnational relationships anymore.

A decolonial world means the end of racism, the end of the centrism of the Global North, the end of the division of the world into ‘developed’ vs. ‘less developed’. It implies the end of the capitalistic exploitation of former colonies, the end of the economic protection of the economies of the Global North in order to profit most from the global economy and an end to western sovereignty of knowledge and interpretation. A decolonial future includes an end to the restrictive classification and definition of ethnic groups and their allocation to certain countries which results in transcultural, multilocal¹⁴² societies.

A decolonial world will end up with equal rights to all human beings despite all differences. It enables the economic development of former colonies instead of preventing it, as done so far. It implies the appreciation of art, design and craft from the former colonies as equally valuable, and therefore also the restitution of all art and crafts objects stolen during colonialism. It would lead to the equal distribution of (scientific) publications around the world. A decolonial world would offer the same chances for basic and higher education, infrastructure, political participation, professional and personal fulfillment to everyone. A decolonial future in my eyes is the utopia of a perfectly equal and fair world, where everybody has the same chances for a fulfilled life, everything done by humans is appreciated and everyone is treated equally no matter the geographical, socio-political, cultural, ethnical, educational background or racial, professional, religious, sexual, gender identity.

» Yet, to achieve a decolonial world, we must first overcome the persistent powerful legacies of (neo)colonialism, both in society as a whole and on an individual level. That is why I wanted to learn from the projects I talked to, whether (neo)colonial structures, relationships or cooperations have influenced the project? And how it is possible to overcome the (neo)colonial legacies in the project and in the daily work?

Jane from **Ni en more** defines decolonialism as learning from our ancestors, their way of life and their traditions.¹⁴³ Decolonialism means overcoming (neo)colonial structures and thoughts in, for example, religion, diet, ideology, identity, discrimination and positions of power. Jane does believe that *Ni en more* is clearly shaped by (neo)colonialism, since the

¹⁴¹ See: “BOA ME NA ME MMOA WO,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/boame.htm>.

¹⁴² Referring to the multilocality described by the writer Taiye Selasi 2014 in the TED Talk “Don’t ask me where I’m from, ask me where I’m local”. She thematises identity, home and nationality and demands the acceptance of ambiguous, multilocal identities. See: Taiye Selasi, “Don’t ask me where I’m from, ask me where I’m local,” filmed October 2014 at TEDGlobal2014, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, video, 15:56, accessed January 30, 2019, https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local?language=en.

¹⁴³ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

project was founded by Europeans and privileged Mexicans. Therefore, many decisions were made from a position of power. Jane explains that the project was not founded with a decolonial perspective, but over time decolonialism has become an essential part of *Ni en more*. Now they are just at the beginning of a new phase, as *Ni en more* has established itself as an NGO and now indigenous people have to be represented on the decision-making team of *Ni en more*. Recently *Ni en more* also received government support for the opening of a second studio in a Rarámuri¹⁴⁴ community. Here indigenous people will be responsible for the studio, work and teach other indigenous people in their own language. Jane sees this as an important and meaningful step in *Ni en more*'s continuing attempt to decolonise itself and develop further.

Benjamin from **El Warcha**, Tunisia, told me that (neo)colonialism is visible in different situations, for example in the way one interacts with others.¹⁴⁵ But he also emphasises that remembrance of colonialism is very different depending on the geopolitical context. This is well illustrated by the different experiences Benjamin had in a project in an Algerian community compared to the experiences in the Tunisian context of *El Warcha*. In the interaction with the Algerian community, the colonial past and the fact that he is French "was really a defining factor and triggered certain types of reactions. There was a lot of animosity against the French, obviously in relation to the Algerian war"¹⁴⁶. In this context it was not possible to avoid the discussion about (neo)colonialism since the colonial past was and still is central in the relationship between French and Algerian people. In contrast, Benjamin hardly has such discussions and confrontations in Tunisia. He suspects that being French in Tunisia is not a particular issue, because he has hardly received any specific reactions to it. In Tunisia, Benjamin experiences that the colonial period is to some extent an issue, but not as obvious as in the Algerian context, which makes it more difficult to approach and reflect on.

Benjamin himself only experiences and feels the colonial past in small, hardly recognisable details. For example, when feeling out of place because of his origin. He describes that there are many situations in which these power relations and effects of (neo)colonialism have a very invisible but nonetheless strong influence on situations. While working with other Tunisian organisations, he experienced situations where his legitimacy as French to address certain issues was questioned, compared to Tunisians. In *El Warcha* decolonialism is not really an issue within the team, but rather stories of social-cultural background and nationality are told to each other.

The second *El Warcha* employee, Marlène, with whom I spoke, also emphasised that (neo)colonialism and the discourse on decolonialism are not noticeable in the everyday life of *El Warcha*.¹⁴⁷ However, nationality is always an issue but never in connection with (neo)colonialism or decolonialism. Her being French is always a subject and makes her questions why and how she has the legitimacy to be in Tunisia and work in *El Warcha*, a project that is supposed to belong to the local community. However, she cannot say exactly how far *El Warcha* and Tunisia are influenced by (neo)colonialism, since it is not an explicit topic in daily life. Furthermore, Marlène observes that it is easier being French than having another foreign nationality in Tunisia, especially due to the common language French. France is not perceived as a negative country despite its colonial past. Marlène has the impression that Tunisians do not have a negative relationship with French culture, and above all see the positive effects of (neo)colonialism, for example the common language and the good political relationship with France. However, she cannot really understand the reasons for this and finds it difficult to judge what Tunisians actually think about (neo)colonialism, since (neo)colonialism is not much of an issue in everyday life. Instead nationality and travelling are issues discussed in *El Warcha* and in the neighbourhood. Here global injustices and (neo)colonialism become visible in an exemplary way.

¹⁴⁴ **The Rarámuri, also called Tarahumara, are the Indigenous American people living in state of Chihuahua with the capital Ciudad Juárez where Ni en more is settled.**

See: "Rarámuri," Wikipedia, accessed February 11, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rarámuri>.

¹⁴⁵ For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

The Centre of the Less Good Idea sees it as a hugely difficult task to liberate oneself from historical structures of (neo)colonialism.¹⁴⁸ The challenge of overcoming (neo)colonial structures and legacies is being faced in many institutions, universities and museums in South Africa, as they were founded during colonial times or during apartheid. These institutions are now confronted with the enormous task of reforming and decolonising themselves but will always remain based on the original framework of colonialism. Bronwyn from *The Centre* therefore appreciates the luxurious and unique situation of not being founded on (neo)colonial structures and thus being free from the heavy structural challenge of decolonising. Nevertheless, (neo)colonialism, apartheid and decolonialism are reoccurring topics at *The Centre*, since these are projects of South Africa.

» I will discuss this in more depth in the following chapter on achieving a decolonial world.

» **To sum up** — in the conversations with the projects I learned that there are various attempts to overcome the legacies of (neo)colonialism and develop decolonialism, but that it is not an easy task. As already indicated the different projects are trying out various methods and techniques in order to become more decolonial. Especially a non-hierarchical, transcultural and local approach is crucial as well as trusting and respecting each other.

» In the following chapter we will look more closely at the necessity and realisation of decolonialism.

HOW TO ACHIEVE A DECOLONIAL WORLD

In order to achieve a decolonial world we need to implement decolonialism in all thoughts and actions. Colonialism officially ended but we can tell from the continuing existence of (neo)colonial structures, that there remains a really long, challenging and difficult way to truly become decolonial. But it is crucial that we work continuously on erasing these (neo)colonial thoughts from our individual and societal minds. Since we all grow up in societies with (neo)colonial structures we all carry these legacies within us. We must overcome these deeply rooted (neo)colonial patterns of thought, evaluation and interpretation. These are the roots of (neo)colonialism inside of us which must be overcome in order to achieve a decolonial world. Additionally, to achieve decolonialism in the personal, individual context we need to fight for decolonial societies globally. We have to implement decolonialism in all thoughts and actions of society. However, this is at least as difficult as decolonialism on an individual level, because large parts of the societies of the Global North are based on (neo)colonialism and because (neo)colonialism is deeply ingrained in all global socio-political, economic and cultural relations. I believe that working transculturally and creatively might help to implement decolonialism in all thoughts and actions.

» In the following we will learn more detailed from the interviewed projects how decolonialism is integrated in their thoughts and actions. Furthermore, I asked why transculturality and creativity in addition to active and theoretical socio-political work might help the process of decolonising.

In **Ni en more** they try to include decolonialism in all thoughts and actions of the project by being careful to treat all diversities with respect.¹⁴⁹ It is essential to be careful not to appropriate Rarámuri culture and to value and respect the beautiful traditions of the

¹⁴⁸ For the following see: Conversation Bronwyn Lacey (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

¹⁴⁹ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

Rarámuri people. Jane explains that it is necessary not to impose a particular culture on anyone. Creatively, they try to incorporate decolonialism into *Ni en more* by using pre-Hispanic dyeing techniques in order to express their Mexican heritage. Moreover, they also communicate diverse skin colours in their advertising. Thus, Jane believes that *Ni en more* is in the positive process of realising decolonialism step by step.

When talking about the implementation of decolonialism, Benjamin explains that within **El Warcha** there has of course been hierarchy and power relations, but these were mainly related to different levels of experience and responsibility.¹⁵⁰ When *El Warcha* was founded it was intended to be as non-hierarchical as possible. Later on, however, they realised that this is really difficult to implement, because despite the desire for horizontal structures and the flat organisation of workplaces¹⁵¹, hierarchical relationships and power imbalances continue to exist. Therefore, these hierarchies must be outlined and explained. Furthermore, in projects with horizontal structures it is necessary that independent and reliable responsibility exists. If this is not the case, it is difficult to establish non-hierarchical structures. The team of *El Warcha* is aware of this and is tackling this challenge. Among other things, it is very important for them that the team is transcultural and is carried on local, not foreign, shoulders.

Despite this, Benjamin considers it difficult to work on the legacies of (neo)colonialism in the everyday work of *El Warcha*. In his opinion, the power relations that can be felt in everyday life do not necessarily come from the origin of the people involved or from (neo)colonialism. For example, in Tottenham, London, where he is now mainly working, he observes older people with contrasting biographies and opinions managing to live under one roof in the shelter homes. Of course historical events, such as apartheid, are topics that come up from time to time in *El Warcha* and have to be dealt with. However, it is difficult to tackle these issues within the project because they are in the past and the people involved are already quite old. Thus, living together in the shelter homes is possible because nobody dwells too long on these difficult topics and because controversial discussions are often avoided. Nevertheless, both in *El Warcha* London and in Tunis, they try to reflect on the challenge of how (neo)colonialism can be addressed and develop a way of dealing with these invisible structures of (neo)colonialism.

That is also a topic Marlène mentioned when talking about flat working structures and the equality between each other being key to decolonialism within the project.¹⁵² She tells me that it works quite well to work equivalent together in the creative and practical processes, since everyone has specific skills in a certain detail of the process, like cutting wood precisely. Accordingly, the diverse skills are all important parts of the process and are all needed in order to achieve a good result. However, for other works in *El Warcha*, like the administrative part, it is difficult to establish horizontal working structures. Marlène assumes that this is due to the fact that many school systems do not teach to take responsibility. Like Benjamin, Marlène concludes that the willingness to take responsibility is essential for the establishment of flat working structures. Everyone working in *El Warcha* comes from the creative-design-architecture field and has therefore done the administrative work more or less autodidactically. Thus the problem actually is that nobody can and wants to take responsibility for something s/he has not learned and understood properly.

Moreover, some assume that the administrative work is the work of foreigners, because it was unintentionally always done by foreigners. But that was never the intention. Benjamin explains that this is influenced by economic factors. *El Warcha* doesn't have the economic means to recruit Tunisians with managerial experiences. Foreigners especially Europeans easier accept such positions because they can support themselves even if they are badly paid, or at least they are willing to work in such a position for a periode

¹⁵⁰ For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

¹⁵¹ See: "Flat Organization," Wikipedia, accessed February 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_organization.

¹⁵² For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

of time. In addition, social engagement has been trending in European design and architecture schools, thus it is attractive for foreigners to work in *El Warcha* despite low salaries. On the contrary Tunisian creatives mostly aspire for better paid positions. This is, according to Benjamin both due to the primarily industry-focused educational system in Tunisia and the lack of public funding for social engagement. Hence, there is a lack of professional prospects for socially engaged work. These are the reasons why it is less incentive to become a socially engaged creative in Tunisia and thereby also more difficult for *El Warcha* to attract Tunisian designers and architects.

These various aspects make it difficult to organise the work in *El Warcha* more horizontally. Therefore, they have made several attempts to establish flat structures in the administrative area of *El Warcha*, for example by more active meetings or by integrating more creativity. So far, these attempts have been unsuccessful and therefore *El Warcha* is still looking for methods to make the other areas of *El Warcha* more horizontal, equivalent and hence more decolonial.

Since decolonialism in South Africa's post-colonial, post-apartheid attempt to decolonise itself is always an issue, and always part of reality, it does not need to be actively addressed and theorised.¹⁵³ Therefore, **The Centre for the Less Good Idea** has the approach that the concept of a project does not have to be fixed at the beginning but can be developed later. Because decolonialism is part of South Africa's everyday reality, everything that arises from it is an attempt to challenge this reality and to better understand how to change towards, implement and achieve a different kind of society. Bronwyn, with whom I spoke from *The Centre*, explains that for her, the decolonial moment exists when an institution decides not to know everything and not to know it better. That is why *The Centre* never actively sets decolonialism as a theme at the beginning, because they have decided not being able to assume which topics the artists want to deal with. This enables the artists to pursue what they want, which is the core of *The Centre*: to give space to artists to do what they have not had the opportunity to do yet. Therefore, in the process of *The Centre* there is not any theoretical discussion on (neo)colonialism. But in the reflection at the end, however, it becomes clear that many of the projects that have emerged deal with (neo)colonialism and decolonialism. After all, decolonialism is the project of South Africa and is thus implied in everything *The Centre* does. But it is never the impulse! Instead, in order to initiate the decolonial approach of complete liberation during the process that Bronwyn just explained, *The Centre* for example sets up a boxing ring at the beginning of a *Season*, invites the neighbouring boxing trainer and observes how artists from various artistic disciplines react to that. Everyone has a different response to this situation, but although, and perhaps precisely because, the boxing coach does not theorise and address decolonial issues, exciting projects on decolonialism emerge. One example is the project "Venus Hottentot vs. modernity" by the opera singer Ann Masina and the spoken word poet Lebogang Mashile.

» I will return to this project later in more detail.

» **Summarised**— It can be said that it is essential to continue questioning the (neo) colonial legacies and to continue to tackle decolonialism. Above all, the staff and all those involved in such projects must be actively involved in the process of decolonialism and work actively on it. Decolonial trainings, for example, could be helpful in this effort. It is also essential for decolonial projects to establish horizontal working structures and equality between all. This would imply that different perspectives, opinions and working methods are always legitimate. Thus, we, especially (white) privileged people, must learn humbleness and the willingness to step back from our own position. This would also include questioning and limiting one's own discourse privileges and decision-making

¹⁵³ For the following see: Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

power. Furthermore, we have to acknowledge that we do not always know everything better and cannot assume what is best for 'the others'. It would be a decolonial approach to leave others free to decide and stand up for themselves. In this way we could experience a multiplicity and diversity of opinions and perspectives, which, through the visibility of diversity, would destroy the legitimacy of stereotypes. In order to spread a global respect for all diversities, it is important to educate theoretically about (neo)colonialism and decolonialism. The resulting mutual respect also implies that we do not appropriate practical and creative aspects of other cultures. The visual, practical, creative field can contribute to spreading visibility of diversity, but also by making the issue of decolonialism accessible, tangible and understandable, thereby emphasising the urgency of decolonising the world.

» In the following chapters we will go deeper into the necessity of transculturality and practical, creative work in order to achieve a decolonial world.

TRANSCULTURALITY AND DECOLONIALISM

Since transculturality understands culture as overlapping, complementary and not clearly distinguishable entities, a cultural exchange automatically arises in transcultural contexts. Interpersonal encounters, openness and interest in other people and their cultures are the basic requirements for an equal and decolonial coexistence. Since transculturality does not unambiguously distinguish between different cultures, but assumes that different cultures exist in parallel, overlapping and equal to each other, the basis for an equal encounter of different cultures can be found in transcultural contexts. Because it is not clearly defined where which culture begins or ends, and what or who belongs to which culture(s), there is therefore no hierarchy between them. They coexist as equals, enriching and fertilising each other. Through these characteristics, transculturality is the ideal basis for equivalent encounters between people and cultures. Social changes that aim for justice, fairness, exchange and encounter can therefore be particularly successful in transcultural contexts. This is also the case in regard to decolonialism. Because equality, mutual exchange and interpersonal encounters are essential for overcoming (neo) colonialism and implementing decolonialism, transculturality is particularly suitable for decolonial processes.

» Therefore, I have explicitly concentrated on projects with transcultural teams and asked them to what extent their transculturality is helpful for equivalent encounters, exchanges, the discussion and overcoming of (neo)colonial structures. In the following I will describe what I have learned from the projects on the contribution of transculturality to a better implementation of decolonialism within the team.

For Jane from **Ni en more**, transculturality is any form of culture that crosses borders and thus connects individuals and communities.¹⁵⁴ Jane suggests that when implementing decolonialism in transcultural projects, it is important that everyone is aware of the colonial past and the legacies of it. It is essential that all, especially those who are privileged, establish a respectful way of interacting at eye level with everybody. She acknowledges that this is complex and a demanding daily task of increasing awareness and inner change. Communication among each other is the most important aspect: talking and listening to each other in order to step out of one's own subalternity or to reduce one's own privileges.

Marlène highlights that the different cultures and languages are the connecting point within the team of **El Warcha**.¹⁵⁵ The great effort everyone makes to understand each

¹⁵⁴ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

¹⁵⁵ For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

other is a very precious part of the project. Therefore, it is helpful that they have developed a new 'language' and thus a new way of understanding each other with the help of the tools and constructions in their practical work. This is very supportive for the work process in *El Warcha*. Marlène sees it as a treasure that understanding, exchanging, working and encountering each other as equals have increasingly developed through the transculturality of *El Warcha*. This shows that the transculturality of a project could also contribute to decolonising in the long run.

Bronwyn from **The Centre for The Less Good Idea** describes that in South Africa one can gain some insight into transculturality, because the whole country is extremely multi-racial and multicultural* with its eleven official national languages.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless many institutions still give priority to one or another race due to segregation. In *The Centre*, they have the advantage of not being founded during colonialism or apartheid and hence being free of these heavy legacies. This enables them to deal with the unanswerable complexity of diversity, trans- and multiculturalism. Bronwyn believes that transculturality is helpful in the implementation of decolonialism and that the most important aspect is to embrace the complexity that comes with it.

» To summarise — what can we learn from the interviewed projects in terms of transculturality as a tool for implementing decolonialism? The conditions for transcultural teamwork are the awareness of the (neo)colonial past and its legacies which must be facilitated by the general circumstances. Transcultural work is complex and exhausting: it is a daily challenge to raise the necessary awareness, inner change, understanding, reflection, questioning, humility and openness to step back from one's own position. Furthermore, it has to be considered that it is a time- and staff-intensive work. Communication is absolutely crucial: talking openly but also listening to each other. Another essential point is to be able to embrace the complexity of transcultural processes. If everyone makes an effort to understand each other and to integrate everyone in their various complexities, a bond within the project team develops through its diversity. The different socio-cultural backgrounds then unite rather than separate. Successful transcultural cooperation ideally results in a respectful interaction at eye level with everybody. This can be very encouraging for the process and enriching for mutual understanding and exchange. Thus, through transcultural work cooperation on a level playing field is possible, which can consequently also be supportive of processes of decolonialism within the project.

DESIGN AND DECOLONIALISM

To achieve decolonialism we have to change individual and collective thinking, and acting on a large scale. We have to overcome the legacies of colonialism and the persistence of (neo)colonial structures in all thoughts and actions worldwide. This means that we have to bring about enormous changes on a private, individual level as well as on a socio-political, cultural and economic level to eliminate (neo)colonial patterns of thought and behaviour and thereby develop a decolonial world. This is an ambitious task!

However, I believe that design, in addition to theoretical and active work, can do much to achieve a decolonial future by combining creative, social and economic factors and methods.

» That is why I have concentrated on design projects and asked them about their

¹⁵⁶ For the following see: Conversation Bronwyn Lacey (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

experiences in implementing decolonialism in their practical, creative work and whether that work helps in the process of decolonising. Thus, I hope that we can learn from the experiences of these various design projects from the Global South.

For Jane from **Ni en more**, the implementation of decolonialism is a cultural, political and economic challenge.¹⁵⁷ (Neo)colonial structures are rooted in our thoughts and actions and must therefore be eliminated from our consciousness. Jane is not sure if the creative sector can solve this social challenge alone, but she is convinced that with creative, practical projects (neo)colonial structures can be questioned and thus also initiate social change. Nevertheless, Jane is sceptical, because the power structures of (neo)colonialism are deeply rooted and we have to be open for this radical change if we really want to achieve a decolonial future. In *Ni en more*, according to Jane's opinion, they still have a long way to go before the creative, practical work encourages the implementation of decolonialism. This is mainly due to the fact that when founding *Ni en more* it was not a collaborative design process. Instead the first designs were brought in by the Norwegian designer Tine Mollat from *byTiMo*. Designs by local designers from Juárez were not introduced until 2019. Although the designs were finally created in Mexico, the problem remained that the indigenous Rarámuri employees still did not identify with them. For them, they are designs of the Mestiza, women of European and Indigenous American descent. The ideal goal for the complete decolonised *Ni en more* is indeed that the Rarámuri can and want to contribute designs from their traditions and ideas. Like that *Ni en more* could become a platform for promoting all diversities.

In **El Warcha** the practical, creative approach has been quite helpful, since Benjamin did not come to Tunis with a finished concept and the structure was very flexible.¹⁵⁸ So, *El Warcha* is an organically organised design studio based on what the people involved want to do. That is important in order to keep a sense of community and a common understanding of what they do. Through this flexible, adaptable way of working, they try to find a language that hopefully everyone understands. Marlène also emphasised that especially the practical, creative part of *El Warcha* is organised in a horizontal, equivalent and flat structure. All of them nourish the creative process. It is particularly valuable that they do not discuss what art is. Instead they intuitively create something creative in a common process. This is essential in equal, collaborative work, since there is no right answer, perspective or approach. Instead room is given for all opinions and perspectives which makes the process a success. It is only through this openness and respect of others that it is possible to connect as equals in the practical, creative process. Such an equal footing for encounter and cooperation is also an ideal condition for the implementation of decolonialism.

When I asked Bronwyn from **The Centre for The Less Good Idea** about the effect of creative work on society, she answered with an example: the project "Venus Hottentot vs. modernity".¹⁵⁹ The piece was created out of a situation that Ann experienced in real life, where her body was critiqued on a daily basis by several men in the streets of Johannesburg. Because Lebogang is also familiar with such situations and the increased harassment and control of female bodies as a sign of a growing patriarchy, they jointly wrote the play on the topic: "Venus Hottentot vs. modernity" (Fig. 54). The play combines Ann's singing voice, Lebogang's spoken words, accompanied by percussions. In fact, the piece is a performance of the two in a boxing ring where Lebogang welcomes you "to the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy detox program"¹⁶⁰. In the performance piece, the two artists address the treatment of Black women's bodies through references to Sarah 'Saartjie' Baartman¹⁶¹, the use of her physical body within various human circuses, but also the mistreatment of her physical remains and the sensitive ethical questions involved (Fig. 53). Thus, they raise issues that are difficult or impossible to address in an academic context, especially in the Global North. Topics that particularly connected with



Fig. 53: Sarah 'Saartjie' Baartman, a Khoikhoi woman from South Africa who was brought to Europe 1810 to be exhibited as 'Hottentot Venus' in freak shows due to her large buttocks. Additionally, 'scientists' analysed and documented her body as if it was not a human person, but an (animal) race to be observed and dissected. Sarah is one of probably several such horrendous crimes of the colonial era.

¹⁵⁷ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

¹⁵⁸ For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*) and Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

¹⁵⁹ For the following see: Conversation Bronwyn Lace (*The Centre for the Less Good Idea*).

¹⁶⁰ See: Lebogang Mashile, Ann Masina and Tlale Makhene, "Video excerpt | Venus Hottentot vs. modernity," filmed March 2017 at Season 01, Johannesburg, South Africa, video, 00:59, accessed February 2, 2020, <https://lessgoodidea.com/video-excerpt-venus-hottentot-vs-modernity/>.

¹⁶¹ See: "Sarah Baartman," Wikipedia, accessed February 20, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Baartman.

Europe's relationship to objects stolen during the colonial period and to the ongoing practice of representing Black bodies. Bronwyn finds it particularly exciting that "Venus Hottentot vs. modernity" arose from a real moment of frustration, but reaches back to colonial times, Sarah 'Saartjie' Baartman, the restitution claims and the still prevailing (neo)colonialism and patriarchy.

For Bronwyn, this performance piece is a good example of how artistic works on (neo) colonialism and decolonialism are created at *The Centre*, although this is not given as a theme in advance and is not actively theorised. This liberating way of working enables the artists to deal creatively and practically with sensitive topics such as decolonialism and thus to engage in a different form of discussion. Above all, topics can be dealt with which an academic debate would hardly or only with great difficulty do justice to. This contributes in a different way to discussing the legacies of (neo)colonialism and the implementation of decolonialism.

Another example of how creative, practical work opens up previously closed spaces and enables understanding is the opera "The head and the load" by William Kentridge (Figs. 55 & 56). In this piece, Africa's role in the First World War and the previously unknown fact that apart from civilians, the largest group of people killed were African workers, are the main topics (Fig. 57). They were not treated as people, but as units transporting the soldiers' equipment (Fig. 58) in hope for the never fulfilled promise of independence. This had never been researched and reflected upon, and never been publicly discussed and acknowledged. Therefore, an essential part of the opera was to make both Europeans and Africans aware of this heritage. However, the opera did not want to achieve a cognitive awareness for the legacies, but a felt, emotional awareness.

With these two examples, Bronwyn illustrated that through intuitive, liberated practical, creative work, topics that are difficult to address and understand can be more easily and sensitively approached. In addition, a better understanding might be achieved, since it is an emotional rather than cognitive understanding. This is why practical, creative work is so helpful and important for dealing with the legacies of (neo)colonialism and, consequently, for the realisation of decolonialism.

» **As a summary** — Design and practical, creative work definitely affect the implementation of decolonialism. It is particularly crucial that design has an impact on society and thus influences social changes and developments by shaping individual and collective everyday life.

For decolonising creative, practical projects, it is helpful if they are organised in a flexible, organic and adaptable way, so that a common understanding of work and thus a sense of community is created. After all, everyone contributes to the work process with their various skills. Intuitive and collaborative work in creative projects also opens up a space that allows for all opinions and perspectives. In such projects, an acceptance for others as equals thus develops.

Helpful for the negotiation process of (neo)colonialism, which is essential for a decolonial future, is that this negotiation of (neo)colonial legacies is different in practical, creative work compared to verbal negotiation as (neo)colonial legacies and implementing decolonialism are negotiated primarily through materials and working methods. In this way, creative, practical work allows for an examination of sensitive topics, such as (neo) colonialism, which opens up previously closed spaces and facilitates a better understanding. This is partly due to the fact that creative, practical works does not want to evoke a cognitive, but a felt, emotional awareness, which can lead to a better or at least different understanding of the subject.



Fig. 54: Lebogang Mashile and Ann Masina staging "Venus Hottentot vs. modernity" in *Season 01 of The Centre for the Less Good Idea*. The piece thematises the treatment of Black women's bodies and thus referring to Sarah 'Saartjie' Baartman.



Fig. 55: Extract from the play "The Head and the Load" on African soldiers serving in the First World War.



Fig. 57: The British King George inspecting non-commissioned officers of the South African Native Labour Corps at Abbeville, France, 10 July 1917.



Fig. 56: In the play, William Kentridge mainly uses projections of script collages and shadows of silhouettes as visualisations of the theme of African soldiers during the First World War.



Fig. 58: Additionally, the requisites and costumes visualised the load, both in the literal and the metaphorical sense, the African soldiers had to carry and the power relations that operated between African and European soldiers.

The intuitive, liberating nature of practical, creative work consequently enables that difficult, complicated and sensitive topics can be addressed and understood more easily which makes it a helpful area for overcoming (neo)colonial legacies and implementing decolonialism.

» **Summarising what we heard from the projects on decolonialism** — To achieve a decolonial world, transcultural teamwork and practical, creative working methods can be effective. The essential basis for implementing decolonialism though is that we overcome the legacies of (neo)colonialism. For this purpose, it is important to develop non-hierarchical, transcultural and local projects. Transculturality and practical methods help in the realisation of decolonialism because they promote diversity, embrace the complexity of it and creates the chance to connect. This goes hand in hand with an openness towards others and a humbleness towards one's own privileges and limited perspective. The key to decolonial cooperation is communication: speaking openly and listening to others.

Hence, we realise that both practical, creative and verbalised, written, or theoretical work is crucial and necessary to achieve the utopia of a fair world. A decolonial future in which everyone has the same chances for a fulfilled life and is considered equal can be achieved by means of transculturality and design.

Thereby we should remember our global dependency on each other and thus to cooperate when striving for a decolonial future. We should not forget the *Adinkra* symbol *boa me na me mmoa wo*, representing mutual help and support — cooperation and interdependence are essential in the process of decolonising.



SUNSET
//CONCLUSION

Although the “Siamese crocodiles” in the *Adinkra* symbol *Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu* share one stomach they fight about food.¹⁶² Hence, this symbol is reminding us of the harmfulness of power struggles for all who are engaged and is thus a call for unity in diversity.

THE LINK BETWEEN DECOLONIALISM AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The most widespread definition of sustainability is a balance between social, ecological and economic aspects (Fig. 59).¹⁶³ More recently the United Nations has defined sustainability as social sustainability meaning a balance of economical, ecological, political and cultural aspects (Fig. 60).

In order to achieve the human development goals of a fair, healthy and equal life for all beings on the planet we must establish a sustainable way of life. A sustainable future world requires social development now, which above all is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹⁶⁴ More detailed sustainable development means meeting human development goals and at the same time maintaining the capacity of nature to provide natural resources and ecosystem services on which human society and economy depend. At the same time we should not exploit nature primarily economically, but must remember that we humans are also created by nature, and we all mutually depend on it. In that way, income and wealth are distributed to a purpose and not to a company,¹⁶⁵ the living conditions of society and use of resources meet all humans needs, without endangering the stability and endurance of ecological systems.¹⁶⁶

While these definitions concentrate on ecological and economical aspects of sustainability, I strongly believe that it is necessary to overcome (neo)colonialism in order to achieve a sustainable world. After all, social sustainability means a fair and equal world for all humans now and in future. However, it is no news that (neo)colonialism is the main cause of today’s global injustice and power imbalance between Global South and North. That is the reason why I demand a discourse on decolonialism and social sustainability and why overcoming (neo)colonialism is a necessity to achieve an equal and socially sustainable future for all.

HOW TO ACHIEVE A SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Since transcultural projects and working groups help to create a more decolonial, equivalent interaction between different cultures, transculturality thus also helps to get closer, on a small scale, to a socially sustainable world. The same applies to creative, practical work: if a more decolonial way of working is created and fostered in creative, practical projects, they also help to ultimately achieve a socially sustainable world.

» I asked the projects how their transcultural, practical work is contributing to a decolonial and thus, on a larger scale, socially sustainable world? How can we achieve this socially sustainable world?

In *Ni en more*, Jane explained that they have so far been focusing more on decolonialism than social sustainability.¹⁶⁷ But they are already using eco-friendly fabric and dying

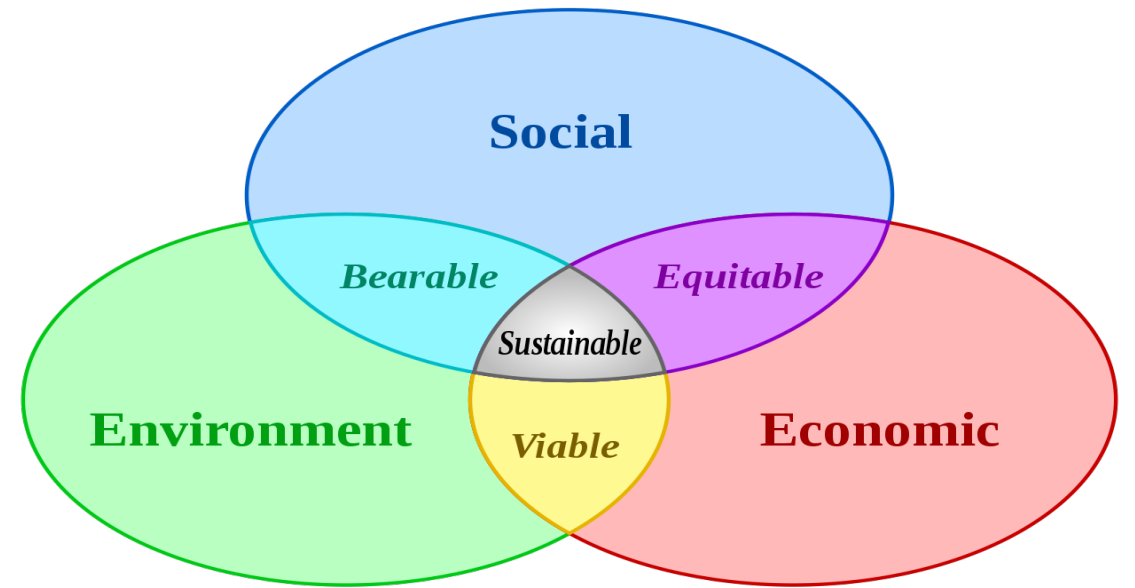


Fig. 59: Venn diagram illustrating the former definition of sustainable development as the combination of ecological, economic and social aspects.

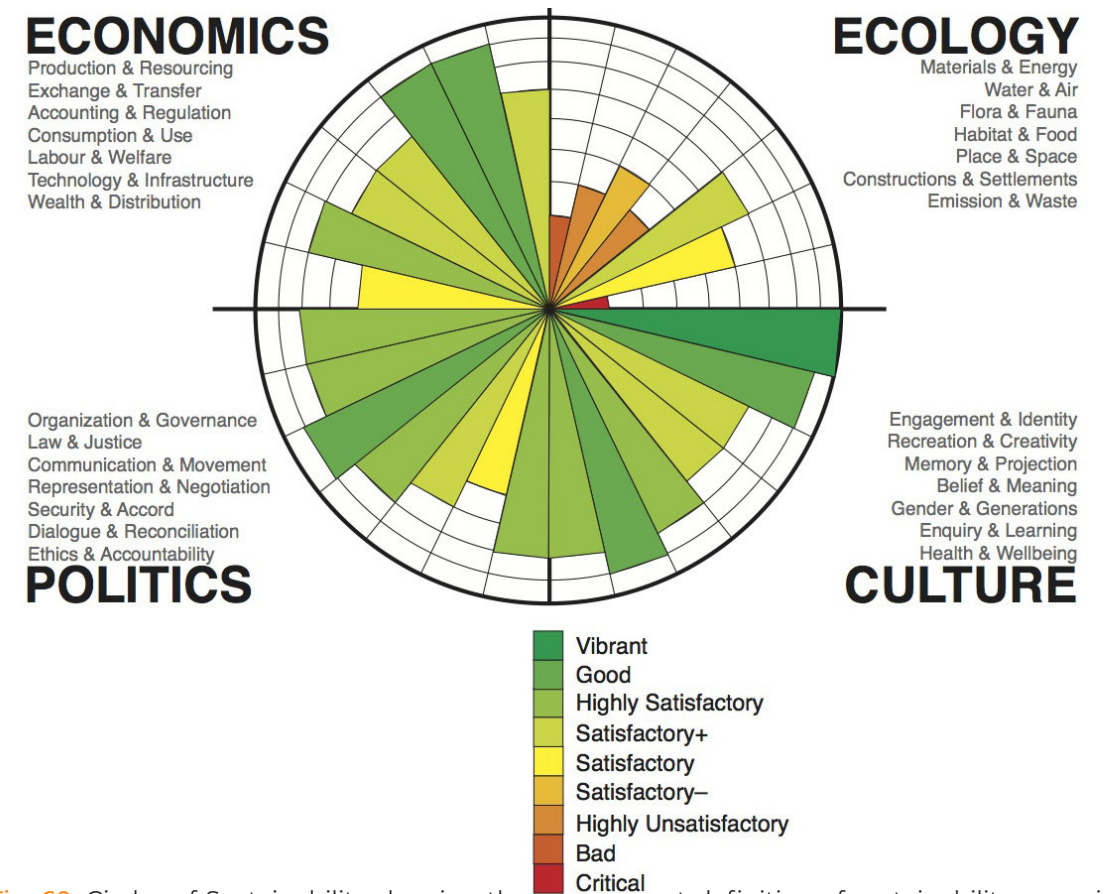


Fig. 60: Circles of Sustainability showing the more recent definition of sustainability as social sustainability. The sustainability of certain regions is evaluated on the basis of various factors in the fields of politics, culture, ecology and economy. Here the example of Melbourne in 2011.

¹⁶² For the following see: “FUNTUNFUNEFU-DENKYEMFUNEFU,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/funt.htm>.

¹⁶³ For the following see: “Social sustainability,” Wikipedia, accessed November 6, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_sustainability.

¹⁶⁴ “Sustainable development,” Wikipedia, accessed November 6, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development.

¹⁶⁵ See: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

¹⁶⁶ See: Wikipedia, “Sustainable development.”

¹⁶⁷ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

techniques, thus promoting the slow fashion movement. A future idea to become more socially sustainable could be returning the income from the sales to the community.

» **Summing up** — I have learned from the interviews that the implementation of decolonialism and the goal of a socially sustainable world is a huge challenge, but should be pursued as an utopian ideal. I myself am not so pessimistic. Of course, I am sceptical and realise that it is a huge task, but we have to start somewhere: the first feminists fought for decades mainly for women's right to vote. That was only a small but, in retrospect, important piece in the puzzle of realising gender equality. And we should approach decolonialism with a similar approach: yes, it will be a long struggle, but step by step we will come closer to the utopia of a decolonial, socially sustainable world. For this reason, we should learn from the interviews that in addition to reflecting on the origin of our prosperity, we need to implement decolonialism both on a small everyday scale and on a large political level. Every individual, especially the Global North, should furthermore really renounce our previous consumption and universalism. The few things that then still are allowed to be produced should be made under high socially, ecologically and economically sustainability standards.

» **Yet how could the utopia of a decolonial socially sustainable world look like? We will examine this question in more detail in the following chapter.**

HOW A SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE WORLD COULD LOOK LIKE

As I have already explained when analysing the link between decolonialism and social sustainability it is obvious that the implementation of decolonialism has an enormous impact on the development of a socially sustainable world. *I believe that decolonising the world will create more connectivity and cooperation between Global South and North since the implementation of decolonialism causes a more equivalent encounter and exchange.*

» **When interviewing the creative projects in the Global South I was interested to learn what they thought about the effects of decolonialism and whether it could create more cooperation globally.**

In Jane's opinion, it is essential for the implementation of decolonialism, for example in **Ni en more**, that the Global North understands, questions and finally changes its historical practices of exploitation, extractivism, slavery, racism, cultural appropriation and impositions.¹⁶⁸ The necessary change for a decolonial world is that the balance of power between the Global North and South must indeed become equivalent. Only then we can achieve a decolonial, socially sustainable world, according to Jane.

Benjamin from **El Warcha** is convinced that more exchange platforms will also bring about an increase in solidarity and cooperation, and thus decolonialism.¹⁶⁹ This is what they experienced, for example, when *El Warcha* did a project during the Street Art Festival "Chale Wote" 2018 in Accra, Ghana (Figs. 38, 61 & 62). They were there for the project, but it was also an opportunity to facilitate the rare exchange between North Africans and Sub-Saharan Africans. In Ghana, the Tunisians were suddenly received as white, resulting in discourses and exchanges about what being white means, the privileges of being white and how to deal with these. It was very enriching to facilitate connections, relationships and exchange platforms through the project in Accra. Benjamin describes that the art project developed a dynamic that was greater than the work itself, so it was not really about the project anymore, but about the dynamic of the work attracting all kinds of diversity and contributing to the exchange.

¹⁶⁸ For the following see: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

¹⁶⁹ For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

This shows that creativity and art can be a universal language that can be understood by people of all socio-cultural and economic backgrounds and ultimately connect them. If creative, practical creation is supposed to contribute to the implementation of decolonialism, spaces must be created that bring people together and create things collectively. When enabling these spaces for exchange that are so essential in decolonial processes, it is important that they are created where people can participate, come and actually do something collectively. Another essential aspect of facilitating exchange is that these spaces should be flexible and there is a collectively created result. Benjamin is convinced that such an exchange gives people the opportunity to have a voice, to contribute their opinion and thus to take part in society-shaping processes — such as decolonising.

Marlène, too, would like to see decolonialism as a means of fostering greater connectivity and cooperation between the Global South and North.¹⁷⁰ To improve horizontal working structures in *El Warcha*, which would also encourage more equivalent exchanges, Marlène has the idea that they should develop trainings both internally from each other and from external experts. In this way it can be made possible that everyone who has been to *El Warcha* has actually learned specific skills, techniques and methods. It would also support an exchange, because everyone gives and gets knowledge in return. For Marlène, the wonderful thing about exchange is that despite all differences, something can be shared. In the everyday life of *El Warcha*, Marlène experiences this as very simple but at the same time complicated to achieve. It is above all about being open, friendly, welcoming, sharing and thus becoming part of the community, neighbourhood. Although Marlène wants to encourage more communication and connection and seeks to support decolonial processes, she is currently rather pessimistic about achieving a decolonial socially sustainable world. In the current system she does not believe in a global realisation of decolonialism and social sustainability, because it would require that nobody is superior to others due to national economy, identity or education. At the moment, however, the system does not allow such a utopia to be realised for fear of the collapse of capitalism and white supremacy. If, however, the realisation of a decolonial, socially sustainable world would be possible, in Marlène's view, it would be a freer world, no longer emphasising the differences between the Global South vs. North, but a liveable, dignified, equal existence for all human beings. That is why Marlène demands that we must continue to spread the truths about this unjust world of ours and fight for decolonising the world. Because the world cannot go on as it does at present.

» The interesting question that remains is what the utopia of a decolonial socially sustainable world would look like.

To me, in a decolonial world the legacies of (neo)colonialism no longer have any influence and racist (neo)colonial thought patterns have disappeared from people's minds. The utopia of a socially sustainable world guarantees human rights, fairness, social and health justice, equality, liveability, peace and labour rights. A socially sustainable world prevents discrimination and overconsumption. Additionally, social sustainability should encourage community capital and support, placemaking, social responsibility, cultural competence, human adaptation, local community development and resilience. Thus, a decolonial, socially sustainable world respects and values every human being, while ensuring a just, liveable, independent and peaceful life for each individual including education and the freedom to choose one's own path in life. A decolonial, socially sustainable world values and embraces the diversities of human beings.

Ni en more's Jane imagines a utopia of a socially sustainable world characterised by circular, local economy, minimalism, peace, renewable energies, ecological balance, respect for all genders, intersectionality, ending racism, diversity, awareness and interbeing.¹⁷¹



Fig. 61: *El Warcha* building the temporary pavilion for the street art festival “Chale Wote” in Accra, Ghana.



Fig. 62: The building of the pavilion was supported the many helping hands and the exchanges that took place.

¹⁷⁰ For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

¹⁷¹ See: Interview Janette Terrazas (*Ni en more*).

Benjamin from **El Warcha** imagines a utopia in which people come together, recognise and appreciate each other and form communities with similar goals.¹⁷² He hopes that in the future the world will develop locally, but still with global responsibilities. The decolonial, socially sustainable utopia Benjamin was thinking of provides spaces for exchange, where people can express themselves and share ideas.

Marlène proposes non-monetary exchange as a new economic system for a decolonial, socially sustainable future.¹⁷³ Instead of using money, she would like us to exchange skills and experience, because nowadays the skills of most people are underestimated. We should start to value all diverse abilities and skills. In this utopia, the world would be much better by taking into account all people and their abilities. Marlène is convinced that if we build a world without money and thus establish another form of appreciation, abilities will be valued more. More generally, Marlène hopes that in order to achieve a decolonial, socially sustainable world, we will stay curious and fearless as we move towards the future.

The easiest way to achieve the utopia of a decolonial, socially sustainable world would be to put the whole sociopolitical, cultural, economic and ecological development of the world to zero. *Imagine how wonderful it would be if humanity got a second chance.*

However, as this will not be possible, we must build on the mistakes of the past and deal with the challenges that arise from them. And maybe that is not all bad: is not the *Adinkra* symbol *Sankofa* telling us that we should learn from the past when striving for the future? With this approach we hopefully achieve *Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu* — Unity in diversity.

¹⁷² For the following see: Conversation Benjamin Perrot (*El Warcha*).

¹⁷³ For the following see: Conversation Marlène Halbgewachs (*El Warcha*).

I will wrap up with this *Adinkra* symbol showing two fishes biting each other's tails.¹⁷⁴ The symbol is telling us that “no one should bite the other” like the fishes do in *Bi nka bi*. Hence it symbolises the need to remember striving for peace and harmony with one another — for a decolonial, socially sustainable world enabling a fair, equal and fulfilled life to every human being.

As mentioned above I strongly believe in the implementation of decolonialism — not alone but still in order to achieve a socially sustainable world. Through my research my assumption that transculturality and creativity are supportive of processes of decolonising got confirmed. Yet it is still not possible to give a concrete solution to every specific project and initiative, since I do not have the legitimacy to give advice from outside. To do that it is very important to have an insight and deep understanding of the local culture, mentality, socio-political and cultural structures. Because I do not have and will never have a universal, all-knowing understanding of our beautiful planet, I confine myself to asking a few questions to support not reproducing (neo)colonial structures, being anti-racist and becoming decolonial. Hopefully the following stimulate a process of thinking and make it possible to transfer them to a specific, local project.

- Who gives me the legitimacy to do, ask, act, talk like I do?
- Do I remember and use the language rules of a non-discriminatory language?
- Who gives me the legitimacy to be where I am, interact in this community?
- Do I come from outside into the context? Or from inside?
- Have I been invited from the community to intervene? Or did I myself decide to do it?
- Where do I take my knowledge from? Is my knowledge based on western sovereignty of knowledge and interpretation? How do I know that it is the truth for all specific contexts?
- Do I know the community and context I work in for more than few years? Have I lived there for longer time?
- Do I by knowing the context intensively have a deep understanding of the local culture, mentality, socio-political and cultural structures?
- Who gave me the power to know and talk the truth? Or is it just my own truth I am expressing?
- Is there a hidden hierarchy influencing working structures? Is this hierarchy based on work experience, context experience and knowledge or rather on postcolonial, (neo)colonial, racist aspects?
- How do I meet everybody as an equal human being?
- Do I manage to be open and curious without prejudices?
- How do we within the team address decolonialism?
- How do we talk about (neo)colonialism shaping our work, our team and how we work together?

¹⁷⁴ For the following see: “BI NKA BI,” West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings, accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/bink.htm>.

- How do I behave sensitively and cautiously in order not to fall into my own traps?
- Do I question my own (white) privileges and thus my power position? Am I aware of my (white) privileges and act sensitively regarding these privileges?
- How do we work as a team? How do we integrate each other and our diversities best?
- How do we create horizontal working structures?

With this research I wanted to create sensitivity and encourage everyone to identify (neo) colonial structures. More people should become aware of the processes and problems of our (neo)colonial thought and behaviour patterns. My goals are to create more knowledge about the necessity for implementing decolonialism, present projects that already work on this implementation and by that motivate others to approach this challenge of making decolonialism reality. The recently mentioned open questions are meant to be a little push in this direction.

If we want to find out what we as white people can do against racism and for decolonialism, it is helpful to first ask:¹⁷⁵ “What has enabled you to be a full, educated, professional adult and not know what to do about racism?”¹⁷⁶ This is an honest, sincere question, because it helps us to understand why we do not know how to deal with (neo)colonialism, even though it has been a topic for centuries. By answering the question seriously, it is possible to understand where the lack of knowledge about (neo)colonialism comes from and thus learn how to deal with it. For example, if (neo)colonialism was not part of your education, then it is obvious that in order to deal with it, you first need to educate yourself further on the subject.

More generally the following might help to become aware of (neo)colonial thought and behaviour patterns, reflect on them and decolonise these structures.

- » “Minimize our defensiveness.
- » Demonstrate our vulnerability.
- » Demonstrate our curiosity and humility.
- » Allow for growth.
- » Stretch our worldview.
- » Ensure action.
- » Demonstrate that we practice what we profess to value.
- » Build authentic relationships and trust.
- » Interrupt privilege-protecting comfort.
- » Interrupt internalized superiority.”¹⁷⁷
- » Become aware of your own (white) privileges.
- » Be sensitive and cautious in the encounters and exchanges with others.
- » Stay open, interested and curious without prejudices.
- » Develop guidelines and instructions for yourself and specific situation(s).
- » Use and internalise a non-discriminatory language.

¹⁷⁵ For the following see: Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 311–312.

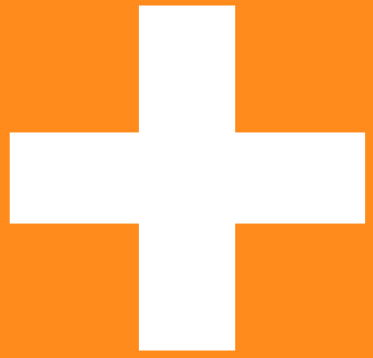
¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

I want to close with a quote from Martin Luther King that has accompanied me through this work: We cannot be content with the absence of tension globally, since it is just negative peace. Let's aim for positive peace — the presence of justice!¹⁷⁸

Let's be inspired by the *Adinkra Bi nka bi*, let's strive for peace and harmony — for a decolonial, socially sustainable world!

¹⁷⁸ See: Martin Luther King, Jr, *Letter from the Birmingham jail* (Stanford: Martin Luther King, Jr Research and Education, 1963), cited after: Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm no longer talking about race*, 100–101.



GLOSSARY

A

BLACK PERSON/PEOPLE = the politically correct self-designation chosen by Black people. *Black* does not describe biological aspects but a socio-political reality.

COLONIALISM = according to the historian Philip Curtin it is the domination of a people by a socio-culturally different people.¹⁷⁹ In order to define modern colonialism more precisely, three additional aspects must be added to this definition.¹⁸⁰ One aspect is the refusal of an own social development and the fundamental decision about the life of the colonised in favour of external interests and needs of the colonisers. Secondly, the colonisers' lacking will to adapt socio-culturally. Furthermore, the intention of the colonisers to force their ideology on to the colonised justified by their conviction of socio-cultural superiority.

DECOLONIALISM = developed in Latin America in the late 20th century, mainly by the Argentinean literary scholar Walter D. Mignolo and the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano Obregón.¹⁸¹ Decolonialism deals with the legacy of colonialism and the continued existence of colonial structures despite the official end of colonialism. Therefore, decolonialism demands to decolonise both the former colonies as well as the countries of the former colonisers. Compared to postcolonialism, which decolonialism consciously differentiates itself from, decolonial theory is usually more action-oriented, takes a more critical view on capitalism and explicitly demands the development of theories of knowledge from the Global South, aiming for a decolonial world.

E

F

GLOBAL NORTH = was developed together with the term *Global South* during the 1980s as an alternative to *industrialised countries* or *first world*. *Global North* is used independently of geographical aspects, such as the northern hemisphere, but is rather a neutral, since less universalistic and neo-colonial term for the countries formerly known as *industrialised countries*. *Global North* is the opposite to the *Global South*.

GLOBAL SOUTH = the term was also developed in the 1980s as a politically more correct alternative to *developing countries* or *third world*. With the introduction of the terms *Global North* and *South*, one hoped to have found less universalistic and neo-colonial terms for designating and measuring the level of development in different parts of the world. Like *Global North*, the term does not refer to geographical aspects, but mainly to the level of development of the respective country. *Global South* includes the former *newly industrialised* (sometimes *emerging*) and *developing countries* and is the opposite to the *Global North*.

H

INTERCULTURALITY = the encounter of two or more cultures, where there is mutual influence despite cultural differences.¹⁸² The foreign and own culture establish a productive relationship of mutual exchange. According to Alois Wierlacher (1999, 2003), a mutual process of understanding is created, which enables cultural cooperation. In contrast to multiculturalism and transculturalism, the different cultures remain clearly defined, separate entities that only partially overlap and influence each other.

J

¹⁷⁹ See: Philip D. Curtin, "The Black Experience of Colonialism and Imperialism," in *Slavery, Colonialism, and Racism*, ed. Sidney W. Mintz (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974), 23, cited after: Jürgen Osterhammel and Jan C. Jansen, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1995), 18.

¹⁸⁰ For the following see: Jürgen Osterhammel and Jan C. Jansen, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1995), 18–22.

¹⁸¹ For the following see: Ramírez, "What is the difference between post-colonial and decolonial thinking?"

¹⁸² For the following see: "Multikulturalität, Interkulturalität, Transkulturalität und Plurikulturalität," Inter-Kultur und Didaktik Seminare, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://www.ikud.de/glossar/multikulturalitaet-interkulturalitaet-transkulturalitaet-und-plurikulturalitaet.html>.

K

L

MULTICULTURALITY = describes the social structures of an institution or society assuming that the different cultures coexist but do not overlap.¹⁸³

NEOCOLONIALISM = refers to the relationship between the former colonies and colonisers after the formal end of colonisation since the middle of the 20th century.¹⁸⁴ Instead of the previous imperialist, hegemonic practices of colonialism, capitalism, globalisation and cultural imperialism are used to further influence the former colonies.¹⁸⁵ The term was first mentioned in 1956 by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre discussed the term in more detail in the essay "Situation V: Colonialism and Neocolonialism" (1964). Furthermore, neocolonialism was first used in the African context by the first Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah in his book "Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism" (1965).

OTHERING = the distancing of an individual or a group from other individuals/groups. For example, the West ('Occident') defines itself through the distinction of and definition of 'the other' ('Orient').¹⁸⁶

PERSON/PEOPLE OF COLOUR (POC) = describe everyone of any race that is not white. The term acknowledges that people who are not white have similar experiences especially in predominantly white societies.

POSTCOLONIALISM = originated in the Arabic and South Asian regions in the middle of the 20th century.¹⁸⁷ Postcolonial theory is concerned with the consequences of colonialism and the persistence of colonial structures despite the official end of colonialism. The goal is to develop theories on how to overcome the legacies of colonialism and thus create a decolonial world.

Q

R

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY = in the outdated but still more widespread definition of sustainability, social sustainability is a partial aspect of sustainability alongside ecological and economic sustainability.¹⁸⁸ More recently the UN introduced a new definition of sustainability as social sustainability, because sustainability always relates to the whole of society. Social sustainability is thus the balance of economical, ecological, political and cultural aspects. Living conditions of society and use of resources meet all present humans needs, without endangering the stability and the endurance of the ecological systems and without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹⁸⁹ Social sustainability means a fair and equal world for all humans now and in the future.

TRANSCULTURALITY = In contrast to interculturality and multiculturalism, the concept of transculturality is based on the assumption that cultures are not homogeneous, clearly distinguishable units, but are increasingly interconnected and mixed, especially due to globalisation.¹⁹⁰ Transculturality is, according to Wolfgang Welsch (1997), the concept of a society in which cultural identities are constituted by the mixing of elements of different cultures, thus creating a global culture. Transculturality is based on a specific concept of *culture*, according to which cultures are not distinguishable units, but interrelated, integrating the foreign and the own. In the sense of transculturality, culture is dynamic, constantly

¹⁸³ See: Inter-Kultur und Didaktik Seminare, "Multikulturalität, Interkulturalität, Transkulturalität und Plurikulturalität."

¹⁸⁴ See: "Neokolonialismus," Wikipedia, accessed February 5, 2020, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neokolonialismus>.

¹⁸⁵ For the following see: "Neocolonialism," Wikipedia, accessed February 5, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neocolonialism>.

¹⁸⁶ See: "Other (philosophy)," Wikipedia, accessed January 27, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other_(philosophy)).

¹⁸⁷ See: Castro Varela and Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie*, 93.

¹⁸⁸ See: Wikipedia, "Social sustainability."

¹⁸⁹ See: Wikipedia, "Sustainable development."

¹⁹⁰ For the following see: Inter-Kultur und Didaktik Seminare, "Multikulturalität, Interkulturalität, Transkulturalität und Plurikulturalität."

changing and based on national, but above all on cultural affiliations, such as religious, political or social groups. Thus, the individual identity consists of different cultural belongings.

U

V

WHITENESS STUDIES = is a critical approach to the cultural, historical and socio-political aspects of being white.¹⁹¹ The focus is on the social construction of *whiteness* as a conviction associated with social privileges. In the mid-20th century, the interdisciplinary Whiteness Studies developed in the USA from white trash studies and critical race studies. Whiteness Studies explore whiteness as a race, culture and cause of systematic racism as well as the structures of white privileges. Furthermore, other social phenomena caused by the social compositions, perceptions and group behaviours of white people are investigated. Whiteness Studies and Critical Whiteness encourage white people to critically reflect on their own race and the privileges it entails.

WHITE PERSON/PEOPLE = the social positioning of white people. Like *Black*, *white* does not describe a biological fact but the sociological-political context.

X

Y

Z

¹⁹¹ For the following see: "Whiteness studies," Wikipedia, accessed February 5, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whiteness_studies.

APPENDIX

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COLOPHON

When designing this work, it was important to me that decolonialism is also implemented in the design because I cannot write about decolonising the world and at the same time naïvely rely on (western) standards of graphic design and my (western) taste. A tremendous number of elements of graphic design are western and thus linked to colonialism, the centrism of the Global North, western universalism and the imposition of western standards on foreign cultures.

Instead of publishing my work in the usual format of a book, developed by the Egyptians, Romans and Greeks,¹⁹² I decided to use the *Leporello* fold inspired by the Aztec codices.¹⁹³ These are illustrated precolonial books of the Aztecs, which were written with pictograms or ideograms. These illustrated handwritings were folded in *Leporello* folding. This work therefore is also folded that way.

Even the common paper formats of publications are mostly western standards that have been transferred to most of the world: the DIN formats. Therefore, I am not using DIN formats or any other commonly western paper size but will use a format inspired by the *Leporello*'s of the Aztec codices. The format of this work is 30 cm x 37.5 cm. The size ratio of the pages to each other, namely 1:1.24 is taken from the Codex Zouche-Nuttall.¹⁹⁴

Another (neo)colonial aspect is language, because English has become a globally spread language through the colonialism of the Commonwealth. The writing with Latin letters that goes along with English is therefore also a (neo)colonial factor. I acknowledge the (neo)colonial heritage of the Latin alphabet and English as a global language but in order for everyone included in this thesis to understand what I am writing I have to use English and Latin letters. Furthermore, I have to acknowledge that due to my white, European origin I only know one script: Latin.

As a decolonial alternative to Latin script and English language, I have selected pre-colonial typefaces: the *Adinkra* and the *Bantu* Symbol language. With these scripts I named the individual chapters and thus also replaced the usual numbering in (Western) scientific papers. The structuring of my work with the *Adinkra* and *Bantu* symbols is also visually much more appealing in my opinion.

Furthermore, for the decolonial colour scheme of this work I was inspired by one of the least expansive cultures in the world: Buddhism in Tibet and Bhutan.¹⁹⁵ The flag of Buddhism and the Tibetan prayer flags were particularly influential. Orange is the main colour of the work, as it symbolises wisdom in Buddhism and represents earth in the Tibetan prayer flags. Accordingly, in the work, especially in the structuring, it was important to work with much concentration and both feet firmly on the ground of this earth. In addition, I chose blue for the personal written paragraphs. In Tibet blue symbolises the sky, while in the Buddhist flag it represents universal compassion. After all, when dealing with each other, especially when it becomes personal, subjective, empathy and openness are always helpful.

Last but not least, it is extremely difficult to find fonts that use Latin letters but were designed by graphic artists from the Global South. This was very important to me, however, because by far the largest part of Latin fonts are designed in Europe and the USA. Of course, this is partly due to the fact that in many other parts of the world Latin letters are not predominantly used for writing. Nevertheless, (neo)colonialism also plays a role here, because there are certainly also talented graphic artists outside the Global North. So, it was a welcome challenge for me to find a decolonial font. In the end, I chose "Montserrat" by the Argentinean graphic designer Julieta Ulanovsky.

¹⁹² See: "Buch," Wikipedia, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buch>.

¹⁹³ See: "Aztekencodices," Wikipedia, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztekencodices>.

¹⁹⁴ See: "Codex Zouche-Nuttall," Wikipedia, accessed February 25, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Zouche-Nuttall.

¹⁹⁵ For the following see: "Internationale Buddhistische Flagge," Wikipedia, accessed February 15, 2020, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internationale_Buddhistische_Flagge and "Gebetsfahnen — Bedeutung," Yakeba. Natural Products, accessed February 15, 2020, <https://www.tibetische-gebetsfahnen.de/bedeutung>.

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