CRC/TR 228 „Future Rural Africa"

Report of the inception workshop in Nairobi, 30.-31.08.2018

(Notes by Gideon Hartmann, Peter Dannenberg, Detlef Müller-Mahn, Léa Lacan)
DMM 6.9.2018

Objectives of the workshop: The inception workshop in Nairobi consisted of two consecutive days serving different purposes. The first day at the Kenya National Museum was primarily to present the CRC programme to regional stakeholders and researchers, and get their critical feedback. The second day was for internal meetings and coordination between CRC members and their African partners.

1ˢᵗ day: 30.08.2018

Venue: Leakey Hall, Kenya National Museum

1) Summary of panel discussion – emerging topics to be addressed in CRC research
notes: Gideon Hartmann

1. Role and responsibilities of science and research

The CRC touches topics with highly relevant implications for the dynamic research regions and beyond. There is substantial controversy in an arena of different ontologies, motivations, interests and agencies. Especially in the context of relational and territorial spaces of future-making, every CRC project is therefore far from occurring under "neutral" conditions. The role and responsibility of the CRC must therefore entail a critical reflection on its performative localisation in such arena.

2. Positionalities – Who is speaking and from which position are we looking at a problem?

Directly connected to the role and responsibility of the CRC, matters of positionalities emerged as a constituting element of the workshop. The CRC aims to connect – and already does connect – scholars from the "North" and "South" and penetrates micro, meso, and macro scales in the research regions. Nevertheless, it remains apparent that an interdisciplinary and intercontinental project of the CRC's size underlies the enduring challenge of identifying, examining and balancing the positionalities of scholars involved in the research. Particularly for junior researchers, the CRC must therefore continue to offer a platform of critical reflection.

3. What can we not see? What are our blind spots? What are we marginalizing in our research? Why do we focus on some topics but leave out others?

With the commencement of the CRC, the project is confronted with new ideas – especially from African scholars and partners as well as the just starting junior researchers. Thus, topics that have not been represented in the proposal either due to lack of resources and expertise or awareness, are emerging as "blind spots" for the CRC. This implies that we must constantly question our epistemological reach and emphasize potential additions and reformulations to our projects. During the workshop we could identify a first cluster of different blind spots that might be filled and followed-up with the progress of the CRC and also flow into and enrich established projects.

4. How can we translate knowledge into practice?

The workshop in Nairobi was persistently shaped by the concern of how and to what extent knowledge can be translated into practice. As the CRC is not intended to do applied research and consulting different programmes and agendas, but involved in different scales where future is made, the notion of the co-production of knowledge received major attention among workshop attendants.

The issue of the co-production of knowledge was discussed by another break-out group on the second day.

5. Ethical dimension of what we are doing: How are visions (mis)used

Visions (Like Kenya´s Vision 2030) may easily be used for other interests than the ones expressed in the design of development plans and programmes. Research must consider the justification of research in the context of development.

2) Notes from the panel discussion: "Future-making in rural Africa: The role of science"

Rationale:

Future rural Africa can be considered as an arena of controversial visions, plans, and powers that struggle for control over the way how the future is "made". In the morning of our inception workshop of the CRC in Nairobi we will address the conceptual background, the general setting and work plan of the CRC. In the afternoon, this panel discussion aims at a critical reflection of what the CRC has in mind, and how it can be made relevant for science, political debates, and development. We particularly want to scrutinize the role of science and of international research cooperation.

panelists:

- Detlef Müller-Mahn (MM), moderator

- Kennedy Mkutu (KM)

- Gilbert Nduru (GN)

- Maggie Opondo (MO)

- Clemens Greiner (CG)

- Katja Werthmann (KW)

First question – Future-making and future makers: Who are the dominant future makers in Africa? How are they related?

Different interest groups, **governments and political leaders** are influential in shaping the arena of future-making, i.e. how the future is promoted and envisioned. For instance, Julius Nyerere was a highly influential future maker for Tanzania. Those political leaders and parties are **constantly shifting and contested**. This is an enduring scenario of different political players who decide on our future in a top-down manner. This might change with new constitutions that allow more participation and induce a greater degree of freedom. Thus, there are other members (civil service, local communities)

emerging and formulating **a more participatory arena.** Nevertheless, the political leaders remain as the main drivers and most powerful actors.

Future-making is an open process.

Future-making may also become the object of disagreement, resistance, contestation and conflict.

I think it is crucial to think **who SHOULD be defining futures**. I think it is those who are affected the most: the people. In reality however, we see a different situation. The government plays a pivotal role in making future-making. Further, the **media** is a strong player of setting the agenda (sometimes in collaboration with governments, sometimes in opposition). Previously, it was said Kenyan media were the most liberal and advanced in Africa – this is decreasing today. What about **universities?** We are continuing to live in Ivory Towers, we fail to translate our insights to the broader public.

I want to highlight the influence **of international development actors**. You cannot avoid the confrontation with such organisations (financial sector, donors, etc.). Visions are dictated via agreements among African economies and such international players. You cannot avoid this topic.

Looking at geothermal developments in Baringo, we must consider **China**. Today, in the 21st century we see a paradigm shift of future-making. That is China pushing infrastructure development. Thus, the entire region has to think what happens when we fail to pay this money. Could we be colonized by China?

Another player I see is the "**elites**". Increasingly, there is an elite group collaborating with Western actors. We have to deal with those elites. Lastly, we have to discuss population growth and the implications for violent futures.

Second question – To what extent is the future in the hand of Africans themselves?

Since the Berlin conference in 1884, Africa´s future has never been in our hands. We had **colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism**. Look at the SDGs. In theory, we are represented, but we are represented by our governments. Thus, at all levels, (international, national) **global capital** will set the stage. Any vision that comes from without cannot lead to a viable future. Are we helpless? Do we just sit there and accept, that futures are shaped by forces beyond us? No, this is where researchers in collaboration with civil society needs to act and enable and propose **alternative futures**. Things that we put on paper and promise participation are not realized. We will need a **more radical way** to deal with research and ensure inclusive and just futures.

Power disparities between the powerful and powerless are huge in Africa. Further, there are weak institutions to oppose power inequalities. This means, we must contest those who are criminal, we cannot only blame the pasts and "the others". The SDGs are for instance also valid for Bangladesh, Germany and so on. A major issue for Africa is **corruption and debt**. Both issues eat up projects like geothermal. They prevent that such projects finally benefit those they are supposed to benefit.

We have **different futures** (political, economic, social, livelihoods). In different contexts of such futures, Africans are engaged to a varying degree. We can see that politically; international scenarios are highly influential on our futures. Here, we are not in control of our futures. See for instance our president (Kenyatta), he must obey to **global politics** (US, China) and please them to maintain power. Those **external forces** even affect religious institutions. Moving to academia, we can see that we can maintain some control over our universities. So there are also other forces affecting our futures. There are diverse fields of actors with huge conflicts even within Africa.

The new frontier with the new resources extends from Mozambique to Ethiopia, this has raised the issue of **geopolitics**. Are the Africans really able to control the future under such circumstances? I doubt that! I see the **Chinaization** of Africa in Ethiopia. The African academics must do research to start understanding their own countries to understand this better.

I think in the CRCs proposal two entities are not represented properly and that is 1) **women**: In how far are for instance agr. intensification changing the agency, options and opportunities for women. This is an important question especially for rural agriculture. The second issue is **youth**. Do young people see a future in rural Africa? The refugee streams show that this is not the case. What are young peoples' visions in rural Africa? This is a crucial and tricky question!

Third question – What is our role and responsibility, or more general, what is the role of science in future-making? What would you expect from the CRC to improve future-making?

We are caught in our own worlds. It is hard to get out of these worlds and this means we often have **little impact**. In my area it is good to be here and write history that shows how people are and how they act. This has value in my opinion. Looking at our last explorative trip, we realized it is impossible to find "the truth". **We cannot look for easy answers**.

Science needs to identify **gaps in governance**. Do not waste much energy looking for information that already exist. Discover how much has been done in which area. Disseminate your results to those you research. We have to ensure to **repackage knowledge** in a manner to migrate it where it is needed. Knowledge migration must me ensured to resolve a lot of issues.

Devolution offers an opportunity. We **need information that helps planning**. The CRC should be able to feed back into the different counties that we are working in and it should be able to make them able to think for themselves.

Knowledge production is always a **value in itself**. The CRC will contribute to that. But, the CRCs success also depends on us asking us who is reading us. We must **enter a dialogue and make people listen to us**. We must think who we are addressing and how we get into dialogues. It will be a challenge for the CRC.

The issue is how we produce knowledge. We need to do it differently, we need to disabuse ourselves from the fact that we are the sole producers of knowledge. **We need to understand that we are participants and that we must appreciate and accept other knowledge**. We must break down the "academic silos". We must even go farther than being collaborative. We must engage with the stakeholders. The agendas that we have with the CRC, is that the same agenda they have. Knowledge we produce is one-sided. The knowledge that we produce is not effective because of the **danger of one story**, the danger of seeing the world in one colour, because we have not engaged with different perspectives.

Plenary discussion (comments from the audience):

1) Researchers fail because they put their research in the shelf. We must unpackage the research into **policy briefs**. Not brochures, not pamphlets, we need policy briefs. Further, I do not see the **media** here, we could have civil society here. In the end, we might end up leaving this room and lacking our results and discussions behind us.

2) I am challenging the narrative of jobless youth as creating violence: We all know that it is a minority of people that becomes violent and we know they tend to be paid and mobilized by politicians. Further, I am sure, we are involving women in our project. We will not ignore it and it is happening. In terms of knowledge production, we might aim for several **smaller workshops**. Further, we can connect communities and circulate our insights with communities and government officials.

3) Looking at the panel discussions: Sure, the politicians and the elite exert their power in making futures. But, they are also consulted and need to base those futures on knowledge. This means **we need to create a critical mass of people, we need to find a common discussion on these topics (in civil societies, NGOs…).** We should not solely focus on human rights, but also **economic equity** (for instance fraudulent deals with foreign capital). Is there the possibility of creating **pilot projects** after the end of the CRC? Those could work as lighthouse projects and good-practice examples.

4) I do not fully agree with the story of unaware local people.

5) I do not agree with the sentence that "any change from outside" cannot constitute a future. I hope the CRC can change that perspective. We must recognize that there is agency everywhere to "pick and choose" from futures and this manifests in the implementation (often resistance) of and to such visions. **Change from outside is not only bad.**

6) I want to pick on the term "**stakeholders**". How much stake do they hold? How can they participate more?

7) Policies: Yes, we can have impact on policies, but how is that **policy implemented**. As researchers, we have little impact to influence the implementation.

8) We should not leave out the use of technologies in changing the future. Some projects are multi-billion projects that come into societies that experience a gap. **I challenge the notion of participation**. Without the knowledge and capacity of local people, they **cannot participate in implementation**. This gap cannot be closed quickly. Participation thus mainly means informing people on large-scale projects, it cannot mean an inclusion of them. Research must be objective to inform everyone on our decisions on the future.

9) When we talk about future makers, it all depends on how we appreciate future-making. Today, Africans have voice, we have constitutions, but we are lacking researchers. Our **future leaders will be a new generation** of informed people. This means we must plant a "positive seed" into this young generation.

10) The issue of how results are conveyed to people we work with and the public. I think our **PhD students will be the ambassadors of our research**. They will live here, and they will transport the idea that education is something important. They are very important.

11) The issue of **debt and corruption**: Debt and weak institutions put many African countries in a vicious circle of development.

12) Pressure on the landscape: The politicians play a big role. They must demarcate land uses (e.g. protected areas) to solute **land use conflicts**. The research should therefore also ask how politicians can be changed.

13) **The future is behind us**. What we know is the present and the past. Your step must be formed by what you see and where you were. We must understand our past and we must understand

where we are. We have to ask ourselves: Those who we think have limited stake, have to be involved in making futures also. They must be critical thinkers and think about thinking.

Panelists' responses:

We need a dialogue between those from outside having ideas with those from inside having ideas. We must stop "consuming ideas". We must understand where we are going. Otherwise, we will always be in conflict. Therefore, there is need for research that creates harmony.

We have to acknowledge that things coming from outside must not necessarily be bad. The history of African has always been shaped from outside and there is no clear dichotomy of outside of "Africa = bad" and from "Africa = good".

Our outputs, I think our mandate is not to write policy briefs. We publish our research and surely need to make it accessible, but further steps are not our responsibility.

Lastly, to enable critical research among Africans, and the creation of informed decisions is the best we can do, and I think we should stick to it.

Change from outside that does not create ownership from within cannot sustain future. People do not see themselves as owners of policies, whereas researchers have their own agenda. This means we must co-produce knowledge. Our research is only useful for people if they are informed and enabled to reformulate the problems. It has to be iterative depending on what you find on the ground. You will not even have to disseminate your results because local stakeholders have been sufficiently involved in your research. Lastly, we must address how representative the stakeholders we include are.

Agreement with MO, but there is no such thing as "stakeholders", there is no such thing as "one government". You will stumble over controversies. You will not get a clear picture of what people think about the future. You will end up with more questions than you have today and that is exciting!

We talk about youths, but we are doing nothing. We need to work on the implementation of policies. This is our major disease.

2ⁿᵈ day 31 August 2018
venue: British Institute in East Africa

> **Break-out group on "Blind spots": Which major issues that are also relevant for African futures are currently not addressed by the CRC?**
>
> notes: Gideon Hartmann

What is a blind spot?

- Topics that are not covered by the projects so-far.

- Lacking epistemologies?

Topical Blind Spots:

- Global dynamics affecting the scope of future-making (Finances, debts, dependencies, geo-politics, intra-regional politics, macro-economy)

- Youth and demography (Is there a future for the youth in the rural?)

- Migration (trans-local relations, international migration, intranational migration)

- Future Aesthetics: arts, fashion; afro-futurism (Representation of the future and alternative visions)

- Gender (changing gender roles under different future-making agendas? E.g. gender roles under modes of intensification/conservation)

- Education and the making of future societies

- Alternative futures (CRC focusses on those future-making agendas that are dominant: Are we missing out alternative practices and agendas of making futures? Is there intended persistence?)

- Future-making and religion (e.g. Role of missionary activities in the rural, the friction of religion, modernity)

- Conservation (include Tanzania since conservation is increasingly relevant?)

- Language and future-making (How are linguistics changed by future-making? How is language used to promote futures?)

- "Rural cities" (Linkages between rural and urban – urban-rural metabolisms)

- Past futures: Landscape history

Blind spots of outreach, participation:

- What happens with the knowledge that we create?

- Are we creating a biased perspective with too much emphasis on meso and macro level since we initially mainly cooperate with actors at meso level (county governors, researchers)?

Break-out group of the CRC projects working in Tanzania/SAGCOT

Notes: Peter Dannenberg

Technical issues

- All PhD researchers in the field should make sure to have **written documents** (letters of support etc.) from their PIs and local partners with them in the field to show them if asked in order to avoid conflicts (several copies).

- Transport in Kilombero/Ifakara: Two **cars** (will have to be purchased), and two **motorcycles**. At the moment there is no updated list on usage and demand. The latest version was an excel file (contact Claudia Gebauer for further information).

- **Survey organization**. Further information on the CRC survey will be provided by Z3 soon.

Aimed joint activities

- A joint Tanzania/SAGCOT **email list** of all partners, participants and further members of this Meeting will be send out soon.

- It is aimed to create a **joint folder** at Sciebo or another database (Constanze Curdt)

- It is aimed to create a list which outlines which CRC members will be **active in the field at what time** (responsibility Linus Kalvelage)

- **A list of people to who we have talked** to and we want to talk to should be created (contact Rene)

- A **small internal workshop** (e.g. at the University of Dar es Salaam or in Kilombero) should take place in 2019 (contact Astrid and Linus).

- A **joint stakeholder workshop** with different actors and experts shall be conducted tentatively first half of 2020. The aim is that projects will present first results and raw papers with the audience to get feedback for the interpretation of their results (contact Christiane Stefan).

- First presentations on concepts or results can presented at *ECAS* (European Conference on African Studies) 2019 at joint CRC sessions (David Anderson will provide further information, potential organizers of sessions yet to be defined).

- It is aimed to come up with a joined special issue in the interdisciplinary *Journal of East African Studies* including project members, partners and further relevant researchers on the topic. PhD students should provide ideas for potential papers to their supervisors. The SI should be handed in in 2020 after the workshop. This means ideas for an outline should be developed in advance.

Break-out group of the CRC projects working in Kenya/KRV/LAPSSET

Notes: Antony Ogolla

The meeting chaired by Prof. Detlef Mueller-Mahn was held at the British institute. The meeting involved the Kenyan scholars, Dr. Sam Owuor and Dr. Maggie Opondo both from the University of Nairobi, Dr. Joy Obando, Kenyatta University, Dr. Christine Noe, University of Dar es Salaam, Antony Ogolla and Rene Vesper, PhD candidates from the University of Bonn and working on subproject C03 as well as counterparts from Tanzania.

Detlef started by giving a background on what C03 will actually be involved in. This included a summary of Green Futures as an emerging paradigm of Green Growth that increasingly finds its way into development policies and programs of international institutions and in national development programs in the global south. He further elaborated the key question of the project as how green growth reconstitutes environmental governance through particular regimes of translation. With this summary, Antony and Rene were able to elaborate on the four work packages involved after which all the scholars present were allowed to ask questions for clarification and to give their inputs as well as share their research interests. Antony and Rene also outlined their plans for fieldwork and how they plan to go about their research.

What came out of the meeting was the modalities of recruiting Masters student who are to work with the PhD candidates and the African scholars were tasked with this as well as to come up with their own area of research which they would work on. How the PhD and the Masters students were going to work together was also discussed and it was noted that it would be best if both PhD and masters went

to the field together but if not, it was still okay if the Masters students would go ahead of the PhDs and collect their data.

The DAAD CRC link was also discussed but it was noted that the October deadline was too ambitious as the time left was not enough to get a student and prepare a winning PhD proposal and therefore focus is put on the next deadline. The Kenyan scholars were tasked with helping students come up with a proposal in line with the project in order to get DAAD scholarship.

Break-out group "Co-production of knowledge: What challenges? What solutions?

Notes: Léa Lacan

Main points of the discussion:

- *What does "co-production" of knowledge mean?*

  - Collaborative research, i.e. recognizing knowledge production that is not owned only by the researcher

  - Taking into account the feedbacks of the people we are researching on (participatory)

  - Involving local researchers

  - Including non-academics as co-researchers

  - Including the people who are the subject of our research as co-researchers

- *Obstacles and challenges impeding co-production of knowledge:*

  - Gaps in understanding each other: including different methods of data recording and processing

  - Diversity of knowledge types and the ways to express them: e.g. the knowledge of a politician, expressed in certain discourses; the knowledge of a member of a local community which does not necessarily come in written form

  - Allocation of funding: inequality between the researchers formally recognized as such, and stakeholders that we would consider as "co-researchers", but that would not be paid for their contribution (e.g. a member of a local community)

  - Imposing our perspective through our research: in the specific knowledge that we mobilize, the choice of the stakeholders and places we focus on, the choice of methods, etc.

  - The researcher also has to navigate between the various interests of different stakeholders: how to remain independent?

  - Dissemination of knowledge beyond the academic sphere: our research often only reaches a handful of academics

- *How to overcome challenges?*

  - Feedback loops: making research an iterative process, consulting the communities/ research subjects along the way and adjust our research to their feedbacks

- Trying to identify how different knowledge types might complement each other and enhance mutual capacity-building

- Including stakeholders in the research process: through co-authoring for example, or representation in workshops

- Transparency and reflexivity: reflecting about our positionality, our perspective, the access to the knowledge that we produce

<u>Minutes of the discussion:</u>

Christiane: There are different ways to see co-production of knowledge. For example, collaborative research = as knowledge production which is not own only by the researcher.

Bernice: the questions raised by collaborative research include: what consultation of these groups, do they know about what we do as researchers? How do we take into account their inputs? How do we disseminate information back to them?

Evelyn: Collaborative research can also be to get feedback from the communities in an iterative manner; and feedback from other stakeholders for example in the case of the LAPSSET corridor.

Marie: Co-production of knowledge per se, i.e. when other stakeholders are contributing to the production of knowledge. One strategy could be to include members of the communities as co-researchers, to include them in the research project as knowledge producers. Collaboration as transdisciplinary, including different people.

Christiane: same view on collaborative research. Collaborative research can be seen as a way to give the same chance to everybody to contribute to the research.

Julian: So, co-production of knowledge could mean including non-academics as co-researchers.

Léa: but it could also mean to include the subjects of the research (e.g. local community members) as producers of knowledge.

Paul: co-production is not only about involving the people that we are studying, but making them a productive input in the research process. How do we involve the communities in the research and make them participate? Co-production is about including local knowledge.

Bernice: indigenous knowledge is specific to a local place; so what do we mean by including local people? Kenyans? Or people from the locality?

Paul: it can be both. The question is how do we bring local people in? there might be financial barriers, etc. Local researchers can be left out.

Angela: Distinction between Kenyan researchers and members of the local communities

Paul: How involving people who can actually be researchers and not only informants? How to make informants more part of the research? Making them co-authors would be a way to do so.

Emmanuel: there is a necessity to take the time to see who are the experts in an area; however, it can be very complicated and time-consuming.

Elke: What are the obstacles and challenges that impede co-production of knowledge? Researchers have been trained in academics and in particular forms of knowledges, according to their discipline, etc. It is already hard to communicate between researchers of different disciplines; thus, it is an even bigger challenge to communicate with communities that have very different backgrounds. There might

be a lot of misunderstandings. To include people in the research process necessitates that they have particular skills already (analytical skills, writing skills, etc.). Suggestion to overcome this: We first need to understand what kind of knowledge have different stakeholders and how it can contribute to the knowledge production (e.g. – the knowledge of a community member, for example about grazing; the knowledge of NGO members who have a very different experience of the field than researchers; etc.).

In addition, as the CRC works, people that we might want to include as co-producers of knowledge cannot be paid. Thus, it introduces a big inequality between the researchers that are officially paid and recognized as such, and the people who participate more informally to the research process.

Julian: Collaborative research could be to include knowledge without requiring a participation in writing the paper.

Elke: But even so, the expression of different knowledge is very diverse: the knowledge of a politician is expressed with certain words, discourses; the local knowledge would be also expressed in specific ways.

Julian: Collaborative research would be to have feedbacks; going to people and expose first findings and take into account their reactions to these first findings and then review the findings accordingly.

Elke: Example - We had a request of an NGO in Northern Kenya, working as social workers with drug addicts: they wanted to understand the setting in which they were working. We taught them methods of social research that informed their activity afterwards, which helped them to change their activities. That was a very successful case of giving knowledge that could inform action.

So, we could find different values of different kinds of knowledge (e.g.: In this case, researcher knowledge and NGO knowledge). We could think about that also in different cases, with other groups.

Caroline: We also really need to differentiate co-production between different researchers, and co-production with our subjects of research.

Julian: knowledge is always co-produced because we draw our research from the knowledge of people that we interview.

Angela: The buy-in of the community/ people we are solicitation for the research is very important. We should ask ourselves whether our research is relevant for the people we are researching about.

Christiane: Challenge of co-production of knowledge: different methods in recording data and processing knowledge are a barrier to co-production of knowledge.

Léa: Researchers impose as well their views through the research question they ask, the knowledge that they select; etc. The co-production of knowledge is limited by this bias.

Marie: how can mutual capacity-building happen? Even within the CRC. Another point would be the challenge of independence: how can the researcher remain independent? Is it possible to cooperate with the state, with institutions, etc. while remaining independent?

Léa: can we escape the engagement of the researcher in positions about controversial situations (eg choosing to research about land claims from a community is already taking a position)?

Emmanuel: whose interest does the researcher represents? Whose interests do we have to navigate?

Christiane: taking into account the inputs of the local communities, also allows to adjust the research in the next phases to their needs and preoccupations. Transparency and reflexivity are also key to ensure that we reflect on how our research is biased, in what ways it could fail to take local perspectives into account, etc.

Paul: funding can also be a challenge. The allocation of research funding is orientating the research and the inclusion of different researchers. Access to publications is also limited for local researchers for example, which can be another big obstacle. Bringing funds to enhance access to research to local academics would be also important.