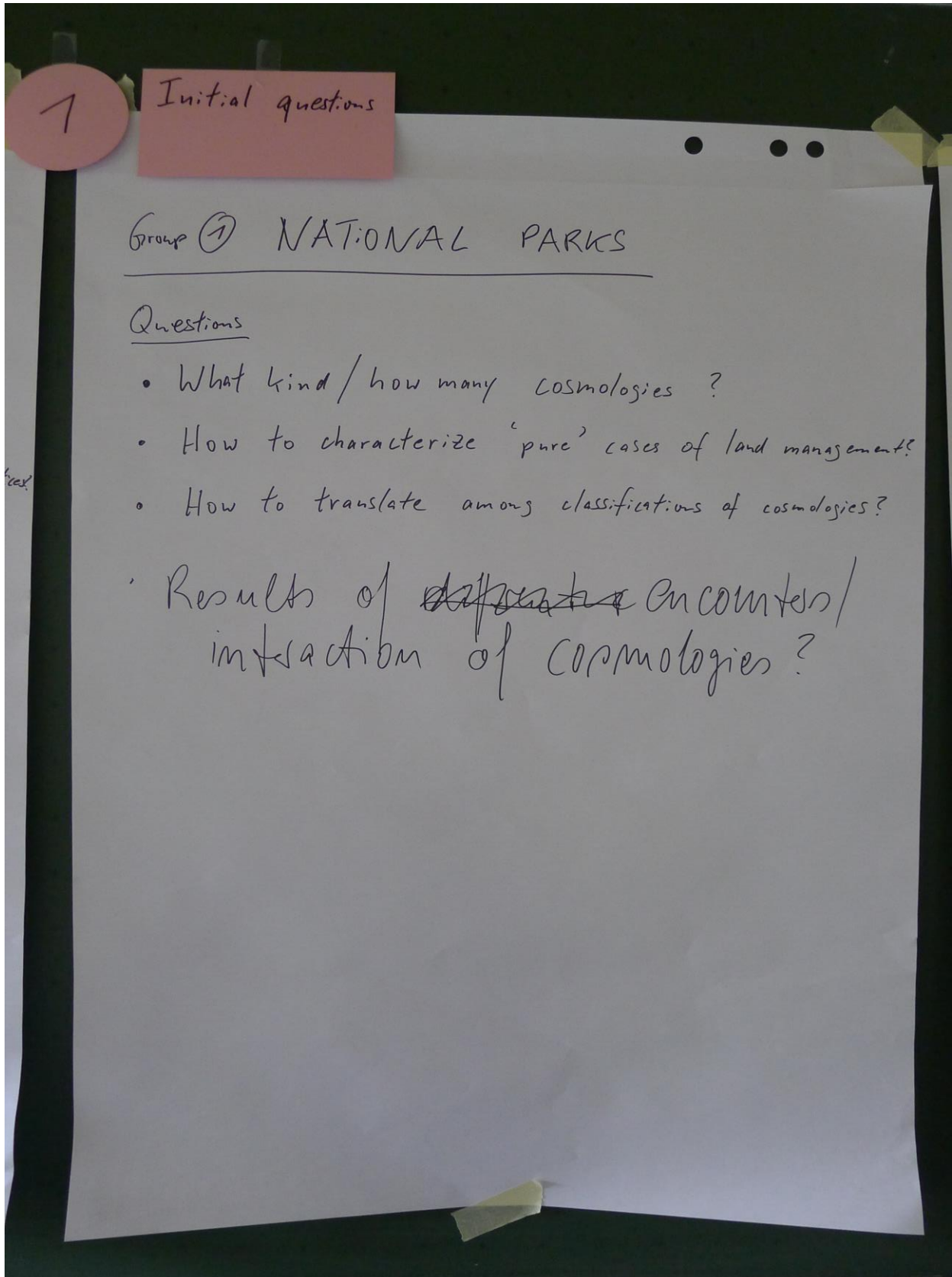


Flipcharts of the Bayreuth Conference on „Negotiating concepts of nature and future in Africa”, June 19-21, 2014

Initial question of the conference organizers



Group (3)

"Adaptation / travelling idea"

- How does global idea of adaptation to CC "travel" to Africa - and back?
- In which way are anticipation, risk-taking and future-making embedded in societal relations with nature?
- How do negotiations about adaptation to CC affect possible futures of/in other regions?

Group (2) RELIGION

Questions:

- Influence of religious beliefs and practices on communities' interaction with environment?
- Impact of environment on religious beliefs & practices?
- Deviations and orthodoxy
- Utilization of collective cosmologies by actors?
- What kind of religions/spiritualities?

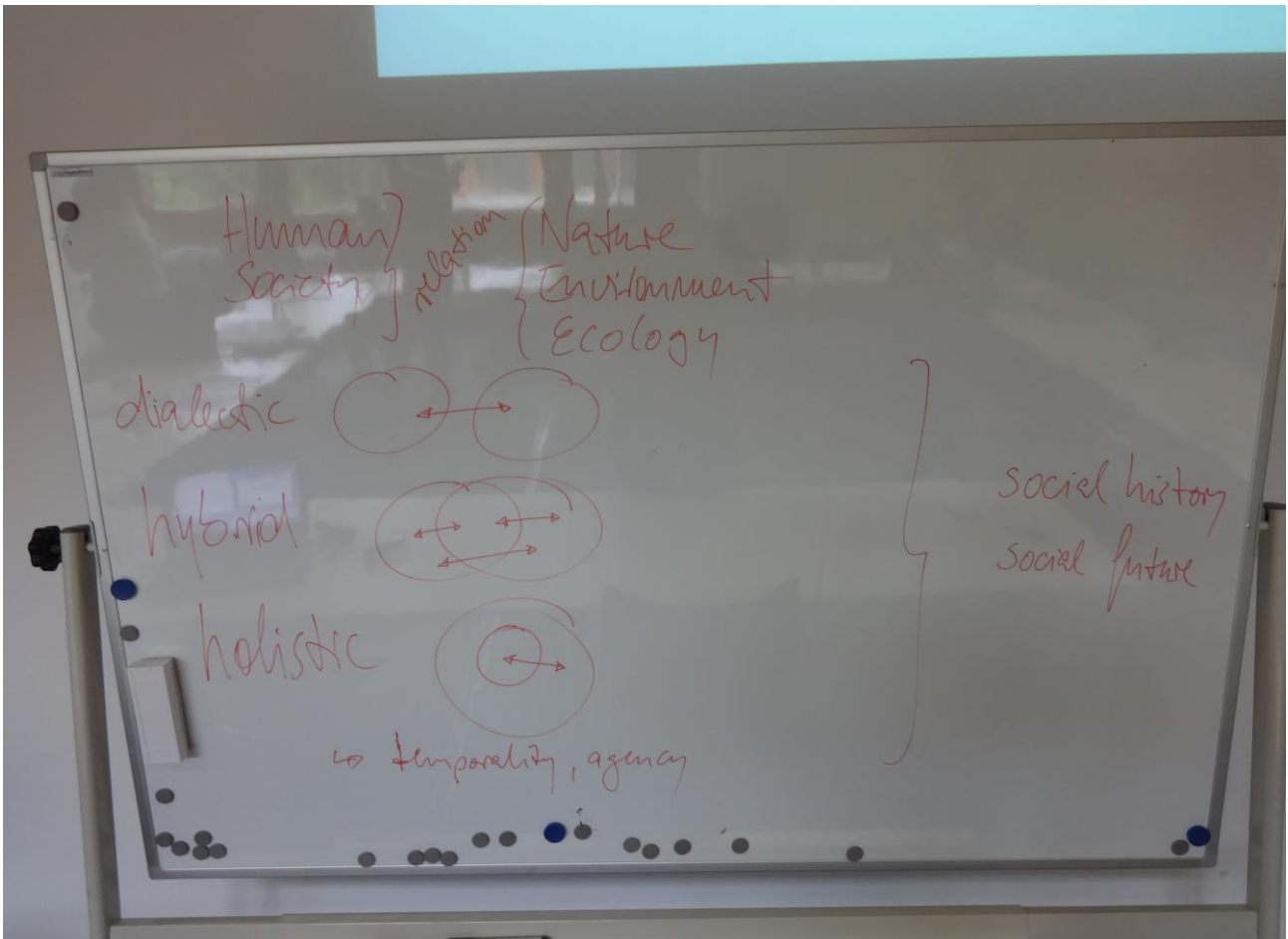
Additional questions after introduction to the conference

- How to overcome nature + culture divide? (Postcolonial Perspective)
 - ↳ Knowledge as cultural practice
- Where does society come in?
 - ↳ social-natures
- What is the role of scientists?
- Why is the figure of dichotomy so attractive?
 - ↳ empirical evidence?
- Relevance of situated knowledge
 - ↳ Reflexion of positionality
- History + actual travelling idea?
- Heritage of narratives of nature?

- Whose future / 'development' are we talking about?
- How can we conceptualize the relations between space - time - materiality - significations?
- How is the domestication / colonization of nature related to gaining control over the future?
- In which way is "power" relevant for the capacity to negotiate one's future?
(including power relations, structure)
- How is the capacity to negotiate future linked to / embedded in locality / space / land ownership?

- Role of communities for environmental protection?
↳ agency?
- Conceptualisation relations of space, time, materiality?

**Discussion after inputs on cross cutting themes of concepts
of nature and future**



3

20.6.14

DISCUSSION ②: Searching for alternative epistemologies

- spirit - body - mind (Lauren: Nombric)

↳ overcoming culture // nature dichotomy
↳ spirituality

- Why should we overcome the division?

↳ Focus on "hybrid phenomena", crisis phenomena

- Culture/nature division as part of the problem?

- Is the problem of understanding the world caused by the organisation of science or by the "world"?

- Why should a triangle be better than binary representation?

↳ alternative: Latour, connectivity + hybrids

- positionality of arguments should be clarified!

- relating to project of modernity?

- ~~Gregory's anti...~~

- epistemologies:
- experience
- knowledge
- things
- ideas

25.10.2019 20:00
Pr. 2.01

Discussion ② How to conceptualize future - nature?

- talking about "environment" instead of "nature"
 - ↳ do we simply have a problem of terminology?
- two entities: humans / non-human world
 - ↳ image of continuum, "plastic" humans
- keep the distinction human / nature in order to address relationship, constructedness, non-identity of nature
 - in which way nature unfolds in history
- images of future as return to the past
 - ↳ getting beyond the linearity of evolutionary concepts of future
- landscape as a "mixture" of culture + nature
 - ↳ temporality of landscape
- terminology: societal relations with nature
- alternative concepts of future:
 - development + planning → controllable future
 - prophecy → future as fate
- modernity → rationality / reasonability
 - ↓ ↓
 - knowledge practice
- agency of non-human, Can nature have agency outside of societal context? ↳ Descartes: totemism

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS (N:4)

4

- terminology & concepts still unclear:
"culture" as a system of meaning? *Ambivalence*
 - getting beyond Nature/Culture separation
or searching for alternative views:
 - anthropological approach → local knowledge,
outside/inside views
 - What is explaining different epistemologies?
 - Science and technology studies
 - ↳ Practices of knowledge production
 - ↳ Drivers of science
 - Is nature/culture dichotomy a temporal problem or
something inherent in every society?
I.e. a phenomenon of modernity or a universal characteristic
of human civilization?
Example: scientific versus vernacular taxonomies of plants
 - nature & culture: ambivalence to future
- APPROACHES IN ANTHROPOLOGY:
- evolutionism: explaining culture through nature (as a "law")
 - adaptation; systems theory (cultural ecology) *opinion's ideology*
 - Cultural diversity & meaning // humans as parts of systems
of meanings

Final discussion: (Re-)Conceptualizing African nature and future

Nik / 2

Future

- emergence
- contingency
- (un-)predictability
- practice of scholars using the n/c dichotomy,
↓
focus on consequences of this practice

experts → arguments
beyond controversy
resilience - future

anti-politics machine
(J. Ferguson)

APPROACHES: dealing with n/c dichotomy

- political ecology
- landscape studies
- science & technology studies
 - ↳ society ↔ technology
 - ↳ rationality of systems
 - ↳ How society inscribes itself into production of landscapes, nature, technologies



Pragmatic approach: What are people doing? Practice?
How are people using dichotomy?
To what end?

Interdisciplinary research projects + research environment

Possibility of controversies

STRUCTURING THE DEBATE ?

OBJECTS
+ QUESTIONS

climate change

land grabbing

power relations

CONCEPTS

FUTURE

NATURE

control vs. openness
"development" + capacities
anticipation + aspiration
time + space

EPISTEMOLOGIES

nature // culture dichotomies
holistic cosmologies

METHODOLOGIES

Search for inventive methods

5.
Further (Questions) and points
of discussion, lessons learnt 21/June

- 1) Nature and Future: Contradictions, Conceptualizations..
- 2) Future making (practice)
- 3) Future: emerges, can be planned?
↳ prediction? Utopia, self fulfilling prophecy
- 4) Nature: there is no universal definition depends on "situated knowledge"
- 5) Communication as important tool for negotiating Future and Nature
→ dialogue, translation, exchange

Continuation

/ ?

- History as starting point for Future making
- ~~is~~ How to not repeat old certainties about Nature - Culture, Nature - Society relations?
- translation and travelling of ideas
- Future, Nature → empty signifier?
- Computers, operating systems as metaphor, entrance (Cultural practice) to conceptualize Nature - Culture in new ways
- relation object - agent
- negotiating future + nature: where and by whom?
- learning from other contexts → Latin America

3

- Future - presence: "Future societies"
 - future is part of everyday challenges
 - ⇒ in other societies future is not a question
- "negotiation future/nature" might not fit to every contexts
- relativity of future and nature concepts
 - in some contexts future = past
- Power relations: who^{*} is making future? *Actors!
 - For what?
 - Why? → with ~~what~~ what purpose and interests?
 - With what power sources? (means)
- Experiences → adaptation and time
- relativity of time: - CC = problem of presence o. future?
 - related to nature (forests...)
- Interdisciplinarity - experiences from other contexts
eg. LA
- Participation, emancipation, local communities +
(... Fraie) local knowledge → situated knowledge
- Who are we speaking for?

- Looking to ^{cultural} history to understand where certain representations and ideas of future come from
↳ (paradise, doomsdayism ...)
- Cross-cultural perspective (Chinese ~~and~~ discourses, etc) to overcome Eurocentric perspective
- Questioning "expert knowledge": What are ideological perspectives behind? (Huxley, Wells...)
- What is significant for people related to future?
 - fears, hopes, memories
 - What in our memories is interfering ^{ideas} ~~the~~ ~~future~~ of future
 - ambivalent
- different future-cultures: calculation, ~~probabilities~~ as a future culture of "surprise" or not prediction

↳

What do we learn from different future-cultures?
- 'Numbers' related to future ^{→ e.g. CC → 2100}
 - ↳ What is the background?
- transdisciplinarity, ~~and~~ transnationalism/transregionalism in knowledge production
- landscape dynamics → dynamics changing socio-ecological landscapes