Workshop Report

Climate Cultures Kick-off Session

October 5th, 2023

Project

Revisiting Climate-Culture

Partners

Coastal University Alliance – Bangladesh (CUAB); Solidaridad Network; International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD); Jadavpur University, Manipal Academy of Higher Education; An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM), UEH Health and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (HAPRI) & Kien Giang University; National Taiwan Normal University, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colorado Boulder, Ohio State University; Utrecht University

Courtesy

Contents

Program outline

Date: 5 October 2023, 14:00 – 16:00 CET

Location: Utrecht University, Marinus Ruppert building, room 002, Leuvenlaan 21, 3584 CE Utrecht, The Netherlands

Mode: Hybrid

Time	Topic	Moderator
14:00 – 14:30	Self-introduction & collaborator's acknowledgement	Dr. Bishawjit Mallick
14:30 – 14:45	Project Brief "Climate Culture"	Dr. Bishawjit Mallick
14:45 – 15:15	Brainstorming for Implementation plan	Dr. Mucahid Bayrak
15:15 – 15:45	Discussion	
15:45 – 15:50	Vote of thanks	
15:50 – 16:30	Drinks and networking	

Self–introductions & collaborator's acknowledgement

The kick-off session "Revisiting Climate Culture" was opened by Dr. Bishawjit Mallick, on behalf of the project team of Utrecht University. After a short discussion of oral ethical consent from the participants in agreement of personal data protection rules (photographs, videos, recordings, anonymousness) and the agenda, participants were asked for a one-minute self-introduction. Participants told their name, affiliation(s), experiences in different research fields, and their motivation for joining the session. Together, they formed an interdisciplinary and international team working in different scientific areas and sectors. The project team and collaborators are made by senior and junior researchers, PhD candidates, and master's students in the Netherlands and abroad.

In particular, this project encompasses collaboration with researchers, and organizations from seven countries: India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Taiwan, Australia, and USA that led to continuing the session in hybrid form, meaning that participants were both present on location and through a Microsoft Teams meeting.

Table -1 shows the project team members.

Australia
Dr. Thong Anh Tran, The University of Melbourne
Bangladesh
Prof. Saleemul Huq, ICCCAD
Professors, Coastal University Alliance Bangladesh (CUAB)
Solidaridad Network Asia
India
Prof. Dr. Tuhin Ghosh, Jadavpur University
Dr. Selim Jahangir, Manipal Academy of Higher Education
Sri Lanka
Prof. Daham Jayawardane, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
Taiwan
Dr. Thong Anh Tran, The University of Melbourne
USA
Prof. Dr. Amanda Carrico, University of Colorado Boulder
Prof. Dr. Kelsea Best, Ohio State University

Vietnam

Prof. Dr. Tran Van Hieu, Vietnam National University
Prof. Dr. Duong Van Nha, Kien Giang University

Acknowledgements were also given to the funders of the research project:

The core-team from Utrecht University encompasses the following co-principal investigators from the departments listed in Table -2.

Human Geography and Spatial Planning (GEO)
B. Mallick (PI)
A. Bailey (Co-PI)
M. M. Bayrak (Co-PI)
J. N. van den Berg (Research Assistant)
Copernicus Institute
H. Mees (Co-PI)
G. Koren (Co-PI)
Department of Cultural Anthropology
D. Henig (Co-PI)
Department of International and European Law (REBO)
H. Du (Co-PI)

Following the round of introductions and acknowledgements, Dr. Mallick continued to the introduction of the climate-cultures project that describes in the next section.

Project Brief "Climate–Culture"

Following the short introductory session, Dr. Mallick continued to present the "Climate-Cultures" projects as a combination of two seed-funding projects under the titles of "Revisiting Climate-Culture" (courtesy: The Pathways to Sustainability) and "Bottom-up Initiative for Climate-Culture" (courtesy: Bottom-up Initiatives). He clarified that why climate-cultures and what does it mean to us, and how can we adopt this concept for addressing our pathways to sustainable future.
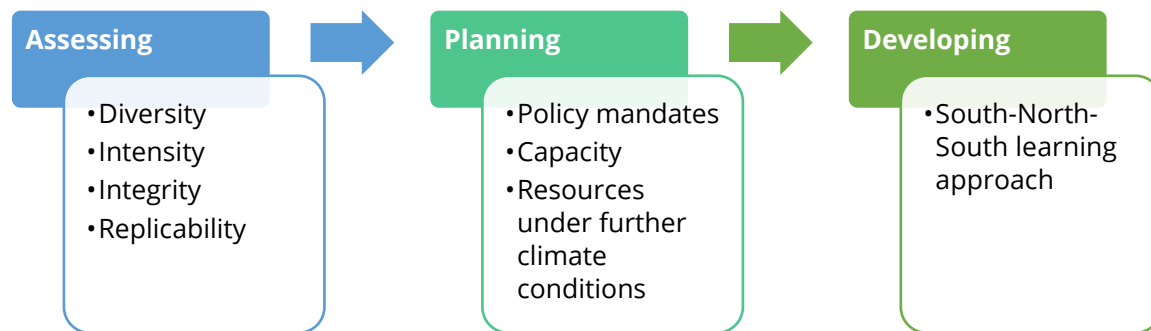
He mentioned, although globalization and intensifying global connectedness is largely a driver for global cultural homogenization and the appearance of "world cultures", climate change adaptation strategies remain geographically and socio-culturally sensitive and bounded. In specific, evidence has pointed out that there are local cultural differences in perceiving and handling climate change,

leading to local limits of adaptation and inadequate transfer of climate change-related knowledge and practices (Feola et al., 2019). So, implementing so-called "best-practice" adaptation strategies might not work in different cultural contexts. For instance, mentioned climate change adaptation strategies are student tsunami drills (Sri Lanka), cultivating salt-tolerant crops in reaction to increased soil salinity (Bangladesh), and using watershed management by burying water diffusers (India). These adaptation strategies hinge on rooted cultural dimensions, knowledge, and expressions of climate adaptive behavior. Therefore, implementing general strategies might clash with or ignore culturally sensitive practices.

Two knowledge gaps then emerge: i) current planning-oriented research and policy on climate change adaptation hardly considers how local/regional differences in 'climate-cultures' are rooted in policy planning, and ii) how similarities and differences in 'climate-cultures' have been evolving globally and locally depending on adaptation cultures. The overarching question that Dr. Mallick presents is the following: *How far are climate change-related knowledge and adaptation practices (hereafter 'climate-cultures') globally transferable and applicable?*

Three requirements (assessing methodology, planning institutional developments, developing an international consortium) are presented as necessary in exploring the overarching question, contributing to closing the two identified knowledge gaps:

Assessing	Planning	Developing
• Diversity • Intensity • Integrity • Replicability	• Policy mandates • Capacity • Resources under further climate conditions	• South-North-South learning approach

The expected outcomes succeeding the methodology assessment of climate-cultures characteristics, planning institutional developments and the development of an international consortium will be:

- Adaptation knowledge and practice labs.

- Dialogue and learning for improved socio-political awareness and strategies.

To achieve the expected outcomes, participants were asked to engage in brainstorming on an implementation plan. Before engaging in an open brainstorming session, a short speech was held by Prof. Ajay Bailey, from Utrecht University. He talked shortly about the relevance and importance of the development of the climate-cultures project. He continued to express his enthusiasm to launch this project with a great international team of scholars and experts to bundle all expertise and experiences, and looked forward to the corporation and attendance of further workshops and thought-provoking sessions.

Brainstorming for Implementation Plan

The next section was a brainstorming session, moderated by Dr. Mucahid Bayrak, to discuss four practical targets and requirements:

1. Adaptation knowledge and practice labs

2. Position paper

3. Grant application

4. Global network on "Climate-cultures"

The group was divided into four sub-groups and given 30 minutes to brainstorm on these four topics, whereafter a presentation was given by each group on the outcome of their ideas. The Teams participants were divided into two groups of 6/7, and the on-site participants were also divided into two groups 7. Each group appointed one person as the moderator who leads the discussion and one person to present the results. After 30 minutes of brainstorming, the groups came together again to discuss their reflections, questions, and ideas in a plenary manner. The following sections include a compilation of all the group outcomes per topic.

Adaptation knowledge and practice labs

To discuss adaptation knowledge and climate-cultures, it is crucial to make a clear definition of 'climate-cultures'. The questions that were being asked were: *How can we define adaptation as culture? What dimensions does it include? And what levels (livelihood, local knowledge, nature-based, technological)? Top-down or bottom-up (or both)? Adaptation to what? How does it differ from (short-term) coping strategies?* A precise definition of the notion would be necessary to

provide answers to all these questions. Additional points that mentioned during the discussion:

- Consider an intergenerational lens.

- (Locally-led) adaptation strategies are not always considered as executed in reaction to climate change. More so they encompass responsive behaviors to certain identified events, such as floodings or cyclones.

- Consider seasonal, geographical changes that the landscape undergoes, coinciding with the implementation of different adaptation strategies according to these changes.

- Adaptation measures can be implemented on various levels (micro, meso, and macro).

- Geographical differences in adaptation, e.g., in rural vs urban. Yet, also the spatial connections that play a role in adaptation processes and capacities. For instance, in- and out-migration.

- Climate change effects and adaptation outcomes are also impaired by other struggles and vulnerabilities that intersect with them.

- Consider how the policies are enabling/disabling the individual agency in change and adaptation embedded in the structural constraints.

- It should be considered that adaptation knowledge and climate change hold a mutual, two-directional relationship: climate change provides us with adaptation knowledge and practices, and adaptation practices relate to the climate change process. It is essential to consider how those two are linked together.

- Adaptation strategies are closely linked to the socio-cultural history of the locality, as well as with the specific ecological context (nature as a stakeholder/actor).

- Cultural practices and adaptations to climate change are rooted and developed since the beginning of an individual's livelihood. If disruptions happen, how will they adapt in new ways? This change causes a gap between what people are practicing and disruptions for which they need to adjust.

  - The temporality of adaptation: traditional versus new adaptation → how does adaptation itself change → it's a process, not static).

- Cultures are constantly in flux and change throughout time. This makes it difficult to define climate cultures. A misinterpretation of its dimensions can cause acts of resistance on various levels (micro, meso, and macro).

Different ideas were given on shaping practice labs and what they could provide and have as a result. Practice labs should encompass real-life participatory experiences and transdisciplinary initiatives from a case study perspective. They should initiate longstanding relationships with partners after the conclusion of the project. Preferably, the collaborator and partners (experts, students) involved should be from various disciplines, focusing on broad expertise knowledge to work under a broad umbrella in incorporating the composed results in knowledge production and dissemination. The practice labs could also be linked to existing platforms, in a way having a possibility to institutionalize. Moreover, the practice labs in different countries should involve the partners as much as possible and possibly do comparative research.

Position paper

Groups argued to present an analytical framework in the position paper. This framework should encompass intersectional dimensions such as age, gender, education, etc., dimensions of cultural shocks, geographical rootedness (or dissemination) of culture and knowledge production. In the framework should also be present the dimensions of culture, such as political, legal, social, and climate. The groups also mentioned the following ideas for the position paper:

- Consider clustering/grouping the adaptation projects within the "climate cultures"

- Apply a broad perspective of adaptation and be careful with case studies.

- Different processes, instruments and ideologies affect adaptation strategies, influenced by cultural dimensions (legal, climate, political, etc.).

- When analyzing the adaptation strategies, we can look at similarities with international law legislation like customary law, where practices become unified among diverse cultures as an outcome of repetitive practices. Likewise ask *Why people comply (or not) with the law?* - it comes as a result of the cultural background which could also be applied to the application (or not) of adaptation strategies.

- Adaptation at what scale? (Relational scales).

- What is adaptation culture and how to study it?

- If/how to transfer

    o Other localities

    o Other generations

- Pathways are usually about imagining the future, but it is imperative with climate cultures to look backward to see how they have arisen over time.

    o Historical (backwards)

- o Future (imagination)
- Differentiate short-term coping strategies and adaptation
- Solution-based/social-benefit-based approaches

The position paper should use an analytical framework encompassing the discussed intersectional dimensions, the temporality aspect of mobility (including future and historical dimensions), and the various layers that shape culture. From this point forwards a concise analysis of climate cultures can be introduced, as defined by all its aspects and dimensions. The research position, edifying the defined climate cultures, should emphasize the contextuality, sensitivity, and temporality of the notion, thereby opposing prevalent so-called "best-practice" adaptation strategies.

Grant application

Regarding the grant application some groups held opposing ideas. Group one said looking at the funder's terms and conditions would be helpful. Narrowing down and aligning the research based on their terms and conditions would provide a higher chance of obtaining a grant. Other groups disagreed and argued it would not be beneficial for the research to restrict itself to the funder. On the contrary, it would be better to present something new. Other ideas mentioned were to emphasize the multi-disciplinary team, work from a social-benefit and solution-based perspective, and possibly give a case study on a micro level, from which a more extensive study can be initiated.

Global network on "Climate-cultures"

The network is already established and strong. However, the groups suggested that it would be beneficial to create a website where all the details and research progress is presented. In the meantime, updates on the research project are presented on this page. Moreover, it would be valuable to include not only academic scholars, but also non-academic, local stakeholders (such as NGOs). Practice labs are essential to maintain longstanding relationships with partners and stakeholders.

Concluding remarks

The final segment of the kick-off session included a word of appreciation from Dr. Bishawjit Mallick for the fruitful brainstorming session. Some participants added their vote of thanks for the kick-off and the organization. Dr. Mallick continued to propose the following sessions to be organized by collaborators in different countries so that each country is actively involved in the organization and representation of the project. Then, each session will be hosted on-site, with collaborators in other countries present through a livestream connection. After these closing words, there was space for drinks and networking with the attendees who were present on-site.

Annex

Table-3. List of attendees.

Name of participant	Organisation
Nasif Ahsan	Khulna University
Harrison Awuh	Utrecht University
Muca Bayrak	Utrecht University
Julia van den Berg	Utrecht University
Ajay Bailey	Utrecht University
Kelsea Best	Ohio State University
Amanda Carrico	University of Colorado Boulder
Liping Dai	Utrecht University
Haomiao Du	Utrecht University
Aisse Feldheim	Utrecht University
Tuhin Ghosh	Jadavpur University
Selim Reza Hasan	Solidaridad Network Asia
Selim Jahangir	Manipal Academy of Higher Education
Daham Jayawardane	University of Sri Jayewardenepura
Bishawjit Mallick	Utrecht University
Marta Martinez Fabiani	Utrecht University
Heleen Mees	Utrecht University
Seama Mowri	Utrecht University
Marcel Pein	Utrecht University
Irene Pietersma	Utrecht University
Richard Pompoes	Wageningen University & Research
Apurba Roy	University of Barishal
Sayantan Samui	Utrecht University
Brent Sandtke	Utrecht University
Shapla Singha	Khulna University
Zakia Sultana	Utrecht University
Thong Tran	The University of Melbourne
Tran Van Hieu	Vietnam National University
Duong Van Nha	Kien Giang University
Diana Vela Almeida	Utrecht University
Abbie Yunita	Utrecht University