The Future of Knowledge Creation:
Visioning a Capacity Revolution - a Futures Literacy Workshop

*"Climate variability and change is inexorably linked to development. In this context, the main challenge of the Forum on **Education, Capacity Building, and Climate Change: A Strategy for Collective Action in Africa** is to address the need in African universities to promote trans-disciplinary education aimed at preparing an educated and informed civil society that values education and research on climate change as crucial to developing societal resilience and adjusting to climate change." Forum Summary.*

How do we know what we do not know: The aims of this workshop are ambitious: to change the way you think, and in so doing, change your capacity to learn and act. We have called it "visioning a capacity revolution" (VCR) because we want to test a dual hypothesis:

- First, on the side of what-might-be, we see the emergence of new, potentially powerful capabilities for learning and acting;

- Second, on the side of what-has-been, we find evidence that existing capacities to learn and act are inadequate, even dysfunctional to the point of being dangerous.

Confirmation of these two hypotheses would begin to provide substance to the claim of discontinuity between the past, dominated by hugely successful but now entrenched educational and administrative capabilities, and the present, rife with tantalizing emergent capacities and new ways of getting things done.

But does this imply a "revolution"? Perhaps, if through the VCR process we can identify how the specific attributes of emergent systems for building and using capacity are distinctive in ways that entail discontinuity with old or existing systems. This is a stringent requirement, one that can only be fulfilled if we can begin to imagine changes in the conditions of change, including changes in the way that we perceive change. In other words, perceiving discontinuity depends, at least in part on being able to imagine new rules and new ways of being should transformations occur. By transformations, we mean processes whereby distinctively "new" systems come to replace or dominate old ones.

The VCR workshop uses the future to help us detect, delineate **and** create changes in the way we learn and act in the present.

Agenda

9:45 – 10:30   Pre-session: Participants Self-introduction (30 seconds)
                       Q methodology (exploring personal values)

10:30– 11:00   Session 1: Introduction to the Workshop –
                       Karen O'Brien – VCR Purpose
                       Riel Miller – Thinking About the Future

11:00 – 11:30   Session 2: Futures Literacy Level 1: Values, Expectations and the Subject

11:30 – 12:00   Session 3: Reporting Back to Plenary

12:00 – 13:00   Lunch

13:00– 13:30   Session 4: Futures Literacy Level 2: A Descriptive Model of the Green Learning Intensive Society

13:30 – 14:15   Session 5: Futures Literacy Level 2: Rigorous Imagining

14:15 – 14:30   Session 6: Rigorously Imagined Scenario: Reporting Back

14:30 – 15:00   Session 7: Futures Literacy Level 3: Questioning Anticipatory Assumptions

Detailed Instructions for Breakout Group Discussions

11:00 – 11:30   Session 2 Futures Literacy Level 1: Values, Expectations and the Subject

- Discuss the "subject" – what are the attributes of knowledge creation in 2030 in Africa – broad view of the sources and uses of knowledge? Describe knowledge creation and the role of the university in 2030.

- Values –What is your ideal outcome for knowledge creation in 2030 and the role of African universities? What are the values that inform this ideal?

- Expectations – what are your expectations, what do think will happen to knowledge creation in , what is your best guess?

- Refining the Subject – what is the actual subject that is under discussion? What are you really trying to think about for the future? How would you describe the subject in the present?

Prepare for presentation to plenary a set of bullet points that cover:

- Definition of "knowledge creation"

- Values for knowledge creation in 2030 and the role of universities in Africa

- Expectations for knowledge creation in 2030 and the role of universities in Africa

15:00 – 15:45 HSS Level 2 Exercise

Locate and describe – "paint a picture" of knowledge creation in Africa in 2030 and the actual roles played by universities in this imaginary picture:
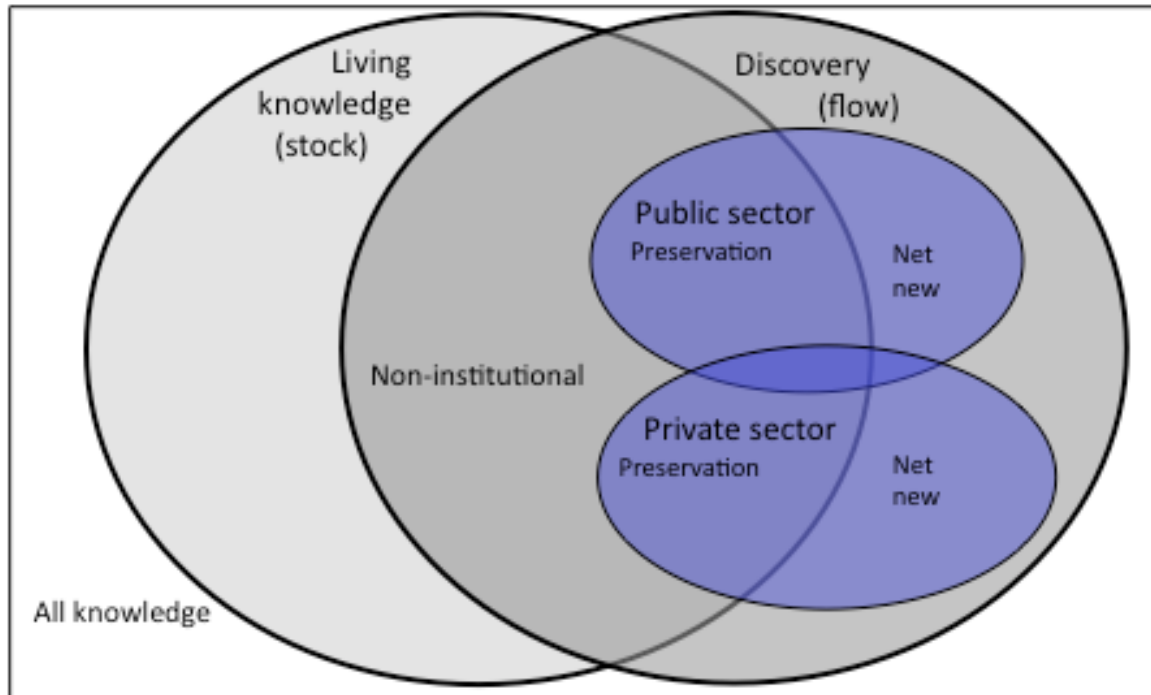
- Possibility Space 1: How is value created in the economy – what is the role of knowledge?

- Possibility Space 2: What are social relationships like – how and where do people connect, create their communities and identity?

- Possibility Space 3: How does decision making work?

Prepare for presentation to plenary a set of bullet points that cover:

- Look for a metaphor, a title for your scenario

- Take a role, a very short day-in-the-life perspective

- Briefly explain the nature, role and working of systems for knowledge creation in Africa in 2030 and the main roles played by universities in this imaginary future

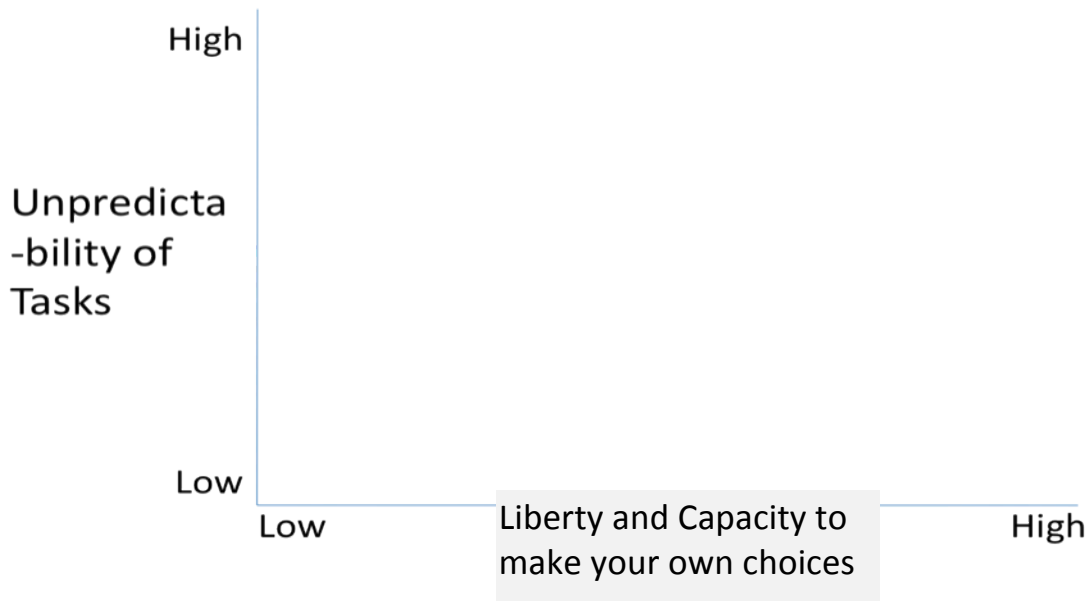## Level 2: The Learning Intensive Society Model: Beyond Industrial Society and Convergence to Industrialism

Defining the Subject

Etienne Wegner: Communities of Practice
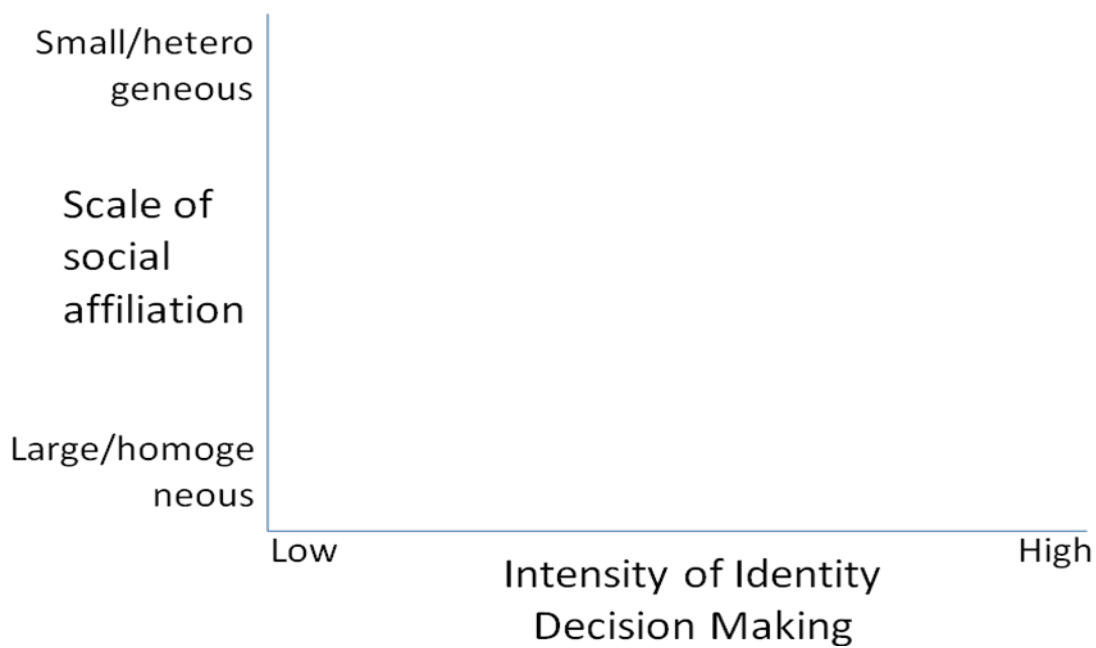
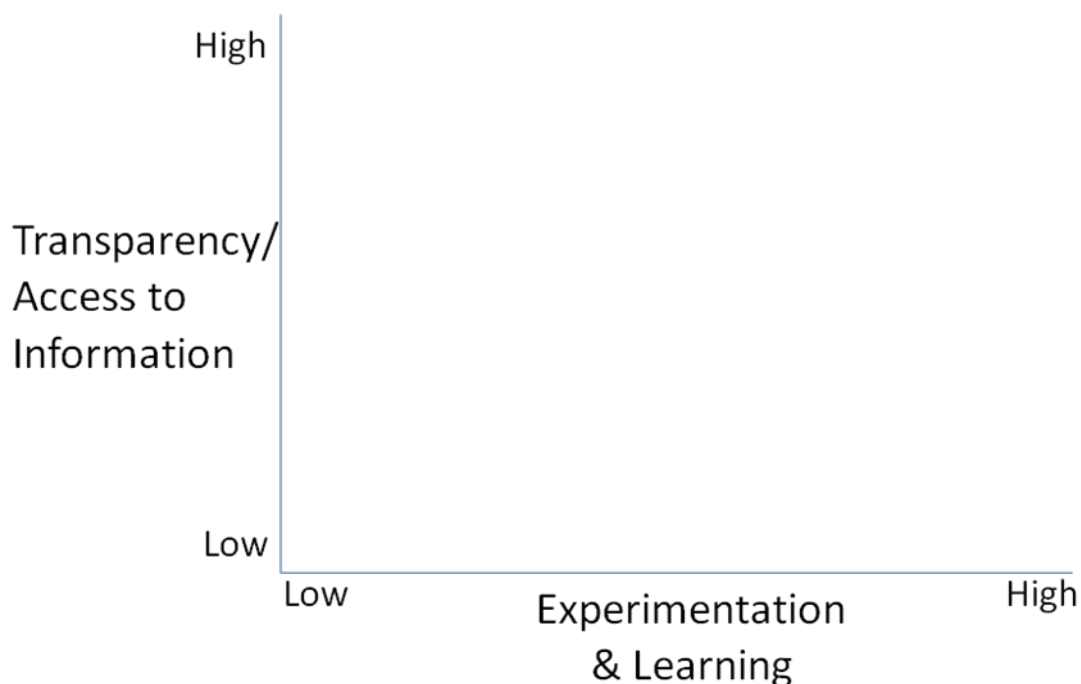**Possibility Space 1**

Economic Dynamism – Unique Creation

High

Unpredicta
-bility of
Tasks

Low

Low

Liberty and Capacity to
make your own choices

High

Possibility Space 2

Social Dynamism – Social Identity Creation

Small/hetero
geneous

Scale of
social
affiliation

Large/homoge
neous

Low

High

Intensity of Identity
Decision Making

Possibility Space 3

Dynamic Governance – Decision Making Quality

Imagining a Post-Industrial Society

	Industrial Era	**Learning Intensive Society**
Wealth	Physical/financial	Human capital
Rules	Simple property rights	Complex property rights
Governance	Ex-ante allocation of power	Real-time allocation of power
Values	Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Economy	Mass production	Production for self/community
Home	Life organized for work	Work organized for life
Authority	Hierarchy	Networked autonomy
Identity	Imposed identity	Co-created identity
Freedom	Liberation from constraints	As a capacity to do things

Narrative assumptions for engaging in the rigorous imagining process:

Purpose: Goal discovery – what is the potential of the present? Not optimisation or contingency.

Point-of-view: Change in daily life (for example change on the scale of moving from agriculture to industry). Not institutional or macro level variables (although obviously the changes in the conduct of daily life have aggregate and institutional implications).

Temporal frame: Comparative static cross-section in 2020 – the issue is not describing the voyage or how or why to get from A to B.

Protagonist: the actor – the decision maker that is interested in the results of this exercise is a is a University leader

Rules: key basic values remain the stated goals of societal progress, such as the universal declaration of human rights, representative democracy, mixed economies, etc., but the world has moved beyond catch-up and convergence to an industrial economic, social and political order

The Learning Intensive Society – a model of a post-industrial social system is defined by:

1) Significant advances in technology – high levels of ease-of-use, range-of-uses for information technologies such that these tools are no longer "evident";
2) Unique creation – high levels of unpredictability of tasks and freedom of initiative for wealth creating activity mean that the predominant source of value-added is the refinement of taste (banal creativity);
3) Bottom-up collective identity – high levels of diversity of affiliations and intensity of identity generating decision making produce sense making that integrates (internalises) the social nature of the individual;
4) Governance – high levels of transparency/access to information and experience in making strategic choices emerges reflexively from the interaction of ambient computing, unique creation and bottom-up collective identity.

Suggestions for thinking about changes in the conditions of change:

- How is wealth accumulation & exchange organised?
- What kinds of property rights predominate (diversity of contractual relationships, mix of different degrees of copyright/copyleft)? How does this relate to business models (ways of making a profit)?
- How is trust established and maintained?
- How does work (or wealth creating activity) relate to the way we build our habitat?
- How is power allocated (is authority assigned or taken, is decision making capacity gained through experimentation, is complexity embraced)?
- What kind of equality matters (hierarchy and/or heterarchy)?
- What shapes a person's identity?
- How is risk perceived & managed?
- What are the enabling or collective attributes of the LIS?
- What do people need to know – know-what, know-how, know-who, know-why?

14:30 – 15:00 Wrap up discussion

Connecting to education, capacity building and climate change:

- What are the anticipatory assumptions shaping policy choices in the present?

- Are there changes in the conditions of change that challenge existing anticipatory assumptions?

- Can we begin to identify new aspects of the potential of the present? How could universities play a role in going beyond industrial approaches to the creation and diffusion of knowledge?

- Does challenging the anticipatory assumptions that shape current decision making offer new avenues for thinking about capacity building and adaptation to climate change?

- What are there specific issues/questions to report back to the overall conference plenary regarding the future of knowledge creation, the role of universities, the current assumptions shaping policy and the implications for adapting to climate change?