Resilience

Melanie
Schwarzfischer

Resilience

This entry will engage with the phenomenon of tourism in Northern Tanzania via the notion of resilience. To understand the approaches towards resilience in the tourism sector, the resilience concept will be explained first. The concept of **resilience** is widely used and applied in many different disciplines ranging from natural sciences to social sciences. Resilience as a scientific concept was defined in 1973 by Crawford Holling, an ecologist researching the stability of ecosystems (Cochrane 2010: 2). Later, the concept was applied in socio-ecological context (ibid.). There is no single definition of resilience in general. It is rather defined individually in each field of study (Hudson 2010: 2). Therefore, the concept is applicable in multiple fields including, among others, human and individual resilience, organizational resilience, resilience of cities or regions, and systemic resilience.

In broad terms, the concept of resilience describes "the capacity of ecosystems, individuals, organizations or materials to cope with disruption and stress and retain or subsequently regain functional capacity and form" (Hudson 2010: 2).

To get closer to the important factors of resilience from a geographic perspective the **sustainable livelihood approach** can be applied. In this approach, a livelihood system is classified as being sustainable if people are able to cope with crises and recover from external and internal disturbances (Lax and Krug 2013: 6). This method defines five interdependent livelihood assets: **human, social, physical, natural, and financial capital**. These five livelihood assets are influenced by external trends and shocks (Vedeld et al. 2012: 22).

The first asset is human capital, which includes skills, knowledge, ability to labor and health.
Secondly, social capital is represented by the formation of networks, memberships of groups and co-operations.
Thirdly, the availability of physical resources and infrastructure is defining the physical dimension of livelihood.
The fourth livelihood asset is the natural capital including the natural resources as basis of all livelihood actives.
And lastly, internal assets such as cash or livestock as well as external income account for the financial capital (Lax and Krug 2013: 9).

Key factors of resilience in general can be defined through this approach. **Figure 12** shows a model which utilizes the livelihood approach to show the key features of a resilient system, region or organization. There is a direct correspondence between each asset in the sustainable livelihood approach and the key factors of resilience.

Regarding **human capital**, the central features of a resilient system are innovation, learning and skilled workforce (Szabó et al. 2018: 397). The ability to learn from previous disruptions or crises is essential. This learning process does not only have to occur within the system's sector but also between sectors (Szabó et al. 2018: 397). The latter is necessary to improve resilience. This is achieved by the adequate existence of **social capital** including partnerships, and co-operations which is in return needed to exchange information and resources (Szabó et al. 2018: 397). The **physical dimension** represents the infrastructural requirements and educational facilities. Regarding the **natural**
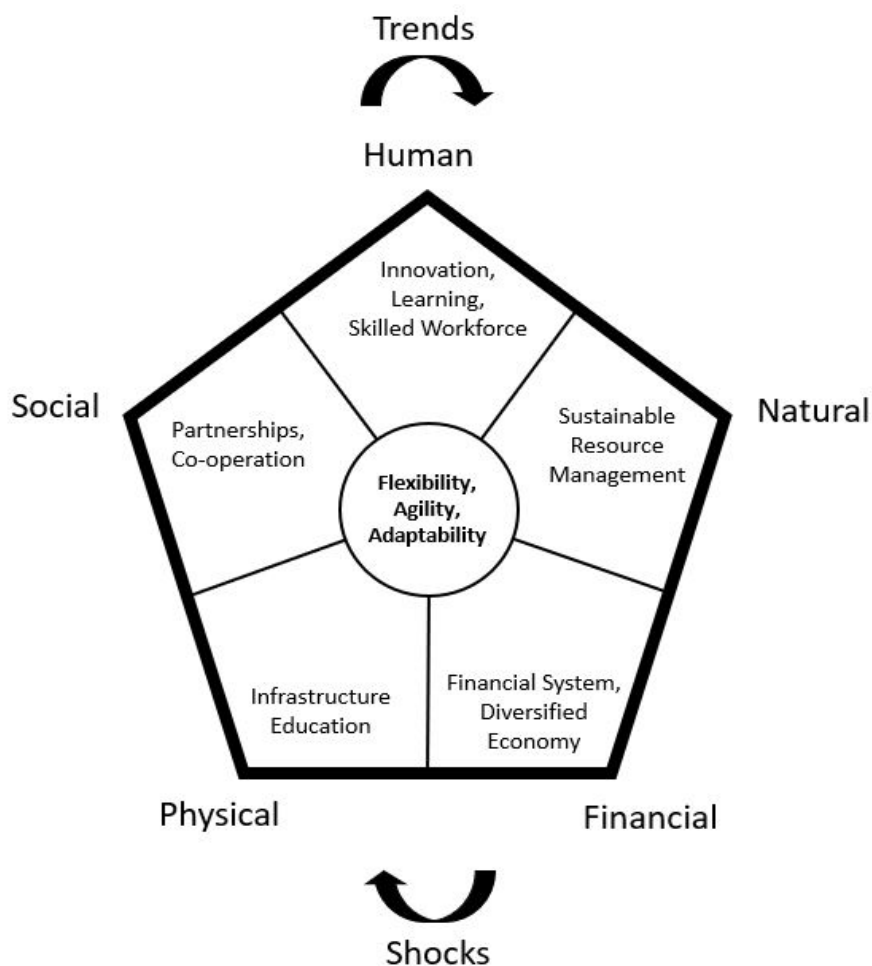

Figure 12: Sustainable livelihood approach and the key features of resilience, Source: Own representation based on Hudson 2010; Jiang et al. 2019; Lax and Krug 2013; Szabó et al. 2018; Vedeld et al. 2012

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capital, sustainable resource management is central for the future development of an institution (Cochrane 2010: 10). Lastly, a supportive **financial system** and a diversified economy are central. A diverse economy improves resilience since a system is not dependent on a single sector alone. If one sector is damaged the others can compensate the damage instead (Szabó et al. 2018: 397). **Flexibility, agility, and adaptability** are central to all five forms of capital (Goldschmidt et al. 2019: 41). At least some of these aspects are needed to cope with a crisis successfully.

The concept of resilience can be applied to regions. A region can be regarded as resilient if it "is capable to maintain economic success over the long term in face of the inevitable adaption required by changes in international competition, shift in consumer demand and other such shocks" (Szabó et al. 2018: 397). Especially the need for a diversified economic base not over-reliant on one single industry is mentioned. This can be achieved through a strong system of innovation at universities, **entrepreneurship** and the establishment of a 'learning region' (ibid.: 397). But also, modern and productive infrastructure will enable better adaptations to changes and therefore improve the resilience of the region (ibid.: 397). Moreover, intra-regional cooperation and sustainable resource management are key factors.

On a larger scale, the concept of resilience can also be applied at an **organizational** level. The focus here is the resilience of single organizations. Resilience is herein mainly understood as a "progressive state of organizational evolution which represents organizations' constant change and adaptation" (Jiang et al. 2019: 884). For an organization, flexibility is very important since it improves the preparation for, response to and recovery from a crisis. (ibid.: 884). Especially, the discovery of new market opportunities, development of new products and the establishment of new collaborative relationships will make an organization more resilient (ibid.: 885).

All in all, the concept of resilience has also to be regarded critically. Since the concept has been introduced at first in natural sciences the question arises if resilience can be adopted by social sciences based on an ecological approach. Moreover, it is misleading to analyze on a single scale only – different scales are simply not independent from each other (Jiang et al. 2019: 884). In other words, the resilience of a region is highly influenced by organizations that are themselves dependent on the resilience of individuals. Therefore, one scale is not enough to understand the dynamics of a multi-scale system. Furthermore, the concept of resilience can be also applied in a development context. It serves as a tool to form regions or

organizations according to the Western model, from which it originates. It can be used as a normative condition without meeting the special needs of the Global South. The application of a Western concept has to be adjusted to the Southern context. But overall, is it even possible to have a resilient system, region, or organization that can cope with any kind of crisis? It remains an open question if the achievement of complete resilience is even possible.

Materialisation of "Resilience" in Moshi

The concept of resilience has also been applied in tourism studies since the number of crises affecting the tourism industry has been rising dramatically over the past years. Due to the globalized nature of tourism, the **dependence** on tourist flows and the reliance on the tourists' safety, the tourism sector is very vulnerable to crises (Jiang et al. 2019: 882 ff.). To improve the sustainability of tourism management and the ability to cope with uncertainties, the concept of resilience can be utilized.

The tourism landscape in Tanzania is quite diverse, ranging from **wildlife safaris, mountain and trekking activities to community tourism and beach tourism** (Mauly Tours 2022). Especially, the Kilimanjaro region and the Northern Safari Circuit are very important for tourism in Tanzania since about 72% of the total revenue from tourism in Tanzania comes from these regions (Peaty 2012: 2). But all in all, the tourism industry is highly **dependent on the natural capital** of the regions and the maintenance of national parks in Tanzania. It is ranked first within Africa regarding the quality of nature-based tourism resources (World Bank Group 2021: 51). "By 2019 Tanzania's tourism sector contributed an estimated 17 percent of its GDP and directly employed over 850,000 workers" (World Bank Group 2021: 51). **Figure 13** shows the development of the tourism sector in Tanzania which features high growth rates since 1990. Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in terms of the number of visitors and revenues is apparent. Additionally, the climate crisis will affect the tourism sector in Tanzania. Therefore, tourism is facing an uncertain future, which is why the importance of implementing resilient structures is rising.

One example of a tourism sector is the **mountain and trekking tourism** around Kilimanjaro. Since the sector provides more than 11.000 jobs, mountain tourism is very important not only for the region but also for its people (Peaty 2012: 2 ff.). Kilimanjaro is the tallest mountain on the African continent and is also a world heritage site. This mountain is attracting mostly tourists from North America and Europe who are hiking the mountain with the help of tour operators (ibid.).
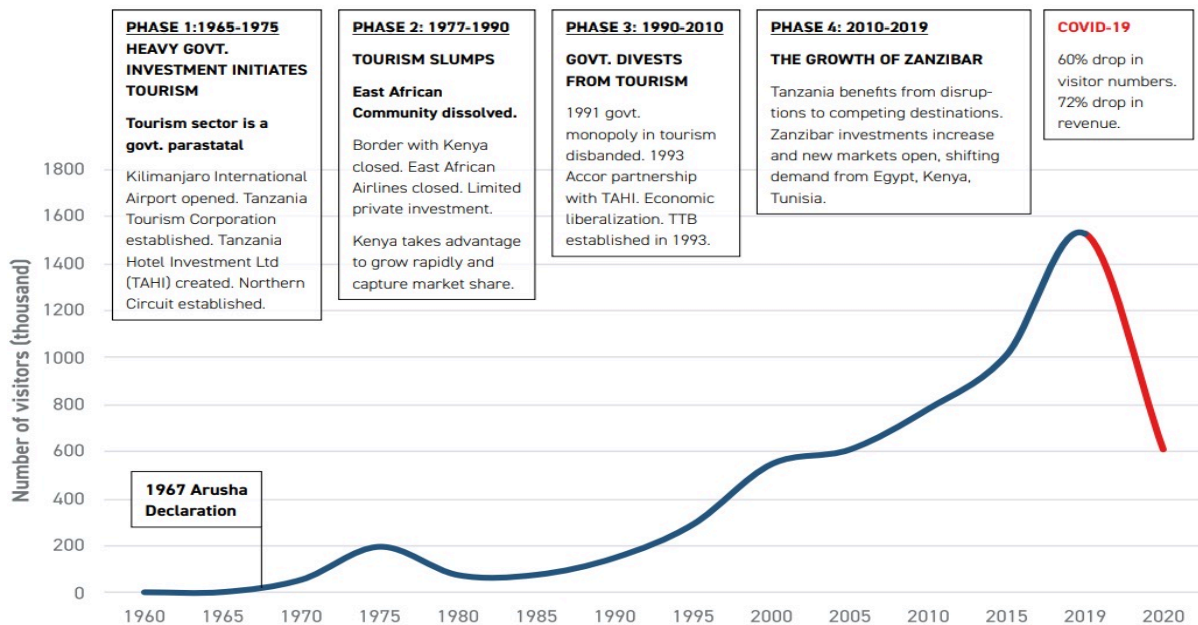
Figure 13: Development of numbers of visitors in Tanzania in the context of government policies. Source: World Bank Group 2021: 54

In Moshi, many tour operators are offering guided tours to the summit of Kilimanjaro. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of mountain tourists has declined from 1544 in March 2020 to four visitors in April and three visitors in May of the same year (The Citizen 2020). The enormous reduction of tourists has impacted negatively on the mountain tourism sub-sector and the tourism sector at large in the region. Besides the current COVID-19 pandemic, the mountain tourism of the Kilimanjaro region is impacted by the climate crisis. Due to its irreversible nature, such impacts will influence the region more dramatically. The top of Kilimanjaro is covered by a glacier which has been suffering a loss of more than 85% since 1921 due to global warming (Peaty 2012: 9). This greatly reduces the visual appeal of the site (ibid.: 9 ff.) and causes more extreme weather effects. This may impact the arrival of tourists in the region. All in all the future of tourism remains uncertain and therefore it is important to figure out strategies to cope with future challenges.

The tourism sector is facing a huge dilemma in terms of climate change. Tourism is highly dependent on international tourists but at the same time, long-distance flights and high CO_2-emissions produced by tourism activities are accelerating the processes of climate change. Therefore, a shift in the tourism sector toward an increased sustainable and resilient structure is necessary.

To cope with the current challenges regarding mountain tourism and the larger tourism industry in Tanzania resilient structures within the region and at an organizational level are important. Since Tanzania is highly dependent on ecological resources, a move towards sustainable tourism may increase resilience (World Bank Group 2021: 65 ff.). The World Bank Group (2021: 73 ff.) is highlighting five main areas that are important to build resilience:

- Firstly, a business environment has to be created efficiently, reliably, and transparently.
- Secondly, it is important to establish an information-management system.
- Thirdly, access to affordable financial support should be ensured.
- Fourthly, health and safety protocols have to be improved consistently.
- Fifthly, partnerships and co-investments are needed to support the management of natural capital.

In addition, I suggest the application of the livelihood model of resilience **(Figure 12)**. **Figure 14** provides suggestions for each of the five livelihood assets for the transitions toward a more resilient organizational structure. Regarding **human capital**, capacity building is important, especially in terms of crisis management. Therefore, fair payment and a supportive work environment including health care, family care, and other essential insurance are crucial. Such

conditions can bind the staff to the organization and reduce staff fluctuation. In terms of **social capital**, the formation of cooperations with other organizations in other tourism sectors is very important to improve resilience (Cochrane 2010: 10). Such cooperations can also be formed for advertisement for each of the organizations (Mauly Tours 2022). Moreover, the platformization process can be helpful to gain more resilience since platforms such as TripAdvisor or Booking.com increase visibility and attract tourists. But at the same time, such platforms are creating new dependencies and challenges. On the **physical dimension**, one way toward increased resilience is the diversification of the location of the organization. If one location is affected by a crisis the other ones may have the capacity to compensate for the damage. Additionally, sufficient water supply is necessary due to climate change and the melting of the Kilimanjaro glacier. Regarding the **natural capital**, a shift towards eco-tourism provides the opportunity to deal with the dilemma of tourism which was mentioned above. Moreover, education programs for tourists may help to protect nature and reduce pollution to maintain the natural capital. Also, biodiversity programs increase resilience because wildlife attracts tourism. Finally, at the **financial level**, diversification of income and assets provides more resilience against crashes in the financial market, such as hyperinflation or

bursting investment bubbles. These are just a few actions that may help to improve the resilience of organizations, but this list is far from being exhaustive.

To sum up, I suggest improving resilience in the Kilimanjaro region and on an organizational level based on the measures noted above. However, I doubt that this can be reached through simply applying a Western scientific concept. Moreover, each region or organization has to define on its own what is regards as resilience. Of course, the concept of resilience can be helpful but does not cover all necessary aspects in the Tanzanian context. Individual and creative solutions will certainly be most effective.
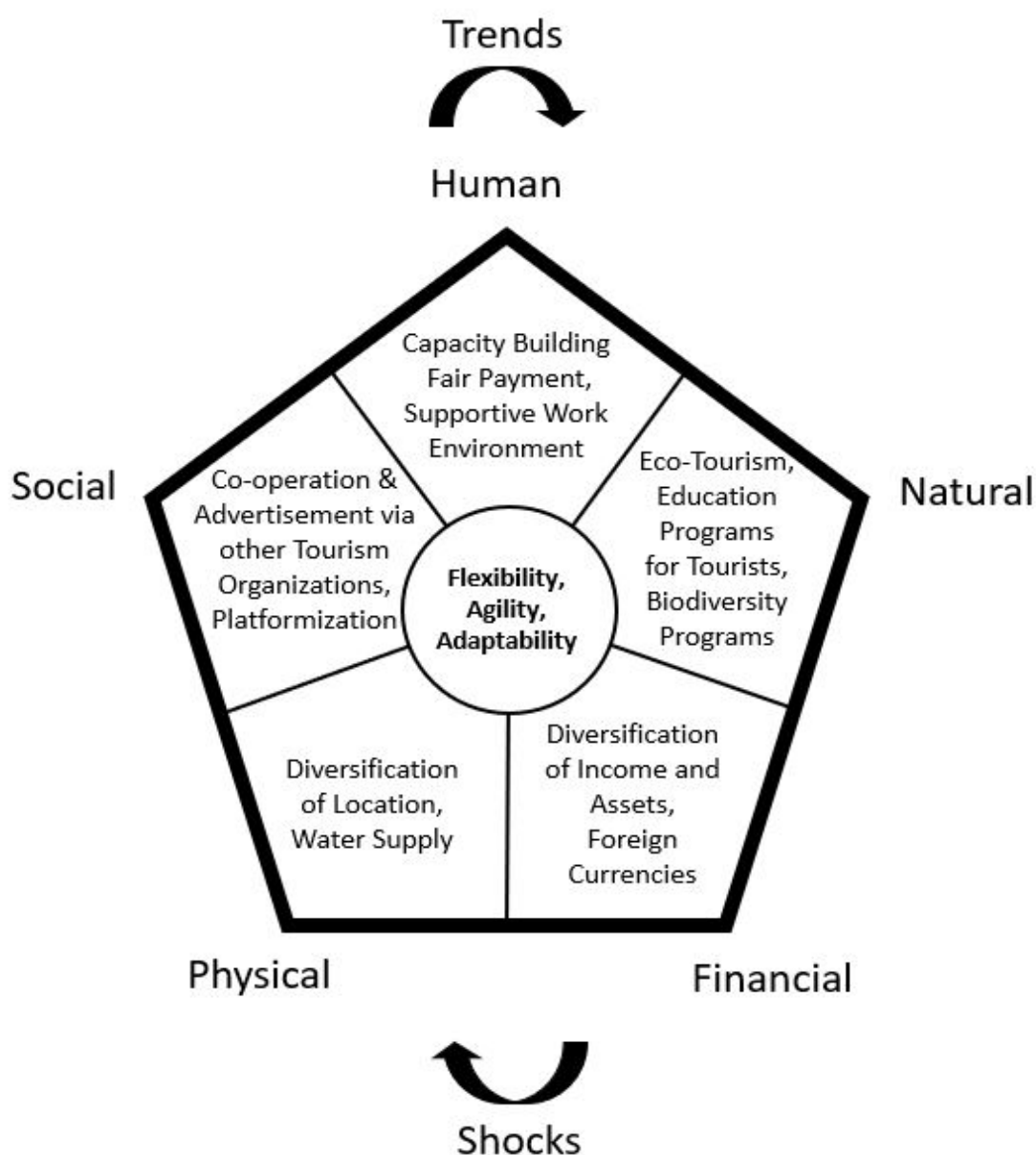

Figure 14: Actions to achieve resilient structures based on the livelihood assets on the organizational level. Source: Own representation
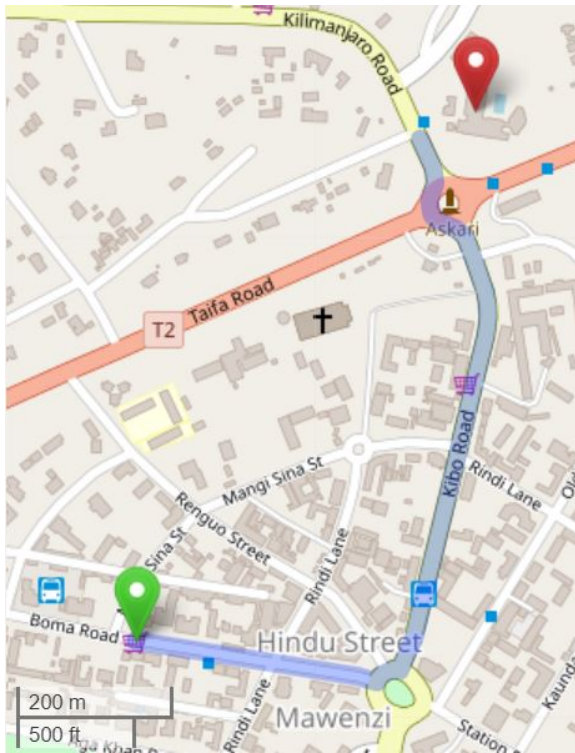
Script for the Excursion Day

Figure 15: YMCA (red) to Mauly Tours (green). Source: OpenStreetMap

1st Part: Mountain tourism in Moshi (9:00-10:30 am)

To start this day, we have a meeting with the tourism organization Mauly Tours (Figure 15). There, we will meet Samira who is going to give us an introduction about the organization itself and the development of mountain and safari tourism around Moshi in general. Additionally, current challenges will be highlighted such as sudden shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction of international tourists but also trends like the platformization with international websites and competition with other similar organizations. Platformization is the outsourcing process of information sharing and booking activities on centralized platforms like TripAdvisor or Booking.com. (Capineri and Romano 2021; Miguéns et al. 2008). Additionally, the resilience and coping strategies of the organization will be discussed.

2nd Part: Individual Time and Lunch break (10:30-12:45 am)

After the meeting with Mauly Tours, the participants will have the possibility to explore Moshi individually. For example, the market of Moshi could be one place to go. While walking through the streets of Moshi we can have a look at the different tourism organizations like Mauly Tours and their way to attract tourists. It may be interesting to see how the tourism sector is shaping the city.

3rd Part: Accommodation sector/ Lodge Tourism (1:30-3:00 pm)

After a 35-minute bus drive from Moshi (Figure 16), we will arrive at Kaliwa Lodge which is located at the foot of Kilimanjaro. The lodge has its focus on sustainability and the "work to ensure that our lodge promotes conservation of the natural and human environment in which we are located" (Kaliwa Lodge 2022). Sustainability and

Eco-Tourism are going to be central topics that we will discuss with Justina, the manager of the lodge. Beyond this, we will highlight the resilience and coping strategies to current crises and get information about the platformization process.

4ᵗʰ Part: Guided Tour (3:00-5:00 pm)

To end this day, we will take a walk or a guided Tour around the lodge. It will take one to two hours. I'm still in contact with Bianca, the owner of the lodge, and waiting for her recommendations regarding the exact destination of our tour. During this tour, we will have the opportunity to reflect on the day and share our opinions.
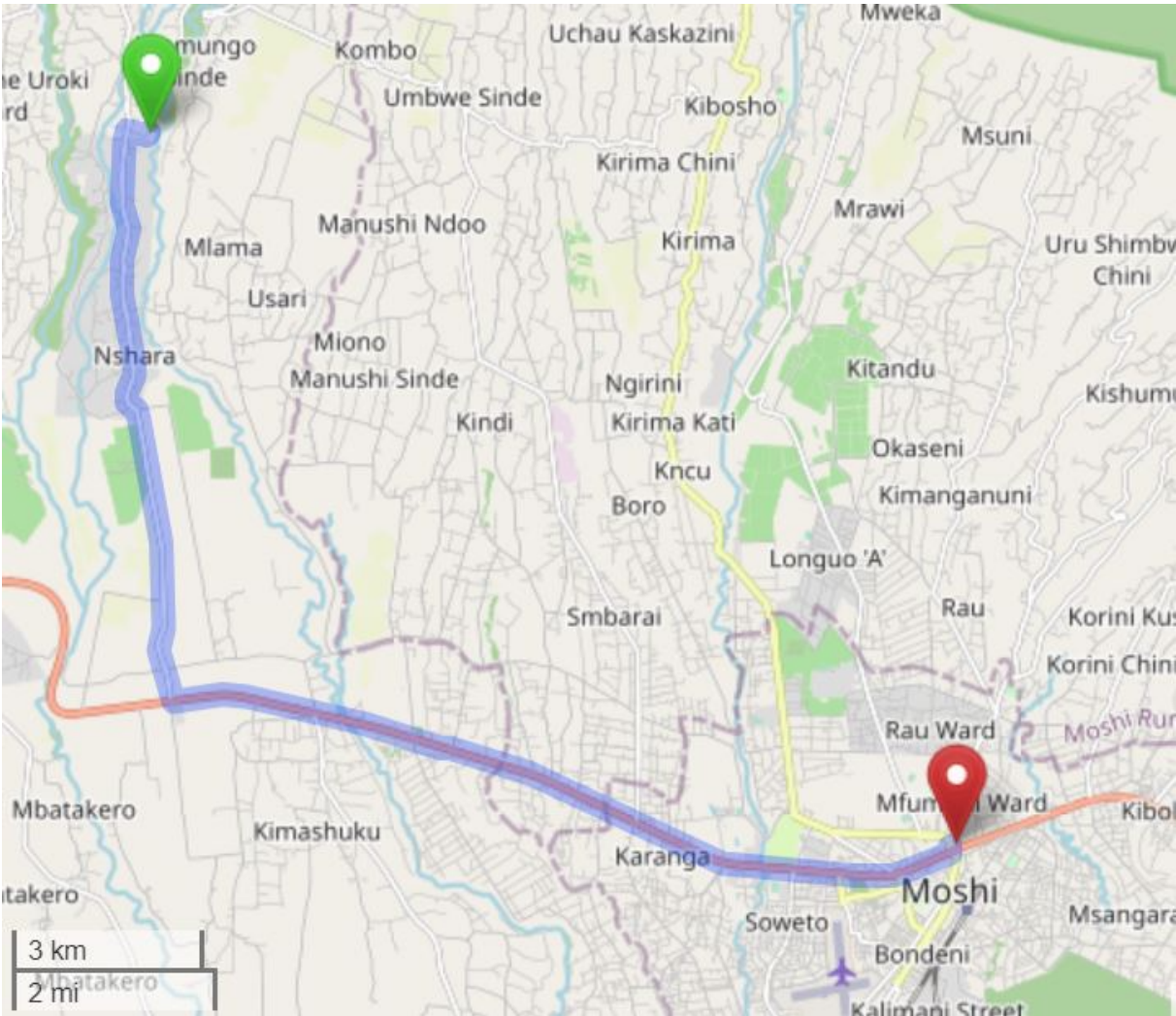

Figure 16: YMCA (red) to Kaliwa Lodge (green). Source: OpenStreetMap

Tanzania Excursion 2022

Postscript for the Day of the Excursion on:
Resilience

Summary of the Day

On the 7th of April, the group engaged with the topic of tourism and crises with a special focus on the concept of resilience in Moshi. Therefore, two organizations – Mauly Tours and Kaliwa Lodge – were visited to get more information about the impact of crises on the tourism sector and the resilience and coping strategies of the organizations themselves.

The first meeting of this day was with the organization Mauly Tours, a tourism organization focused on mountain and safari tourism. There, we met Jameel the operation officer of the family-based company. Mauly Tours is mainly interacting with international tourists, primarily Europeans. Since the organization's offers are quite expensive, Tanzanians are not the target group. Moreover, Jameel highlighted the seasonality of the arrivals of tourists. During the low season, the company focuses on issues for improvement, for example on sustainability. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic highly impacted the company regarding bookings. When the pandemic emerged, the organization tried to oversee the situation firstly and secondly, they were acting with caution and putting measurements in place. Additionally, they organized training for the guides and staff in terms of safety and hygiene. In general, also the importance of platforms like TripAdvisor was stressed since approximately 70% of the tourists are informing themselves via such platforms.

After this meeting, the group had time to explore Moshi and the tourism industry there. The task during the break was to have a look at the manifestation and visibility of tourism organizations in Moshi. Unlike my expectation, these organizations are barely visible in Moshi. Some organizations placed some inconspicuous signs **(Photo 12).** Furthermore, few individuals were advertising their services in person. We did not observe other advertisement strategies. This may be because it was low season and only a few tourists were in town.

Photo 12: Example of a sign from a tourism organization in Moshi. Source: Own Picture, 2022

Afterward, the group headed for the second meeting with Kaliwa Lodge. There we had an interview with Justina, the manager of the lodge. The lodge is hosting 98% **German tourists** since it was built and is still owned by Germans. Due to COVID-19, no tourists had arrived and therefore some staff had remained unpaid or received only half of the salary in 2020 until early April 2022. Another interesting aspect that came up during the interview was the question of ownership and land rights. Since the current owner is German, **Tanzanian shareholders** are needed to have the right to own the land. Although the website of the lodge provides much information about its approach towards sustainability, Justina only mentioned the reduction of plastics and social responsibilities since a school is supported by the lodge. Moreover, the only strategy to cope with the COVID-19 crisis was to **wait until the tourists came back.**

Photo 13: Garden of Kaliwa Lodge. Source: Own picture, 2022

From Kaliwa Lodge we had a guided walk through the region to a small river. This region is populated by the ethnic group of the Chagga. We got to know more about the local population and the plants of the region. Our guide provided me with more insights into his work as a tourist guide during COVID-19, a time when he was focusing more on his side business, growing, and selling vanilla.

Reflecting on Resilience "After the Field"

The excursion showed very clearly that the concept of resilience is an **academic concept**. The organizations we visited on the 7th of April did not know about this concept and, therefore, resilience does not play any major role in the day-to-day management. Instead of having specific resilience strategies, these organizations are trying to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic as far as possible and are waiting for the situation to improve. Besides, some measures were put in place like the provision of sanitizer at the workspace, reduction of running costs for staff and guides – layoffs or lower salaries – and training for the staff to meet new safety and hygiene requirements. Also, in terms of the climate crisis, there were no considerations for management plans, even though it may impact the tourism industry severely.

Apart from their crisis management, at least some **elements of resilience** can be observed. Particularly the approach to use **platforms** like TripAdvisor or Booking.com and other local organizations for **advertisement** can improve the resilience and the visibility of the organization (social capital). Moreover, the awareness of the importance of **sustainability** has become clear and some first measures toward a more sustainable organization have been taken in both organizations (natural capital). On the lodge website, several measurements have been highlighted, for example, energy conservation, recycling, and waste reduction (Kaliwa Lodge, 2022). Another aspect that can improve resilience is the acceptance and even preference of **foreign currencies** (financial capital). In both interviews, they were giving prizes in US dollars. Additionally, **training for the staff** can improve the resilience of the organization (human capital). However, it is still questionable if these aspects are increasing the ability to cope with crises in practice. In my opinion, achieving resilience in the tourism sector is only attainable to a limited extent, since it is highly **dependent on external factors and global connections**. To cope with these dependencies, an organization could focus more on local tourists.

During other meetings of the excursion, resilience was mentioned a few times. For example, at Tanga Fresh, the milk company visited by our group a few days later, the importance of the resilience of the farmers was highlighted. It would have been interesting to know how they understand resilience and how they apply it. Possibly, sectors other than tourism are utilizing the concept of resilience more.

Regarding the concept of resilience, the interviews of the day were not informative, providing barely any insights into the application of resilience in the tourism sector. However, it was a huge learning experience in terms of **interview situations**. In the interview situation, we did not reach the following aims:

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Creation of trust, intention to learn, phrasing of clear and simple questions, avoidance of leading or discriminatory questions, and dominating the conversation (Ouma 2022: 87).

One very important aspect of a good and insightful interview is to **build trust** between the interviewer and the interviewee (Mattissek et al. 2013: 161, 164). Without trust some information will not be shared with the interviewer and more in-depth facts, perspectives and coherence will be missed. To gain the trust of the interviewee, good preparation of the content is essential as well as presence, respect, and empathy for the interviewee (Meier Kruker and Rauh 2005: 63). In general, a positive and open atmosphere during the interview is very important. The following aspects reduced the comfort of the interview situation: lack of an open attitude, suggestive phrasing, academic terminology, and rapid sequence of questions. It is central to enter the interview with an open mind and the **intention to learn** more about the issue from the interviewee (Mattissek et al. 2013: 166). This was quite challenging for us since tourism had already been mentioned negatively in the days before. Especially in the context of coloniality and national parks, tourism was mentioned as a capitalistic mechanism. National parks are a source of tourism income but promote the loss of livelihood of indigenous people and, consequently, their eviction. We were unable to set this

impression aside and entered the interview with bias and skepticism. Our intention to get to know another perspective on tourism was lacking and therefore limiting the quality of the interview.

The group's skepticism became obvious in the way we phrased questions. On one side it was hard to leave the academic level of asking questions. The phrasing of the questions has to be not only **clear and simple** but also **adapted to the context** of the interview (Mattissek et al. 2013: 165). During our interview, the interviewees asked us several times to put questions differently. This shows how important it is to prepare not only for the topic of the interview but also for the interviewee. On the other side, **leading and suggestive questions** or even personal opinions must be avoided (ibid.). Such questions influence the interview and lead the conversation toward a specific direction. This contradicts with the objective to learn from the interviewee. Such questions can even offend the interviewee and may lead to an early termination of the interview. Suggestive questions are also a form of **domination** in the conversation and generate an unwanted hierarchy. Furthermore, domination is also created through the rapid sequence of questions. We were asking questions without any pause, taking the chance to think from the interviewee. It is very likely that he/she would have told us more about a question if we had given him/her the chance.

All in all, the mindset of the interviewer is essential for the quality of the interview. "The interviewee is always right" (Ouma 2022: 87), should be the mindset during the interview even though the interviewer has another opinion.

The interview situation is also highly influenced by the interviewee. Since every person has an individual character, it must be accepted that not everyone feels comfortable in such a situation or is willing to share information about a topic.

Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Upscaling the Topic

Researching resilience strategies in the tourism sector in Tanzania can be difficult since the scientific concept of resilience is not known and not directly applied by some companies. Nevertheless, some elements of resilience and coping strategies, before and during a crisis can be spotted. It could be very interesting to have a closer look at companies and individuals involved in mountain tourism to get to know more about their strategies. Moreover, it can be difficult to get access to the broad spectrum of service providers since not all share their services on the internet. These service providers can only be accessed during the field trip. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to be **curious and attentive**. Since the tourism sector is highly dependent on international tourists,

communication and language won't be a major difficulty.

Besides methodological challenges, there are also ethical challenges to be examined. Resilience strategies in the tourism sector in Tanzania are a topic that has the orientation to be applied in practice. Therefore, it must be considered if the study is requested by the local actors of the tourism industry and if advised strategies or improvements will be applied in practice. Furthermore, the question arises: Who is **benefiting** from research about the resilience of the tourism sector? The majority of the Tanzanians, the government and economy, or rather some individuals, who may not even be Tanzanians? For this purpose, it is important to have a **broader picture** of tourism in mind and reflect on the practices critically. It is wrong to have a look at aspects like tourism's impact on the GDP and the national or regional economy exclusively. Rather it is important to consider the impact of tourism on the local populations, the environment and macroeconomics of different sectors. But at the same time, the researcher has to enter the field without any **prejudices** to ensure this study is not influenced by his/her personal thoughts.

Moreover, the **positionality** of the researcher and the concepts applied in the study are central. Regarding the researcher of the Global North, it is important to note that he/she comes from a different context and is socialized in a different reality.

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This can significantly influence a study. Additionally, since resilience is a concept developed by an ecologist from the Global North, it is questionable whether this concept can be applied to a topic from a very different discipline in the Global South. At least it must be adapted to the context and reflected critically. All in all, the **neo-coloniality and power relations** of current practices of both the tourism sector and academic knowledge production have to be examined during the whole process of research.

Personal Reflection

In my opinion, a personal reflection of how I acted "in the field" is as important as a thematic reflection. Therefore, I would like to share some thoughts in this section. Since we were in an unfamiliar country, it would have been necessary to engage more with the context during the preparation of the trip. This became very clear in terms of language. Even simple conversations in everyday situations were sometimes challenging. At least some basics in Kiswahili would have been very helpful.

Moreover, I should have interacted more with local people apart from our meeting not only to get to know more about my topic but also to get to know the context better. Retrospectively, I missed many opportunities to get in touch with local people. This skill is very important for researchers to get a broader view. Therefore, I have to leave my comfort zone and need to get more in contact with local people.

Academically, the interview situations were very challenging for me, since I was overthinking the questions I wanted to ask. While I was thinking the interview moved on to the next topic, though. This was sometimes quite frustrating, and I need to improve my interview skills. For me, it was good to be forced into the position of leading the interviews on my day to be exposed to overcome insecurities. I believe practice and experience will help me to feel more confident in such situations.

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