Building Resilience Through Translocality:
Climate Change, Migration and Social Resilience in Rural Thailand

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Content

1. Point of departure
2. Research objectives
3. Conceptual approach
4. Methods and research sites
5. From knowledge to action
Point of departure

From climate refugees to “migration as adaptation”

- Migration as normal aspect of life, multi-causal & complex
- Migration in vulnerable livelihoods system
- Immobility, left behind & trapped population
- Feedback effects of migration (e.g. remittances)

Foresight Project Report
2011, UK
Point of departure

- Migration as key driver of global change
- Feedback effects of migration on coping/adaptation neglected in research

Global Migration Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>in million</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>international migration</td>
<td>244</td>
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<tr>
<td>domestic migration</td>
<td>740</td>
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</table>

Research objective and methods

TransRe Project

Building Resilience Through Translocality: *Climate Change, Migration & Social Resilience in Rural Thailand*

- Funded by BMBF (Nachwuchsgruppen Globaler Wandel, „Forschung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung“)
- Funding period 10/2013 – 09/2018
- Hosted by the Department of Geography, Bonn
- Main partners: Raks Thai Foundation; IPSR, Mahidol University
(1) Understand social and ecological changes induced by feedback processes of migration

(2) Focus on the effects on social resilience to environmental risks in the place of origin of migrants
Conceptual approach: Translocal resilience perspective

1. Migration as **livelihood strategy** / delocalization of rural livelihoods  
   (Rigg et al. 2012)

2. Translocal networks connect **places of origin and destination**...  
   (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013, Brickel & Datta 2011)

3. ...and have the potential to foster the **social resilience of rural communities**  
   (Sakdapolrak 2014, Scheffran et al. 2012)
Conceptual approach: Translocal resilience perspective

„[Social Resilience] is the property of a social system and its components (HH, communities, etc.) to deal with stress and perturbation or to take the opportunity to maintain and increase wellbeing, while not compromising the wellbeing of its components.“ (TransRe definition)

“Surfing the bores of opportunities while avoiding the reefs of risk.”

Social (e.g. individual, HH, community, etc.)

Spatial (e.g. local, national, global, etc.)

Temporal (e.g. weekly, seasonal, generational)
Our project in a nutshell

- Till Rockenbauch: Migration Networks & Social Resilience
- Luise Porst: Social Practices of Translocality & Internal Migration
- Sopon Naruchaikusol: Vulnerability and Resilience to Climatic Risks
- Simon A. Peth: Social Practices of Translocality & International Migration
- Kayly Ober: Governing Translocal Social Resilience
Research Methods

Household survey

Mixed Methods Approach

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Network mapping

Multi-sited ethnography
Research Data

- Empirical Data
- Panel Survey in 1086 households (2 years);
- Survey with 250 domestic migrants;
- Survey with 250 international migrants;
- 415 in-depth interviews with experts, policy makers, farmers, migrants;
- 140 network interviews;
- 65 group discussions
- Observations, photographs, field notes, ...
Research Sites

Areas of origin of migrants:

- Rural areas in Thailand
  - 4 sub-districts in N & NE Thailand
- Selection criteria:
  - Risk exposure
  - Rural Livelihoods system
  - Embeddedness in migration network
Research Sites

Areas of destination of migrants:

- Internal migration: Urban & industrial centers in Thailand
- International migration: Singapore & Germany
From knowledge to action

Guide Book

- Tools for assessment and implementation
- Tested and developed with Thai partner Raks Thai Foundation (CARE Thailand)
- Target group: NGOs and local government working with communities
- Published and officially launched with CARE International and IOM in Feb 2018
- 2018 rollout in Laos

- Migration assessment (migration influence on livelihoods)
- Adaptation strategy and migration mapping
- Financial and business planning
- Mentoring for future migrants
- ...
From knowledge to action

Scenario Planning

→ Participatory, exploratory scenario workshops in 2 sub-districts (April and Mai 2018)

→ integrating climate change adaptation and migration/demographic change in local and regional planning
Speed talks

Till Rockenbauch
Migration Networks & Social Resilience

Simon A. Peth
Social Practices of Translocality & International Migration

Kayly Ober
Governing Translocal Social Resilience

Luise Porst
Social Practices of Translocality & Internal Migration

Sopon Naruchaikusol
Vulnerability and Resilience to Climatic Risks
Rural Livelihood Vulnerability: Multiple Risks and Adaptation in the North and Northeast of Thailand

- Households with diverse & accumulated assets have a better capacity to cope and adapt to climate-related risks
- Remittances (esp. international migration) contributed to household adaptation strategy as additional source of income and investment for adaptation
- Land and land-ownership are important household assets for adaptation

Key Message
Research Questions

• Which households/communities are vulnerable to environmental risks?

• What are factors contributing to household vulnerability?

• What is the role of migration in the rural livelihoods system?

• Does migration opens paths for resilient transformation? and what are those mechanisms?
Methods

I. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques: Overview of study areas
   • Historical timeline
   • Crop and hazard calendar
   • Resource and hazard mapping
   • Vulnerability matrix

II. Semi-structured Interviews
   • In-depth information at HH level

III. GIS data
   • Investigate land use changes over the past 20 years (1994 – 2013)
Livelihood Ranking

- Northeastern Thailand (Buriram and Udonthani)

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<tr>
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- Northern Thailand (Phitsanulok and Chiangrai)

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## Risk Ranking

### Climate-related risks

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Nam Kum, Phitsanulok</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floods</td>
<td>+ +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flashfloods</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ ++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm &amp; hail</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>+ +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longer dry spell</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay of rain</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++++</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unpredictable rain</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++++</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temperature increase</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pest</td>
<td>+</td>
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*+++++ High  +++++ Rather High  +++ Medium  + + Rather Low  + Low*
## Risk Ranking

- **Climate-related risks**

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<td>+</td>
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<td>+ +</td>
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<td><strong>Temperature increase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pest</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
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</table>

**Legend:**

- +++++ High
- ++++ Rather High
- +++ Medium
- ++ Rather Low
- + Low
Livelihood and Environmental Risks

Agricultural Practices (rice)

- Post-Harvest Activity
- Burning and Tilling lands (Mar - Apr)
- Seeding / Rice Broadcasting (May - Jun)
- Transplanting
- Weeding
- Fertilising (rice booting stage)
- Harvesting (end of Oct - early Jan)

Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec
Livelihood and Environmental Risks

Agricultural Practices (rice)
- Post-Harvest Activity
- Burning and Tilling lands (Mar – Apr)
- Seeding / Rice Broadcasting (May – Jun)
- Transplanting
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- Fertilising (rice booting stage)
- Harvesting (end of Oct – early Jan)

Environmental Risks
- Delay of rain (Apr – Jun)
- Thunderstorms and hail (Apr – May)
- Long dry spell (Jul – Sep)
- Storms & floods (Sep – Oct)
- Unpredictable rain (Oct – Dec)
### Livelihood and Environmental Risks

#### Agricultural Practices (rice)
- **Post-Harvest Activity**
- **Burning and Tilting lands** (Mar – Apr)
- **Seeding / Rice Broadcasting** (May – Jun)
- **Transplanting**
- **Weeding**
- **Fertilizing (rice booting stage)**
- **Harvesting (end of Oct – early Jan)**

#### Environmental Risks
- **Delay of rain** (Apr – Jun)
- **Thundersstorm and hail** (Apr – May)
- **Long dry spell** (Jul – Sep)
- **Storms & floods** (Sep – Oct)
- **Unpredictable rain** (Oct – Dec)

#### Adaptation Strategies
- **Established a small irrigation system, pond, and pumping station**
- **Diversity farm income** (e.g., fishing, charcoal, and NTFPs)
- **Use different rice & crop varieties**
- **Observe weather and use forecast for cultivation planning**
- **Transplanting/setting period** (Jul)
- **Borrow (rice) from relatives**
- **Set up a pumping station to drain excess water**
- **Build up temporary embankment/barrir**
- **Shift a seeding period (May to July)**
- **Replanting/reseeding**

#### Financial & Labor-related strategies
- **Saving and compensation money**
- **Requested more remittances**
- **Work harder (wage labor)**
- **Diversify household income** (e.g., handicraft)
- **Family members migration**
- **Shift to new livelihood strategies**

#### Agricultural strategies
- **Switch to new crops or drought tolerant crop** (rice => cassava, sugarcane)*
- **Abandon land** (avoid drought impact)*
Conclusion

Low asset household (poor)
- Domestic migration and rely on wage labor and remittance
- No accumulate income and assets
- Coping with limited adapting capacity

High asset household (rich and average)
- Domestic and International migration
- Accumulate income and assets (e.g. additional lands, saving, agro-machinery, etc.)
- Coping, adapting (and transforming)
- Average household has limited capacity and higher debt
Speed talks

Till Rockenbauch
Migration Networks & Social Resilience

Luise Porst
Social Practices of Translocality & Internal Migration

Sopon Naruchaikusol
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Governing Translocal Social Resilience
Translocal Social Resilience?
What to learn from a social network perspective

Till Rockenbauch, University of Bonn
Translocal Network Perspective

Structural approach (SNA):

- What are patterns of translocal networks?
  - distribution
  - composition

- What are flows / how are flows channeled through translocal networks?

- How and to what extent relate translocal networks to the resilience in rural communities?
Research Framework

Social Networks

Capacity to cope

Household Support Networks
who is providing support in terms of labor, advice and finance?

Capacity to adapt

Agricultural Innovation Networks
who is providing advice on changes in agricultural crops and practices?
Fieldwork

Household Support Mapping

Farmer Advice Questionnaire
Analysis: Support Networks

Poor households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Members</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Internat.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintances</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Rich households

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>Acquaintances</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
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<td>13.9%</td>
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Ties (in % of wealth status)

Support type (in % of actor group / geography level)
- Labor
- Advice
- Finance

Importance
- moderate importance (%scores are 5% higher than %ties)
- high importance (%scores are 25% higher than %ties)
- very high importance (%scores are 50% higher than %ties)
- minor importance (%scores are 5% lower than %ties)
- low importance (%scores are 25% lower than %ties)
- very low importance (%scores are 50% lower than %ties)
Analysis: Innovation Networks

Sugarcane Network

- Translocal Weak: 5%
- Translocal Strong: 5%
- Local Weak: 10%
- Local Strong: 42%
- Formal Ties: 33%

Rice Network

- Translocal Weak: 5%
- Translocal Strong: 5%
- Local Weak: 16%
- Local Strong: 53%
- Formal Ties: 17%

Tie strength: Weak, Strong
Node size: Centrality (Degree)
Actor attributes: Institutional Representative
Analysis: Innovation Networks

Sugarcane Network

Rice Network

Tie strength:
- Weak
- Strong

Actor attributes:
- Institutional Representative
- Centrality (Degree)
Results

1. Translocal networks are not as dominant as high levels of migration and translocal connectedness would suggest
   - The majority of support and advice flows through local, informal and strong ties
   - Limited translocal ties are mostly weak and formalized

But!

2. Translocal networks do matter for household livelihoods
   - For particular types of support (advice and finance)
   - Especially for poorer households (less access but higher dependency)

3. Translocal networks can facilitate agricultural change
   - Formal top down innovation flows
   - Informal bottom-up innovation flows
     » return migrants / migration experience
     » incremental changes
Key messages

I. Translocal networks are a **limited but highly relevant** source of resilience

II. Translocal networks are a **context specific** source of resilience (institutional set-up, ability to access & maintain translocal ties)

III. A translocal network perspective is **instructive!**
   - unrevealing relevant sources of coping and adaptation
   - contextualizing migration and translocality research
Speed talks

Till Rockenbauch
Migration Networks & Social Resilience

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How do translocal practices shape social resilience of migrant households?

A case study on rural-urban migration in Thailand
Approach & questions

1. Which potentials and effects do translocal connections and multi-embeddedness of migrants and migrant households have for the social resilience of households?

2. Under which circumstances can households benefit from (migration-induced) translocal connections?

3. Under which circumstances do rural-urban migrants live and work at the place of destination and reach out to their household at the place of origin?

Conceptual framework:

- Translocal space:
  - Motivation
  - Embedding: duration, work, relation to home
  - Connections: remittances, children, parents, agric.
  - Return? y/n/temp.

- Social resilience:
  - Life events & phases
  - Practice-context:
  - Mutual support
  - Social relations, econ. & pol. context
  - Timescale
  - Exchange relations
  - Interdependencies
Methods

Connections between and embeddedness at both place of origin and destination

Translocal perspective
Results

Through multi-embeddedness

Through connectedness

How do translocal practices shape social resilience of migrant households?

Social resilience:
Capacities, risks and opportunities on multiple socio-spatial- and timescales

Embedding: duration, work, relation to home

Connections: remittances, children, parents, agriculture

Return? y/n/ temp.

Motivation

Results

How do translocal practices shape social resilience of migrant households?

Through multi-embeddedness

Through connectedness

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Through multi-embeddedness

Through connectedness

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Results

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Through multi-embeddedness

Through connectedness

Social resilience:
Capacities, risks and opportunities on multiple socio-spatial- and timescales

Embedding: duration, work, relation to home

Connections: remittances, children, parents, agriculture

Return? y/n/ temp.

Motivation

Results

How do translocal practices shape social resilience of migrant households?

Through multi-embeddedness

Through connectedness

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Results
Livelihoods of migrant households, and their social resilience, are influenced by migrants’ lives at the place of destination and by connections between the migrant and the household of origin.

Translocal connections can extend resources and capacities of households, but can also reinforce the difficulties of individual household members at the place of destination (especially if exposed to precarious working and living conditions, which is partially a reflection of the socio-economic conditions at the place of origin).

Social resilience is shaped across multiple socio-spatial levels and timescales; factors and variables on wider levels than individual- and household level need to be taken into account, including gender and class relations, socio-economic context, rural-urban interactions.
Speed talks

Till Rockenbauch
Migration Networks & Social Resilience

Luise Porst
Social Practices of Translocality & Internal Migration

Sopon Naruchaikusol
Vulnerability and Resilience to Climatic Risks

Simon A. Peth
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Kayly Ober
Governing Translocal Social Resilience
Main Research Question

How does transnational migration influence the social resilience of translocal family networks?

- **People**
  - visits, holidays, relocation
- **Remittances**
  - economic & social remittances
- **Goods**
  - e.g. food ingredients, massage balm, local specialties
- **Translocal bonds**
  - social, emotional, cultural

**PLACE A**

**PLACE B**

**family networks**

**social fields** (Bourdieu 1989)
Comparative Approach

Love & Marriage Migrants in Germany

Contract Workers in Singapore
Methods

- semi-structured interviews
- surveys
- PRA & group discussions
- photo interviews
- social media discussion
- informal talks & recalls

TransRe Survey n= 1085
Online Survey Thais in Germany n= 246

- Thailand: 38
  - Singapore: 24
  - Germany: 6

- Thailand: 7
  - Singapore: 2

Internet: 1

- Thailand: 9
  - Singapore: 16
  - Bangkok: 2
  - Hat Yai: 1
  - Germany: 2

Rural Thailand
BKK
Singapore
Germany

follow the trajectory

Bonn, 5 – 7 Sep. 2018
Results

- Economic remittances, flow more easily than social remittances
- Social remittances, have a stronger impact in social resilience; but face barriers of transfer
- **Resilience is a process / a matter of time!**
The sense of belonging is maybe the strongest driver for social resilience in context of migration.

What do we learn from the comparison between Singapore and Germany?

Social embeddedness less important then the translocational positionality in translocal family networks.

What does this means for practitioners and decision makers?

Besides working on the social integration of migrants (which is very important for their wellbeing) more efforts need to be put into the question how the transfer and use of social remittances can be fostered.
Translocal Embeddedness

Can social segregation strengthen translocal belonging?

1. Reference Point Thailand
   - Migration decisions are family decisions
   - High social expectations
   - Rural Thailand as problem-laden place: migrants keep their focus on the places of origin
   - Places of origin are important places of return (e.g., after successful or failed migration or as retirement residence)

2. Social Segregation in Singapore
   - Transnational labour migration
   - Very strict immigration system with high level of control
   - Segregation of foreign workers in dormitories
   - Life in a state of a ‘permanent temporariness’ (Swidler 2011)
   - Strong group cohesion
   - Limited social relations to host society
   - Very strong translocal connection to Thailand

3. Social Integration in Germany
   - Mostly love and marriage migration
   - Social integration (family of husband, family reunion)
   - Lower integration into the labour market (mini-jobs)
   - Different/conflicting aspirations
   - Strong social networks between Thais in Germany
   - Strong translocal connections to Thailand but also Germany

4. Conclusion
   - The simultaneous social embeddedness in both the place of origin and destination is less important for the persistence of translocal relations than the question of positionality and social role within translocal family networks.

Simon A. Peth
Department of Geography, University of Bonn

Photo 1: Thai community in Germany commemorates the poet of King Rama III (Bhumibol Adulyadej) in Cologne in 2016 (credit: S. A. Peth)

Photo 2: Thai community in Germany commemorates the poet of King Rama III (Bhumibol Adulyadej) in Cologne in 2016 (credit: S. A. Peth)

Photo 3: Thai community in Germany commemorates the poet of King Rama III (Bhumibol Adulyadej) in Cologne in 2016 (credit: S. A. Peth)
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Main questions to be explored

• What do “migration as adaptation“ policies look like?
• How have they come to be (or not be)?
• How has this idea translated through different administrative levels?
• In what ways?
What’s a policy?

“Intentional course of action followed by an institution or official for resolving an issue of public concern” (Cochran, 1990)

“Whatever [policymakers] choose to do... or not to do” (Dye, 1992)
How is it made?
How is it made?

Context

Ideas

AimBN

Institutions

Events

Actors

Networks
How is it made?
What about “migration as adaptation” policies?

International Level

• **Social practices** in everyday organizational life, including making publications and attending meetings, can **shape and perpetuate** conceptions of “migration as adaptation”

• **Bigger international organizations, with more economic, social, and symbolic capitals**, have a heavier hand in shaping migration as adaptation policies

• The **IOM**, in particular, has an outsized role

• Privileged actors have pigeonholed “migration as adaptation“ policy as **temporary and circular labor migration schemes**
What about “migration as adaptation” policies?

**National Level - Thailand**

- The **IOM** has a niche role in Thailand, and **does not have a hand** in climate change adaptation policies.
- **Past historical and development trajectories**, especially related to relationships with the West and other international organizations, including **UNDP and GIZ**, have framed current climate CCA to a larger degree.
- Therefore **no understanding or interest in migration as adaptation** as a policy concept in Thailand.
- Most CCA policymaking revolves around **budgeting codes and mainstreaming in development plans**.
What about “migration as adaptation” policies?

Local Level – Ban Dung, Udon Thani

- Climate change adaptation policy has largely not translated to the local level
- Thus, there’s little to no chance that (top-down) “migration as adaptation” policy would as well
- Local policymakers see CCA as mostly business as usual
- In this way, migration is seen as a failure or last resort
Key messages

• “Migration as adaptation” is much more in the minds of international researchers and policymakers than anywhere else
• The ability for the concept to translate and take hold is limited, and becomes even more so as it travels each administrative level
• Questions:
  • Would this change based on the strength of IOM’s relationship in other countries?
  • Is it necessary (or even desirable) to have specific “migration as adaptation” policies?
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Corner talks & Discussion