Translocal social networks as a source of resilience?
Conceptual considerations and empirical evidence from rural Northeastern Thailand.

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Outline

1. Translocal networks perspective
   *Why and what?*
2. Research concept & design
3. Empirical findings
   *Support & innovation networks*
4. Conclusions
5. Conceptual Implications
1. Translocal networks perspective

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

3. ...and have the potential to foster resilience to climate related risks.
   (Sakdapolrak 2014, Scheffran et al. 2012)

1. Migration as livelihood strategy / delocalization of rural livelihoods
   (Rigg et al. 2012)
1. What is the composition and extent of translocal networks?

2. What structure do translocal networks have and what “flows” are channeled through them?

3. How do translocal networks evolve in a temporal perspective?
2. Research concept

- **Capacity:** cope
- **Social Networks**
  - **Support Networks:** Labor, Advice, Finance
  - **Innovation Networks:** Knowledge, Information

- **Ties:**
  - Household
  - Farmer

- **Nodes:**
  - Ego-centric
  - Socio-centric

- **Perspective:**
  - Translocal perspective

*(Keck & Sakdapolrak 2013)*

*(Wasserman & Faust 1994)*
2.1 | Research design: Support networks

Household Ego-Networks (*stratified sampling*)

- Comparison between study sites
- Support types
- Tie frequency & importance
2.2 | Research design: Innovation networks

Farmer Partial Network  *(snowball sampling)*

- Case Study
- Type of change / type of advice
- Structure, tie strength & importance
3.1 | Support networks: Patterns by study site

Phitsanulok
Households: N = 21
Ties: n = 314

Udon Thani
Households: N = 28
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Buriram
Households: N = 27
Ties: n = 446

+ / - deviation from average importance
3.2 | Support networks: NW-Types by study site

**Province:**
- Udon Thani
- Phitsanulok
- Buriram

**Number of Households**
\[ N_{\text{all}} = 76 \]

- HHs in Udon Thani rely more on translocal networks (in particular for advice and finance) -> regional migration patterns
- HHs in Buriram are more reliant on local (in particular for advice and finance) -> most market oriented agriculture
3.2 | Support networks: NW-Types by land size

- HHs with small land most reliant on translocal networks (in particular for labor and advice) -> compensating for lack at local level
- But: HHs with big land most reliant on translocal financial networks -> better means of benefiting from translocal networks?

Land size:
- Small
- Medium
- Big

Number of Households
Nall = 76
3.3 | Innovation Networks: Ties & structure

Study Site (Ban Chai)

Egos: =60 (37 female)
Alters (ex. Egos): nA = 115
Ties: nT = 484

- Local ties & local importance
- Local ties & transl. Importance
- Transl. ties & local importance
- Transl. ties & transl. importance
3.4 | Innovation Networks: Who are influential actors?
3.5 | Innovation Networks: Top down vs. bottom up?
3.5 | Innovation Networks: Top down vs. bottom up?

**Sugarcane network**
Nactors = 71; Nties = 141
Strong Ties 52%; Transl Ties: 25%

**Broadcasting & cutting network**
Nactors = 70; Nties = 92
Strong Ties: 65%; Transl Ties: 20%

Translocal Ties (%): Translocal connected actors (blue) are not necessarily among the most active providers of advice.
3.5 | Innovation Networks: Top down vs. bottom up?

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Migration Experience:
Actors bringing back knowledge from migration (red) play a more pronounced role in terms of frequency and advice sharing in the broadcasting network.
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**Agricultural Income:**
Actors making their living mostly from agriculture (green) are active providers of advice in both networks.

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**Private / Public Extension**

**Big Sugarcane farmers**

**Service Provider**

**Good example**
3.5 | Innovation Networks: Top down vs. bottom up?

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**Remittances:**
Actors making their living mostly from remittances (red) are not among active providers of advice in both networks
4. Conclusions

Support Networks:
- Translocal ties account for a substantial part of households’ support networks and are perceived as particularly important
  - Advice & financial support (national - international ties)
  - Land (socioeconomic status)
  - Study site (migration history)
- But the local level is the main source of HH support

Innovation Networks:
- Information about new crops / practices is transmitted mainly by informal & strong local ties (observe & follow)
- Few central actors function as brokers linking between public extension and local networks (top-down innovation)
- Centrality / Influence is less attributed to migration related ties, but to agricultural activities and institutional roles
- Experience / knowledge of (return-)migrants as a road for bottom-up innovation (if sufficient capital and favorable local embeddedness)
5. | Conceptual Implications?

Limits of translocal resilience?

- The poorest households might not necessarily profit in the same from translocal networks as better-off households (costs of establishing & maintaining networks)
- Trade-off between migration and staying (successful/active famers are less involved in migration)
- Increasing influence of policies and market development (formalization)
- Re-localization of livelihoods / networks?

Competing capacities?

- Coping (e.g. sending money) might help preserving the status quo of livelihoods, but might prevent adaptation (e.g. changing crops / techniques)
- Is agricultural change really driven by decisions to decrease future risks (adapting) or is it rather driven by short term decisions and due to a lack of alternatives (->coping)?
Thank you for your attention!
Literature & Links

TransRe-Project:
- www.transre.org
- facebook.com/TransReProject
- @TransReProject

Literature:
- Rigg et al. (2012): Joining the Dots of Agrarian Change in Asia: A 25 Year View from Thailand.
- Scheffran et al. (2012): Migration as a contribution to resilience and innovation in climate adaptation: Social networks and co-development in Northwest Africa.
- Schönhuth et al. (2013): Visuelle Netzwerkforschung.