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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

TransRe: Building Resilience to Climate Change through Migration and Translocality

HARALD STERLY¹, PATRICK SAKDAPOLRAK²

¹*University of Bonn, Dept. of Geography, Germany*

²*University of Vienna, Geography and Regional Research, Austria*

Abstract

The paper presents an overview of the TransRe project and its findings of the first project phase. The project explores the contribution of migration and translocal linkages to improved household and community resilience in rural Thailand. It takes the perspective that migration already is and will continue to be a major phenomenon as well as a driver of global change, and that through migration a multitude of translocal practices and networks are induced. Migration can thus lead to profound changes in a place's demography – and the often mentioned brain and labour drain – but is also connecting people, facilitating flows of knowledge and resources, and creating networked and interconnected translocal spaces. This intensifying translocal connectedness, the paper argues, has the potential to increase the ability of households and communities to respond to risks and to enhance their livelihoods and well-being – that is, their social resilience. The project focuses especially on climate and climate change related risks that smallholder farmers face in rural Thailand.

The research design follows place-based as well as multi-sited fieldwork approaches and seeks to generate empirical evidence based on case studies carried out in Thailand and in the places of destination of migrants, urban places in Thailand as well as international destinations such as Singapore or Germany.

The paper addresses findings in four interconnected fields: first of translocal networks of support and innovation, second of the related practices of migrants and the connected non-migrants in the places of origin and destination, third the changes in household and community resilience in the three dimensions of coping, adaptation and transformation, and fourth the governance of the nexus of climate change adaptation and migration.

Keywords: Climate change, resilience, smallholder farmers, Thailand, translocality