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Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Diplomarbeit selbstständig verfasst, andere als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel nicht benutzt und mich auch sonst keiner unerlaubter Hilfe bedient habe, dass ich dieses Diplomarbeitsthema bisher weder im In- noch im Ausland in irgendeiner Form als Prüfungsarbeit vorgelegt habe und dass diese Arbeit mit der vom Begutachter beurteilten Arbeit vollständig übereinstimmt.

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Abbreviations and Glossary

HH Household

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

THB Thai Baht, the national currency of the Kingdom of Thailand¹

TAO *Tambon* (subdistrict) Administration Organisation

Baan Chang Thai term for touristic elephant camps

Farang Thai term for Western foreigners

Kwan Chang Thai term for a Mahout, the keeper and caretaker of an elephant

Por Luang Thai for ‘village head’

Rai Thai term for ‘mountain field’ and farming in general; also used as an agricultural measuring unit (1 rai= 1,600 m²)

¹ During the research period 1 Euro equaled around 34 Baht

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1 Introduction

Insight 1: R., an in-migrant to the village, proudly shows me his coffee trees. He stopped working in Bangkok a few years ago and recently started a coffee community enterprise in the village. While he does come from a family of coffee-growers in a neighbouring province, he explains that the “*knowledge and experience of going away*” gave him the “*confidence to start new things in the community.*” (EX-IN 9). He wants to establish organic coffee as an alternative crop in a village where most households grow maize, a crop he associates with negative environmental impacts.

Insight 2: N. arrives in the village on a Friday afternoon with his white pick-up truck. While he has been living in the city of Chiang Mai for over ten years, he visits his home village very regularly. The reason is not only his parents and wider family that live here, but also the organic fruit orchard he started to cultivate on the family farm a few years ago. He got the idea to practice this kind of agroforestry from his workplace, a university in the city. He wants to see this project through in his home community and motivate others to follow the idea: “*People in the village need an example. I know they will start if I set a good example.*” (HH-IN 16)

While migration has been widely accepted as a *livelihood-strategy* to deal with risk and uncertainty, the insights depicted above from a remote Karen village in Northern Thailand illustrate that there is more to it: migrants can also be a force of change in their places of origin, impacting local life and livelihoods as they transfer ‘so much more than money’ (Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou, 2017) to their home communities.

The current ‘age of migration’ (Castles, Haas and Miller, 2014) is characterized by the flows of people, goods, money, ideas and cultural products in a globalised world. The intensification and growing importance of mobility is reflected by the emergence of a ‘new mobilities’ paradigm leading to a ‘mobility turn’ in social sciences and human geography (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Human mobility is the focal point of this shift, while the increasing acceleration, globalisation and differentiation of migration phenomena is at the same time an expression of its dynamic (Castles, Haas and Miller, 2014). Migration processes intensify the interrelation of people and places across various distances and create new translocal spaces (Verne, 2012, p. 212), which allow for the exchange of resources, knowledge, ideas and identities (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Like in other parts of the world, the increasing levels of human mobility over the last five decades are seen as the most fundamental form of societal change in Southeast Asia too (Kelly, 2011). Thailand experiences widespread internal and international migration, which shows to have various impacts on society, development, economy and culture in the kingdom (UNTWG, 2019).

The study carried out in the frame of this thesis is embedded in the interdisciplinary theme complex of migration and development. It aims to take a translocal perspective to investigate the impact of social remittances on rural livelihood change. Translocality investigates how the everyday lives of

people at different places are interconnected and how these places are impacted by the translocal connections. The translocal practice of exchanging financial and social remittances is a central mechanism of translocality. Social remittances are migration-driven forms of cultural change that can impact societies on a local scale (Levitt, 1998). Furthermore, the alter development contexts by creating new possibilities but also challenges (Zoomers, Westen and Terlouw, 2011). By transferring and utilizing incorporated and intangible social remittances (Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019), migrants become ‘agents of change’ (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017), profoundly effecting their (rural) communities and places of origin. Social remittances are therefore ranked among the forces that propel rural livelihood change in the global south (Rigg, 2006). The process of ‘socially remitting’ is embedded in contextual factors and the impact on rural livelihoods varies according to different features and barriers (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017; Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019).

The process and impact of social remittances on rural livelihood change will be investigated with a case study, conducted in a rural ethnic Karen village in Northern Thailand. The emphasis of the analysis are the day-to-day dimensions of translocality in the village, the object of research being the households in the study area. The daily environment of this only seemingly immobile, place-bound group of actors (see Rau, 2012) is strongly influenced by the migration phenomenon and translocal practices among their household (or family) members. Accordingly, their day-to-day livelihoods and livelihood activities are also characterized by translocal mobilities.

The main research question of this thesis is built around these aspects:

MQ: What impacts do social remittances have on local rural livelihood change in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities?

Along with six corresponding sub-questions, the study aims to analyse the thematic of translocality and social remittances in the study area on a wider scope. The central hypothesis of this thesis implies that the translocal practice of social remittances has impacts on the change of local rural livelihoods, resulting in a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities.

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. Following this introduction, chapter 2 presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of translocality and social remittances which are the basis of this study. It develops an analytical framework for the empirical case study context and refines further research questions at the end. The methodology used to conduct this study is set out in chapter 3. Chapter 4 gives a brief overview over the context of rural change and migration in Thailand. In chapter 5, the case study analyzes the impact of social remittances in rural livelihood change in the study area and lays out the empirical findings according to the research questions. Chapter 6 is an in-depth discussion of the findings, also in respect to the state of the scientific research. The thesis is concluded with a short summary of the initial question and final thoughts.

2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The following section presents the theoretical and conceptual scope this thesis is based on. Firstly, the translocal perspective for this research work will be laid out and conceptualized. Secondly, the research term of social remittances will be introduced, as they are the fundamental interest of this empirical study. The process of social remittances will be explained and their impact in regard to livelihood diversification, transformation and change will be discussed as well as the notion of *rural livelihoods* to contextualize the research interest for the following field study in rural North-Thailand. The conceptual and theoretical framework will be concluded by the operationalisation of the previous expositions, which will lay out the analytical framework and research questions that underlie this case study.

2.1 The Translocal Perspective

Translocality has gained momentum as an interdisciplinary perspective in different fields of research in the past two decades (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 3; Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 373). The following section aims to outline the translocal perspective that underlies this study. To do so, conceptual parallels and differences between the fairly new approach of translocality and the established research tradition of transnationalism will be summarized. After presenting the main aspects of translocality, the approach will be conceptualized for the ensuing empirical study.

2.1.1 Translocality and Transnationalism

While the term ‘translocal’ has been used in varying contexts and notions among different “research fronts” (Verne, 2012, p. 15), it emerged from works on transnationalism when analysing “phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation and spatial interconnectedness” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 373). It is an interdisciplinary concept that is applied across the spectrum of social and human sciences such as geography (see Brickell & Datta, 2011b; Reif, 2017; Stenbacka, 2012; Verne, 2012), anthropology (see Appadurai, 1996; Marion, 2005; Núñez-Madrado, 2007; Greiner, 2010), sociology (see Rescher, 2010), area studies (Oakes and Schein, 2006b; see Freitag and Oppen, 2010b), cultural studies (see Bennett and Peterson, 2004) and development studies (see Zoomers and van Westen, 2011). Because the concept of translocality takes its departure from transnationalism (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 7), an approach in migration theory, it is necessary to draw out the fundamental ideas but also limitations of this research tradition.

While ‘transnationalism’ had firstly been used to indicate the extensive relations of international organisations and non-governmental organisations, which seemingly operate on a level above and independent of national territories (Verne, 2012, p. 16), it gained widespread popularity as a

concept to analyse international migration, due to the unsatisfaction of scholars with the established explanatory approaches of migration (Reif, 2017, p. 16). While migration studies had been dominated by economic, neoclassical theories such as the push-and-pull-model (see Lee, 1966) until the 1990s, many authors argued for new paradigms to understand phenomena of migration, which grew in their complexity, processes and dynamics (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, p. 11). The ‘age of migration’ (Castles, Haas and Miller, 2014), called for new theories to gain a more profound understanding of migration (see Massey *et al.*, 1999). The concept of ‘transnationalism’ regarding migration was established through the anthropologists Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton and their works in the 1990s. They conceptualized transnationalism as the process, in which international migrants create new social spaces through social relations and practices between their country of origin and their country of migration (see Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992, 1995). Erected and preserved through multiple social contacts over national borders, these transnational social spaces dissociate from being spatially bound to territories (Pries, 2010, p. 22). This transnational perspective created an analytical framework that tried to overcome the notion of container spaces and focus on the social practices and relations of migrants across borders (Reif, 2017, p. 17). It opted for a “networked understanding of migration as a flow of people, motivated by a multiplicity of factors and embedded in a network of social relations and institutions” (Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou, 2017, p. 2802) and concluded that migration cannot be comprehended by solely looking at the country of origin or destination itself, but that attention must be given to the context and the spaces between the “origin” and “destination” (Ibid.).

A shift of focus deemed necessary because the inherent phenomenon of cross-border social relations are ever-changing in their quality, frequency and density due to the ongoing progress in communication and transport technologies in recent times (Pries, 2010, p. 11). Also, the life of a person or a household isn’t restricted to one specific location anymore but rather simultaneously embedded in distant (national) localities (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2008, pp. 312–313). Transnationalism can be seen as a way to examine this simultaneity and an attempt to overcome the restraints of methodological nationalism in social sciences (see Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). In contrast, critique emerged over the usage of the term in a diffuse and too universal manner (see Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2008) and about the fact that transnationalism can’t overcome the ‘national’ notion “of the world as formed and ordered by a static framework of clearly distinguishable scales” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 374). The shift towards a more ‘rooted’ or ‘grounded’ transnationalism, which acknowledged the importance of local-to-local connections and the social agencies of migrants, shaped the trajectory of translocality (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 9) – it became the face of ‘transnationalism from below’ (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998).

2.1.2 Definitions and Aspects of Translocality

Definitions of the terms ‘translocality’ and ‘translocal’ vary among authors and disciplines. As an emerging and highly interdisciplinary concept, translocality is approached in more conceptual coherent ways when synthesised with social theory (e.g. Giddens) (see Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2012) but also in a more general notion (see Ma, 2002) to explain mobilities and spatial connectedness (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 375). This work follows the conclusion Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013, p. 376) drew after reviewing various works:

“translocality [is used] to capture complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented and multi-dimensional understanding [...] translocal perspective[s] seek to integrate notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand with notions of fixity, groundedness and situatedness in particular settings on the other.”

As an interdisciplinary research perspective, Freitag and Oppen (2010a, pp. 5–6) summarized:

“[translocality] aims to highlighting the fact that the interactions and connection between places, institutions, actors and concepts have far more diverse, and often contradictory effects than is commonly assumed. [...] [translocality] proposes a more open and less linear view on the manifold ways in which the global world is constituted: through the transgression of boundaries between spaces of very different scale and type as well as through the (re-) creation of ‘local’ distinctions between those spaces.”

Despite the parallels that connect translocality and transnationalism, the concept bears new aspects as “an approach in its own right” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 380) that are crucial for this empirical study and therefore will be outlined in this section.

Firstly, the analytical focus of translocality on socio-spatial processes between different locales on various scales and beyond the administrative borders of nation states transgresses the ‘transnational’ limitations and opens up to other phenomena of mobility and movement such as internal migration and (ir-)regular commuting between rural and urban spaces (see Hedberg and do Carmo, 2012). The significance of internal migration phenomena, not only when looking at the numbers of people involved², has been falling short due to the focus on international movement in transnational studies. The fact that socio-economic inequalities and spatially uneven development, which are regarded as major drivers for international migration, are very much evident not just between but also within nations (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 374). While these internal mobilities are rather translocal than transnational, these migrants “also move across different places and take a range of decisions around moving”, but still fell out of the transnational focus

² The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated in 2009 that around 740 million people worldwide are internal migrants, while 214 million people migrate internationally (UNDP, 2009, p. 21), although this number was admittedly “conservative” (UNDP, 2009, p. 1). Also, internal migration data has to be taken with caution because “the search for a meaningful and consistent definition of an internal migrant is largely illusory” (Skeldon, 2017, p. 4). Still, this estimate accomplishes to demonstrate the worldwide significance of internal migration.

and were categorised as rural-urban or regional migration within the discipline of development geography (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 10).

Secondly, translocality, includes non-migrants and “left-behinds” and opens up new perspectives of these apparently ‘fixated’ phenomena (Reif, 2017, p. 19). The daily realities of this only seemingly immobile, place-bound group of actors (see Rau, 2012) are very much influenced by the migration phenomenon among their household (or family) members and therefore their day-to-day world is also characterized by mobilities (Hedberg and do Carmo, 2012, p. 3). Migrants and non-migrants at different places are equally embedded in translocal spaces, consequently spatial mobility is not an external feature but a locally embedded process. Through the newly established connections of migrants in new places on the one hand and remaining connections to people at the place of origin on the other, “*fixity* in a place is part of mobility.” (Ibid.).

Thirdly, a “place-based perspective on mobility” (Oakes and Schein, 2006a, p. 20), is endorsed in translocal research, while aspects of local-to-local relations were often overlooked in the debates of transnationalism (Reif, 2017, p. 18). Translocality emphasizes on the local contexts and locales that social groups and actors are situated in because translocal migrants and their activities are despite their mobilities not “exclusively mobile, uprooted or ‘travelling’” (Oakes and Schein, 2006a, p. 20), but simultaneously ‘grounded’ across various locales which create “overlapping place-time(s) in migrants everyday lives.” (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 4). Following Smith and Guarnizo (1998, p. 11), their practices are not in-between places but rather “situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times” which justifies the focus of translocal studies on “different kinds local-local journeys” (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 4).

Lastly, a central aspect of translocality is the attention on “mobilities beyond human migration” such as the “flows of ideas, symbols, knowledge” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 380) and resources. The local development context of a specific place, is very much “determined by *translocal* relations” (Zoomers, Westen and Terlouw, 2011, p. 491), in the sense that what happens in one place is largely dependent on the activities in other places, although the relations between the locales may not be apparent straightaway (Ibid.). Furthermore, considering the local networks and dynamics people are embedded in helps to understand local development and livelihood opportunities because translocal networks and connections “are as much an outcome of as a precondition for translocal practices” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 377). This translocal connectedness bears new chances but also problems for the security of local livelihoods (Reif, 2017, p. 18). Therefore, a translocal perspective also gives attention to the materialisation of mobilities and their transformative agency on places. As a consequence, translocal, scale-

transcending practices often engrave in the physical space through “land-use patterns, agricultural practices or built environments.” (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 377)

2.2 Conceptualization of Translocality

The following section aims to conceptualize the aspects of translocality for the empirical study. It follows the conception Reif (2017, pp. 19–22) drafted for the empirical field study of translocality as an aspect of social resilience. In this conceptualization, the understanding of space in translocality is sketched out and translocal practices are formulated as the foundation of translocal connectedness and relations. Then, the central unit of analysis and point of departure, the translocal household, is further explained.

2.2.1 The Translocal Space

This work enters the translocal perspective through the field of human geography, therefore it is important to discuss the geographical concepts of space and spatiality that are the basis of a translocal approach in this field of study.

The understanding of space in this thesis follows the works of human geographer Doreen Massey, who established that “the spatial is socially constituted” (1992, p. 80). By that she implies that space is not an absolute but a relational dimension, created as a product “of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global.” (Ibid.) This relational aspect does not imply that space is solely the product of these social interactions, but rather that temporality and spatiality structure the nature of these social relations themselves (1992, p. 79). The simultaneity of these social relations at different places makes them specifically spatial and constitutes space as *dynamic*, because the social relations and interactions between objects that create the spatial are dynamic by their very nature (1992, p. 81). Here, Massey breaks with the often implicitly *static* notion of space just moving through time and conceptualizes spatiality and temporality in a correlation where “space is not static, nor time spaceless.” (1992, pp. 79–80). This dynamic understanding of space also constitutes that space is always in the process of being made and never finished or closed (Massey, 2005, p. 9) and has to be understood as a fluid, relational social space.

In our globalizing world, the postulation of space as a relational dimension that overcomes spatiotemporal borders leads to further investigations of the ‘local’ within the ‘global’. As Reif (2017, pp. 19–20) mentions, different notions established across academia such as “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1990, p. vii), “global village” (McLuhan and Powers, 1989), “glocalisation” (Robertson, 1994) “space of flows” (Castells, 2010), “global flows” and “postnational locations” (Appadurai, 1996) attest these intensive examinations of locality in the

context of globalization and concepts of space-place in social sciences and human geography - subsumed by Massey in the call for a “a global sense of the local” (1994, p. 156). In the “ever-more interconnected world” (Hannerz, 1996, p. i) the intensity of global connections has increased to a state of ‘deep integration’, which made the boundaries between places and of places themselves very ‘porous’ (Castree, 2009, p. 161). Processes of translocalisation reduce the distance between places and interlinks them in interdependencies, because “what happens *then* and *there* can have sharp consequences in the *here* and *now*.” (Ibid.). Still, these locales remain *unique* for themselves in the sense that they are different but also share similarities in an interdependent world (Ibid.), rather than becoming homogenized or delocalized, as some authors propose (Castree, 2009, p. 154). Because places create themselves and their specific identity through interactions with and in counter positions to ‘outside’ spaces (Massey, 1994, p. 169), the increasement of translocal connections equals to intensified social place-making (Oakes and Schein, 2006a, p. 21). In regard to scales, Brickell and Data (2011a) situate the ‘local’ across different scales of movement such as “regional, national, rural, urban, neighbourhood, homes and bodies” (p. 11). This allows and invites for a multi-dimensional analysis of translocality that incorporates phenomena on different sites and scales simultaneously (p. 19).

In conclusion, translocal spaces are highly ‘fluid’, because they are characterized by mobilities and their dynamics as well as multilocal influences through their extensive interrelationships (Reif, 2017, p. 20). A translocal understanding of space connects this ‘fluidity’ with local embeddedness to mediate between the global and the local (Ibid.) and allows for a “progressive sense of place” that relates to our “current local-global times” (Massey, 1994, pp. 151–152).

2.2.2 The Translocal Practice of Remittances

This section constitutes translocal practices as the basis of translocal interrelationships by building on the argument from the previous section: translocal spaces are the result of social interactions and practices. Actions such as visits, communication through different (and increasingly digital) channels, transfers of money but also the return of migrants, are therefore seen as the founding element of translocal spaces (Reif, 2017, pp. 20–21), which is why authors propose an action-oriented research of translocal spaces (Brickell and Datta, 2011a, p. 17). A significant amount of these multiple social interrelationships is constituted through the translocal practice of exchange and transfer (Cohen, 2011, p. 107), also labelled as ‘remittances’. The differences between international and internal migration play a role in the sense of type and amount of remittances (Garip, 2014, p. 675), but both types of migration can be equally treated in analysis (see King and Skeldon, 2010). Thus, remittances as a social practice closely connect with all forms of migration in all parts of the world.

The most obvious forms of remittances are private transfers of financial capital to and from internally and internationally migrating household members (see e.g. Garip, 2014). The effects of financial remittances play a crucial role in different studies related to the migration-development nexus (Sørensen, 2004; see e.g. de Haas, 2007; Page and Mercer, 2012). This has to do with their high economic impact and relevancy on a global level, especially for developing countries³. In recent global policy debates, international organisations acknowledged their importance by including the regulation of remittance transfer cost to their agendas⁴.

Apart from money, migrants also export and import “ideas and behaviours back to their sending communities” (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011, p. 3) as ‘social remittances’. They are defined as norms, practices, identities and social capital, that circulate between translocal spaces (see Levitt, 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Social remittances tend to be overlooked and paid less attention to when studying the phenomenon of remittances, although the research interest on social remittances increased in social sciences in the past decade (see e.g. Suksomboon, 2008; Boccagni and Decimo, 2013; Vianello, 2013; Vlase, 2013; Bobova, 2016; Lacroix, Levitt and Vari-Lavoisier, 2016; Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou, 2017). Peth and Sakdapolrak (2019, p. 2) propose for financial and social remittances to be seen as “equally integrated into a broader range of socio-cultural settings”. As shown in Figure 1 (next page), they argue that studying financial remittances solely is inadequate, because social remittances are significant for the usage of financial remittances and their effect in changing or transforming livelihoods. While they can be an important asset for implementation, change and transformation can *only* come through the transfer of new ideas, knowledges and practices. By addressing the conceptual challenge to distinguish the influence of social remittances “from other impacts of globalization, such as digitization which also promotes the transfer of knowledge, ideas, information and social capital” (2019, p. 4), the authors acknowledge the digital zeitgeist and complexity of our current times. The concept of social remittances, their process and effects are a main focus of the case study and will be further elaborated in chapter 2.3 of this thesis.

³ The World Bank estimated that in 2015, worldwide remittance transfers were as high as 601 billion US-Dollars. Nearly 75% of these financial remittances, worth 441 billions of US-Dollars, were sent back by migrants to developing countries. This number equals “three times the volume of official aid flows”. In about 25 developing countries, these cash transfers constitute more than 10% of the gross domestic product (GDP). It is also noteworthy that the real amount of remittances is believed to be significantly larger, as these estimates fail to include unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels (World Bank Group, 2016, p. xii).

⁴ In 2015 the United Nations (UN) released the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030, which addressed the high costs of remittance transfer within “Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries” with “Target 10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%” (United Nations, 2015, p. 24). In 2018, the UN addressed remittance transfer again in their Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration within “Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants” (United Nations, 2018, p. 6)

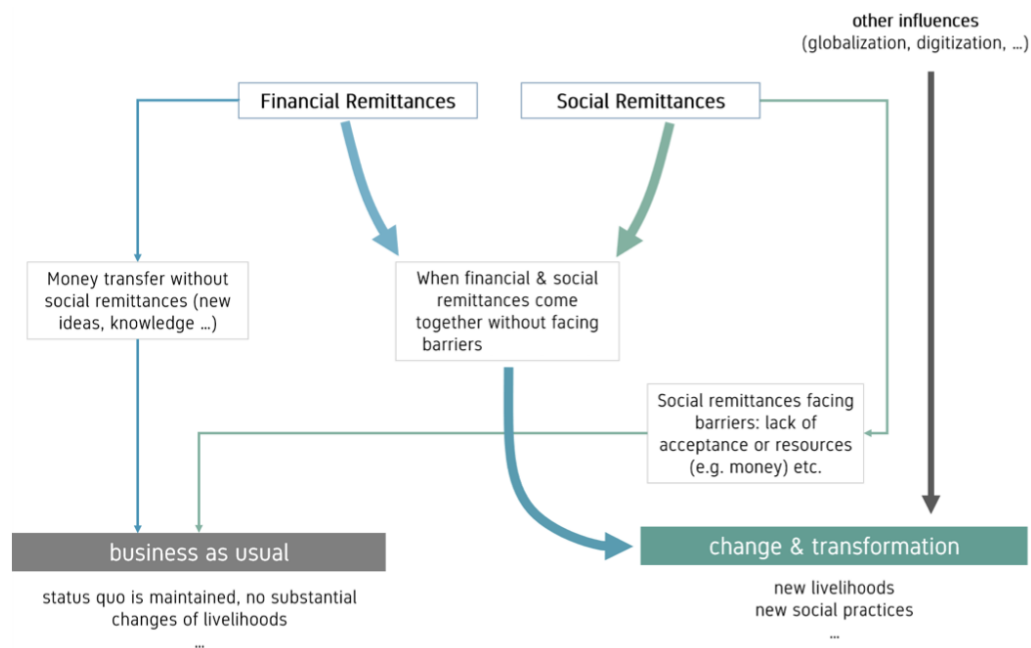


Figure 1: Integrated view of financial and social remittances. Source: Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 3.

The exchange and the mobilization of remittances becomes embedded in local everyday lives when translocal social ties become established, they are a result of translocal practices but also a requirement to make them even possible (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 377). Reif (2017) explains this factor with an example: if a work migrant was to send part of his/her wage to his/her parents, who reside in his/her country of origin, translocal social relationships have to exist, e.g. through family ties. If the social relationship between the migrant and his/her family intensifies, the translocal connection is reproduced and strengthened as well (p. 22).

2.2.3 The Translocal Household

To investigate translocality from an actor-oriented perspective, authors see the micro-level of the individual and its networks, where translocal practices of exchange are usually individually initiated and realised, as a suitable starting point for investigation (Strasser, 2009, p. 81). The household, with its individual members and their complex networks of relationships, is therefore an appropriate empirical point of entry and departure for this local case study.

The notion of the ‘household’ itself bears some discussion in social sciences. To define the ‘household’ as a universal analytical category as the smallest socio-economic organizational unit and clearly distinguishable subcategory of ‘population’, researchers mostly used the co-residency as the main criteria to differentiate ‘household’ from ‘family’ (Steinbrink, 2009, pp. 46–47). Following this definition, everybody who shares a building as their place of residency, is a member of the household, therefore also non-family members can be household members and vice versa. A main point of critique towards this definition is that relationships of exchange are not limited to the four walls of a building but can also happen beyond this border. Anthropologist Wilk

elucidated on this discussion that “the difficulty in finding a cross-cultural identifying criterion hints at the nature of the problem and the best solution. While in every society a household like group or thing can be found, in each place it performs unique mixes of activities and functions.” (cited from Steinbrink, 2009, p. 47).

For this empirical study, the household will be spatially translocalised and “defined as multi-spatial, combining farm and non-farm activities and rural and urban residence.” (Tacoli, 1998, p. 149) It can therefore be seen as a “community enacting ‘household’ in a specific socio-cultural accepted context” (Steinbrink, 2009, p. 48).

2.3 Social Remittances – Flows beyond Money

This section aims to illustrate the research term of *social remittances* further and define and conceptualise it for the following empirical study. This is deemed necessary because while the term has been increasingly used in recent migration studies “*by the way*” (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 13), the lack of theoretical refinements (Boccagni and Decimo, 2013, p. 1) can make the concept hard to grasp theoretically and apply empirically. Therefore, a recent conceptualisation of the social remittances process will be laid out and explained. Additionally, the *impact* of social remittances on (rural) livelihoods that has been found in empirical studies so far will be presented.

2.3.1 Concept of Social Remittances

The notion of *social remittances* goes back to sociologist Peggy Levitt, who coined and revisited the term in her transnational studies between the Dominican Republic and the United States to define the cultural diffusion of ideas, values, beliefs, norms, practices, aspirations and social capital that emerges through transnational migration (see Levitt, 1998, 2001; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). She established three main categories of social remittances: normative structures (ideas, values, beliefs and norms such as behaviour in the family and the community), systems of practice (actions shaped by normative structures such as organisational practices or practices of participation) and social capital (based on values and norms which facilitate the circulation of them). Levitt (1998, p. 944) also notes that social remittances are not solely ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ in their impact, but rather that they can affect locales in a multitude of ways, which are interpreted differently by different stakeholders. Therefore, there is no guarantee on how experiences and knowledge gained in places of destination will affect places of origin and vice versa.

Within migration theories, social remittances can be described as “migration-driven forms of cultural change” (de Haas, 2010, p. 1595) which entails that migration can influence identity formation, norms, values and behaviours in migration-sending communities through the confrontations with other norms and practices, even more so when migration is associated with

social and material attainment (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 14). Scholars see this development as a part of the “culture of migration” (see Cohen and Sirkeci, 2011) which transforms the behaviour and the systems of norms and values on both sides of the migration spectrum.

2.3.2 Conceptualisation of Social Remittances for Empirical Studies

Further theoretical conceptualisations of social remittances have been made by Grabowska *et al.* (2017, pp. 17–34) to investigate migrants as agents of social change in an enlarged European Union. They define the stages of ‘social remitting’ as *acquisition*, *transfer* and *outcome (impact)*. Regarding the *content* of social remittances, they disentangle from the categories established by Levitt (1998) (normative structures, systems of practice, social capital) into three operationalizable items (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, pp. 21–22): (1) *objects*, which are material items that can gain social meaning throughout migration, (2) *ideas*, which are unconsciously acquired “nodes of conceptual thoughts” (Ibid.) that can lead to an activity plan or problem-solving”; (3) *practices*, which are “a style of acting connected to the internalisation of the external world” (Ibid.); they depend on active and passive cognitive experiences and are, referring to Bourdieu, relations between habitus (style of acting, thinking, being, feeling) and current conditions.

Peth and Sakdapolrak (2019, pp. 4–5) follow this conceptualization for their study on the social remittances of return labour migrants in rural Thailand and split the *contents* of social remittances in two categories, according to their different transfer and assessment:

- *intangible social remittances*, “which include information, reflections on norms and values, different viewpoints, ways of doing and generally new ideas”, that are acquired during migration.
- *incorporated social remittances*, which are more graspable and “include new skills and personal knowledge”. They are incorporated know-how or concrete innovations and can therefore be used in practice and transferred upon return or further migration.

Also, they incorporate the translocal perspective and embed the whole process of social remitting in this setting. Figure 2 (next page) shows the conceptual model of the transfer of social remittances that stems from this modification. Due to its development on and reference to empirical background, the thesis will follow this model. Additionally, the refinements made by Peth and Sakdapolrak (2019) refer to a study context that is similar to the one that underlies the empirical study of this thesis. Therefore, the components of the model will be further elaborated in the following chapters.

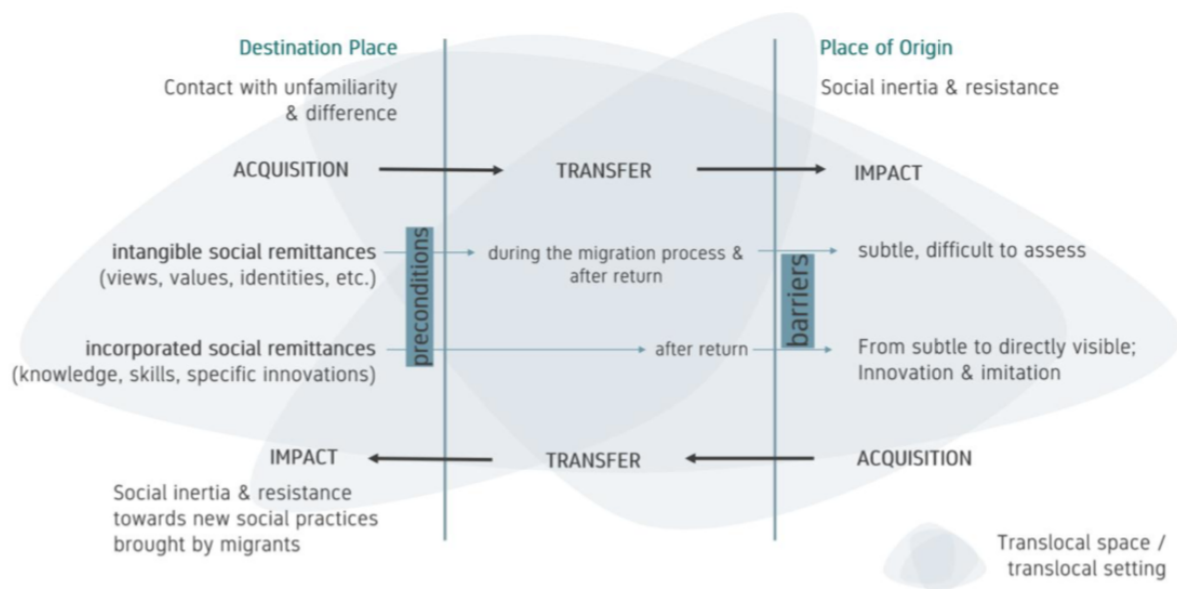


Figure 2: Conceptual model of the process of social remittances. Source: Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 3.

2.4 Process of Social Remittances

The perception of ‘social remitting’ as diffusion processes of *imitation* and *innovation* underlie the whole conceptualisation. Therefore, the ‘rules’ of these processes will be explained in this section.

The notion of *imitation* entails that change can only happen through the stimulation of inventions that “diffuse through the process of imitation” (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 17). People can therefore imitate everything that can be transferred from one person to the other such as beliefs, motives, aspirations etc. and the more people interact, the more likely it is that innovations appear that can facilitate the adaption to changing environments (Ibid.). Based on Tarde (1903), there are three basic rules of *imitation*: firstly, imitation starts with an individual who sets actions, which is followed by cognition by others and results in the effect of imitation; secondly, innovations made by socially legitimated people (superiors) are more likely to be imitated than those by non-legitimated (inferiors); thirdly, innovations regarding contemporary pressing social issues are more probable to be imitated (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 17).

The concept of *innovation* implies that change is the consequence of new ideas, practices or objects being invented, diffused, adopted or rejected in a planned or spontaneous way in a social system (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 18). According to Rogers (2003, pp. 238–240) *innovation* carries five specific attributes: relative advantage (what is brought should be perceived as a better idea or object than the practice it replaces); compatibility (degree to which innovation is seen as coherent with the existent values, past experiences and needs of potential imitators); complexity (degree of difficulty in comprehending the innovation); trialability (degree to which innovation can be tried); observability (degree to which innovation is observable to the others). While some inventions are more flexible than others, the (in)compatibility of the involved individuals is seen as the biggest

challenge in the diffusion process of innovations. The decision-making process regarding innovation is facilitated through possessing first knowledge of an innovation and the ensuing decision to adapt or reject the implementation and confirmation the new idea. The decision process can also be disrupted or reversed, for example when innovations are initially rejected but later on adopted (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 18). The consequences of the innovation diffusion can be functionally desirable or undesirable for the social system, direct (immediate) or indirect (delayed) in outcome and reaction and anticipated (recognised and intended) or unanticipated by members of the system (Ibid., p. 19). ‘Influential persons’ can lead to the diffusion of innovation, they are characterized as being more innovative and exposed to a variety of communication, having a higher socio-economic status and wider communication networks (Ibid.).

2.4.1 Acquisition

The *acquisition* of social remittances is intensely connected to migration, as migrants on prolonged migration paths are confronted with unfamiliarity and difference in various aspects of their life (Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 4). In Levitt’s (2001, p. 57) research on social remittances, three types of *acquisition* modes among migrants have been characterized through their interaction with the host society: firstly, *recipient observers*, who work either inside their home or at workplaces mostly staffed with co-ethnics, have a social life within their diaspora community, don’t explore their world, new ideas and practices actively but rather observe and adopt passively through the media and the interpretations of others; secondly, *instrumental adapters* are more integrated in the host society and therefore need to add and alter their routines for pragmatic reasons; to do so they adjust the way they interpret the world to equip themselves in a better way for the constraints and challenges of migrant life; thirdly, *purposeful innovators* are ‘sponges’ who dynamically explore, select and absorb new ideas, objects and practices with the goal of getting ahead rather than just getting by; they therefore change not because they are obliged to but because they want to learn and benefit from the newness around them and do so through creatively adding and combining what they observe with their pre-existing ideas and practices which results in the expansion and extension of their cultural repertoire. The process of *acquisition* of potential social remittances is therefore linked to the meaningful social contacts and sites of their encounter, where observation and interaction might take place (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 23), which is highly impacted by the social embeddedness of migrants at the destination (Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 6). Various findings show that higher/lower levels of integration into the host society fortify/hinder the acquisition of social remittances (see e.g. Suksomboon, 2008; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Grabowska *et al.*, 2017; Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019). Acquisition is facilitated either by imitation (duplication or reproduction) or innovation (creative adaption, adjustment or transformation) or met with resistance (un-/intentional blocking) (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 24).

2.4.2 Transfer

The *transfer* of social remittances is briefly summarized by Levitt (1998, p. 936):

“Social remittances exchanges occur when migrants return to live in or visit their communities of origin; when nonmigrants visit their migrant family members; through interchanges of letters, videos, cassettes and telephone calls.”

The transmission happens not through mere communication between migrant and non-migrant but because there is a necessary purpose (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 25) and “active agency of social actors and their interactions with global cultural flows” (Markley, 2011, p. 370).

Meeting the increasing challenge of distinguishing social remittances from other influences of globalisation (see Figure 1 in chapter 2.2.2), Levitt (1998, p. 936) emphasizes that the transfer of social remittances is different from global cultural dissemination in the aspect of being ‘traceable’, the source and destination of social remittances are identifiable and migrants and non-migrants can tell how they learned of specific ideas. Social remittances as a process are therefore different from other forms of influence because they are “personal, subjective and offer the opportunity for social actors to express their sense of place and identity and reflexively position themselves” (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 32) in the complex translocal field. They are often, though not solely, passed on intentionally and systematically between individuals who are familiar and connected with each other, two factors that make social remittance differ from the “faceless, mass produced nature of global cultural diffusion”. Nevertheless, social remittances are more likely to be accepted and adopted when they match patterns that have already been diffused by cultural globalisation, e.g. through the media (Levitt, 1998, pp. 936–937).

Grabowska *et al.* (2017) argue with reference to de Tarde (1903) and Rogers (2003) that the most effective channel for the transmission is direct communication, which also refers to the translocal usage of new communication technologies such as video-calling (Skype, FaceTime etc.) and instant app-based messaging (WhatsApp, LINE etc.) (p. 25). Interestingly, the novelties and innovations in the current digital age have actually strengthened the effectiveness of direct communication because face-to-face physical presence has gained a higher value (Ibid.). Moreover, the transfer of social remittances happens between individuals that are linked by a network of contacts, but “essentially a direct contact is its prerequisite” (p. 27). It is therefore not surprising that return migration was found to be very influential in generating social remittances, as a qualitative study in Romania, which was conducted among return migrants, showed (Pralong, 2010; referenced by Markley, 2011, p. 368). Regarding the process of *transfer*, it is also acknowledged that an idea has to come into materialisation before it starts travelling, which happens through the translation into an object and/or action, a process that takes place locally. It

is an ongoing process of editing, negotiating and adapting, which contextualises and reformulates ideas and practices to meet the local context (Mica, 2013; referenced by Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 26). The model (see Figure 2) concludingly illustrates the reciprocal transfer of social remittances between destination and origin, while also showing that the circulation of ideas and practices is not an automatic action of migration, because certain preconditions (social proximity during migration etc.) and barriers apply. All of these are “embedded within the translocal setting of each migration system or trajectory” (Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 4).

2.4.3 Outcome and Impact

The *outcome* or *impact* of social remittances is generated through the imitation and innovation of ideas and skills in the place of origin, but it can also be hindered by social inertia and resistance (see Figure 2). They are difficult to assess and trace because they vary from individual to communal level. Levitt (2001, pp. 64–69) lists six factors she encountered during her study on the ‘transnational villagers’ that influence the impact social remittances can have in places of origin: the nature of the remittance itself (easy or difficult to transfer); the nature of the transnational/translocal system (tight or open social network and community practices); the characteristics of the messenger (social categories of differentiation⁵ of the ‘transmitter’); the target audience (social categories of differentiation of the ‘receiving’ community and individuals); differences between sending and receiving countries (relative differences concerning normative, cognitive and structural constraints between place of origin and place of destination); features of the transmission process (social remitting in ‘packages’ along with other social or economic remittances); through multiple pathways e.g. the media; periodical, simultaneous, infrequent or accidental transmission).

Grabowska et al. understand the impacts of social remittances “as mediation and (re-) construction of transferred objects, ideas and practice to local contexts as a result of migration.” (2017, pp. 26–27). They underline the dependency of social remittances outcomes on the agency of migrants, return migrants and those who maintain translocal relations. Theoretically speaking, this entails that common people “can act as cultural creators and carriers who receive, expand, interpret and transform the values and practices they have been exposed to.” (Suksomboon, 2008, p. 474). During their empirical study on migrants as agents of change Grabowska et al. found that the outcomes and impacts of social remittances depend on both the characteristics of migrants themselves and the communities where social remittances come into a new context as well the availability of spaces for the potential diffusion of them (2017, p. 218). These findings play into

⁵ Social categories of differentiation refer to the socio-economic status, age, gender, life-cycle status of a person.

the same vein as the six categories mentioned by Levitt (2001, pp. 64–69) and show how context-specific and reliant on individual actors the transfer and especially the impacts of social remittances are. While it is established that migrants are generally agents of change through the process of socially remitting, Grabowska et al. (2017, pp. 220–221) mention that the ‘force’ or ‘radius’ of impact is dependent on a set of features individuals need to have. These features include personal traits (openness, helpfulness, willingness to learn), opportunities for contact and informal learning abroad across social spaces, social spaces to transfer social remittances which are often created by migrants themselves (business or organisation), a network of active contacts (clients, patients, friends etc.) as an audience for their social remittances, a socially useful everyday role in the community (teacher, shop keeper, service provider etc.) and migration money which is often used to create own spaces for the diffusion of social remittances. Change is therefore embedded in the “everyday stream of actions of competent actors” (p. 221).

This correlates with the empirical findings of Peth and Sakdapolrak (2019, p. 7) on return labour migrants in rural Thailand, who additionally mention the local economy and characteristics of the families at home (e.g. openness towards new ideas and change) as influential factors for the impact social remittances can have as well as the type of remittances. While they found that intangible social remittances such as business attitudes or thoughts on agricultural practices were exchanged regularly, they don’t conclude how impactful they were on the diversification of livelihoods. But they mention a few cases where new attitudes (e.g. new business thinking), that were acquired during migration, influenced migrants’ livelihoods: a return migrant started a pig farm, inspired by his experience in Singapore, where he was working on a construction site of a dairy farm. He was also less worried by setbacks and diversified his income multiple times by opening new businesses. Another finding is the influence of tangible social remittances: while all households of the study came from a rural background that relied on agriculture, most of them worked in non-farm employments during migration. These new occupations led to new skills and knowledge which can be transferred upon return or during the migration process. But their empirical research showed that migrants are required to have “the structural and personal ability” (Ibid.) to use these social remittances, for instance by changing their occupation after returning to their place of origin. This also brings into play the topic of ‘lost remittances’, which will be discussed in the next section. In regard to the temporal aspect of social remittances’ impacts, it is highlighted that they are often less immediate than assumed: the change they induce happens over a longer period of time and evolves over many years (p. 9).

As mentioned before, the impacts of social remittances can be both and simultaneously ‘positive’ and ‘negative’, depending on the interpretational perspective and perception. This also reflects the current “nuanced views on the migration-development nexus”, which acknowledge “the

complexity of migration processes and their impacts” (Peth and Sakdapolrak, 2019, p. 1). The study of Montefrio et al. (2014) on land-use changes through south-south migration is an interesting example here. They found that social remittances do not lead to a singular outcome in terms of attitude: In regard to developing oil palm farming in the Philippines, some labour migrants who worked on oil palm plantations in Malaysia very much endorsed their cultivation because they saw it as a path to prosperity, while other migrants who had seen the long-term environmental impacts of this mono-crop cultivation expressed concern and advised other community members against oil-palm development with their knowledge (p. 237).

2.4.4 Resistance and Barriers

The *resistance* to social remittances can be found at two stages of the outlined process: At the *acquisition* in the place of destination, people can refuse to accept and take migration novelties as their own, while these novelties can also be refused in the place of origin at the stage of *impact*. This *resistance* can be viewed “as resistance to social change generated by modernising processes [of globalisation] affecting local communities in various domains” (Grabowska *et al.*, 2017, p. 31) but often also just stems from the “natural inertia of the social world, of mundane patterns of social and cultural reproduction” (Miller, 2008; referenced by Ibid.). It can show through different small everyday actions in discourse, behaviour and the manifestation of norms and values in an unorganised and unspecific way.

Peth and Sakdapolrak (2019, pp. 7–8) found that especially incorporated social remittances such as knowledge and skills face many structural and personal barriers that can limit them in their impact. When social remittances face and can’t overcome these barriers, they become so-called ‘lost remittances’: Although skills and knowledge were acquired at the place of destination during migration, they are ‘thrown away’ upon return and don’t affect a livelihood transformation or change. Their empirical study exemplifies an array of barriers: for instance, neo-Fordist working schemes (e.g. in factory work) and very specific tasks (e.g. in construction) make learning a wider range of skills less likely. Also, there are often not enough jobs in the place of origin which require the skills learned during migration (e.g. migrant factory workers have little employment options in a rural area with no factories; migrants who were employees in the service sector can’t use their acquired skills in a rural, agriculture-based context) as well as a lack of time and money to implement new ideas (e.g. migrants from rural areas who worked in agriculture during their migration can’t adapt and implement their new knowledge in the local agricultural setting due to this barrier). They also found that long-term migration makes a return and therefore a direct livelihood impact through their new knowledge less likely (e.g. in marriage migration). Moreover, return migrants from various occupation fields can also be challenged with a lack of self-initiative

to adapt and implement new skills into livelihood. Also, the timing of migration in the biographical stage (e.g. later in life) of the migrant can make it less likely that new knowledge and skills will be used and impactful upon return.

2.5 Rural Livelihood Change

This thesis studies the impacts of translocal social remittances on *rural livelihoods*. To conclude the theoretical framework, it is therefore substantial to lay out the terms and point to changes *rural livelihoods* are undergoing, especially in terms of diversification and with focus on the ‘global south’⁶, in which the research area is located in.

The terminology in this work follows the field of development studies (Ellis, 2000, p. 10):

“a livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household. [...] A fundamental characteristic of rural livelihoods in contemporary developing countries is the ability to adapt [...]. The construction of a livelihood therefore has to be seen as an ongoing process”

While most rural livelihoods in the global south still rely on smallholder agricultural production⁷, changes are happening at a fast pace and the number of people employed in agriculture is declining (World Bank, 2019, p. 99). Drawing from multiple empirical field studies, Rigg (2006, p. 183) summarizes evident processes and trends, namely “trajectories of change in the rural south”, that are happening in a variety of places.

The most influential development stemming from these processes is the *diversification* of occupations and livelihoods in rural areas which entails that “occupational multiplicity [is] becoming more common and more pronounced” (Rigg, 2006, p. 183). In the literature (Ellis, 1998, p. 4), “livelihood diversification is defined as the process by which rural families construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standards of living.” As a deliberate household strategy or involuntary response to crisis, it can both diminish or accentuate rural inequality as it can be a safety measure for the rural poor on the one hand and a mean of accumulation for the rural rich on the other. In regard to agricultural productivity, livelihood diversification can be a benefit or an impoverishing force by withdrawing critical resources (Ibid., p. 2). While livelihood diversification is not synonymous with income

⁶ “The phrase ‘Global South’ refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is one of a family of terms, including ‘Third World’ and ‘Periphery’, that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized. The use of the phrase Global South marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power.” (Dados and Connell, 2012, p. 12)

⁷ According to data from 2016, 68% of the population in low-income countries and 60% of the population in lower middle-income countries lived in rural areas (World Bank, 2016c). At the same time, 63% of employment in low-income countries and 41% of employment in lower middle-income countries is in the agricultural sector (World Bank, 2016a).

diversification, most economic studies form categories of income sources, in which a household can diversify. The primary categories are (Ellis, 2000, pp. 11–12):

- *Farm income*: livestock and crop income; includes both consumption-in-kind of own farm output and cash income from output sold
- *Off-farm income*: wage or exchange labour on other farms; including harvest share systems
- *Non-farm income*: non-agricultural income sources such as non-farm rural wage or self-employment, property income, remittances from either internal or international migration.

By analogy, rural livelihoods are comprised by farm, off-farm and non-farm activities and can also diversify their livelihoods in these activities. The diversification then results in livelihood strategies that can be classified, although typologies should be handled with caution, as they bear the risk of excluding those that do not ‘fit the type’ (Ibid., p. 41) or context-relevant factors. In the style of Dorward et al. (2005, p. 9), who exemplified three types of asset or activity contribution to livelihood strategies (‘Hanging In’ – ‘Stepping Up’ – ‘Stepping Out’) and with the focus of this thesis on the impacts of social remittances on rural livelihood change, three ‘outcomes’ of livelihood change in regard to livelihood activities are formulated, which can happen in the on-farm, off-farm or non-farm sector :

- *Diversification*: New livelihood activities in another sector are adopted alongside existing activities in one sector being pursued.
- *Transformation*: Existing livelihood activities are transformed within their sector so that new activities emerge.
- *Substitution*: Existing livelihood activities in one sector are abandoned and substituted by new activities in a different sector.

Ellis (1998) postulates that diversification follows a range of causes and motivations that “vary across families at a particular point in time, and for the same families at different points in time” (p. 7). Some reasons for diversification may be location-specific (e.g. semi-arid zones are highly prone to drought) or problem-specific (e.g. soil degradation), and while the poor diversify to survive, the rich may diversify to accumulate (p. 15). Therefore, he sees a danger in seeking to isolate separate determinants of diversification, because it communicates a rather one-dimensional view of the dynamics that shape rural livelihoods. As the main determinants for the diversification of rural livelihoods seasonality, labor markets, risks, coping, credit markets and accumulation are concluded but with a remark to the fact that while they are conceptually distinct, they are “rarely separable in practice” (p. 16). Rather they are all intermediated through social institutions, including community and kinship ties, property rights and obligations as well as gender relations within the household. Interactions with the physical environment and changes over time in the

larger economy shape these determinants as well (Ibid.), which concludes that individuals and households are in practice influenced by a multiplicity of factors determining the livelihood changes they experience (p. 17). Concludingly, he draws the deduction that “diversification is an infinitely heterogeneous social and economic process, obeying a myriad of pressures and possibilities in the rural economy” (p. 29). The causes and effects of diversification are distinguished by “location, demography, vulnerability, income level, education and many other factors.” (Ibid.). By recognizing this heterogeneity, the importance of local contexts is emphasized. Also, just the sheer capability of a household to diversify its income sources indicates an improvement regarding livelihood security and income increasing capabilities (Ibid.).

According to various empirical findings gathered by Rigg (2006), the change of livelihoods in the rural south shows through the households income generation shifting from farm to non-farm, therefore disentangling livelihoods from land and from farming (p. 183). At the same time, growing internal and international migration mobilizes the lives of rural people and livelihoods become delocalized or translocalised, which leads to remittances playing a growing role in rural livelihood incomes. He also notes that the average age of farmers is rising, suggesting that younger generations don’t work in the agricultural sector as much. Therefore, cultural and social changes are being implicated in livelihood transformations “and in new ways” (Ibid.). These empirical findings challenge the widespread belief that there is a primordial ‘attachment’ of rural people to the land and bring migration as mobility more into the focus of rural studies (p. 189). Especially the perspectives of villagers themselves present a different view of rural livelihoods, as education, global media, consumerism and migration have profoundly changed the way rural people think about work, farming, their own and their children’s futures. Rigg (2006, p. 189) concludes that “rural existences are becoming almost as monetized [...] as urban lives.”. This also changed the view on farming to an occupation to be avoided (pp. 189–190). But there is the challenge to find out to which extent this shift reflects life cycle changes, implying that younger generations will see the attraction of agriculture and farming later in life and will eventually come back to this occupation, and how far are more profound and permanent processes of cultural change at work, which will prevail throughout the life cycle (p. 190). Undoubtedly, both dynamics are prevalent in rural communities, as “there are behaviours, views, and outlooks that can be associated with particular stages in the life course [while] there are also those that reflect the era in which people are living” (Ibid.). This is also where *social remittances* come into play as they can “transform production and consumption practices” (Ibid.). Therefore, economic and livelihood changes have to be interlaced with wider social and cultural modifications (Ibid.) that happen through migration and globalisation.

He condensates five forces which propel changes in composition and trajectory of economic activity and livelihoods, their importance depending on the individual cases (pp. 187-188):

1. the erosion of the profitability and returns to small-holder agricultural production through e.g. national policies favouring industry, structural adjustment and neo-liberalism, declining terms of trade between farm and non-farm;
2. the emergence of new opportunities in the non-farm sector, both local and non-local through e.g. foreign investment, improving access and heightened levels of mobility associated with infrastructural improvements and education;
3. environmental degradation through e.g. environmental conflicts between farm and non-farm activities in rural areas, labour shortages hindering maintenance of farm infrastructure; over cropping and other non-sustainable cultivation practices, deforestation and associated environmental degradation;
4. increasing land shortages through e.g. population growth, sequestration of land by the state and agencies linked to the state and effects of land reform;
5. cultural and social change through e.g. mobility, media-led consumerism and education.

2.6 Analytical Framework and Research Questions

This concluding chapter of the conceptual and theoretical framework presents the scope of the empirical analysis and the research questions that underlie this piece of work.

2.6.1 Analysing the Impacts of Social Remittances on Rural Livelihoods Change

The diagram in Figure 3 (next page) shows the components of the analysis and how they interact with each other. The translocal household, which is composed of a household in which one or more member(s) experience(s) migration phenomena, ‘socially remits’ (see chapter 2.4) tangible and intangible (see chapter 2.3.2) values, knowledge, ideas, practices and social capital through different channels (return migration, communication and migrant visits) in the translocal space (see chapter 2.3.2). These social remittances then have an impact on rural livelihood change, which emerges from rural livelihoods that are comprised of on-farm, off-farm and non-farm activities connected to the household. The livelihood change can result in different outcomes that can be in the on-farm, off-farm and non-farm sector: livelihood diversification, livelihood transformation and livelihood substitution (see chapter 2.5).

It is important to point out that many factors other than migration-induced social remittances can impact rural livelihoods and also the changes they undergo, but this thesis will focus on the impacts of migration, specifically social remittances, on rural livelihood change.

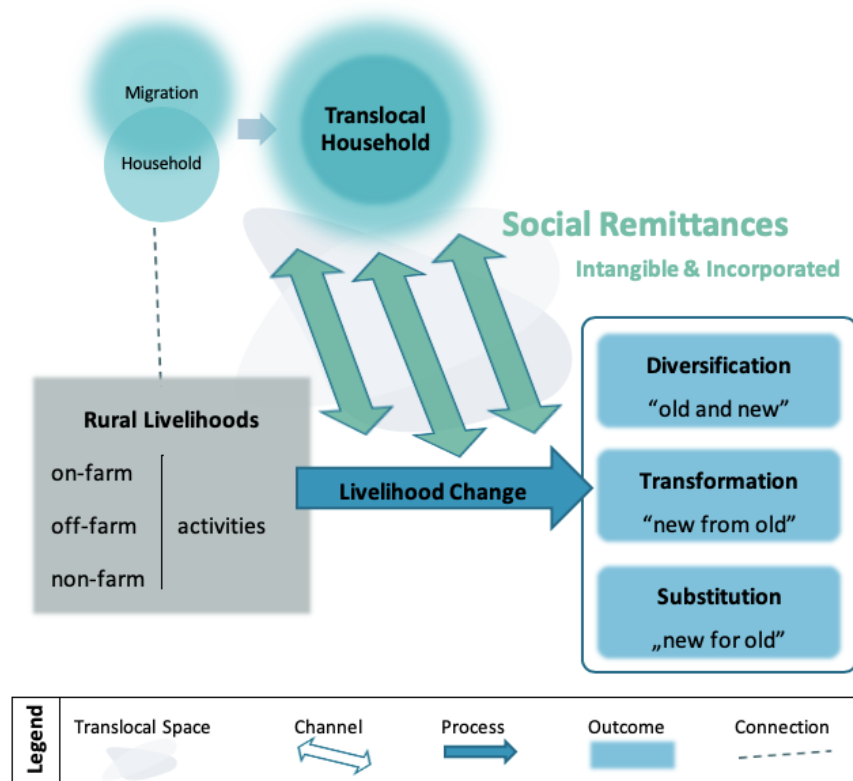


Figure 3: Analytical Framework for the Impacts of Social Remittances on Rural Livelihood Change. Source: own draft.

2.6.2 Research Questions

The research questions that underlie and structure this case study emerge through the conceptual and theoretical framework in three consecutive stages, the main research question (MQ) being framed by three preceding and three succeeding research questions (RQ). The first stage explores migration phenomena that shape the translocal field of the study area as well as the prevalent translocal practice of social remittances. Secondly, livelihood changes impacted by these social remittances are investigated. The last stage further examines the features that fortify or hinder social remittances' impact and the physical materialisation of livelihood change in the local space.

a) Translocal connections through migration and social remittances

RQ 1: How is migration and translocality characterized in the study area?

RQ 2: What types of social remittances are prevalent in the study area?

RQ 3: How are translocal social remittances exchanged in the daily life?

b) Impacts of social remittances on rural livelihood change

MQ: What impacts do social remittances have on local rural livelihood change in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities?

c) Features of social remittances impacting rural livelihood change

RQ 4: How do social remittances vary in their impact on rural livelihood change?

RQ 5: What barriers hamper social remittances in their impact on livelihood change?

RQ 6: How do livelihood changes impacted by social remittances materialise in the local space?

3 Methodology

The theoretical framework that was elaborated in the first chapter is fundamental to understand the whole research process, as it not only influences the development of the research question, but also acts as a ‘guide for interpretation’ (Mattissek, Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2013, p. 139) for the qualitative-interpretative approach of this empirical study. This approach deemed appropriate because previous scientific inquiries showed that “the use of qualitative methods for research [...] enables [...] to grasp the non-quantitative character of social remittances” (Hasalová, 2010, p. 151). This section therefore aims to introduce the methodology of this thesis as well as disclosing the influence the theoretical backdrop had on this vital part of the research process. To do so, this section starts by explaining the empirical fieldwork underlying the data basis of the case study, including the course of action in the field and the sampling of interviewees, which leads to the applied methods to obtain data as well as their limitations and external effects. Concludingly, the methods of data evaluation and analysis are laid out.

3.1 Empirical Fieldwork

Research on translocality requires an investigation of the local circumstances translocal processes and practices are embedded in (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, p. 24). In this context, a geographic-ethnologic approach is endorsed to empirically capture local specifications of global processes and transboundary social relations (Mitchell, 1997, p. 110). Further, the focus should lie on the research of everyday environments and social practices to indicate the social production of translocal relations (Long, 2008, pp. 39–40). In the same vein, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p. 1012) advocate for methodologies in translocal research that “focus on the intersection between the networks of those who have migrated and those who have stayed in place” and on “the experiences of migrants and those who are only indirectly influenced by ideas, objects, and information flowing across borders”. Therefore, the data basis of this thesis was obtained by doing fieldwork over the course of three weeks in a ‘*place of origin*’.

Fieldwork itself is described as a “a style of investigation” (Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 94) in social research that uses qualitative methods. The primary goal when undertaking fieldwork is to encounter life ‘*as it happens*’ in its usual place or organisation, while also identifying its patterns and subsequently producing an *understanding* of these (Grills, 1998; referenced by Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 95). Also, fieldwork is not merely research conducted ‘*in the field*’ but rather part of a specific theoretical position. Doing field research most often entails committing to a theoretical orientation “that assumes there is a world external to the researcher which is best

interpreted in its own context; as coherent units of action; through direct interaction with, and interpretation by, the researcher.” (Ibid., pp. 95–96).

The following sections demonstrates how the field research came together, including the selection and access of the study area, the course of action in the field and the sampling of interviewees.

3.1.1 Selection and Access of Study Area

Following the thought of geographer Carl Sauer (1952) that “the principal training of the geographer should come, wherever possible, by doing fieldwork” (cited from Phillips and Johns, 2012, p. 4), the opportunity to develop a thesis based on empirical research emerged through the possibility of doing field research during a project excursion in Northern Thailand. The contextual and thematical backdrop for the excursion was the ongoing international project ‘AGRUMIG “Leaving something behind” – Migration governance and agricultural and rural change in “home” communities’. It aims to understand rural livelihoods engaged in these phenomena through comparative experiences from Europe, Asia and Africa. The project studies the interaction between migration and rural and agricultural change because these two effects seem to shape the changes in livelihoods of people in rural areas that are still dependent on agriculture (IWMI, 2019). The research country Thailand is a good example of the coexistence of highly developed centres focused on industry and services, and other very rural parts of the country with around one third of the population employed in the agrarian sector (World Bank, 2018b). Agricultural change is therefore a very relevant phenomenon to look at in the area. The same goes for migration phenomena, as Thailand has a long history of international and internal migration, may it be in the context of education or to find work, “largely motivated by uneven levels of development in between the rural and urban areas of the country” (UNTWG, 2019, p. 2).

Together with the project partner *Raks Thai*, a local NGO, the province (*changwat*) of Chiang Mai and the district (*amphoe*) of Mae Chaem where chosen as project area, because little local development research had been undertaken in this Northern district of Thailand. The study village⁸ (*muban*), which is located in the subdistrict (*tambon*) Mae Suk, was chosen by the *Tambon Administration Organization* (TAO) because it agreed to work together with the AGRUMIG project and allow foreign students to conduct research in their community. From a pragmatic viewpoint, the size of the village and indicators of migration phenomena happening in the community met the requirements for the planned research project. The village is located around 80 km linear distance (180 km driving distance) west from the eponymous province capital Chiang Mai, the largest city and metropolitan area in Northern Thailand (see Figure 4). Access to the

⁸ The name of the study village will not be enclosed to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees and interlocutors that participated in the study.

village was made possible by the TAO and *Raks Thai*, this enabled the author to stay in the village with a local family for the duration of field research.

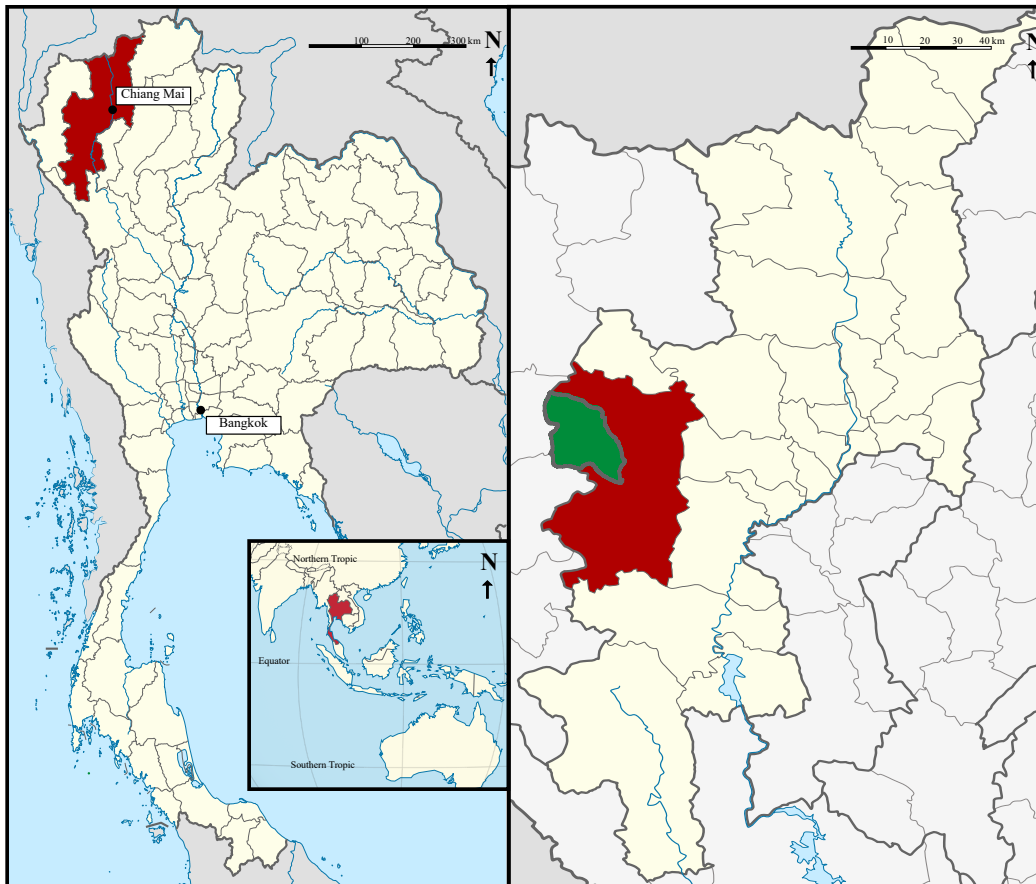


Figure 4: Localisation of the study village in Northern Thailand. Middle: The Kingdom of Thailand (red) in South East Asia. Left: The province Chiang Mai (red) in Northern Thailand. Right: The district of Mae Chaem (red) and the subdistrict Mae Suek (green) where the study village is located. Source: own draft; Map basis: TUBS/NordNordWest/Hdamm (Wikimedia Commons)

3.1.2 Course of Action in the Field and Sampling of Interviewees

The focus of a case study, like the piece of work presented here, is not to generate findings that can be generalised, but to study an *example* “in its own right and for its unique importance (Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 32). According to the epistemological framework of social constructivism, it does not strive to capture an ‘objective reality’, but rather to explore socially constructed realities (Mattissek, Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2013, p. 31). The findings aim to portrait local, subjective experiences, valuations and rationalities (of agency) and therefore need to take an interpretative-understanding approach towards the everyday environment of social actors and their local contexts (Reif, 2017, p. 29). It requires methodology to move away from numbers and statistics, and turn more to ‘texts and contexts’ (Mattissek, Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2013, p. 127). Consequently, the data basis for this thesis was obtained by using qualitative methods of empirical social research. Accordingly, every interaction is therefore an interpretative process in a socially constructed reality and research has to be understood as an interpretation of this interpretation. The data aims for a differentiated investigation of the individual case and the ‘typical’ rather than

representativeness. The quality criterion for findings are their ‘plausibility’, not the intersubjective verifiability (Ibid., p. 35). For the course of action in the field, this meant to engage with social actors through different interview settings, (participatory) observation resulting in informal talks and an exploratory transect walk. Additionally, a basic village household survey was conducted to get an overview of the village demographics. The applied methods will be further explained in section 3.2 of this chapter. Collection of data was done with a research partner who investigated the field on educational migration over the course of three weeks and made possible through the work of two interpreters, as the author was not fluent in the languages of the study context, Thai and Sgaw Karen.

The first ten days of fieldwork served as an orientational phase in order to get to know the field and to adapt the research focus according to context and situatedness. Due to the exploratory character of this phase of research, the selection of interviewees did not follow very specific criteria in the beginning but focused on finding people who had experience with translocal migration phenomena e.g. return migrants, current migrants and translocal household members. First phenomenon of migration, translocality and social remittances as well as livelihood change could be identified and further investigated in a second phase of two weeks. In this deepening phase of field study, theoretical sampling was applied to gradually find interviewees that “close gaps, point out additional and new information, but also contradict the already detected data. They should condense, differentiate and solidify statements [...] until new cases barely reveal new insights” (Meier Kruker and Rauh, 2005, p. 55). A pre-requirement for theoretical sampling is the development of a theory that guides the selection; accordingly, interviewees are chosen that are believed to possess information related to the research interest. In this aspect, they differ from random sampling, where interviewees are chosen from a randomized sample (Flick, 2016, p. 159). Additionally, snowball sampling was used once the sampling had already begun as current interviewees were asked to suggest other participants for the study (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003, p. 18).

The interviewees were sampled based on four categories:

1. **Category:** People living in a translocal household in the village with at least one migrating household member.
2. **Category:** Migrants, including people who have migrated and lived outside the village at the time of the study (a), return migrants (b) and prospective migrants (c).
3. **Category:** Other people living in the village such as farmers, people with other occupations and households with different socio-economic backgrounds.
4. **Category:** ‘Experts’ in a specific topic or field of knowledge in the village.

Translocal studies usually demand for a multi-local research (Smith, 2011, pp. 183–184), however Glick Schiller and Levitt (2004, p. 10112) note that “although multi-sited research is ideal [...] the impact of transnational[/translocal] relations can be observed by asking individuals about the transnational aspects of their lives, and those they are connected to, in a single setting.” Due to financial and temporal constraints, the case study could not be facilitated in multiple locations, but the author was still able by chance to talk to migrants currently residing in a ‘*place of destination*’ while they were visiting the study village. In total, 46 interviews were conducted, 13 informal talks and one transect walk. The database for this thesis is therefore comprised of 60 individual data sets. Additionally, a village household survey was conducted to get an overview of the village demographics (see Table 1).

Table 1: Overview of the methods and scope of the data collection in the study village

Method	Category	Dataset by category*	Total Number
Qualitative Interviews	- Members of translocal HH	19	
	- Current migrants	9	
	- Return migrants	20	
	- Prospective migrants	3	
	- Other villagers	11	
	- ‘Experts’	14	46
Informal Talk	- Members of translocal HH	11	
	- Migrants	2	
	- Other villagers	16	13
Transect Walk			1
Village Household Survey (HH Survey 2019)			
- 66 of 67 HH participated (98,5 % of village HH)			66

*Some interviewees/interlocutors fit in more than one category and/or more than one person participated in the interview/informal talk, therefore the number can be higher than the total number of datasets.

The number of participants is hard to strictly define, as some people were interviewed more than once to deepen the understanding and to clarify uncertainties. Also, most interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees, and other members of the household would naturally join and leave the interview situation in some cases, as rural Thailand has a very ‘open doors’ culture (in this contextual setting). By the number of datasets, approximately 48 people were interviewed, and around 16 more contributed with their insights during informal talks.

Table 1 indicates that the focus of the empirical research was on return migrants, experts and members of translocal households. The higher levels of these categories in the database is due to

the main interest of the study in translocality and social remittances, which are usually transferred through return migrants or translocal ties (see chapter 2.4.2). ‘Expert’ in this sense refers to interviews with people who had some kind of expertise in a field of knowledge, they are often connected to livelihood change in the community and therefore highly interesting from a social remittance’ viewpoint. Interlocutors in informal talks were mostly other villagers, as it was easy to approach people in an informal way in their day to day life and gain insight to their own thoughts about their living environment and practices.

3.2 Applied methods

The following sections briefly introduces the methods of empirical social research that were used to conduct the case study.

3.2.1 Qualitative Interview

The main method to obtain empirical data were qualitative interviews, namely problem-centred household interviews (HH-IN) and expert interviews (EX-IN). They were open and semi-structured, as this mode is the most suitable to obtain subjective experiences, attributions and valuations without losing focus on the research topic and research question (Mayring, 2016, pp. 66–67).

On the basis of an interview guideline, which is composed of questions and narrative incentives, problem-centred interviews make biographical data in regard to a specific topic the subject of discussion (Flick, 2016, p. 210). They are usually open for the interviewee, in the sense that no specifications for the answer are given and semi-structured, which means that the interviewer is flexible in his reaction to the course of conversation (Mattissek, Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2013, p. 166). Their degree of openness is between the highly open narrative interview and the hardly open focused interview (Ibid. pp. 160–166). In contrast to the narrative interview, a theoretical concept has already been established and is confronted with and modified by the social reality through the problem-centred interview (Lamnek, 2010, p. 333).

The interviews generally follow four phases (Lamnek, 2010; Witzel and Reiter, 2012, p. 78):

- 1. Introduction:** At the beginning of the interview the problem area in the social reality that is the topic of the dialogue is set out. There should be a warming-up phase of easy dialogue to get the interviewer and respondent familiar with each other.
- 2. General Exploration:** In this second section, a narrative phase is stimulated by the interviewer through an opening question. It is followed by detailing questions and examples towards the interviewee. The implementation of everyday elements of the participant into the situation should induce narration and further detailing.

3. Specific Exploration: In this third phase, the interviewer tries to generate understanding for the narration sequences and variations of depiction presented by the interviewee. The interviewer has three communication strategies to actively generate comprehension:

a) Mirroring: The interviewer offers interpretations of the expressed statements in his/her own words to the respondent, who gets the opportunity to control, modify or correct them. Mirroring therefore helps the interviewer and respondent with cognitive structuring and communicative validation.

b) Comprehension Questions: Help the interviewer to clarify common-sense structures, terms that are lacking or unclear to therefore get more valid and precise interpretations.

c) Confrontation: To clarify or invite further specification of unclear or contradictory statements, the interviewer confronts the respondent with inconsistencies that occurred during the general exploration. This strategy has to be handled carefully, as insisting on clarifications of everyday contradictions that are simply part of life can make the interviewee feel misunderstood and ruin the atmosphere of the interview situation.

4. Follow-Up Questions: This last phase allows for direct, ad hoc questions towards subjects the interviewee has not mentioned so far on his/her own initiative or to ask for more social and personal characteristics (Witzel and Reiter, 2012, p. 89).

30 of the 46 interviews conducted during the fieldwork were household interviews (HH-IN) and generally followed the phases of problem-centred interviews depicted above. The duration of interviews varied between fifteen minutes and two hours (on average 65 minutes), depending on the time availability and number of interviewees participating as well as on their willingness to respond and converse. As the research was carried out together with a research partner, some interviews covered a big array of topics related to both research studies. They therefore lasted longer than they would probably have if they had been directed towards a sole research focus. Notably, the interplay of both migration-oriented research interests delivered unexpected and multi-faceted insights that helped and deepened the understanding for both parties.

The interviews usually followed a guideline of questions about basic information on the one hand and more specifically about migration, translocality and social remittances on the other hand. Especially questions about migration experiences opened up the room for longer narrative phases, during which the interviewer could locate hints for social remittances and follow up with questions. As social remittances are a concept that is hard to grasp ad hoc by respondents, questions were formulated around innovations, transfer of knowledge, barriers, occupational multiplicity, incentives for decisions regarding livelihood change and valuations of these changes. When respondents were interviewed a second time, questions following up on the information of the first interview could further deepen and increase the quality of understanding. The household

interviews usually took place in the home of the respondents; therefore, the atmosphere was mostly quite relaxed. This also meant that other people would sometimes be present during or even join the interview, but it never interfered with the interview situation. Also, children were often present, especially when interviewing women.

Another form of qualitative interview that was conducted was the expert interview (EX-IN), which is a special form of the problem-centred interviews. Here, the interview is not solely focused on the interviewee as a single person, but he/she is rather seen as a representative of a group (Flick, 2016, p. 214). There is an academic discussion about the specifications of who can be identified as an 'expert' and if these roles can be detached from the 'private' person, but the term mainly relates to a person being a member or representative of a specific organizational unit (Ibid., p. 215). Expert-interviews are mainly used for either exploration or to gain deeper insight into contexts that arise during other methods (Ibid., p. 216). Guidelines play an even more important role during expert interviews as the work that goes into the preparation of them guarantees that the interviewer is not an incompetent conversation partner. Also, they help the interview to stay 'on track' rather than getting lost in irrelevant topics. Still, it is advised to use expert interviews complementary to other methods, as the exclusive focus on knowledge of a specific group is insufficient for most scientific issues (Ibid.; p. 219).

In this case study, expert interviews mostly served the purpose to gain deeper understanding of contexts as they were usually 'experts' in a field of knowledge e.g. the implementation of a new crop or agricultural practice, the head of the village, the manager of the tourist organisation etc. The duration of the eight expert interviews varied between 22 minutes and one hour 40 minutes (on average 70 minutes) and some experts were consulted a second time to gain deeper understanding and clarify uncertainties.

A number of eight interviews were hybrids of household and expert-interviews, so called 'expert-household-interviews' (EX-HH-IN). They examined the household situation of the interviewee and also their 'expert' role in a field of knowledge. On average, they were around 90 minutes and therefore longer as the other household interviews, mainly because more questions were asked, and the 'expert' role could lead to longer conversations on a topic.

All interviews were recorded digitally after getting permission from the interviewee(s) and transcript notes were taken manually during the interviews as well. First overview-analyses of interviews and transcripts with coding and memos happened constantly during the fieldwork phase to further develop theory and customize the sampling and guidelines for further interviews.

3.2.2 (Participatory) Observation – Informal Talk

A part of field research was also the constant observation of the local field, as it allows the researcher to capture actions, experiences and phenomena which are hard to grasp solely through speech and narration and rather understood by witnessing and seeing (Reif, 2017, p. 34). The strength of the method is the strong focus on the ‘real’ social environment of the field of interest, as the researcher tries to understand the field ‘from within’ in a rather cognitive-observing way than participating emotionally or pragmatically (Lamnek, 2010, p. 502). The method itself is inherently interesting and problematic at the same time, as the subjective observer becomes the ‘instrument of perception’. Therefore, the question concerning the unbiased perception of reality, which is usually pointed at instruments of research, has to be addressed towards the researcher themselves (Ibid., p. 576).

Observation can happen in participative and non-participative ways. The difference between the two modes is the point of observation: the researcher either observes the social field from ‘outside’ as a researcher (non-participative) or enters the social field through a participating ‘role’ which allows for exhaustive participation and observation of the field from ‘inside’ (Lamnek, 2010, p. 511). Between the two points of observation, a gradation of observation ‘roles’ can be made (Gold, 1958; referenced by Lamnek, 2010, pp. 523–525):

1. **Complete Participant:** the researcher completely identifies with the field and works covert, not disclosing his purpose of research to the social field.
2. **Participant-as-Observer:** the researcher primarily acts as a participant in the field and secondarily as an observer.
3. **Observer-as-Participant:** the researcher is incompletely integrated into the field, but primarily focusses on formal observation rather than informal interaction.
4. **Complete Observer:** the researcher solely observes the field without any interaction.

The observation during the fieldwork varied between the roles of observer-as-participant and participant-as-observer, as ‘more complete’ participation could only be facilitated to a limited extent due to the research period being rather short. Still there were periods of participation in everyday life, such as helping in agricultural work on the field, taking part in religious events and living in a local household, which included helping with chores and participating in daily chatter through the interpreter. Other observations in the field happened rather in a non-participative way, but always overt towards the participants, with an enclosed research purpose.

As participatory observation as a qualitative method involves communication and aims for communicative contacts, it resulted in many face-to-face interactions facilitated through the interpreters, which happened in an open, flexible and unstructured way (Lamnek, 2010, p. 523).

They are labelled as ‘informal talks’ (INT) in this research study and make up an important part of the database and therefore the understanding generated during the field work. In total, 13 informal talks were conducted which lasted between a few minutes and over one hour (on average 24 minutes) and a transect walk (TR) through the village with the village chief deputy, which also led to many short informal talks. They were recorded digitally and therefore transcribed, coded and analysed in the same ways as the interviews. Other observations by the researcher were handled the same way in selective and summarising verbal memos or through photography.

3.2.3 Village Household Survey

To gain basic understanding of the village demographics, a brief village household survey was conducted during the field work. Although surveying and quantifying multifaceted social spaces comes with problems regarding the plausibility of quantitative data being able to demonstrate complex social realities (Mattissek, Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2013, p. 50), it was deemed necessary for a better understanding of the whole population for two main reasons: On the one hand the research team got contradictory information regarding the population size and number of households in the village as official census data was not available to them, on the other hand there was the need to investigate some general social realities in the whole village and translate them in to numbers for better representation. The survey was realised in a face-to-face-interview situation (Ibid., p. 92) which meant going from door to door and asking households to participate by answering basic questions about the number of household members and more specific ones about migration phenomena in the household. The questions were half-standardized and left space for further details regarding the answers, as the main goal of the survey was not to produce statistical data for comparison with other villages, but rather to be able to define the village population and gain deeper insight into migration phenomena across the whole village. It also served as a triangulation for some statements and assumptions given during the interviews.

As Table 1 demonstrates, 66 of the 67 identified inhabited households in the village participated in the survey, although it has to be noted that some households were filled in with second hand information by neighbours when households could not be contacted directly.

3.3 Methodological Limitations and External Effects

The fieldwork bore both the excitement of not being in control of the place and people the data will originate from, but also the challenge of performing in an unexperienced setting, responding ad hoc to events and making sense of the detailed practices of other people’s lives. It called for a constant review, self-interrogation and re-interpretation of own performances and reactions to them (Payne and Payne, 2004, pp. 94–95). Therefore, some unaware reactions and specifications

of the researcher during the fieldwork could have influenced the way participants interacted or answered. Being an ‘outsider’ of the community in terms of looks and appearance made participants on the one hand curious, on the other also suspicious. Therefore, some intercultural barriers in interview settings between researcher and participants in interviews and informal talks were probably not totally erased.

Due to already established tourism in the village (see chapter 5.1.3), some interviewees viewed the researcher as a tourist and, in the researcher’s perception, tried to portray the life in the village according to a positivistic ‘tourist gaze’ (see Urry and Larsen, 2011). It seemed from the researcher’s perspective that problems the community was dealing with were rather silenced in conversation and could in most cases only be assessed after some time or multiple interviews. The impression the researcher got from these experiences is that participants don’t want to risk the reputation of their village as a rural tourist destination by any chance. The mahout context (see chapter) also bore some difficulties in interviews. The keeping of elephants and their usage for tourism is a sensitive topic in regard to animal welfare and conservation and it seemed that there had been incidents where elephant keeping in Thailand or even in the village was portrayed in a negative way in national and foreign media outlets, which made some villagers apprehensive of this topic in connection with a foreign person.

The frequent dealing with tourists also made participation in everyday life harder from the researcher’s perspective, as some people were very used to having guests around and treating them as such, therefore not letting them help with chores etc. The level of participation got better with time and the change of accommodation to a more central location in the village, but in general the research period of three weeks seemed too short to be able to take on an embedded ‘participating role’ for observation.

The language barrier between research and participants was another limitation. It was managed very well through the work of two interpreters, still the researcher could not engage directly with participants, which brings a degree of constriction for the interaction. Also, especially older participants were not fluent in Thai but could only speak Sgaw Karen, the language spoken by the Paganyaw, this group of Karen Hilltribe in Northern Thailand. The interpreter during the first phase of fieldwork was only fluent in Thai, which restricted the access to participants. Luckily, the interpreter during the second phase of fieldwork was fluent in both languages and therefore language barriers towards participants could be reduced immensely.

The household survey was conducted with little difficulties, as it was done towards the end of the stay when a lot of villagers were already familiar with the researcher. As mentioned before, some household data relies on information from neighbours if the household could not be contacted directly and is therefore more prone to being inaccurate.

3.4 Data Evaluation & Analysis

The basis for the data analysis of the case study were the audio files, transcripts and postscript notes (regarding setting, incidents etc.) from the qualitative interviews, informal talks and the village household survey.

The data was structured by analysing and thematically coding the qualitative datasets obtained during the fieldwork. These codes were summarized in categories that corresponded with the main research interests and hence, the research questions: translocality and migration in the study area, the resulting social remittances, their impact on livelihood change by changing livelihood activities and the features of the livelihood changes impacted by social remittances (e.g. migration experiences of participants, changes in livelihood activities, barriers when adapting new livelihood practices etc.). The concept of thematical coding by Flick (2016, pp. 402–409) was developed following Strauss (1991) approach of qualitative empirical social research (see *Ibid.*, p. 402). It proposes to firstly code cases openly, then selectively to generate a system of categories and thematic areas for each case. They are compared among cases in a further step, which results in a thematical structure. This thematical structure, developed from the first cases, is further verified among all other cases and modified accordingly if new or contradictory aspects arise, therefore forming the basis for the further analysis of the cases in the data (*Ibid.*, p. 404).

In practice, this meant that during the first phase of the field research process, snowball sampling was applied (see 3.1.2) to firstly find household that had migrating household members as well as to find households where livelihood changes could be identified. It was therefore important to get a general overview of the livelihood activities in the village to be able to notice changes. This meant talking to a diverse group of interlocutors during the explorative phase of the field work, while being sensitive to changes in local livelihood activities. From the main findings of this phase (the general migration dynamics of the study area and the four on-farm and non-farm livelihood changes where the impact of social remittances could be identified) the thematical structures on social remittances impact on rural livelihood change were developed. They were further investigated, compared and modified in the second phase of the field research through more theoretical sampling (see 3.1.2) in the groups where livelihood changes occurred.

After the data collection was finished, the cases were again analysed according to the adapted thematic structures to fill information gaps and reveal new interrelations.

4 Local Context of Rural Thailand

The Kingdom of Thailand is the third biggest territorial state in South East Asia after Indonesia and Malaysia, stretched out in the heart of South East Asia from the foothills of the Himalayas in the north to the Malay Peninsula in the south. The territory of 5131000 km² encircles the gulf of Thailand along the east coast, while the west coast borders the Andaman Sea (Grabowsky, 2010, p. 9). The population of the country has increased immensely in the last century, from 8,5 billion inhabitants in 1919 to around 69,4 billion today (Rigg, 1993, p. 280; World Bank, 2018a). Thailand structurally transformed from an agrarian to an industrial economy in the second half of the 20th century and is now a so-called ‘newly industrialized country’, classified as a ‘upper middle income economy’ (World Bank, 2018a). From 1965 until the Asian economic crisis in 1997, the economy of the country was steadily growing and booming, with an average annual growth rate of 7 % (Warr, 2005, p. 3) . As Kaosa-ard (2005) puts it, “Thailand’s natural resources and environment have paid the price for its phenomenal economic growth” (p. 315) with a massive degradation of forest, land and water resources (p. 316-328). Moreover, the enormous growth of the industrial sector in the ‘economic Golden Age’ (p. 313), making up 30 % of the national income by 1996, supported only 10 % of the population, leaving the majority of the workforce depending on agriculture in an increasingly depleted environment (p. 315-316).

The profound structural change of Thailand dominated by the industrial and service sector lead to a steady decline of the primary sectors share of the GDP (World Bank, 2018a). This results in high income disparities between the urban and rural population (Promburom and Sakdapolrak, 2012, p. 14), and while poverty has vastly decreased in overall Thailand, it is nowadays a phenomenon more pronounced in the countryside with 13.9 % of the rural population living under the national poverty line compared to 7.7 % in urban areas (World Bank, 2016b).

4.1 Change of Rural Areas in Thailand

Around 52 % of the Thai population live in rural areas nowadays, a number that is steadily declining: in 2000, 69 % of the population lived in rural areas (World Bank, 2016c). The agricultural production in Thailand is still dominated by smallholder family farms, a fact that has persisted throughout the changes Thailand underwent structurally (Rigg, 2019, p. 118). Most smallholder-farmers who were traditionally reliant on rice subsistence farming, have diversified their farm-income in the past five decades through the cultivation of cash crops⁹ such as sugarcane, maize, soybean and many others. The capital intensive character of cash crops as well as their high

⁹ The term *cash crop* refers to market-oriented agricultural products that are cultivated for sale and not for own consumption

dependency on external inputs and vulnerability to market fluctuations poses a problem for many smallholder-farmers (Bryant and Gray, 2005, p. 1; Promburom and Sakdapolrak, 2012, p. 19). The continuously declining economics of smallholder family farms over the last 30 years are due to a decline in the access to productive natural sources: Soil quality has deteriorated through unsustainable farming practices such as monoculture cropping and heavy use of agroindustrial chemicals; the higher demand for and competition over water resources has increased the access to them only slightly; land access has declined as the number of people per unit of land has increased and land ownership has become a critical factor for rural livelihoods due to their centredness around agriculture (UNDP, 2010, p. 21; Promburom and Sakdapolrak, 2012, p. 19). Especially in Northern Thailand agriculture is still the primary economic activity, with impactful changes oriented towards the intensification of cash-cropping on irrigated or non-irrigated fields or in orchard cultivation (Vanwambeke, Somboon and Lambin, 2007, p. 25). Also, rural households seeking other off-farm income sources, choose internal and international migration as a livelihood strategy (Ibid.). Rigg et al. (2012) traced these dynamics of agrarian change and extracted three processes that shape the social reality in rural settlements in their findings: a delocalisation of living, a dis-embedding of households and a dissociation of the village community, observed through a ‘geriatrification’ of farming, a generational drift of non-farm work and increasing complexity in household form. Rural living has therefore become very mixed and mobile, households and people are characterized by hybrid identities and a growing diversity of activities in the countryside.

4.2 Migration Dynamics in Thailand

Thailand is both an important ‘place of destination’ and ‘place of origin’ as well as a ‘station of transit’ for large numbers of internal and international migrants in Southeast Asia (UNTWG, 2019, p. 9). In the 1970, international work migration from Thailand was boosted by state agencies and aimed for the labour markets of less populous oil states in the middle east, such as Saudi Arabia (Sakdapolrak, 2008, p. 82). Since the 1990s, most work migration shifted towards East and Southeast Asian countries, especially to the then aspiring and now established market economies of Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Japan, which still rank as the key destinations for work migration along with Israel (Ibid., UNTWG, 2019, p. 20). In 2017, it was estimated that around 1.1 million Thais are residing in other countries, with 115,215 Thai workers migrating into other countries through state channels in this year. At the same time, nearly 2 million registered work migrants lived in Thailand, although it can be assumed that the number of informal inbound and outbound work migrants is much higher (UNTWG, 2019, pp. 16; 20).

Thailand also experiences significant internal migration phenomena, nowadays mostly from rural areas to urban centers and from the North and North-East to the Central region and the Greater Bangkok area (UNESCO *et al.*, 2018, p. 3). Historically, internal rural to rural migration for agricultural development was most common until the 1980s, leading to 43.2 % of the land area being used for agriculture (World Bank, 2016a). Internal migration is regarded as a common livelihood strategy used by the rural populations to handle resource shortages, economic crisis and agricultural seasonality (UNTWG, 2019, p. 21). Motivations for internal migration are said to be the seasonal employment in agriculture and the vast wage differences within the country¹⁰ (Ibid.) as well as “poor access to social and physical infrastructure at district or provincial levels” (FAO, 2018, p. 56). The patterns of internal migration are also influenced by national macroeconomic circumstances as in periods of economic growth and increasing demand of labor in industrial regions, the rural-urban migration is rising. During and after the economic crises of 1997-98 and 2008-09, a reversed migration processes from urban to rural areas could be observed, as they “functioned as safety nets for large numbers of unemployed workers in industrialized urban areas” (Promburom and Sakdapolrak, 2012, p. 21). In recent years, internal migration rates have declined, which is associated with government attempts to promote more regionally balanced development and decentralized economic growth (UNESCO *et al.*, 2018, p. 3). Rural internal migrants, that obtain their income in urban centers, are very connected to their place of origin in most cases and nearly all internal migrants remit money back to their place of origin (Ibid., pp. 6-7).

Economic remittances of internal and international migrants have a differentiated impact on rural households in Thailand. While village communities with many international migrants can have very pronounced income discrepancies, transfers from internal migrants can lead to a more balanced distribution of income within the country (Suksomboon, 2008, p. 478; IOM, 2011, p. 58). Also, economic remittances can have ambivalent effects on households through changed patterns of consumption and investment, as for example some households loose productive assets such as land due to the loss of labor of a migrating household member (Garip, 2014, p. 673). Especially for very poor households, internal migrants’ economic remittances do not always offset the loss in labor of an active household member in subsistence agriculture (UNESCO *et al.*, 2018). The impact of social remittances on rural livelihood change in Thailand has not yet been studied in great detail, apart from the study by Peth & Sakdapolrak (2019) presented in chapter 2.4.3 .

¹⁰ The monthly household income in the provinces in the North (THB 19,046) and North-East (THB 20,271) is less than half of the amount in the Greater Bangkok area (THB 41,897) (UNTWG, 2019, p. 21).

5 Case Study: Impacts of Social Remittances on Rural Livelihood Change in a Karen Village, Northern Thailand

The following section presents and discusses the empirical study on translocal social remittances and their impact on changes of livelihoods. The findings will be structured by the research questions asked in chapter 2.6.2. Prior, the local context will be introduced by a description of the study area (5.1). This includes the geographical and historical context and the specific village and community structure as well as a simplified livelihood analysis, laying out the livelihoods that currently shape the everyday reality in the village. An elusive introduction to the local context and livelihood activities is deemed as a necessary prerequisite to analyse the changes that are impacted by social remittances. In order of the research questions, the characteristics of migration and translocality in the study area will be presented (5.2), followed by apparent social remittances and their means of transfer (5.3). This leads up to the main research question regarding livelihood changes impacted by social remittances (5.4). The findings on local on-farm and non-farm livelihood changes will be depicted in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities. Further, features of social remittances impacting livelihood change will be portrayed (5.5), including variations of impact according to contextual features as well as barriers that hamper social remittances impact on livelihood change and concluding with the observable materialisation of livelihood change impacted by social remittances in the local space.

5.1 Study Area Description

The following sections introduces the area the case study is situated in, starting with the geographical and historical background on the location of the village and its community, continuing with the current village structure and focusing on the livelihoods present in the village.

5.1.1 Geographical and Historical Context

The study village is based in the mountainous Northern Highlands of Thailand, more specifically in the ethnically diverse district of Mae Chaem, where around 72 % of the districts population belong to one of the four ethnic minorities in the region namely Karen, Hmong, Lisu and Lua, (Badenoch, 2006, pp. 19–20). The remaining part of the population, ethnic Northern Thais, are mostly located in the ‘lowland zone’ (300 –600 m. a. s. l.) while Karen and Lua tend to settle in the midland areas (600 – 1000 m. a. s. l.) and Hmong and Lisu in the highland zones (1000 – 1800 m. a. s. l.). Regarding the history of the area’s settlement, Karen have been known to have come from Myanmar and settling in the region hundreds of years ago, while other ethnic minorities began to populate Mae Chaem in the 1850s, while lowland Thais have been settling in the region since the 1950s (Beaulieu, 2017, p. 30). The mountainous landscape of the area is characterized

by the foothills of the continental Himalayan mountain range, steep hills and hilltops with an altitude of over 600 m. a. s. l.) in most of the district (Beaulieu, 2017, p. 27) and mountain highlands going up over 2,000 m. a. s. l. The steep landscape of sandy clay and clay loam soils leads to “rates of soil erosion that prevent advanced soil development” which results in the districts soils to be “relatively shallow” and with “limited water holding capacity” (Thanapakpawin *et al.*, 2007, p. 216). The village itself is located on a hillside between 1,000 and 1,100 m. a. s. l., surrounded by forested hilltops going up to 1,200 m. a. s. l. and small river valleys as low as 850 m. a. s. l., which are watersheds of the local Yot river, a tributary of the eponymous Mae Chaem river. The climate in the province is “defined by large variations in seasonal and annual rainfall that are influenced by Pacific-born typhoons, superimposed on the south-west monsoon. The orographic effect induces an altitudinal increase of spatial rainfall distribution. The average annual temperature ranges from 20 to 34 °C and the rainy season is from May to October.” (Thanapakpawin *et al.*, 2007, p. 216). As a result of these features, the forest vegetation in the area is a gradation of moist temperate forests in the highlands, coniferous evergreen forests in the midlands and dry dipterocarp forests in the lowlands (Beaulieu, 2017, pp. 28–29).

Due to the fact that the Mae Chaem watershed sub-basin acts as a major tributary sub-basin of the Ping River, the largest tributary of central Thailand’s important Chao Phraya River (Thanapakpawin *et al.*, 2007, p. 216), the region is of high environmental significance. This also shows when looking at the administrative classification of the Mae Chaem district: the majority of the land area are classified as ‘*National Forest Reserves*’ (79.6%) and ‘*Protected Areas*’ (19 %), where formal land tenure with land title deeds is not permitted. Nearly the whole Mae Suek sub-district, including the location where the village is situated, fall under this regulation (Beaulieu, 2017, p. 25). Additionally, the majority of watersheds (63.9%) in Mae Chaem district, including the ones for the village, are categorised as Class 1 A and B, which entails that only “some agricultural concessions, albeit with strict conditions” are allowed (Ibid., pp. 23-24).

5.1.2 Village and Community Structure

The study site is an ethnic Karen village with very few exceptions and consists of 67 households with a population of around 320 people living in the village for most of the year, with a balanced gender divide among the adult population over 18 years old, while 61 % of the minor population under 18 are male and 39 % female, the average household size being 4,8 people (HH Survey 2019). The village was connected to the road infrastructure of the sub-district through a paved road in 1997 and to the national electrical grid three years later in 2000 as part of governmental infrastructural development that intensified in the region since the 1980s (EX-IN 1). Nowadays, the village is equipped with mobile network and internet connection and a speakerphone system

for general announcements, all houses are electrified, and the vast majority of households own pick-up trucks and/or motorcycles that are used for agricultural work and private purposes. Regarding education facilities, a day care nursery for children between two and four years was established around eight years ago in the centre of the village (EX-HH-IN 8). The school complex close to the main road, which houses a kindergarten for children between four and six years and the elementary school of the village, was founded in 1976 by a Northern Thai teacher who now lives in the village as well and married a local woman (EX-HH-IN 6). The school has around 70 pupils now (TR 1) and was recently extended with the financial help of a Japanese development foundation (EX-HH-IN 6). Children can therefore get elementary and primary education in the village, while secondary education has to be pursued in a village nearby or the province capital.

Right next to the school is the Buddhist temple, a central point for the village community, which is mostly Buddhist nowadays, although Karen traditionally used to follow their own animism cult (EX-HH-IN 1; INT 8). Also, there is an active Christian minority of around twenty people in the village who have a small church close to the main road, which was established through Karen Christians who married into the Buddhist village. Their spouses would sometimes convert to their faith as well. The religious plurality in the village does not seem to be a conflict in the village community (EX-HH-IN 2; INT 8). Buddhist traditions and ceremonies play an important role in the village community as they gather people together and the temple is seen as a pride for the village and a place of education for the youth to learn Buddhist morals (HH-IN 9). Equally important is the deliberate keeping of many Karen traditions rooted in animistic beliefs, such as animal offerings for the farmland during the different periods of cultivation (EX-HH-IN 1) and the ceremony of *Pi Tee Mud Meu*, which is celebrated twice a year. Elders give blessings and tie white strings around the wrists of young people, who often return to the village for this occasion.

“It is rooted in the Karen tradition of every person having a spirit, which is called back and rooted to the village [during the ceremony]. It is important [to do this] when you went around wandering a lot.” (EX-IN 1; EX-HH-IN 1)

Regarding gender structures, the household head under which the house is formally registered is usually male (EX-HH-IN 2). In contrast to this, the house and household is passed down matrilocally from the mother to a daughter, and men usually move into the house of their wives (EX-HH-IN 1). Usually, it is the role of women to propose a marriage and there is no dowry tradition (EX-HH-IN 2). Chores inside the house were often observed to be split, including cooking and child care, as well as agricultural work (HH-IN 1 & 5). When women have very small children that still need nursing, they usually stay at home and participate less in farm work. Traditionally, the role of women was to manage the household and partake in agricultural work, while physical labour intense farm work and work in connection with elephants, including work

migration (see chapter 5.1.3), was seen as the role of men. Women were often bound to the house due to the childbirth of three to five children with only an one- or two-years distance, keeping them occupied with childcare for a longer period of time (EX-HH-IN 1 & 2). Nowadays, most families have two to three children (HH Survey 2019), women therefore engage more in income-earning activities and gender roles in terms of decision-making seem to have become more equalized from the traditional way of a male household head having the sole sovereignty over the household's decisions regarding livelihood activities, income usage, education etc. (HH-IN 4).

The formal structure of the village entails the head of the village (*Por Luang*) as the leader of the village, he or she is elected by the village community every four years and also has a chief deputy, who helps with the tasks. Additionally, they represent the village in the TAO. The head of the village and the deputy have to negotiate between the TAO and the village regarding regulations, regional development plans and strategies as well as care for matters and concerns inside the village. The village head is described as being known for having an honest and transparent style of leadership as well as taking in collective knowledge for making decisions, which shows through his re-election three years ago and other village chiefs coming to him for advice and consultation (INT 2). There is also a communal village fund from which people in the village can take out loans for agricultural investment. It was started through a government initiative which gave the financial basis and is managed by the village chief and his deputy. Interest rates are very low and help farmers to acquire less agricultural debt than with third-party credit-givers, often seen as 'loan sharks' in the community (INT 1; EX-IN 1). By the statement of the village chief and his deputy, the fund is well managed and supported through the touristic activities in the village (see chapter 5.1.3 and 5.4.3) and the level of debt in the village is lower than in other regional villages (INT 2).

5.1.3 Livelihoods

Agriculture

"Q: What do people do here for a living? A: Rai, rai!! (Farming, farming!!)" (EX-IN 1)

Not surprisingly, agriculture is practiced by all households in the village and therefore a highly existential livelihood, referred to as *Rai* ('uphill farmland', 'mountain fields') (EX-IN 1). Rice cultivation is the basis for the daily food consumption and grown in two varieties in the villages surrounding the village, either as *Khao Rai* (rain-fed upland rice) or paddy rice, *Khao Na* (wet rice grown in rice terraces), shown in Figure 5 (next page). Both varieties of rice depend on the heavy rainfall of the 'wet' season' from May until October as there are no artificial irrigation systems on the fields of villagers, which is according to two villagers "*not possible in this steep landscape*" (EX-IN 1; HH-IN 6). Due to the terrain, using mechanical harvesting equipment apart from small ploughing machines is not possible on many of the fields. Rice terraces were gradually established

by past generations around thirty to forty years ago along the watershed in the lower region of the valley in the area, as the paddies need a natural irrigation source (EX-HH-IN 4). This is in line with the observations Walker (2001, p. 152) made, regarding paddy rice as an “adaptive agricultural intensification” increasingly established by many Karen villagers since the 1960s in Northern Thailand in addition to their ‘traditional’ agricultural practice of planting *Khao Rai* in a rotational cultivation. Although all families plant both kinds of rice to secure their nutrition, most have to also buy rice from the market to meet their households’ levels of consumption (EX-IN 1).

On the *Rai* and in little gardens around the houses, other vegetables for household consumption are grown as well such as beans, garlic, chilies, onions, eggplant varieties, leafy greens and two varieties of corn for human consumption, *Khao Pood Khao Salee* (‘wheat corn’) and *Khao Pood Khao Neao* (‘sticky corn’). Some households in the village cultivate fruit trees in their surrounding for own or animal consumption such as banana,



Figure 5: Rice agriculture in the village: Mountain rice 'Khao Rai' and household consumption vegetables (lower third), paddy rice in terrace fields (middle third), protected forest (upper third). Source: own image, 2019.

mango, pomelo, dragon fruit, jackfruit and passion fruit, but none of them are used to sell and generate income. Additionally, most families keep chicken and pigs for in relatively small numbers for own consumption and ritual purposes (EX-HH-IN 1). Water buffalos are also cultivated by some households, but not for own consumption (HH-IN 1) but rather as a safety asset as they can easily be sold and transformed into cash money if there is the need for it (INT 9). They were traditionally cultivated for farm work and to plough rice fields, but nowadays manual mechanical appliances are used to prepare fields (INT 2).

In the mountain rice fields of the village community, shifting cultivation is still practiced (INT 2; HH-IN 7). Through a collective assessment it is decided which *Rai* will be used as farmland during the year and which will be fallow. This way, fields and their soil have around five to ten years to recover and become forest-covered again before they are cleared and burned as a preparation for new crop cultivation. It was explained that the fallow period can vary, depending on other factors such as the state of regrow and recover of the field and the income necessity of a family. This shifting cultivation system of slash-and-burn agriculture with limited land resources is under

pressure. Not only is the increasing demand for financial income from cash crops shortening the fallow periods, but it is also affected by climate change due to the dependency on rainfall patterns, which are getting more and more delayed. For instance, the wet season in this region would usually start mid-April, but in 2019 heavy rainfall would not occur until the end of May. An adaption strategy for the shortage of water is to use fertilizer, which used to be made from animal faeces, but is now often substituted by chemical fertilizers. In this area, *khao rai* seems to be mostly grown without it, as farmers noticed that “*the soil goes bad when chemical fertilizer is used*” (INT 2).

The omnipresent cash crop in the village is maize (shown in Figure 6), which is grown by almost every household doing agriculture. It was introduced to the village’ households around ten years ago by the major Thai agribusiness CPF (*Charoen Pokphand Foods*) through middle men (EX-IN 4) and although it does not embed smallholders in contract farming, it is part of a larger agroindustrial structure and distributing system. This allows farmers to buy seeds and fertilizers



Figure 6: Maize cash crops (lower third) in the field of local villagers. In the background: 'brown hills' from maize cultivation (middle third) and protected forest (upper third).
Source: own image, 2019

as well as agrochemicals needed for cultivation through a middle man, who also guarantees to buy back the produced maize from the farmer. In this system, the farmer does not have to pay for the equipment up front, but rather these costs are deducted from the sales earnings. This way, the farmer does not accumulate no or less debt (HH-IN 20), depending on the market prices of corn, as there is no need for a credit to pay for the equipment upfront and the price fluctuations are not as high as they are with other agricultural crops. On the other hand, revenues for the farmers from growing maize are quite small compared to other cash crops (INT 1 & 9; EX-HH-IN 4). Maize is very labour intensive to cultivate and often perceived as unsustainable due to the yearly replanting as well as the heavy use of agrochemicals, which is unavoidable in order to cash-crop maize profitably (EX-HH-IN 4). A young return migrant and farmer associated observed soil degradation, which ensues environmental impacts such as higher risks of floods and landslides, with the use of large amounts of agrochemical fertilizers and pesticides in maize cultivation:

“The soil where maize is planted goes bad, I could pull out the trees with just one hand” (HH-IN 20),

Another local resident linked the practice of using agrochemicals for maize with the lower watershed close to the village being unsuitable for consumption (HH-IN 2).

Additionally, the drained soil results in lower yields of maize every year and pressures farmers to enlarge their fields in the following year to earn the same income from maize cultivation (INT 9), which is theoretically not possible due to the ‘*National Forest Reserve*’ (see chapter 5.1.1) status the land surrounding the village has. While it allows for agricultural land to be inherited by children, it can’t be formally acquired or enlarged with a land title deed. The clearing of trees and forest for maize cultivation, leading to ‘brown hills’ is seen as problematic by older and younger villagers alike (INT 9; HH-IN 13). The outlook that there is no alternative to growing maize if one does not have the financial means to invest in other forms of agriculture, such as fruit orchards, which take around three to five years before they can generate income for the household, is seen as problematic as well. Additionally, the bodily protection standard against harmful side-effects of the heavy usage of irritating agrochemicals was observed as rather low, with pesticide spray tanks being used without adequate protection of eyes and airways and unsafe storage of them inside the houses. The popularity of maize as a cash crop was associated with the high risk-aversion of villagers after bad experiences with other cash crops which were cultivated in the community before and led to high levels of debt (EX-HH-IN 4, INT 1). The prices of vegetable crops fluctuate a lot in the regional market, making it hard to predict the yearly income and leading to debt (EX-IN 4; INT 1), therefore cash-cropping growing vegetables was seen as like “*playing the lottery*” for income (HH-IN 20). Cabbage was given as an example, a crop that needs even higher inputs of agrochemicals than maize, which was perceived as very harmful for the health of farmers:

“You would get a ‘drunk headache’ from all the chemicals when spraying the cabbage.” (EX-IN 4).

There are a few agricultural particularities brought by in-migrants, for example one villager has a rooster farm (EX-HH-IN 6) while another one grows pumpkins as cash crops (HH-IN 17), but these practices were not taken on by other villagers (see section 5.5.2). New branches of on-farm agricultural livelihoods such as organic agroforestry and coffee cultivation were at an interesting development stage in the village during the time of the field work and will be further explained in section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 of this thesis.

Elephant Livelihoods

“The brother of Ka Loi, one of the first settlers from Myanmar who founded the village, had an elephant, he had bought it from Laos. [...] I don’t know why, but in my village, we are really good at keeping and breeding elephants. [...] I am proud to have ‘elephant fingers!’” (EX-HH-IN 1)

This statement by the village eldest and ‘intellectual’ demonstrates the strong traditional and cultural ties this community has with animal husbandry of domesticated Asian elephants, a common cultural phenomenon all over South and Southeast Asia (Lair, 1997, p. ‘Domesticated elephants’). In Thailand, it is mostly found in tribal communities (Ibid., p. ‘Tribal keepers’) and Karen communities have been described by anthropologists as being genuinely kind in their

relationship with the animals and oriented towards breeding (Ibid., p. ‘Karen’). In total, there are around 60 to 70 elephants owned by people living the village (EX-HH-IN 1). They are ‘kept’ in the families as assets and are usually inherited from generation to generation, passed down from the parents to their male and female children. Many elephant owners describe them as a ‘*part of the family*’ (TR 1; HH-IN 8), which is understandable regarding their life spans of up to 70 years, being close to those of humans. Also, ‘owning’ of elephants can be shared among siblings, which in practice means that the responsibility for the elephant and earning from their ‘employment’ rotates every one or two years between family members (EX-IN 1, HH-IN 1).

Elephants are connected to a multitude of the village household’s livelihoods. If a family owns elephants, they generally have to generate financial income through them to meet the animal’s costs of living, which are perceived as quite high and include expenses for medical care and fodder (EX-IN 1). Often, elephants are ‘rented’ to a *Baan Chang* (Elephant Camp) for tourists, which are popular all over Thailand and especially in the Northern Provinces (Tipprasert, 2002, p. 157). Through this ‘employment’, the elephant generates income for the owners, while they also have to equip the animal with a *Kwan Chang*¹¹ (shown in Figure 7), who is traditionally male and continues to be so in the majority of modern elephant keeping¹². A member of the family is favoured for this



Figure 7: Elephant Livelihoods: A young elephant born in the village is trained by one of the families *Kwan Chang* to participate in the local elephant foundation, which keeps elephants in a semi-captive environment in the forest. Source: own image, 2019

position because elephant keeping is seen as a ‘family affair’ (EX-HH-IN 2), it can be the owner himself or any other male kin who is trained in this profession (son, nephew, in-law etc.) (TR 1). Additionally, feeders who collect the grass that is fed to the animals have to be employed in the camps by the owner. Also, the elephant needs a ‘manager’ for its economic activity (EX-IN 1), which is usually the owner but not in all cases e.g. when the owner is an elderly person (TR 1). Therefore, elephants are not only an economic asset for a household in terms of income generation, but also often employ one or more members of the household or family because of *Kwan Chang* activities surrounding the elephant. Even when the family does not currently ‘own’ an elephant due to the sharing system among siblings, men educated as *Kwan Chang* can work in this

¹¹ A Mahout, a caretaker and keeper of domesticated elephants. They are usually trained for this occupation in an informal family setting from a very early age on, such as nine or ten years (EX-HH-IN 2; HH-IN 8).

¹² In the study village, all *Kwan Changs* were male (HH Survey 2019), and it was pronounced that women do not participate in this branch of work (HH-IN 8). Therefore, it is fair to assume that female exceptions are very rare.

profession for the family elephant or for other elephant owners in *Baan Chang*. The income from for an elephant owner in a *Baan Chang* is a fixed amount per month, but the labour costs of the *Kwan Chang* (around 40% of the set rate) have to be deducted (INT 3). The income for the elephant owner can be irregular when the operators of the camps don't pay the full amount, which seems to happen sometimes. The camp operators don't give specific explanations for the lower payment and, according to an elephant owner, sometimes say that there is less business, "*but we know there are tourists*", implying that this explanation is not the truth and there is a degree of uncertainty when elephants are 'employed' at the elephant camps (Ibid.). Generally, the labour of being a *Kwan Chang* in the *Baan Chang* is regarded as hard work not only because it is physically demanding, but also due to the fact of that one can become very lonely, being away from their home and family. It is also seen by many parents as being unsafe for the mainly young men employed there, as there seem to be drug abuse problems in some camps due to boredom and loneliness (HH-IN 9). Often men stop to work as *Kwan Chang* in the camps when they start to have a family with young children or when they "*get too old for this job*" (EX-HH-IN 2).

Another elephant livelihood was established *inside* the village around nine years ago. A globally operating international volunteer tourism network came to the village and set up an elephant conservation project which is based on the idea that the animals should stay in the natural forests in a semi-captive environment instead of the *Baan Chang* and volunteer tourists should come and stay in the village to see the animals in their natural environment without direct interaction and do community work as well (EX-IN 2). This form of eco-tourism has been growing in the village, as another conservation foundation was founded in the village in cooperation with a foreign project partner. The process of these tourism developments, which involved social remittances, will be further explained in section 5.4.3 of this thesis. Elephant livelihoods were created inside the village through this process, as the two tourist organisations 'rent' the elephants from their owners for a fixed rate per month (20,000 THB), which then usually have a young family member working as a *Kwan Chang* with the organisation (EX-IN 2). Nowadays, there is also a big celebration for the elephants held annually, where they are offered a buffet of fruits and vegetables. It also includes the tying of strings around the elephant's ears to root their spirits to the village (see chapter 5.1.2) and has become a major touristic attraction of the village with a lot of visitors coming to attend the celebration and see the elephants (INT 2; EX-HH-IN 1)

Non-Farm Livelihoods

Other livelihoods in the village are also connected to the establishment of tourism in the village, especially having a *homestay* to take in guests coming to the village through the two tourist organisations and providing them with three meals a day. Most work activities regarding the homestay are organized by female household members, but men help with the chores (e.g. cooking) as well. Ten homestays in the



Figure 8: *Non-Farm Livelihoods: ‘Homestay Standard’ information sign at the entrance of the village to notify tourists about the opportunity to stay in a family’s home that meets quality requirements of the national ministry of tourism.*

Source: own image, 2019

village are certified by the Thai ministry of tourism to have ‘Thai Homestay Standard’, the others are associated members (EX-HH-IN 2). The certification is an important asset to market the tourism projects in the village (see Figure 8). Currently, 33 households (49% of all households in the village) offer homestays, especially those who are within walking distance of the tourist organisation bases. This aspect excludes some houses which are located further up the village and along the main road from this livelihood activity. The reason being the organisations argumentation that it is unsafe to have tourists walking that far after evening activities, especially in the rainy season when road conditions can be bad and power outages can lead to insufficient road light (INT 1). The income from having a homestay is irregular for the households, as it is dependent on the seasonally changing numbers of tourists who come to the village (HH-IN 13). One of the organisations also employs ‘community liaisons’ among the villagers, which help with the allocation and administration of tourists. They also hire other local people for occasional activities with the tourists, such as basket weaving and bamboo handicraft (EX-IN 2). Two households also rent rooms to the staff of the tour operator on a monthly basis, which generates less income, but also involves less work as it does not include cooking meals (HH Survey 2019). There is also a guesthouse operated close to the main road which takes in guests who visit the area as a part of a touristic motorcycle route of the region (HH-IN 28).

Additionally, there are four shops operating in the village and three near the main road, which mainly sell soft drinks, snacks, groceries, alcohol and other small consumer goods. Additionally, there are two seasonal cookshops and a smoothie bar in the village. All of these enterprises are mainly operated by women (see section 5.4.4) and a coffee shop opened by a coffee grower (see section 5.4.2). Some women in the village also weave and sew traditional Karen clothing and bags which is popular among tourists and sold at the tourist organisation every other week. It is not as popular as an income generating strategy as it seems to be with other Karen communities and most women weave for themselves and their relatives (HH-IN 2; HH-IN 19). Apart from these occupations, some households own small construction machineries such as tractors and dump

trucks (HH-IN 15) which are rented out to other villagers inside and outside the community, one farmer also is a self-taught carpenter and works in this sector besides his farm work (HH-IN 19), while another one used to work as an electrician and still does from time to time. The local nursery also employs women from the village, while teachers at the school are allocated by the education ministry and come from other provinces (TR 1; EX-HH-IN 8).

Social Capital

Social capital in the community is mainly based on strong family ties as well as reciprocity and trust. Household members living together in the village mostly use ‘one pocket’ for financial capital (HH-IN 1, 2 & 4). Family relations expand through the whole village, and the notion of ‘family’ encompasses wider connections than just immediate relatives and also includes cousins as well as in-laws, which sometimes also live in houses close to each other (TR 1). Frequent visitations and gathering together is very common, during these visits’ agricultural products from the gardens such as fruits are also shared from time to time. When parents out-migrate for work, children are incorporated into wider family structures (EX-HH-IN 2). It has to be noted that the connection between parent and children as well as siblings seem to be particularly strong in terms of feelings of obligation, which has been described in studies regarding family relations in Thailand (see e.g. Suksomboon, 2008; Hoang and Yeoh, 2015) and also has been self-described in contrast to the understanding of family obligation in other cultures:

“When I get old, I have my relatives to care for me [...] It’s not like in Europe, where old people go to retirement homes, here they stay in the community and get cared for by their children” (HH-EX-IN 2)

This importance of family ties can be shown through different examples, such as the strong commitment some adult children have to help their parents in substance rice farming during the rice planting season. Several young migrants who either work or study in other locations return to the village in the wet season (HH-IN 1; HH-IN 3; HH-IN 9) to help with the labour-intensive planting of rice seedlings in the paddy fields and the sowing of rice on the *rai*:

“I want to help [with the rice planting] because it can only be done once a year [...] It is important for my family.” (TR 1)

Older people who used to work as Kwan Chang outside the village also frequently mentioned they would come back for the rice-planting season (EX-HH-IN 1). There were also cases where adult children would stay in the village and keep helping the parents with agricultural work because one of several siblings was asked to do so (HH-IN 16; HH-IN 24) or return after the death of a parent to help the remaining parent with the family farm (HH-IN 1). Adult children often put their own work or projects aside if they “*know my family needs me*” (HH-IN 26). Additionally, family and

community members help each other during phases of labour-intensive agricultural work, such as rice and maize planting and harvesting season (HH-IN 13), a practice called *Ma Do Ma Ga*.

The establishment of two ‘community enterprises’ rather than privately owned enterprises show the general importance of community in the villages society. It was described by the local head of one of the enterprises as “*the Karen culture of sticking together*” (EX 9), when he was asked why he rather started his project as a community enterprise than as a sole entrepreneur. The social capital of family and community ties can therefore be transformed into other forms of capital.

In conclusion, agriculture in terms of subsistence farming and cash-cropping is unarguably the most important livelihood in the village, but it was early on diversified through livelihood activities connected to the keeping of elephants. These non-farm activities also play a substantial role in livelihood portfolios of many households in the community. Other non-farm livelihood activities are increasing in the village due to the emerging tourism in recent years. Sufficient access to natural capital such as fertile agricultural land plays an important part in the food security of households and also serves as the basis for financial capital through the practice of cash-cropping, which gained a more dominant function among the community in the past decades. It facilitated the shifting of the village society towards consumption-orientation, which shows e.g. through the high attainment of pick-up trucks, other vehicles and consumer goods such as electronic appliances (HH-IN 20 & 28). Natural capital in the form of agricultural land can only be inherited, while social capital in the form of reciprocal social structures and close family ties form the basis for generating food security and financial income from agriculture, as human capital is substantial for the largely manual labour-intensive form of agriculture practiced in the village.

5.2 Migration and Translocality

RQ 1: How is migration and translocality characterized in the study area?

When scrutinizing the village community in terms of migration and translocality quantitatively (see Table 2), the conducted household survey revealed¹³ that the majority of the village’s households (82 %) have experienced out-migration phenomena¹⁴ for educational or work purposes in the past and/or present. All of these are happening or have happened within Thailand and can therefore be classified as internal migration movements, which makes a translocal perspective on the village’s households (see chapter 2.4.2) applicable. 57 % of all households have experienced work

¹³ All percentages regarding migration in the village mentioned in this section are drawn from the data of the HH Survey 2019, if not cited differently.

¹⁴ ‘Migration phenomena’ are understood as mobility movements where a person leaves a place of origin (the village) to go to a place of destination (another location outside the village) with either the intention of staying or even relocating to this place for a longer period of time or for a specific purpose (e.g. work, education).

migration in the past and/or present, while 58 % of all households have experienced educational migration in the past and/or present (33 % of all households have experienced both types of migration). When looking closer into the contexts of work migration, the data shows that 39 % of all households in the village have experienced work migration in occupations directly related with elephants or elephant tourism in the past and/or present while 37 % of all households have experienced work migration that is not connected to elephants in the past and/or present (18 % have experienced both types of work migration). At the moment of the study, 64 % of all households had at least one member that is currently migrating for work or educational purposes (48 % had at least two members currently migrating). Of these households, 70 % experience work migration, while 49 % experience educational migration.

These numbers conclusively prove that migration for educational or work purposes are a widely experienced phenomenon either in the past or present (or both) in the all-over village, which is interesting in regard to how ‘out-migration’ is perceived by the villagers themselves. For example, the village head (a return migrant himself) estimated that around 20 % of the population out migrate to work (EX-IN 1), probably not including people in his prediction who migrate non-permanently, moving back and forth between the village (place of origin) and their work place (place of destination) numerous times within a year and those who have migrated but then returned back to the village again. Additionally, the interviews revealed that rural in-migration through marriage plays an important role in the village as well. Though it seems that many people marry inside the village, there are numerous households who experience in-migration through marriage. This feature was not quantitatively recorded but the interviews and data from the household survey show that at least 19 households (28 %) currently have members based that in-migrated through marriage and now live in the village, and it is safe to assume that the actual number is higher.

Table 2: Overview of migration in the study village. Source: HH Survey 2019.

Migration phenomena (past and/or present)	Nr. of HH experiencing phenomena (N=67)		
Out-migration for work and/or education	55	(82 %)	
Out-migration for work	38	(57 %)	Out-migration for both 22 (33 %)
Out-migration for education	39	(58 %)	
Work migration related to elephants	26	(39 %)	
Work migration not related to elephants	25	(37 %)	
Current migration phenomena (August 2019)			
At least one HH member is migrating	43	(64 %)	
At least two HH members are migrating	32	(48 %)	
Work migration	30		
Educational migration	21		

5.2.1 Understanding Migration

To *understand* migration phenomena in the community, the numbers provided have to be linked to qualitative information, which could be done due to the manageable sample size of 67 households and the fact that the survey was done in a face-to-face interview situation, allowing for further questions regarding migration phenomena among the villages' households.

The household survey shows that 71 % of past or present 'migrant households' experience educational migration phenomena, which seems logical as there are no facilities inside the village for higher education past the primary level. For secondary school, children from the village either visit the school in a bigger nearby village or in the district capital Mae Chaem. Both are usually boarding schools, with the children either returning every weekend or less often. Some children are also in secondary schools in other districts, in most cases one parent is employed at this school or works in the district as well. Some boys in the village visit a secondary school in the neighbouring province Lamphun, which is possible through a soccer scholarship and entails playing soccer in a junior team to substitute for the costs of school. For academic education, most people that do or did so go to the Province Capital of Chiang Mai, where many universities and colleges are located at. Especially popular among the villagers is a university which is run by a Buddhist convent, as it is less expensive than other universities and even more so for boys who are practicing the life of a Buddhist monk. The studies at this university seem to entail community work as well as religious education. Few people also study at university or college in the northern city of Chiang Rai, while some people also pursue higher education in Bangkok, but it is less popular due to the greater spatial distance to the village.

When examining work migration, 68 % of past and present 'work migration households' have at least one household member whose migration is linked to elephant livelihood activities. They can be directly and indirectly connected to elephants, such as working as a *Kwan Chang* or as an employee in another section of a *Baan Chang* (e.g. tourist guide, grass collector). For this kind of work, most people from the village go to an elephant camp in the province of Mae Wang, which is located around 2-3 hours by car from the village, but also to Mae Tang, Hang Dong and other districts in the north of Thailand where there is tourism in connection with elephants. They come home to visit the village every three to four months or less often. Many young *Kwan Chang* return to the village for the rice-planting season. This kind of 'elephant work migration' often stops either when the *Kwan Chang* starts to have a family or is physically not able to do the demanding job anymore (see chapter 5.1.3). When looking at migration phenomena historically, 'elephant work migration' has played an important role in the village for a long time, as a numerous older villagers mentioned that they had worked in the tropical timber logging sector with the help of elephants

(EX-HH-IN 1; EX-HH-IN 3; HH-IN 11), which used to be a very common and widespread income generating activity among the Karen population in the forest areas of Northern Thailand and Myanmar (Lair, 1997, p. 'Past logging'). As all occupations linked directly with elephants, it was specific to men. An older *Kwan Chang* (EX-HH-IN 3), who had worked in this field, described it as a physically hard and sometimes very dangerous occupation. He said he felt that especially groups that could not read, for example most hilltribes at the time, were easily exploited by logging companies. A company would usually get a concession for logging a specific area of forest for timber such as teak and the workers would go there with their elephants and stay until the concession was finished, which meant staying away from home for long periods of time, up to three or four years. Because of the negative environmental impacts and the bad and often illegal working conditions, a legal ban on logging was implemented in Thailand in 1989 (Lair, 1997, p. 'Past logging'), which stripped a lot of elephant owners from this income generating activity and left them with an elephant to feed. Some went on to work in Myanmar and Laos, where logging was not prohibited, but working conditions seem to have not been very good which is why it was not taken up anymore shortly after (EX-HH-IN 3). A lot of elephant owners went on to work in elephant camps, as it has been described in section 5.1.3.

Other work migration among village households is mostly in the tourism, service and healthcare sector in urban centres (e.g. HH-IN 10 & 25) and less in the industrial and manufacturing sector. Chiang Mai is the most popular destination for such work migration (HH-Survey 2019). Numerous educational and work migrants mentioned that they opted to migrate to this city because it is less far away (e.g. EX-HH-IN 4; HH-IN 10) and therefore assumingly more easily accepted by parents. This could be related with the perception of migrants who live in more distant locations such as Bangkok as being 'more far away' not only spatially, but also in terms of family ties. This could be linked with their more limited possibility to visit, as distant and digital communication is not affected by spatial distance.

"I preferred to work in Chiang Mai, although I studied in Bangkok, but there it is too busy! Also, Chiang Mai is closer to home." (HH-IN 26)

This quote is by a return migrant who studied accounting in Bangkok and started to work in this field in the capital, but then decided to go to Chiang Mai and work in an occupational sector unrelated to her studies before returning to the village. It is an example of how family ties influence the choice on place of destination of out-migrants.

The previous case also illustrates the correlation of work migration to urban centres and educational migration that was found in 34 % of past or present 'work migration households'. Interviews revealed that this is due to the fact that many young people who pursue education at a university or college have to pay back student loans they were granted and need a regular salary

to do so. Seasonal dependent income from agricultural on-farm work is unsuitable for this financial need and rural off-farm labour is not seen as an option by educational migrants. Employments that grant a monthly income are more widely available in the city than in the village, even if it is not in the migrants' field of study but e.g. in the unskilled service industry (HH-IN 1; HH-IN 3). Some educational migrants then stay and consolidate their life in the city, but there is also a number of educational migrants who return back home. They often do so after working in bigger cities for a few years (HH-IN 20 & 26), but not long enough to have 'built a life' there in regard to activities which would intensify and consolidate their connection to the place of destination (e.g. marrying, starting a family, buying property). Female educational migrants with no consolidation in the city often return to the village when they want to start a family, because they perceive it as being easier than in the city and with other family members participating in childcare (HH-IN 6, 24 & 30).

5.2.2 Attitudes towards Migration

The opinion of older and parent generations regarding migration is differentiated among the villagers and mostly dependent on the fact if the person has had migration experience themselves. A woman, who never migrated herself but is the mother of two migrants who live in southern Thailand and one return migrant made a remark about her feelings towards migration.

"As a mother it is hard when the kids are away, especially with the boy. I was always worrying he would not behave well while being away." (HH-IN 16)

By saying this, she implied she was afraid he could get bad influence (e.g. drink too much) or do other things that are not good in her regard while living in the city. On the other hand, villagers who have had migration experiences themselves often connotate it more positively or are more open to it. An example is this quote by a young return migrant, who came back to the village to start a family after working in Chiang Mai for a few years.

"My daughter can do whatever she wants, I don't want her to stay at home." (HH-IN 5)

She described herself as being "very attached to my mother", therefore choosing a long distant high-school education so she could stay with her in the village. When she decided to gain work experience in Chiang Mai, her brother, who had previously stayed and worked in the city, had to come back to the village and stay with the family to help with agriculture. Now both live in separate households in the village again, but for their children's future they don't mention any preference for or against migration to urban areas (HH-IN 5; HH-IN 19). The brother mentioned that he sees rural-to-urban migration as a normal event in a lifetime of a person from the countryside.

"It is common for young people to go and see what the city is like [...] I worked in Chiang Mai just for the experience but found out I like it better to live here." (HH-IN 19)

Sometimes parents also wish for their children to gain higher education and work in other fields than agriculture, because they perceive farm work as very hard and low-earning themselves (HH-IN 29). A couple, whose son is studying in high school, made the following remark about farming:

“People who study don’t have to do this kind of work. [...] When my child studies, it can help me when I get older myself.” (INT 11)

Educational migration is then also seen by parents as a way to have higher financial security for themselves when they get older. Migration and translocality, including the practice of sending monetary remittances is therefore also perceived as strengthening resilience, not only for the migrating individual, but for other members of the household (INT 11; HH-IN 29). Through her own experience, a mother of two daughters and wife of an in-migrant, wants her children to either study and work in the non-farm sector or pursue a different route when doing agriculture:

“There will be less people involved in agricultural work because of studying [...] I don’t want my kids to do [maize] cash crops [...] If they want, they can do integrated farming.” (EX-HH-IN 7)

In conclusion, educational migration in the village seems to have increased in the last decades due to the aspiration for higher education many young people and parents have (e.g. EX-HH-IN 4; HH-IN 29) and the generally rising educational attainment among the village community. Currently, 31% of all households are experiencing educational migration. Regarding work migration, the community has experienced work migration movements due to the specific elephant context in the village for a very long time and continues to do so as the survey showed. It cannot be said if migration phenomena connected to elephant livelihoods have decreased or increased in the last decades nor predicted how it will develop due to a lack of longitudinal data, but there are young people in the village community who continue to pursue ‘elephant work migration’. For other work migration among the community it is the same case and it seems to be linked with educational migration in some cases, as explained above. Currently, work migration to urban centres (mainly Chiang Mai, less often Bangkok and other cities in the south) or elephant camps in Northern Thailand is present among nearly half (45 %) the communities’ households. In-migration to the village through marriage is also widely happening in the community and causing cultural changes, e.g. the emergence of a Christian community in the village (EX-IN 1; EX-HH-IN 2). There are also present translocal ties in families where migrants live translocally, splitting their life between the village and a place of destination, usually an urban centre such as Chiang Mai (EX-HH-IN 2; HH-IN 15) or a *Baan Chang* (HH-IN 17). The emerging translocal fields from these connections as well as from return migration and in-migration allow for the translocal practice of transferring social remittances, as the next section will demonstrate.

5.3 Social Remittances

RQ 2: What types of social remittances are prevalent in the study area?

As mentioned in the previous section, a translocal space is established through the widely occurring migration phenomena among the village society. As explained in chapter 2.3.2, social remittances can be categorized as *intangible* (reflections on norms, values, different viewpoints, perceptions of self, social networks) and *incorporated* (new skills, personal knowledge, concrete innovations, know-how). They can manifest in the everyday environment and practices, therefore perpetuating other influences (or being the gateway) of cultural, social and livelihood change in the village. The following section aims to highlight social remittances that could be observed in households that experience migration phenomena.

5.3.1 Incorporated Social Remittances

Incorporated skills can be acquired by working in a specific job during the migration period. An example are the cases of two young local return migrants: they both worked in the food service sector in Chiang Mai and opened small businesses in the village after their return. One of them worked in a juice and coffee bar in Chiang Mai University, and opened a similar shop in the village, which is popular among young people and tourists, as it caters to their taste (HH-IN 5 & 19). Another one worked in a bakery and runs a seasonal shop preparing smoothies and small snacks such as crepes (HH-IN 26) (see 5.4.4). Through her work in the city she gained the skill of baking and was exposed to other gastronomic enterprise ideas:

“I learned how to bake cakes in a bakery in Chiang Mai, but I saw all the mobile crepe shops being busy. An older colleague from the bakery did it as a side job, and I consulted with him how to do it.” (HH-IN 26)

For another young woman, it was a comparable case, as she worked in a shop selling clothes while studying in college in Mae Chaem. Back in the village, she opted for opening a snack shop because she *“had the experience of working in a shop”*. Another return migrant who is one of the few who worked in the industrial sector as an electrician on construction sites in Bangkok, said he used this incorporated skill to do electrical work in the district, which would earn him good income, but he stopped a few years ago because he doesn’t want to do it anymore (EX-IN 9).

Other incorporated social remittances are personal knowledge, which is acquired during migration through education or exposure. Exemplarily, a woman who went to a vocational school for gastronomic professions as her higher education plans to open a bakery shop at a strategic point close to the school and the main road (HH-IN 6). Similarly, but in another field of occupation, a young woman from the village who wants to do community development work *“because I know that families in hill tribes face a lot of problems”*, learned to gain deeper knowledge of social

problems in rural communities through studying social work at a university in Chiang Mai. By being able to trace conflicts to root causes and find context-fitting solutions and knowing how to practically tackle them in the community, she hopes her educational knowledge can help “*to develop the community*” when she returns to the village, which she plans to do (HH-IN 9).

In-migrants from rural areas also have incorporated knowledge on different agricultural practices and crops, as three examples show. The first one is an in-migrant from a nearby region where coffee has been grown since a long time. When he came to the village, he revitalized former coffee trees in his father-in-law’s land because he “*knows how to do it from [his] own village*”, which is starting to have an impact on the village’s agricultural practices (see chapter 5.4.2). Similarly, the husband of a local woman comes from a village who also grows pumpkin, and he continues to do so in this village “*because there they grow it for ten years, so I thought here I can do it too*” (HH-IN 17). As a last example, an ethnic Thai in-migrant who studied at an agricultural school and a teaching college, came to the village to teach and develop the local school over 40 years ago. He married a local woman and is now retired as a teacher and breeds roosters, which is according to him “*Thai tradition*”, in the Karen village it is accepted but not picked up by other villagers although the online trading of roosters for ‘cock fights’ is quite profitable according to him.

Regarding ‘elephant work migration’, people who went to *Baan Changs* gained the skill of working with foreign tourists interested in elephants, which is an important ability when keeping in mind the emerging tourism in the village. They know how to treat and care for tourists in an elephant tourism setting in terms of safety measures, thinking about habits that could lead to misunderstanding and communication.

“We have the experience for taking care of Farang [foreigners from western countries] from working in elephant camps with them.” (EX-IN 12)

Additionally, a *Kwan Chang* explained how he learned about elephant healthcare in the camps when autopsying elephants that had died young without any indicating symptoms. Together with veterinarians in the camps, he found the reason of death to be the unvaried diet of grass they have in captive environments, which further gave him a desire to change life circumstances for the animals. This influenced the establishment of tourism in the village (see chapter 5.4.3).

A man who in-migrated to the village by marriage migration explained that during his time as a *Kwan Chang* he got the skills on how to establish and run a guesthouse from his work experience in a *Baan Chang* in Mae Wang, where a friend of his operated one. It gave him the idea to do the same and he decided to do so when he moved to his wife’s village to resettle in the countryside as he liked “*meeting people from all over*” when he was working outside the village (HH-IN 28).

5.3.2 Intangible social remittances

The previous example shows the difficulty of drawing a sharp line between *incorporated* and intangible remittances in practice. While the mentioned participant had gained practical knowledge of operating a tourist accommodation by observing hotels in the city and participating in his friend's guesthouse in Mae Wang, he had also gained the desire to be surrounded by people from different areas. He then put his incorporated knowledge and his intangible desire into practice upon returning to the village by building and opening a guesthouse. But the impact of social remittances goes further. Prior to being a *Kwan Chang*, he had worked in Bangkok for over ten years in a supermarket of the *Royal Project*¹⁵. The principles of *sufficiency economy*¹⁶, which are the projects guidelines, influenced him to start his own organic farming project, which was the actual reason why he wanted to return back to the village. His work experience equipped him with the business administration skills he needs for profitably running this venture, which is why he diversified in other areas than agriculture and opened a shop, a small garage for motorcycle and car repairs and the guesthouse which aims at a different customer group than the homestays in the village and is mostly visited by urban Thai or motorcycle tourists (HH-IN 28).

Another, similar example of social remittances was observed in the case of a now translocal educational and work migrant, who comes back to the village nearly every weekend. He went to a vocational college to study business administration and majored in this discipline. Additionally, he has been working in Chiang Mai at the library of *Maejo University*¹⁷ and has been exposed to ideas regarding sustainability and green economy that are gathering at this place due to the institutes research interests and guiding principles. He transferred these ideas and values to the village through his own organic farming project, which was inspired by a sustainability workshop at his workplace. Through his studies and work experience in business administration, he knows how to profitably run an enterprise and therefore plans to not solely focus on agricultural production but to diversify his project by offering accommodation in the fruit orchard for “*nature enthusiast from the city*”. He gained knowledge of the market for organic agricultural products and this kind of eco-tourism through his work at the university library, which exposed him to this ‘eco-

¹⁵ The *Royal Project Foundation* was established in 1969 by the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej “to develop and improve the economic and living standards of the hill tribe peoples in the north by using cash crops to replace opium cultivation and preserve the forests and environment.” (Pipattanawong, 2015, p. 15)

¹⁶ “*Sufficiency Economy* is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as the overriding principle [...]. This applies to conduct at the level of the individual, families, corporations, and communities, as well as to the choice of a balanced development strategy for the nation so as to modernize in line with the forces of globalization while shielding against inevitable shocks and excesses that arise. Sufficiency means moderation and due consideration in all modes of conduct, as well as the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks.” (Pruetipibultham, 2010, pp. 100–101) It was promoted by the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej since the 1950's as the development mantra for the Kingdom of Thailand.

¹⁷ *Maejo University* in Chiang Mai is an academic institution that focuses on agriculture-based development, nature & environmental conversation, tradition & culture preservation and green & smart technology (Maejo University, 2020)

conscious' part of urban society and potential customers. The knowledge of markets and demand for organic produce makes him an important adviser for other people in the village who are interested in cultivating and selling such products (HH-IN 15). His case is another good example how incorporated and intangible social remittances, stemming from educational and work migration, often go hand in hand when materialising, creating a fruitful interplay in their impacts. Exposure to certain ideas and attitudes in the place of destination play an important role in acquiring intangible social remittances. A young migrant interested in organic agriculture mentioned that he gained knowledge of environmental impacts of monocrops, such as soil degradation through maize cultivation, by participating in information workshops at his university in Chiang Rai, although he studied a different subject unrelated to agricultural studies. He said that *"distance of studying gave me a different perspective"* to reflect mono-crop farming practices in the village and along with the incorporated knowledge from his place of origin on the negative sides of maize cultivation (labour intensive, physically demanding cash crop, not easy to pursue for older people, negative health effects) he developed the desire to change the agricultural practices (HH-IN 20). An in-migrant who works in Mae Chaem at the local health clinic had a similar experience of exposure: through working in the local health sector, he was heavily exposed to people who face health problems due to heavy use of agrochemicals, which made him reconsider the practice of maize cash-cropping practiced in the village as an intangible social remittance, which he transferred to his wife in the village which resulted in both becoming pioneers of agroforestry in the village (EX-HH-IN 7).

Another important intangible social remittance return-migrants and translocal migrants mention is the perception of self and building higher self-esteem through migration experiences. This gives them ideas and desires *"to do something else than agriculture"* (EX-HH-IN 2; HH-IN 27) in terms of cash-cropping for income-generation, while also knowing they want to live in the village rather than in the city because they have made this experience (HH-IN 19 & 28). They therefore often feel more confident to pursue ideas and facilitate projects when coming back to the village (HH-IN 16, 19, 20 & 27; EX-HH-IN 2 & 5). Also, for some migrants their migration experience of working as an employee under a supervisor encouraged their desire to be more independent, returning to the village because *"I wanted to be my own boss"* (IN HH-IN 20 & 26) or *"have my own shop"* (HH-IN 19), an opportunity they perceive as being less likely in urban centres.

Educational migration poses an interesting case in regard to social remittances. Firstly, educational migrants often transfer their knowledge of educational systems and non-farm career paths back to the village, therefore having an impact on younger people who plan to pursue higher education. An example is the first female educational migrant in the village who pursued university education.

She mentioned herself that she is often consulted by parents of students in the village who are thinking about gaining higher education at a university or college. One of her nieces decided to study and chose the same study subject as her, Japanese language, due to her influence (HH-IN 29). Through her example, she also indirectly remits the idea that going away, getting education and working outside the village brings a lot of income.

“I tell younger members of the family, if they want to live outside the village to earn money, they have to have at least a bachelor’s degree.” (HH-IN 4)

In two other examples, the return-migration of educational migrants discouraged their younger siblings to go away for studies as they perceived their return as a ‘fail’: Despite going away for studies, they returned to the village and work in agriculture at the moment. This shows that the idea that university education is not helpful for the life in the village was unconsciously remitted by return migrants (HH IN 16 & 17). While university education is not always seen as an advantage by parents and siblings if an educational migrants returns to live in the village, they themselves say that their education does help them with their life in the village (HH-IN 20, 26 & 28), even though they mostly don’t work in an occupation directly related to their studies. In their perception, their knowledge from university helps them with their local projects and ventures they want to pursue, which are often influenced by other intangible remittances acquired during their migration experience, such a new ideas and reflections of current practices. Ideas and values about migration are therefore also transmitted directly and indirectly as an intangible social remittance when out-migrants return or visit and tell about their migration experiences, which gives interlocutors the chance to compare what they hear with their life situation and can increase or decrease their desire for or against migration.

In conclusion, it becomes apparent that incorporated and intangible social remittances are both present in the everyday life. While incorporated social remittances such as know-how and skills are usually transferred by a return migrants or translocal migrant directly to their households through their livelihood practices, they can be indirectly transferred to the whole community through their practical example and can lead to imitation and foster livelihood changes (see chapter 5.4.). Intangible social remittances such as ideas and mindsets are on the one hand directly influencing members of the same household, as the influence of educational migrants on younger members showed. On the other hand, these reflections, ideas and ‘new ways’ seem to be the ‘motor’ for many migrants to induce changes in the village and use their incorporated knowledge through establishing projects, which means that intangible social remittances are then again indirectly transferred on to other household and community members through their example, which brings up the topic of social remittances exchange.

5.3.3 Transfer of Social Remittances

RQ 3: How are translocal social remittances exchanged in the daily life?

Through migration, translocal spaces between the village and the places of destination of migrants as well as the places of origin of in-migrants emerge, which allow for social translocal connections to be established and for financial and social remittances (see section 5.3) to be transferred in both directions in this translocal field (see Figure 2 in section 2.3.2). This thesis specifically focuses on the transfer of social remittances *to* the study village and their effect *in* the community, with the village having both roles: a place of origin for out-migrants, and a place of destination for in-migrants, most who have become ‘local’ due to their time spent and/or life they established in the community. Still, they can remit socially through their incorporated practices, as section 5.3.1 demonstrated. Translocal social connections between migrants and their place of origin are maintained on regular phone calls, but more vigorously through the visits of migrants to the village. A factor for this practice could be that people from older generations are not as open to mobile phone usage, which makes it harder for them to keep in touch over phone calls with their migrating children, therefore making it a less strong channel of transfer.

“I have a really good relationship with my mother but calling her is not so easy because she doesn’t know how to use the phone. So, I communicate more with my brother [who lives at home], and he puts my mother on the phone.” (HH-IN 9)

Another important communication tool that came up during interviews is the communities’ own group on the social media ‘Facebook’, managed by the chief’s deputy. It includes people living in the village and people who out-migrated. It helps to spread information about activities and gatherings in the village quickly, especially among young people who frequently use social media. People who are currently living outside the village share information too, but they mainly use it to stay up to date with life in the village (EX-IN 1).

The direct transfer of social remittances through in-migration (e.g. marriage) happens when migrants start to enact their knowledge from their place of origin e.g. agricultural practices. Transfer from out-migrants happens directly when they visit the village and exchange ideas with household members and other villagers, when they return temporarily or permanently or split their life between the village and the place of destination. As the conclusion in the previous section revealed, intangible and incorporated social remittances are mostly transferred to the whole village community when they go into effect in an action or practice inside the village, enacted by a return migrant, in-migrant or out-migrant visiting the community, as statements in interviews with local non-migrants revealed:

“I saw the example of him growing coffee successfully, so I thought I want to try it too.” (INT 3)

Regarding the exchange of financial remittances, which should be mentioned due to the integrated view on remittances (see chapter 2.2.2), it was noted that most household members who migrate do send irregular financial remittances, but they are mostly not perceived as a part of the basic household income due to the irregularity and rather low amounts. This finding could be a result of the rather middle-low income-level most work migrants from the village have in the tourism and service sector. When asked about remittances they receive from their migrating children, most parents of work migrants living in urban centres such as Chiang Mai and Bangkok noted that living expenses in the city are higher than in the village and that their children firstly have to sustain themselves with their income before being able to remit (HH-IN 4; HH-IN 13).

In one case where two children had a high paying job due to educational and then work migration, regular remittances were sent to their ageing parents to cover food expenses and pay for additional agricultural investment, but also to accumulate savings (HH-IN 4). It was also mentioned that in ‘emergencies’ work migrants would send money, e.g. when there was not enough agricultural income to cover the annual lease of an acquired pick-up truck (HH-IN 16). When it comes to ‘elephant work migration’ to elephant camps, most households receive remittances from these migrants, although there are also exceptions, usually in conjunction with the argument of higher living expenses when living outside the village (HH-IN 13). In regard to positionality, it was also observed that especially in the first generation among villagers who went to university, financial remittances from siblings who worked in the elephant tourism industry would be used to finance academic education for other siblings (HH-IN 4; EX-HH-IN 4). This was perceived as normal and pragmatically commented by one of the *Kwan Chang* remittance senders:

“Everybody wants to go to school, but there has to be one who works.” (EX-HH-IN 2)

Concludingly, the transfer of social remittances in this community is very much based on channels of direct contact between migrant and village and facilitated either through visits, return migration or in-migration. Distant communication through calls or messaging does not seem to suffice for most households to transfer social remittances. This could be due to the fact that intangible ideas and values seem too abstract when they are not embedded in the local context, while incorporated skills are more likely to be transferred when enacted through practical examples in the local context. When social remittances are transmitted effectively to the village through the transfer channels mentioned, they can impact livelihood changes of households in terms of changing livelihood activities, as the next section will demonstrate.

5.4 Social Remittances and Rural Livelihood Change

MQ: What impacts do social remittances have on local rural livelihood change in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities?

The intangible and incorporated social remittances mentioned in 5.3.2 can have an impact on livelihood change and consequently livelihood activities if they are not blocked by barriers (see 5.5.2) and transferred through an impactful channel (see 5.3.3). The following chapter scrutinizes two on-farm livelihood changes (chapter 5.4.1 and 5.4.2) and two non-farm livelihood changes (chapter 5.4.3 and 5.4.4) that were found to be impacted by the translocal practice of social remittances. Each section aims to demonstrate how this livelihood change took place in the study area, which social remittances had an impact and how livelihood activities changed in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution.

5.4.1 Organic Farming and Agroforestry

As mentioned in chapter 5.1.3, subsistent rice and vegetable cultivation is ‘traditionally’ the basis for food consumption in the community and cash cropping was taken up by Karen in the 1980s as a livelihood transformation within the on-farm sector to gain financial income, with maize being the dominant cash crop in the village since around ten years. In one of the first interviews conducted in the village, the topic of orchard cultivation and a pioneer group interested in organic integrated agroforestry came up. By integrated agroforestry, they understand plots where fruit trees that are mostly grown as cash crops such as avocado and mango are cultivated together with other smaller-growing crops that don’t need yearly replanting such as coffee, passion and dragon fruit, either for cash-cropping as well or for household consumption. The goal is to have a mixed fruit tree orchard with a highly diversified crop variety that is grown organically without using agrochemicals (EX-IN 1) to help soil remediation and increase biodiversity. It is argued to be more sustainable than annual vegetables (e.g. maize) as trees don’t have to be replanted once they are big enough and produce fruit. An additional argument in regard to sustainability are the diversified revenues of agroforestry being as stable as corn, but by using less land resources. They are therefore seen as a way to increase income with limited access to agricultural land (HH-IN 17). On the other hand, and different to cash-cropping corn, the income from orchard cultivation is not immediately available in the season of planting, as the trees need around four to five years until they produce fruits that can be harvested. Also, young tree seedlings have higher investment costs and can die easily if there is a lack of water or soil nutrition, which seems to have happened recently to some farmers trying out agroforestry (HH-IN 13 & 20; EX-IN 1).

The origin of this pioneer group is attributed to an in-migrant, who lives between the village and the district capital of Mae Chaem, where he manages a health clinic (EX-IN 1), and his local

wife¹⁸. She explained in EX-HH-IN 7 how their livelihood change was impacted by her husband reflections on mono-cropping: He grew very sceptical to the heavy usage of agrochemicals involved because of his exposure to affected people during his work in health clinics all over the district. Additionally, the wife mentioned that her own negative experience of cultivating maize and being exposed to agrochemicals accelerated their decision to try this different form of cash-cropping. They decided together to start their project of organic agroforestry on a plot of land that was formerly used for maize cultivation after successful try-outs with fruit and coffee trees around their house. Through his work in Mae Chaem he got in contact with the development NGO Raks Thai and they gained more information regarding organic farming and tree cultivation by attending their workshops held in the area. In their orchard, they have built a plant nursery to cultivate plant seedlings themselves and a station to produce organic fertilizer from buffalo faeces and rice skin. She mentioned numerous times that is a slow transformation, right now she and her husband are still growing corn on other plots to have enough income, but when they start to gain income from the organic agroforestry, they plan to fade out corn cultivation completely (EX-HH-IN 7).

Their visible example of their agroforestry orchard inspired the village heads deputy, a former educational migrant who returned to the village after studying in Chiang Mai, to establish the pioneer group together with them. Apart from their example, he got inspired to pursue organic agroforestry due to his administrative job, as the TAO invites leaders and their deputies to join workshops about agricultural development organized by Raks Thai. The main goal of the pioneer group to motivate farmers to try agroforestry and organic agriculture, while helping them to get information on the subject. He also perceives it as a slow process of agricultural transformation: to sustain income, he also feels that it is not possible to stop growing corn immediately, but rather to phase it out while other crops start to generate income (EX-IN 1 & 5). He also mentions a synergy this livelihood transformation can have with the ongoing livelihood change of tourism (see 5.4.3) in the village: Farmers who cultivate varieties of fruit and vegetables by practicing integrated farming are able to sell even small quantities in the village, as households need fresh produce to cook for their homestay guests, products they currently often buy at markets (EX-IN 5). His nephew, who acquired the desire to change mono-cropping practices as an intangible social remittance through educational migration to Chiang Rai (see 5.3.2) is also in the pioneer group and wants to transform his family's farmland to integrated organic agroforestry. He convinced his parents to use one of the four plots the family owns solely for organic agroforestry and plans to plant 300 avocado trees on this land, which he already ordered from a seedling seller (HH-IN 20).

¹⁸ While her husband was mentioned by other villagers as being the pioneer for organic agriculture, she stated very clearly that it is "*my work to plant and care for the trees*" as he is mostly unavailable working in Mae Chaem (EX-HH-IN 7).

Another inspiration and motivation the participant in HH-IN 20 mentioned is the organic tree orchard project established by the translocal out-migrant who works at the library of Maejo University in Chiang Mai (HH-IN 15). As explained in chapter 5.3.2, he directly linked his incentive to do this project with inspiration he got at workshops about sustainability at his workplace, which makes this idea an intangible social remittance. As explained, he plans to not only transform his households on-farm income with this project, but to further diversify it in the non-farm sector by offering accommodation in the orchard for tourists who want to enjoy the nature and see organic agriculture in practice. He therefore positions

this diversification on the interface of agriculture and tourism with an emphasis on organic agriculture being the main attraction for visitors, an idea he got by being surrounded by people with this mindset at his workplace. He also mentioned that he sees the need for a slow transformation, which is why his farming model has the opportunity to cultivate corn between the trees at a safe distance of 5 meters for about three years, or until the trees start to produce crops that can be sold. His sister, who is an educational and work migrant and currently lives in Chonburi with her family and visits the village regularly, also supports his project financially as she “*wants to make the brown hills green again*” (HH-IN 4). She explained this incentive through her upbringing in the village before maize cultivation, when the hills were more forest-covered. His brother-in-law, who is also the head of the local coffee community enterprise (see section 5.4.2) and has a background of in- and work-migration, has also started experimenting with integrated agroforestry and is trying out different fruit tree variations in the garden around his house, which he wants to use for household consumption and for serving the guests of his homestay. Due to his own interest in organic agriculture and the encouragement of his brother-in-law, he accompanied him to his workplace in Chiang Mai and attended workshops on organic agriculture practices at the university. He gained knowledge of crossing different varieties of the same crop to develop more robust hybrids and is now experimenting with this practice (INT 10), as shown in Figure 9.

Another pioneer in organic agriculture is the in-migrant mentioned in section 5.3.2, who was influenced by his work at the Royal Projects market in Bangkok to follow the principles of sufficiency economy in his own business and strive to “*not be rich, but have a sufficient and happy life*” (HH-IN 28). As mentioned, his idea to pursue organic agriculture can be seen as an intangible social remittance, as he was more exposed to this concept through his work migration experience



Figure 9: Agroforestry: A farmer experiments with crossing crop varieties, a technique he knows from accompanying his brother in law to his workplace in Chiang Mai. Source: own image, 2019.

in this specific store. While he only produces organic vegetables for household consumption at the moment and still needs to cash-crop maize to earn enough income, he also planted avocado trees on one of the farming plots his local wife inherited from her parents and wants to grow other crops there too as soon as the cash-crop trees have consolidated (HH-IN 28). The transformation of his on-farm livelihood is therefore evolving slowly, as he shifts from corn to integrated farming, while he also diversified his livelihood with businesses in non-farm sector to sustain his long-term project of a livelihood based on organic agriculture.

The life-stages of migrants are also of importance when regarding this on-farm livelihood transformation, as the example of the in-migrant and rooster farmer mentioned in section 5.3.1 shows. He is also starting to plant avocado and banana trees on former maize fields and around his house, because *“when you are old, you can’t grow corn”* (EX-HH-IN 6). It therefore also becomes an attractive livelihood activity for people who are in later life-stages and want to continue doing agricultural work, as the example of an older couple underlined: they cultivate coffee and just started planting mango and avocado trees for the same reasons as the rooster breeder (HH-IN 29).

Concludingly, organic farming and agroforestry can be seen as a livelihood change, as income-generating livelihood activities undergo a transformation within the on-farm sector. The fact that all people who are interested or already pursuing organic farming or agroforestry have an experience of educational or work migration suggests that this livelihood change is directly impacted by their intangible social remittances. Interestingly, none of the involved people migrated in the context of agricultural work or to study agricultural studies, yet all of them want to pursue this agricultural transformation slowly in their household’s farmland. Therefore, this livelihood transformation seems to be more likely in households where members have migrated. The main intangible social remittance that directly impacted this livelihood transformation is the reflection on the current practice of cash-cropping maize that was gained during migration, which created the desire to practice agriculture in a more sustainable way. Likewise, the intangibly acquired self-esteem and open attitude to try out new things acquired while migrating has an impact in terms of ‘helping’ them to pursue these ventures. The integrated view of financial and social remittances (see chapter 2.2.) is particularly crucial for this livelihood transformation: all of the examples mentioned above are able to facilitate an agricultural livelihood change because they have other forms of financial income from labour (migration) employment or savings from previous work migration that can finance initial investment needed and substitute the income loss from less maize cash-cropping in the transition period.

5.4.2 Coffee Cultivation

Another form of agricultural livelihood transformation impacted by migration is the cultivation of coffee as a cash-crop. It can be traced back to an in-migrant from another Karen village, who married a local woman and was a labour work migrant himself prior to returning to the village (EX-HH-IN 5 & EX 9). He worked as an electrician in rural areas but also on construction sites in Bangkok and other places in Thailand and advanced his skills through this work deployments. He continued to use these skills to generate income working in electrification projects in the district, where he said he was highly requested due to his work experiences. He stopped a few years ago due to the risk



Figure 10: Coffee cultivation: Tree seedlings grown by a coffee cultivation pioneer are waiting to be planted.

Source: own image, 2019.

this job involves and “*because I have always worked far from my family [...] it is nicer to be close for me and everybody else*” (EX-IN 9). When he was visiting his family in the village in between employments, he noticed that his father-in-law had coffee trees his farmland. Although their quality was good, they were not harvested anymore due to the focus on cash-cropping maize for a more secure income, as there was seemingly no market available to the village for selling the coffee cherries. He had incorporated the knowledge of coffee cultivation from his place of origin, a village in Mae La Noi district in the neighbouring province Mae Hong Son. It was among the first Hilltribe villages to start coffee farming around four decades ago, which his family has actively engaged in for a long time. He recovered the overgrown trees and started to harvest small amounts of coffee cherries¹⁹, which he then sold through his mother’s village in Mae La Noi, where farmers were selling their processed produce directly to a well-known US-American coffeeshop company at the time. When he fully returned to the village four years ago, he started to cultivate more coffee trees by making his own seedlings (see figure 10) and concentrated on building his own coffee brand by stopping to sell coffee cherries and beginning to process and roast coffee himself with the help of his uncle in Mae La Noi district, who is a coffee roaster. He was able to market his finished product to coffee houses in Chiang Mai through contacts he acquired by hosting tourists and also built his own coffeeshop in the village after the example of similar places in his home village. It is a popular place for foreign tourists to drink coffee and also an innovative non-farm enterprise (see chapter 5.4.4), impacted by the incorporated social remittances acquired by visiting his place of

¹⁹ Coffee cherries are the fruit of the coffee plant and the raw material consumable coffee is produced from, which involves several steps of processing. Therefore, revenues from selling the coffee cherries are lower than from fully or partly processed coffee beans.

origin. The reason he chose coffee as a cash crop is linked to the social remittance of incorporated knowledge from his place of origin, but also to his desire of “*wanting to be a change in this challenging world*” (EX-IN 9), which he developed through media consumption he says himself. Coffee cultivation as agroforestry fills this desire as it is more environmentally friendly and sustainable in his opinion, if done in an organic way and in alignment with respect to the natural environment, because “*we live in the forest, so we have to look after the forest*” (EX-IN 9).

He is widely seen as the pioneer of this on-farm livelihood transformation in the village (INT 3), which is also showing impact on other village households as they began to grow coffee as a secondary crop due to his influence (HH-IN 16 & 29). He started a ‘coffee community group’ that everybody who is interested in cultivating coffee can join, his only requirement is the will of members to produce organically (EX-IN 5). The purpose of the group is to exchange information and help each other with the cultivation, and he guarantees to buy the produce from the members if it meets his standards for further selling or processing, giving them a secure market. To be able to sell his processed and roasted coffee, he also registered the group as a ‘community enterprise’²⁰. To find more markets, he works together with his brother-in-law, who is employed at Maejo University in Chiang Mai. They do most of the online-marketing through a page on the social media platform Facebook, where people who ‘like’ the page are informed about the coffee growing in the village with pictures and short videos that show the village life and work on the coffee farm. In the future, his plan is to run the whole process chain from the coffee cherry until the packaged roasted coffee in the village to generate more revenue for the coffee farmers and also produce other products such as *Cascara*, a tea speciality that is made from the coffee cherries’ outer skin (EX-IN 9). When asked how he got the idea to pursue such projects, he referred to his own migration experiences being a motivational factor:

“Knowledge and experience of going away gave me confidence to start new things in the community” “If you don’t go to other places and just stay in your village, you have nothing to compare [your way of living to] [...] you have to go to other places to see different things [...] with social media, you can see a lot of pictures, but it is not the same as when you see it in person [...].” (EX-IN 9 & EX-HH-IN 5)

In conclusion it becomes evident that the interplay between the intangible social remittances of self-esteem and entrepreneurial business thinking, in terms of developing ideas and finding ways to carry them out, and the incorporated skills and knowledge about coffee cultivation from the

²⁰ Community enterprises in Thailand operate under various forms. They have the central goal “to provide social benefits, generate profits or a surplus from trading, be financially self-sustaining, make use of local resources and support stakeholder involvement.” (Nuchpam and Punyakumpol, 2019, p. 143) A community enterprise is based in and provides benefits to a particular local community, while also being owned and managed by members of this community (Ibid.). This legal form is endorsed for economic community projects, as it has no tax burden until a specific amount of revenue (EX-HH-IN 2).

coffee pioneers place of origin directly impacted this livelihood change. It is a transformation of income-generating on-farm livelihood activities of his household, as coffee is starting to substitute corn as a cash crop. His social remittances are also starting to impact other households' livelihoods indirectly, as the number of people joining the coffee group is increasing every year and is now close to 20 members, with most of them starting to grow coffee as a secondary crop (HH-IN 16) and therefore transforming their agricultural livelihoods. If his plans of establishing the whole production plant for roasted coffee as a finished product go into practice, they would further impact and transform his own as well as other households' livelihoods in the on-farm sector. By changing the practice of producing 'only' raw materials to manufacturing coffee products that can be directly sold to end-costumers, the monetary profits generated through production could stay in the village community and increase financial income. The coffee community enterprise he established builds social capital by connecting different people in the village through a common livelihood activity and fortifies chances to learn from each other by exchanging experiences and helping out one another. He himself can be classified as a 'purposeful innovator' (see chapter 2.4.1) directly impacting livelihood change.

5.4.3 Tourism

While the village experienced occasional and irregular tourist guests that visited the place on guided adventure trekking tours to Northern Thailand since the 1970s (INT 7), tourism in connection with elephant conservation started around nine years ago (EX-IN 2). The former village head, who had worked as a *Kwan Chang* in the logging and tourism industry with elephants for most of his life, and his son, who is also a *Kwan Chang* and had worked with the families elephants at different tourist camps, developed heightened concerns about the living conditions and health of the elephants in the camps. On the one hand they were gained by having different experiences in the two elephant work settings of logging and elephant camp tourism, on the other they increased after the son had gained knowledge after attending and helping with autopsies of young elephants who had died unexpectedly, as mentioned in 5.3.1 (EX-HH-IN 2; EX-IN 6 & 8).

"Elephants working in the camps have limited space and limited food, they eat mostly grass, and get sick very often. When I was working with them in logging in the forest, they had more breaks in between to be in the forest, and they were very strong and healthy" (Father, EX-IN 8)

"I did the autopsies of elephants that had died in the Baan Chang. I learned about the elephant's digestion and noticed this problem [bad gut condition resulting from limited food choices] a lot with the elephants that had died in the camps." (Son, EX-HH-IN 2)

The death of an elephant is not only sad for the household in terms of the relationship they have with the animal through elephant husbandry, but also means losing an income-asset sooner than anticipated, posing a risk to the livelihood security of the household. From their migration

experiences, they gained the knowledge to come to the reflection that illness, posing a risk, resulted from doing the 'Elephant camp work' livelihood practice. Additionally, they had both come to the conclusion that while being occupied as a *Kwan Chang* in an elephant camp does earn financial income, it also entails higher living costs for the individual than when residing in the village and is not fulfilling for men who want to be closer to their family (EX-IN 6 & 8).

"I got the experience from going here and there that living in the village is better [more desirable] for most Kwan Changs" (EX- IN 6)

While the son himself lives between the village and Chiang Mai, where his foreign wife and their son live, he is attached to his community and wants to move back when he is older and retires. (EX-HH-IN 2). When his father initiated the idea to bring elephant back to the village, he had to think about ways to earn income from the elephant while keeping them in the village (EX-IN6).

"He was exposed to tourists and saw the market for it, he thought that there has to be another way to gain income for elephant owners that is not with such bad conditions for the animal!" (EX- IN 6)

The father, who had worked in the elephant tourism industry in different places for over ten years, had established a network of partners and acquaintances in the industry over time, through which he met a Thai veterinarian from Chiang Mai concerned with the health of domesticated elephants in elephant camps. He helped the father to bring one of his family's elephants back in 2009 by providing medical and financial support and connected the village with an international volunteer tourism organisation that wanted to set up a project of elephant conservation in the region. While the work relation with the veterinarian stopped due to alleged corruption regarding donation fundraising for medical expenses, the village decided to pursue the project with the volunteer tourism organisation. The project began to practically develop in 2011 when the son returned to the village and helped with structuring the project (EX-HH-IN 2).

"When they asked me to help with the project, I knew it would be a good idea for the Kwan Changs and the elephants. Other elephants' owners were more sceptical, but I wanted to make an example that there is an alternative to growing maize" (EX-HH-IN 2)

Besides being a *Kwan Chang*, he had studied law from a distant education programme, which he did not finish. Still, he had knowledge on topics such as commercial law and a strong desire for fair treatment towards his community, which was shaped by his experience of assisting his illiterate father with public administration duties as *Por Luang*. He mentioned that he had the feeling that because his community is "very far away", companies would try to take them for fools and make profit by exploiting their lack of knowledge on policies. He partnered up with an NGO that is specialized in community-based tourism in hilltribe villages and two community enterprises were formed to enable tourism legally, the 'Elephant Conservation Group' and the 'Homestay Group'. They function as unions for elephant owners who 'rent' their elephants to the tourism

organisations and for households offering homestays for tourists. The goal of the community enterprises is to make the tourism legally possible and to engage as a community in the project, so that benefits are more evenly distributed, and everybody receives the same income for their service. Each community group has a committee of members, which takes decisions collectively. These measures mean to ensure that all households participating in ‘renting’ elephants to the tourism organisations or hosting tourists in their homestays have the same rights and obligations and to strengthen community ties through the joint economic activity rather than erode them by competing with each other (EX-HH-IN 2).

In 2015, the same father and son duo partnered up with a British elephant welfare foundation operating in Northern Thailand. They had met through the same NGO specialized in community-based-tourism and started another conservation-tourism venture in the village together, that is smaller in its structures and not connected to a global enterprise but privately owned. This elephant foundation also ‘rents’ elephants from the community and has the goal to bring more elephants home into the villages forest, while assisting with financing the elephants through donations and bringing other touristic audiences interested in elephant tourism into the village, as the volunteer tourism organisation mainly attracts young people who want to volunteer, preferably also for a longer period of time. The elephant foundation tailors the stay more to the visitors needs and also engages with academics interested in elephant studies and conservation. They also work together with the homestay group and use them for tourist accommodation (EX-HH-IN 2 & EX-IN 3).

At the moment, 13 elephants are managed and ‘rented’ to the two tourist and conservation ventures by the elephant conservation group, their owners and *Kwan Changs* are the members of the enterprise. Contracts between the community enterprise and the tourism ventures are renewed every year and include rules and requirements for both parties (EX-HH-IN 2; EX-IN 2). The homestay group currently has the 33 households who have homestays as members, ten of them are ‘certified members’, who have to meet the requirements of the Thai Homestay Standards of the Ministry of Tourism while the rest are ‘associated members’. In the allocation of guests, the status of the homestay does not play a role. The certified homestays are controlled every two to three years by the ministry’s representatives, the first certification was obtained in 2014. The number of homestays in the village is growing, they are not recruited but rather households who are interested join the homestay group. The allocation is done by the local community liaison of the tourism organisation, and usually seems to be quite equal for the group’s members in terms of nights they host guests and therefore earn income, but there seems to have been problems in the past where the allocation was influenced by the family ties of the community liaison (INT 2).

While the legal establishment was facilitated together with the NGO specialized in community-based hilltribe tourism, the relatively unproblematic establishment of tourism inside the community was possible because villagers had incorporated the skill of working with foreign tourists in an elephant tourism setting and could make use of this social remittance by doing this work in their place of origin (EX-IN 8). Also, the acquired intangible social remittance of viewing tourism as a possible source of income made it easier for community members to adapt to having tourists in their houses (EX-IN 6). The first homestays in the village were therefore mostly established in the households of elephant owners (INT 3). As the number of volunteer tourists began to increase slowly, the numbers of homestays did as well and more households who had no livelihood relation to elephants in the past or present started to offer homestays, currently making up 58% of all 'homestay households' (HH Survey 2019), it can therefore be said that the idea and skill of working with tourists transferred as a social remittance on other household who were not engaged in this livelihood practice before, diversifying their on-farm livelihoods to the non-farm sector. There are also secondary livelihood diversification impacts for households as members are engaging in income-generating activities related to the tourism in the village, such as being a driver for the tourist transportation due to the lack of public transport in the region, working as a community liaison, renting out houses to the staff of the organisations for longer periods of time or weaving clothes for selling to tourists (EX-IN 1; HH Survey 2019).

Most participants in the case study who diversified their agricultural livelihood with the non-farm activity of hosting tourists had a positive attitude towards this activity and mentioned that they would like to host tourists more often in their homestays (INT 6). A reason for this could be the possibility of this livelihood diversification to generate income throughout the year in smaller rates, increasing the financial security and liquidity of households which usually generate financial income only once or twice a year when harvesting is done. One interviewee mentioned that there was an acclimatisation period where they had to get used to the tourists being in the village (HH-IN 2) and the rules for the visitors had to be reinforced by the *Por Luang* (EX-IN 1), but the current attitude towards tourism in the village seems to be positive. A factor could be that tourism does not interfere with the daily rhythm of people pursuing agricultural livelihoods too much, as visitors usually start early for their daily hikes, are occupied during the day to see the elephants in the forest, come home around the same time as the farmers and sit together at night in the tourist organisation or elephant foundation base buildings (EX-IN 2).

"They go look at the elephant during the day, at night they come to sleep [...] my task is to prepare the meals for them, they eat the same food as we do" (INT 6)

The volunteers also help during the rice and corn harvesting season, which is positively attributed by households (INT 7). Still, the diversification can also lead to less time and human resources for

agricultural activities. In some households, women don't participate in cash-cropping anymore, but rather see caring for the homestay as their main activity to generate financial income for the household (HH-IN 2), while they still participate in subsistent rice-farming. On the individual level, tourism is therefore a livelihood change resulting in a substitution of livelihood activities for generating financial income. In another case, an older *Kwan Chang* undertook a substitution of his livelihood activities that generate financial income, as he now only engages in elephant tourism in the village and plans to increase this activity, while he stopped growing maize as a cash crop completely and only engages in agriculture for household consumption. This also could be due to his stage in life, as he is older and feels he can't grow maize profitably anymore (HH-IN 18).

The idea of to bring elephants back to the forest and transform/diversify livelihoods of the community is further spreading: A *Kwan Chang* from the village, who had worked for the volunteer tourism organisation for a few years opened another elephant foundation with a very similar concept in a neighbouring village. He pursued this project together with his foreign girlfriend, who he met while she was volunteering with the organisation in the village (HH-IN 17). The social remittances of the father and son duo are therefore further transferred and imitated, starting to change livelihoods outside of the village and in the region.

Concludingly, the process of tourism establishment in the village was directly impacted by the intangible and incorporated social remittances the father and son duo acquired during their work migration in *Baan Changs*, that led to a reflection on the common livelihood practice of employing elephants in this setting and ultimately to a desire to change this livelihood. Their social capital acquired during migration, in terms of a network in the elephant tourism industry can also be seen as a social remittance that played a role for the transformation and diversification of livelihoods. These intangible and incorporated social remittances from two 'instrumental adapters' (see chapter 2.4.1) changed the livelihood for nearly half the village in terms of impacting a diversification, as they now engage in livelihood activities the non-farm sector of tourism and the on-farm sector of agriculture. For households already engaging in the tourism elephant sector outside the village, this livelihood change is a transformation of livelihood activities, as they now engage in elephant tourism in a different setting and slightly different activities. Their incorporated skill of working with foreign tourists, which can be seen as a social remittance from their work migration to touristic *Ban Changs*, further impacted this livelihood change as it fortified the process (EX-HH-IN 2; EX-IN 2 & 8). The community enterprises increase the social capital in terms of cohesion in the village, as the households have a common venture they manage together (EX-HH-IN 4).

5.4.4 Non-Farm Business Enterprises

As mentioned within chapter 5.3.1, the establishment of some non-farm business enterprises in the village is linked to incorporated social remittances of migrants who had worked in the service industry. Apart from the participant of HH-IN 28 (already mentioned in section 5.3.1 and 5.4.1) who says that his working experience in the Royal Project supermarket equipped him with the skills to run his multiple businesses there is another good example: the smoothie shop of a woman who had worked in Chiang Mai in a smoothie and coffee bar for one year (HH-IN 5 & 19). She returned to the village a few years ago because she wanted to start a family with her husband, an in-migrant from another Karen village. Her return was motivated by her preference of living in the countryside because of her family, the more quiet way of life and the opportunity to make savings, which she was not able to make while living in Chiang Mai due to the high living costs and her employment in the lower wage sector. One reason she wanted to open a shop in the first place was her urge to generate income while also having small children that need to be looked after. While she had opened a regular snack shop like others in the village when she returned, she noticed that it was not very profitable because there was already an oversupply in the village. Two years ago, she therefore decided to try opening a smoothie bar, which would offer freshly prepared drinks similar to her place of employment in the city.

“When more tourists came to the village, I thought I should try to sell this [fruit smoothies] to farang. I saw an opportunity for a different shop” (HH-IN 19)

Her smoothie bar is very popular among the young volunteers and the menu is targeted towards them with English writing and drinks such as iced cocktails, resulting in mostly foreign customers these days. Locals from the village come in the summer month for ice and before she had her second child, she also served noodle soup and papaya salad, which was more popular with local customers. She got the idea to also offer small dishes while she was living in the city, because she saw many noodle soup shops around there, “*it seemed popular*” and she thought she should try it out in her place as well (HH-IN 19). While she had to take a break from offering food when she got her second child, she now serves both ranges again to be able to cater to both local and foreign customers and plans to expand the seating area of the shop even further due to the profitability. Her husband grows corn to generate income, but he helps her with running the smoothie bar as well by getting ingredients needed from bigger cities and markets. The enterprise has become the main source of financial income for the household and can therefore be seen as a significant change of livelihoods through diversification in the non-farm sector. She mentions that in the future, as soon as her second child can go to the day care, she wants to participate in the family’s agriculture of growing rice but also keep the shop, because she likes it and it is profitable enough, even with numbers of customers not increasing very much (HH-IN 5 & 19).

For another young return migrant, who studied accounting in Bangkok but went on to work in a bakery in Chiang Mai because she liked it better than working in bookkeeping, it is a similar case. She returned one year ago because she prefers living in the countryside and wants to start her own business, which she perceives as being less likely in the city. With her incorporated skills of baking and exposure to different gastronomic ideas and ways to learn about them (mentioned in chapter 5.3.1),



Figure 11: Non-Farm Business Enterprises: A return migrant opened a food shop in the village after working in a bakery in Chiang Mai. English and Thai writing aims to attract both local and foreign customers.

Source: own image, 2019.

she built and opened a smoothie and crepe shop in the village a few months ago (shown in figure 11), which was possible with her financial savings. She also has foreign tourists as customers, but it was especially popular among locals during the harvesting season and the summer, she had to close it during the rainy season because her family needs her help with the rice planting. She also plans to expand the menu accordingly to cater to more customers, e.g. offering French fries because she knows that the children and foreigners like them. Her brother, who runs the elephant foundation in the nearby village mentioned earlier, goes to Chiang Mai regularly, she often accompanies him and buys the ingredients for her shop, as they are cheaper and available in a wider range in the urban centre than in the nearby city of Mae Cham. She therefore profits from the translocal connection the village has through tourism (HH-IN 26). Her enterprise is a step of her households' livelihood towards a change in terms of diversification, as she generates income through a non-farm livelihood activity rather than through cash-cropping.

Another female return migrant, who incorporated the skill of professional baking through her educational migration in home economics at a vocational college and gained practical experience in this skill by working in a bakery in Chiang Mai, has the plan to open a bakery close to the local school together with her husband. She says that it would be the first shop of this kind in the village, and the strategic position on the main road can attract more customers in her opinion (HH-IN 6).

Apart from businesses that sell self-prepared food and beverages, a young migrant who studied art at university in Chiang Mai opened a small gallery in the village (HH-IN 27). On the one hand, he got the idea for this venture from his experience in the city, where some of his fellow students rented a gallery space in the popular 'Night Market' in the touristic centre of Chiang Mai. He worked there and noticed that tourists liked to buy paintings from local artists. On the other hand, he also had experiences with selling his artwork in the village to tourists who were staying at his household's homestay. While he is not sure yet if he will operate this business as his main

livelihood, as he will take a national test to be an art teacher, he sees it as way to generate additional income and have a collection of his art as well as a studio in the village, where he can produce artworks to sell to tourists if they are interested. Incorporated social remittances in terms of skills (working in a gallery catered at tourists), as well as his knowledge on creating art from his educational migration, combined with the ambition to have his own gallery to showcase his works impacted the decision for this livelihood activity, which can be seen as a diversification on the household level but a substitution on the individual level, as he does not plan to engage in cash-crop agriculture like his parents as a main livelihood. On the other hand, he still wants to help with the family's rice-farming for consumption. For this reason, he came back to the village during the rainy season, although he has already finished his studies and could also work in Chiang Mai to have a regular salary for paying back his student loan debt, which he plans to do when the rice planting season is over, making him more of a regular visitor than a return migrant.

Without doubt, the presented ventures are feasible because foreigners are coming to the village through tourism: the gallery caters to tourists and the smoothie and crepe shop are also marketed towards foreign customers from the tourist organisations, e.g. by having English menus. It therefore seems that migrants who worked in urban centres like Chiang Mai or Bangkok (as in the four examples showed above) can make more 'use' of tourists in the village by opening enterprises that are more oriented towards urban lifestyles, which is appealing for western tourists who are often used to urban or suburban lifestyles. The example of a young return migrant who also opened a shop in the village, can be argued to undermine this conclusion. She lived in Mae Chaem, the more rural capital of the province, to get training as a nurse assistant. By working on the side in a shop selling clothes, she incorporated the skills of operating a small business, a social remittance she now uses for running her own shop. She also says that "*the experience there helped me to open a shop here*" (HH-IN 22), while the range of products she offers is more or less the same as other small snack shops in the village. It is clear that the idea to use trading and selling as a way to earn financial income is not restricted to migrants, other people who stayed in the village opened shops as well, but their businesses, are less specifically targeted towards tourists and mainly resell packaged snacks and small household goods. Exemplarily, a young woman who had lived in the village for all her life said she would like to open a shop too if she had money for investment. But she would like to sell agrochemicals needed for farm work, a business venture that is needed and inspired from her work in maize cash-cropping (HH-IN 23).

A concluding look at the examples of non-farm enterprises that emerged in the village shows that the incorporated social remittance from working in the service industry in terms of skills directly impacts this livelihood change, that results in diversification on a household level and substitution on an individual level regarding livelihood activities that generate financial income. The intangible

social remittances of self-esteem and entrepreneurial business attitudes of ‘trying out’ acquired through migration impacted former migrants as well and ‘helped to open their businesses, which in the case of the smoothie shop, crepe shop and art gallery are innovations that differ from the other shops in the village that mostly resell packaged goods.

5.5 Features of Social Remittances Impacting Rural Livelihood Change

Drawing from the findings of the previous chapter, this section aims to analyse the on-farm and non-farm rural livelihood changes impacted by translocal social remittances of the study area even further. Within this section, variations of the impact of social remittances on rural livelihood changes are explored in aspects of different features. Further, barriers that were found to hinder social remittances in their impact on livelihood change as well as their materialisation in the local space will be laid out.

5.5.1 Variations of Impact

RQ 4: How do social remittances vary in their impact on rural livelihood change?

As demonstrated in the previous section, social remittances can impact rural livelihoods and fortify their changes. This section investigates how this impact can vary due to different (contextual) features that were found to be apparent in the study area: transfer channel, diffusion context, socio-economic status of the household and type of social remittance.

Transfer Channels

Regarding channels, section 5.3.3 demonstrated that the transfer of social remittances in this community is very dependent on direct social contact and interaction, such as visits or return-migration and in-migration to the community. This is especially true for social remittances that impact livelihood change, as the examples in section 5.4 showed: Both on-farm and non-farm livelihood changes were initiated either by migrants visiting the community frequently, return migrants or in-migrants. A close look at the initiators of the livelihood changes presented in section 5.4 shows that the majority of them are return migrants, while some visit the village very often and live ‘translocally’ at the moment, a few of them can be characterized as in-migrants. The importance of ‘setting an example’ in the local space to change practices of other members of the community is also known and considered by many return migrants and frequently visiting migrants who initiated livelihood changes in the village, as interviews proofed:

“People in the village need an example. I know they will start [with organic agroforestry] if I set a good example, it was the same with corn.” (HH-IN 15)

“I want to show that cultivating coffee is an alternative to maize. People will slowly profit from growing coffee; it is the more sustainable way” (EX 9)

Return migration can therefore be seen as the most ‘powerful’ transfer channel for social remittances that impact livelihood change in this study area, while other direct channels such as visits of migrants and in-migration are also impactful, but don’t appear that often quantitatively. It can be assumed that channels of remote communication don’t transfer social remittances that impact livelihood change in this specific case.

Another dimension regarding transfer channels are the spatial characteristics of the places they connect as social remittances are transmitted either through rural-to-urban or rural-to-rural channels. Both have an impact on on-farm livelihood change in regard to crop changes: The example of coffee cultivation is an on-farm livelihood diversification impacted by a rural in-migrant who inherited this practice from his rural place of origin, while the practice of doing agroforestry is remitted as an idea from a more ‘urban’ environment. The health care practitioner, who is seen as a pioneer for this practice, acquired the idea of agroforestry through experiences he made during his ongoing work migration to the nearby province capital of Mae Chaem. The other two pioneers both got exposed to this idea through their migration to urban centres (Chiang Mai and Bangkok). For the non-farm livelihood activity of tourism, the idea, desire and skills of both the initiators (father and son duo) and other participators (elephant owners) at later stages were acquired at a rural place that is not attached to agriculture, the elephant camps in Northern Thailand. It can be argued that villagers who worked in the tourism sector in urban centres such as Chiang Mai also acquired the skill of working with tourists, while ‘elephant tourism’ originated from the *Ban Changs*. Non-farm business venture ideas were mostly transferred to the village by urban-to-rural channels via return migrants from urban centres such as Mae Chaem, Chiang Mai or Bangkok who resettled in the village. Therefore, urban-to-rural channels appear in higher numbers, but social remittances transferred through rural-to-rural channels seemingly impact more livelihoods in the community: More people in the village participate in tourism, and coffee cultivation is gaining popularity faster than agroforestry, simply by looking at the numbers of people involved in the interest groups for both new on-farm ventures. This could be due to the fact that coffee cultivation is ‘closer’ to the current agricultural livelihood practice of cash-cropping maize than integrated agroforestry, which possibly needs a greater shift of attitude and practice. The same could be said for tourism, as people are already used to working in the tourism industry through their ‘elephant work migration’ or other work migration in a tourism context.

Diffusion Context

The impact social remittances can have on livelihood change is also dependent on the previous diffusion context they are embedded in. It was found that knowledge, practice and ideas that had been disseminated through another source are more easily adopted. For example, coffee cultivation

has been promoted as a cash crop for hilltribe communities by the Royal Project, through the TAO (HH-IN 29) in Northern Thailand for a longer period of time, while it has also been becoming more and more popular among farmers in forest areas in the last decade due to the global trend of speciality coffee sweeping over urban Thailand (INT 3). It is similar with the practice of agroforestry, which has been endorsed by the Royal Project and development NGOs (HH-IN 13). The diffusion of these ideas and practices into the community through other transmission channels make it easier for social remittances transferred by an influential individual to be accepted locally and can further impact livelihood change in the community at some point if adapted *successfully* in the local context. Many ‘livelihood change pioneers’ mentioned in section 5.4 address this key issue when talking about the activities that induce livelihood changes: the encouragement of farmers to grow a crop or implement a farming practice by development agencies is not enough for change to actually happen. It is equally important to make markets accessible for them and help with all stages of the promoted livelihood change, which is seemingly not done that well by these actors in this village (HH-IN 15). Pioneers mention that they feel their ‘good example’ is a more impactful way to change livelihoods in the village (HH-IN 15, 20 & 28; EX 8), and the statement of a local farmer interested in cultivating coffee undermines this observation:

“I saw other villages on a Raks Thai fieldtrip that already established coffee cultivation, but he [local coffee farmer mentioned in section 5.4.2] is the pioneer here to produce, process and sell coffee. I think he is doing well [...] I am thinking too about starting to grow coffee” (INT 3)

For the non-farm livelihood change of tourism mentioned in the previous section, there seemed to have been no comparable direct diffusion through endorsement in the community, but the generally rising tourism to Northern Thailand and the emerging of community-based-tourism concepts and initiatives (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2014, p. 107) can be seen as a cultural diffusion some community members were and are exposed to through their work migration to elephant camps. Livelihood changes through non-farm business enterprises are also not specifically endorsed, but rather stem from the individual’s desire and choice to undertake this livelihood change.

Socio-economic Status

Another context that affects the impact of social remittances on livelihood change is the socio-economic standing and background of the household. If there is other income or savings (e.g. from work migration) that can sustain the household during a transition period, livelihood changes in regard to agricultural transformation or diversification in another sector can be done more easily. It also affects the ability to make investments needed for this livelihood change or compensate for a period of reduced income, e.g. the years until planted trees starts to produce fruits. When looking at the pioneers of livelihood changes in the on-farm sector, this context becomes particularly

evident: While all of the agricultural livelihood transformation projects mentioned in 5.4.1 were started because migrants acquired intangible social remittances of ideas to do something else in commercial agriculture or diversify it with other businesses, they also had the monetary means to do so through other income sources and financial remittances from their own migration. For example, the agricultural pioneer and entrepreneur who worked at the *Royal Project Supermarket* (HH-IN 28) said that he was able to generate enough savings through his work migration to construct his little business complex on the main road and also to make the initial investments needed for establishing organic agriculture e.g. buying tree seedlings. Regarding the livelihood change of tourism inside the village, having the asset of owning an elephant increases the possibility to undergo this livelihood change, but households with no elephant can diversify their livelihood as well by participating in the homestay group. Here, the financial barrier for livelihood change through diversification seems lower, as practically any house that has the capacity to offer a spare room or built a hut outside the house can participate, if they are within an easy walking distance of the tourist organisations' base. When asked if homestay households are more likely to get more guests if they make investments and e.g. install western sanitary facilities, it was negated and explained that it is up to the household to make these instalments or not (HH-IN 17). Also, the livelihood change of tourism is a good example that social status can be relevant as well. As former *Por Luang* and former village head deputy, the father and son duo are believed to have a high social status among other villagers, which could have also helped the dissemination of their ideas and reflections, additionally to their practical example.

Types of Social Remittances

Regarding variations of impact between intangible and incorporated social remittances, the examples presented in section 5.4 show that intangible and incorporated remittances both play a crucial role in the four presented non-farm and on-farm livelihood changes. Most livelihood changes of the migrant actors themselves were often undertaken by integrating both types of remittances: the smoothie shop owner used her incorporated skills as well as her intangibly acquired attitude of not being afraid to try something new out. Similarly, the coffee cultivation pioneer in the community, said that his experience of migrating in a totally different job occupation (electrician) built up the self-esteem and courage, which made it possible for him to follow through with his project of realizing his own coffee brand and coffee house (EX-HH-IN 5). In the case of tourism establishment in the village, more than one social remittance impacted the livelihood change: the intangible reflection on work practices, the incorporated knowledge on the health problems of elephants in the camps, as well as social capital in terms of having a helpful network in the industry were gained by the father and son duo during their 'elephant work migration'. The interplay of these social remittances impacted the livelihood change of their household, while the

work skills other community members incorporated from ‘elephant migration’ probably impacted their uptake of this practice. It then moved on to change their household’s livelihood activities as well. Therefore, the argumentation leads to an integrated view of intangible and incorporated social remittances, which correlate with each other and influence the impact social remittances can have on livelihood change, along with the other contextual specific influential factors mentioned in this section that lead to variations of impact.

5.5.2 Barriers

RQ 5: What barriers hamper social remittances in their impact on rural livelihood change?

While analysing the social remittances and livelihood change in the study area, various barriers were detected that can hinder impact. They will be exemplarily enumerated in this section. While there are barriers that hinder the return of migrants, which entails ‘closing’ the most impactful channel of social remittances transfer, the focus of this section will be on the barriers return migrants in the community face while transferring and/or materialising their social remittances in the place of origin.

It was found that incorporated knowledge from education can become a ‘lost remittance’ if the acquired know-how does not meet the skills needed for the local rural context. This hinders people from returning and transferring acquired social remittances. Several people in the village studied business administration or accounting (HH-IN 20 & 26, EX-HH-IN 8) but could not make use of their knowledge upon their return to the village because there are no big companies in the area which would need people with these skills. They usually went on to work in other occupations in the village unrelated to their study subjects such as the day-care facility, cash-crop agriculture and offering homestays. Similarly, a young return migrant who studied traditional Thai medicine, which enclosed medicinal massage and knowledge on herbal medicine. While he likes to work as a masseur to help people and sometimes does it for a very reduced fee among the people in the village who need this kind of treatment, he does not see a way to make a sustaining livelihood from this skill while staying in the village, as there is no clinic within a distance that would not entail partly migration (e.g. Mae Chaem), where he could get employed (HH-IN 16).

Another barrier, the constraint of time, eradicates the option of opening an own massage business in the village. Due to his work obligations on the family’s farm for subsistence rice farming and cash cropping, he said he would not have enough time to run a business by himself. He experienced this barrier as well when he tried to run a coffeeshop close to the main road, as he also had the experience of working in a coffeeshop in Chiang Mai and tried to make use of this social remittance. But he could not open it most of the time due to work obligations in agriculture, which is why he closed it. He said he came to terms with the fact that he can’t do a business on his own

in the village, as the local context and sense of obligation towards his family demands him to help with the farming. He shifted his livelihood interests and started to try out agroforestry by planting coffee with the help of the community group (see section 5.4.2.), while he also began to plant fruit trees for household consumption (HH-IN 16). The lack of time is also a barrier for the return migrant mentioned in section 5.4.4 to run her crepe and drinks shop as a main livelihood activity:

“I would like to open in the rainy season as well [...] If I could choose, I would have the shop open all the time, but I know my family needs my help with the rice planting.” (HH-IN 26)

Similarly, the lack of money can equally hinder social remittances to have an impact on livelihood activities, especially for the further transfer of social remittances in the community. While a local farmer mentioned she would be interested in taking up agroforestry with avocado and mango trees, she simply does not have the financial means to do initial investment or overcome a period of less income (HH-IN 13). An older farmer mentioned the similar concerns regarding changing agricultural practices, although he perceives cultivating corn as harmful for his health and knows of negative environmental impacts this practice has (INT 9). Regarding participating in tourism, there is also a monetary barrier: while the earnings for ‘renting’ an elephant to the local tourist ventures are good, they are still significantly higher in an ‘employment’ in a *Baan Chang* (HH-IN 18). This seems to keep some people from employing their elephants ‘locally’ as well.

For many women, entering the life-stage of being a mother can also hinder the impact of social remittances. Exemplarily, two local female return migrants, who studied social care and elderly got married and had children soon after they had returned to the village, which they mentioned as the reason why they have not been able to make use of their degrees and skills in terms of generating income through an employment or by starting their own venture (HH-IN 14 & 22). The woman who studied elderly care sees no job opportunity in the village and therefore opted for opening a conventional shop, making use of other acquired social remittances while working in a clothing store, her skills of operating a shop (mentioned in 5.4.4), while the social worker thinks about working a state orphanage.

Another barrier can be social inertia or resistance due to different viewpoints and/or generational conflict. Most of the agricultural pioneers mentioned in 5.4.1 said that they could only start with different farming practices once their parents’ farmland or parts of it were inherited to them (HH-IN 16 & 28; EX-HH-IN 7) before it was not possible. The return migrant mentioned above who is interested in starting agroforestry referred to this barrier as well, he feels “*my parents are not ready yet to change*”. Similarly, current agricultural practices can interfere with new try-out, as the young return migrant interested in organic agroforestry who studied in Chiang Rai, explains:

“I experimented with planting avocado trees in the corn field, but they all died. It could be either because of the chemicals that were used for the corn or because it was so dry in the summer that some young trees did not make it.” (HH-IN 20)

In another example, the retired teacher and in-migrant in EX-HH-IN 6 talked about growing banana and how easy it is, as trees seem to multiply by themselves. While some households in the village who have elephants started to grow banana for their animals as supplementary food, they don't do it commercially, which he would endorse. He mentioned that as a community, they could sell in bulk to meet resellers quantities. When asked how he came up with it, he said that he saw it in a close by village where he also worked as a teacher, but he feels like *“people in this village are not ready to change yet”* (EX-HH-IN 6). It showed that uncertainties about market options seem to discourage people with no migrating household members and therefore less changes to profit from knowledge about demand markets outside the village (e.g. high urban demand for coffee and avocado) from changing their livelihood practices even if the practice, e.g. growing avocado trees, is endorsed by actors from outside, such as the Royal Project (HH-IN 13).

Naturally, there is also a certain self-initiative needed to use acquired skills from migration experiences within the local context. Not every return migrant is motivated to do so and returns to a smallholder agricultural livelihood. For example, a woman who worked in Bangkok for over five years in a supermarket while trying to attend an open state university, as she did not have the financial means to go to an institution that requires funding, returned to the village, started a family and is now working in agriculture again. She did eventually diversify her income through tourism, as her household was one of the first ones to participate in the homestay programme, but she does not connect this livelihood activity with her migration experience (HH-IN 7).

Concludingly, the most impactful barriers that hamper social remittances in their impact on livelihood change are constraints of time and money return migrants have to deal with. Time is usually limited due to the social obligation to work on the family farm, which means participating in rice subsistence agriculture and also maize cash-cropping. Social resistance in the community and between household members is also an influential barrier that can hinder social remittances from having an impact on livelihood activities and livelihood change.

5.5.3 Materialisation

RQ 6: How do livelihood changes impacted by social remittances materialise in the local space?

This section aims to demonstrate how social remittances and the livelihood changes they have impacted materialise physically and therefore shape the appearance of the local space. Due to the fact that there are no photos or records of the former appearance of the village, the status quo

cannot be directly compared, but rather interpreted in aspects of visible differences with the general appearance of the village.

Agroforestry is becoming visible through more fruit trees around the houses, as some villager are trying out cultivating trees for household consumption before starting to plant it for commercial use. The same can be observed with coffee trees, which are planted around houses because people often firstly want to observe how they are coping in the environment. When trees are planted on formerly 'brown' maize cultivation fields, they start to change the appearance.

In regard to tourism, the village deputy mentioned that this livelihood change visibly altered the look of the village in terms of cleanliness, he generally noted that there is less trash lying around and pigs are now rather kept in stables than free ranged (EX-HH-IN 4). In terms of built structures, households who participate in tourism by offering homestays don't specifically look different in their appearance to houses who don't participate in this livelihood practice. They sometimes build



Figure 12: Materialisation of social remittances impacting livelihood change: An artist who visited as a tourist painted a typical scene of elephant tourism in the village on a homestay hut and included a self-portrait.

Source: own image, 2019.

external huts outside the main house to offer space for tourists or extend the houses, which is also a common practice among the community as children often move in with their spouses to have proximity to their ageing parents (INT 8). Some households install separate western bathrooms for the guests, while most homestay households do not have this facility. There are some information signs in English language for tourists who come to the village e.g. where the headquarter of the elephant community group is; houses who are 'certified' homestays are labelled with a Thai-English plaque. The base of the elephant foundation is a rather small wooden hut structure and does only stand out from other external huts due to the brighter colouring of the outer walls. The volunteer tourism organisation does not break with the appearance of the village in terms of looks, as it was built with the help of local carpenters (EX-IN 2) and has the same wooden style as the other houses around the village. It stands out due to some murals the volunteers painted on the outer walls, which also scarcely pop up all-over the village as tourists who are artists offer to paint them on the houses of the homestays they are staying in (HH-IN 2 & 18). They mostly portrait the view of the village as an 'elephant village' as Figure 12 demonstrates.

It is observable that especially the livelihood change of non-farm business enterprises impacts the built environment in the village. Mostly, business owners build structures outside of their ‘private premises’ to house their businesses, one entrepreneur explained his behaviour because “*people in the house could disturb customers, or the other way around*” (EX-IN 9). Examples are the art gallery, the coffee shop, which also serves as a headquarter for the coffee community enterprise, the two smoothie bars inside the core structures of the village (shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**) and the guesthouse-shop-garage complex along the main road. These places can also be seen as places for the dissemination of social remittances, as other local villagers can visit and observe the changed livelihood activity and possibly get influenced by them.



Figure 13: Materialisation of social remittances impacting livelihood change: built structures of non-farm enterprises in the village, detached from private home structures (clockwise from top left): smoothie & cocktail bar, coffee shop, smoothie & crepe shop, art gallery.

Source: own images, 2019

In conclusion, the physical materialisation of translocal social remittances impacting livelihood change is taking place through visible changes in the village’s appearance in terms of built structures, painting of houses, land-use of farmland and keeping of animals. Especially non-farm business enterprises result in visible buildings, which can also serve as a place of dissemination.

6 Discussion of Findings

The presented study on translocal social remittances impacting rural livelihood change used methods of empirical social research and reveals findings that undermine conclusions and arguments other studies in this field of research have come to. It explains four context-specific on-farm and non-farm livelihood changes that were impacted by social remittances of internal migrants and analyses contextual factors that lead to variations of impact. The various empirical findings on social remittances impacting rural livelihood change are summarised and visualised in an adapted analytical framework (see 2.6.1) in Figure 14.

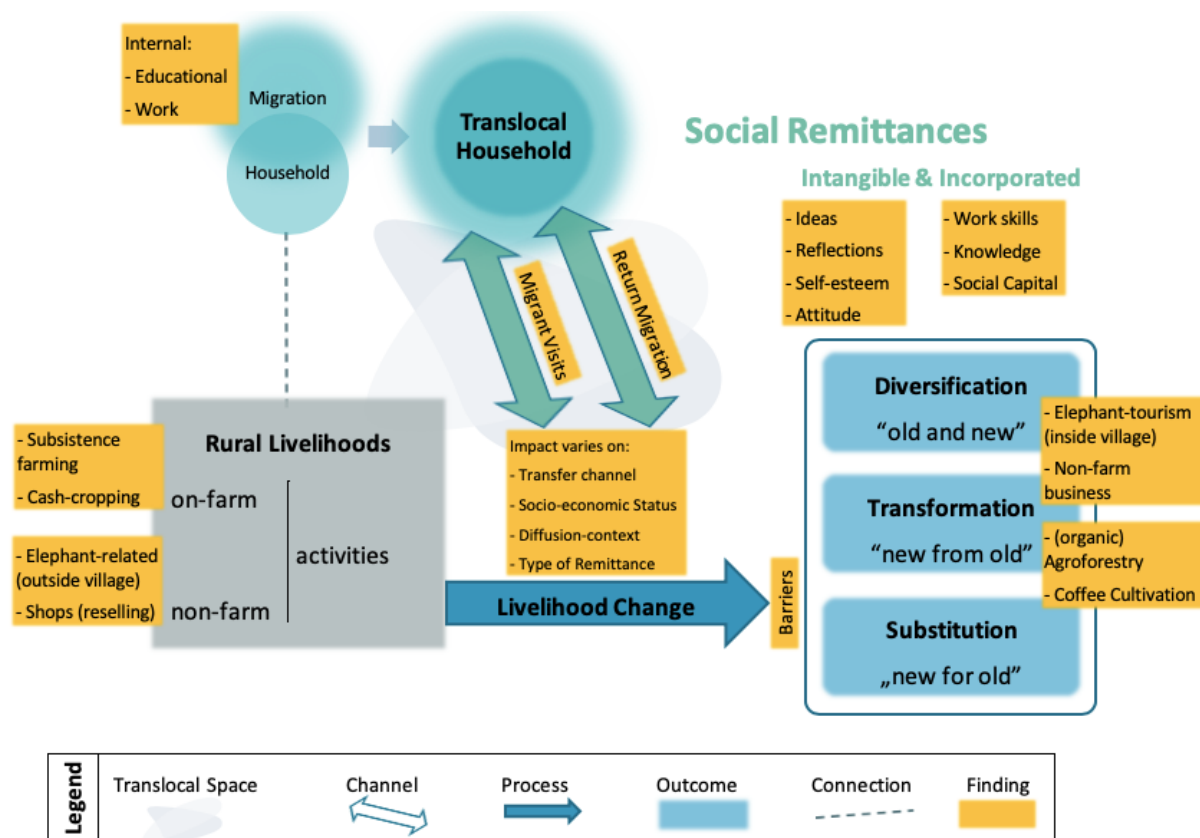


Figure 14: Impacts of Social Remittances on Livelihood Change in the study village. Source: own draft.

The generalized livelihood portfolio analysis (5.1) revealed that most households' livelihoods were completely or partly based on agricultural livelihoods, which consist of subsistence farming for household consumption (rice, various vegetables, fruit trees in gardens), keeping small quantities of livestock for own consumption (pigs, chicken) as well as trading (water buffalos), cash-cropping (mostly maize). There are also evolving new agricultural livelihoods (coffee-cash-cropping and organic agroforestry of fruit trees e.g. mango and avocado). Non-Farm livelihoods include owning an elephant and/or working in 'elephant tourism', either in- or outside the village. Tourism inside the village is also a non-farm livelihood activity in households who don't own an elephant. Still, owning an elephant makes it more likely for households to participate in this non-

farm sector. Some households also run a shop that resells goods as a livelihood activity, while there are a few exceptions run by return migrants, which do sell self-prepared drinks and food. Family ties and reciprocity are important cornerstones of the village social structure, which could be attributed to the Karen heritage of community sense. There are strong feelings of commitment towards members of the family and household, but also for community engagement, as the establishment of the three 'community enterprises' and the village fund show. Still, there are differences between households in terms of financial income and social status

Migration in the village is characterized by internal in- and out-migration (see 5.2). In-migration can mostly be characterized as 'marriage migration' from other rural areas. The reasons for out-migration are educational and work purposes, often in the context of 'elephant-migration' to a touristic *Baan Chang*. Out-migration related to elephant-work has a long history in the village and is still an often-found case. Other work migration is mostly rural-urban to centres such as Chiang Mai or Bangkok, where people often work in the tourism and service industry. Educational migration is widespread, as going somewhere else is inevitable if people want to pursue higher education past the primary level. While migration is often seen as a necessary livelihood strategy, it is not solely attributed positively due to emotional restraints. As the study area is not impacted by international migration-mobilities, the findings on migration undermine the importance of a translocal perspective when looking at migration phenomena. Globally and in the context of Thailand, internal migrants exceed the number of international migrants by far (UNDP, 2009; UNESCO *et al.*, 2018). The study therefore shows how opening up the conversation on migration to a translocal viewpoint can create a more inclusive approach, since it incorporates mobility phenomena that are relevant to large numbers of people and in various contexts.

Social remittances are mainly transferred to the village through the channels of return migration and visits of migrants (see 5.3). Incorporated social remittances include skills, social capital (e.g. acquaintances in the tourism industry) and personal knowledge acquired through education or work occupation settings (e.g. working in gastronomy). Intangible social remittances on the other hand are reflections of practices, ideas picked up through exposure, self-esteem built through undergoing the migration process. Both are either directly transferred from the migrants to their households through the mentioned channels, or indirectly transmitted through the materialised practices of migrants (e.g. changing crops). They can also both be transferred indirectly to the whole community through practical examples and foster livelihood changes in the village through imitation by other members.

Looking at the main question and the four investigated livelihood changes impacted by social remittances in terms of a diversification, transformation and substitution of livelihood activities

(see 5.4), it becomes apparent that there has to be separation of livelihood activities that generate financial income and those that don't. Livelihood changes in the on-farm sector described in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 are mostly a *transformation* of livelihood activities on a household level in terms of trying out new cash-crops (coffee cultivation, integrated agroforestry) with the goal to phase out maize as a cash-crop completely. Integrated agroforestry is also a *diversification* of non-financial-income agricultural activities, as many households start this livelihood activity as a try-out for food consumption. Tourism (see 5.4.3) can be seen as a livelihood change of income-generating activities and more specifically as a *transformation* for households who already engaged in the elephant tourism industry outside the village. It is also a *diversification* for households who did not participate in this part of the non-farm sector before. Especially tourism can impact many livelihood changes across households in the community, as there are various complementary occupations (e.g. transportation) linked to this sector. There is the chance of *substitution* of income-generating activities on an individual level if people decide to not engage in cash-crop agriculture anymore but to make tourism-related jobs inside the village their main occupation. The same can be said for non-farm business enterprises (see 5.4.4), which mostly are a livelihood change in terms of a *diversification* of income-generating activities on the household level and can be a *substitution* of income-generating livelihood activities on an individual level, if business owners make running a business their main activity. Interestingly, none of the livelihood changes or social remittances seemed to impact the livelihood activity of cultivating rice for food consumption, as none of the interviewees mentioned they would like to give it up. It rather occurred that most interviewees would want to keep it up, despite their change in income-generating livelihood activities. Rice subsistence agriculture can therefore be seen as a livelihood activity that seems more or less 'untouched' by the presented livelihood changes impacted by social remittances. It is probably impacted by migration in general, as household members who out-migrate more permanently can mostly not work on the rice family farm and therefore substitute this agricultural livelihood activity with other, mostly non-farm activities. Further, these findings demonstrate that social remittances can be a major driver for occupational multiplicity in rural areas. Concludingly, they undermine Riggs (2006) assumptions that the ensuing diversification and transformation of livelihoods are "trajectories of change", which can make rural livelihoods more resilient (or vulnerable) in the global south.

It was found that the impact of social remittances on livelihood change can vary, depending on various features (see 5.5.1). Regarding transfer channels, return migration was found to be most impactful, and while both urban-rural and rural-rural transfer channels impact livelihood change, rural-rural channels are more 'powerful' in regard to the number of people they impact. The results on the variations of impact between transfer channels of social remittances go in line with the

arguments of previous scholars (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Grabowska *et al.*, 2017). They argue that forms of direct social contact are the most influential transmission channels for social remittances. The findings of this case study also classify frequent visits and especially return migration as the most influential channel of social remittances transfer and impact, despite the heightened availability and usage of digital and remote communication channels. While the influence of these channels will probably increase in the future and is higher in other context, the impact of these transfer channels is still quite non-existent in the rural context of this case study.

The impact of social remittances also varies according to the diffusion context of ideas and innovations, as they are generally more easily adopted if they have been disseminated locally through other channels and/or actors. These findings correlate with the argument previously made by Levitt (1998). It says that knowledge, practices and ideas that are transferred to the community as social remittances are more easily adopted if they have been disseminated through other channels of global (or local) cultural diffusion. Also, the study offers various examples of people who become ‘pioneers’ of livelihood change through their translocal migration stories. This corresponds to Grabowska *et al.* (2017) proposition of migrants as ‘competent actors’, who act through their everyday actions and practices as agents of change.

The socio-economic status of households and individuals is an especially important variation factor, as financial capital seems to be a very critical aspect when implementing livelihood changes impacted by social remittances. The observations made on the evident interlinkage and gradual interdependence of social remittances that impact livelihood change in terms of income-generating activities and financial resources (often financial remittances from migration) undermine the integrated view of social and financial remittances proposed by Peth & Sakdapolrak (2019). These findings also imply that especially the livelihoods of households with less financial income are less impacted by social remittances. They are therefore less likely to transform, diversify or substitute their livelihoods. This could increase the inequality between households in the village with different socio-economic backgrounds.

Regarding types of remittances, incorporated and intangible social remittances often impact livelihoods through their interplay, as incorporated remittances make changes possible (e.g. specific skills), while intangible remittances (e.g. self-esteem) are the ‘motor’ for these changes. This new perspective of an ‘integrated view’ of social remittances also promotes a context-specific assessment of mobility, as generalisations about migration mobilities simply don’t serve the complex structures of human mobility. The ‘elephant context’ of the study area is a good example of a very specific yet also very influential factor that should be considered when looking at the mobilities of this specific area. There are surely similar contextual factors in other settings which

are easily looked over from a higher scale, but very impactful or even pivotal on the household and individual level in specific cases.

Barriers that hamper social remittances (see 5.5.2) were identified as well and heavily correlate with the findings Peth & Sakdapolrak (2019) made: Insufficient financial resources and/or a lack of time to implement or carry on with livelihood changes as well as social resistance and/or inertia among community/household members can hinder social remittances to show impact on livelihood change. 'Lost remittances' occur as well when skills or ideas that were acquired outside the village can't be used upon return.

The materialisation of social remittances impacting livelihood change (see 5.5.3) are visible changes in the village such as built structures (e.g. shops), murals on houses and new land-use patterns (e.g. more trees around houses), which can act as models for imitation. These findings can be associated with Grabowska et al. (2017) observation that migrants tend to create own spaces for the diffusion of their social remittances among their return to places of origin.

Due to pragmatic limitations of the field study context, the temporal aspect of livelihood change was an issue, as the study only presents a moment in time. Naturally, it can't track and 'verify' the assumptions and statements made on the impact of social remittances on changes on a temporal dimension. It is beyond the scope of this study to be replicated at a later stage in time, although it would probably bring in reinforcing evidence. Also, because of the interpretative-understanding approach, the findings of this research study can arguably be criticised as being non-representative and unable to draw generalizations from. However, they do offer indications for further studies in this field and undermine previous findings on social remittances with new results. The context of social remittances of being a rather underexplored theoretic concept that lacks some refinements (Boccagni and Decimo, 2013) became apparent during the research and analysis stage of the study, as some social remittances were hard to define with a term and depend on argumentation.

The study, explaining, depicting and arguing a general impact of social remittances on rural livelihood change and the specific transfer and involvement, can act as a basis for further research. For example, the power- and gender-relations within rural communities could be further investigated on their effect on the process of social remittances and the derived impact on livelihood changes, as well as differences in social remittances among different ethnic communities living in the same region.

7 Conclusion

Social remittances as a practice of translocal mobilities can impact rural livelihood change on an individual, household and community level. This work shows how four different on-farm and non-farm livelihood changes were impacted by social remittances, resulting in a diversification, transformation or substitution of livelihood activities. The village itself serves both as a place of origin for out-migrants but also as a place of destination for in-migrants. This translocal field enables the exchange and transmission of social remittances. They materialise in practices and built structures, changing not only livelihood activities but also the appearance of places over time. This study took a translocal perspective that emphasizes on the multifaceted nature of places and their mobilities, which allowed for a more inclusive perspective on human mobility. Changes induced by social remittances stemming from internal migration mobilities may seem more subtle due to more familiarity to the surrounding they are embedded in. Nonetheless, they do have profound effects on the livelihoods of rural communities, often in less immediate temporal dimensions than presumed. Also, their impact can vary, depending on various influential features and barriers that amplify or diminish the effect of social remittances on rural livelihood change. In some cases, they are the pivotal ‘make or break’ factors of livelihood change to happen.

A central finding of this study is to pay greater attention to social remittances when examining the impact translocality can have on rural communities and their livelihoods. The study depicts how they are of higher importance than the amount of attention they are given, in comparison to more frequently investigated financial remittances. From a ‘positive’ migration-development narrative perspective, migrants that transfer social remittances can be seen as rural innovators who further develop the village economically and integrate it into markets more sustainably than liberal structural reforms do. From an opposite, more ‘negative’ viewpoint on the migration-development-nexus, they can bring more market- and capital-oriented mentality into the village, which potentially erode village community structures already weakened by the heightened migration of younger generations. Both assumptions are too simplistic and one-dimensional, which is why this thesis prefers to follow the conclusion other scholars drew on social remittances: they don’t have a “dichotomous positive or negative effect” (Suksomboon, 2008, p. 478) for households and communities, but an uneven, yet profound impact on (rural) livelihoods and the changes they undergo in our time and age of mobility. The study therefore advocates for a differentiated and scrutinizing view on rural places, which are nowadays comprised of increasingly complex livelihood portfolios. They differ from the ‘distorted realities’ (Rigg, 2019, p. 3) rural places are still abundantly imagined as by urban and urbanizing societies in the Global North *and* South and should be acknowledged in respect of their multifaceted realities.

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9 Annex

Annex A: List of Conducted Interviews and Informal Talks

ID	Method	Participant information	Date	Main Themes	Category
EX-IN 1	Expert Interview	Por Luang (village head) (40) and village head deputy (34), both male	13.07.2019	Overview of the village	1 2 b) b)edu
TR1	Participatory Transect walk	Village head deputy (34), male (recurring)	13.07.2019	Overview of the village	
HH-IN 1	HH Interview	Young local woman (23) who recently majored in English Humanities Bachelor CM and returned to the village for the rice planting season	14.07.2019	HH structure, education, remittances	1 2 b)edu + c)
HH-IN 2	HH Interview	Local female shop owner (36) with a homestay	15.07.2019	HH structure, income structure	3
HH-IN 3	HH Interview	Young local man (24) who recently finished an Art Bachelor in CMI, owns a little art gallery in the village	15.07.2019	HH structure, education	1 2 b) + c)
HH-IN 4	HH Interview	Female out-migrant (35), studied in CM, translator for Japanese language, works and lives in Chonburi	15.07.2019	HH structure, migration story, remittances	2 a)
EX-IN 2	Expert Interview	Female manager of volunteer tourist organisation (28) based in the village	16.07.2019	work/activities of tourist organisation in the village	4
EX-IN 3	Expert Interview	Young woman (24) from outside the village who works for locally owned elephant foundation	16.07.2019	work/activities of the elephant Foundation in the village, story of founding	4
EX-HH-IN 1	Expert – HH Interview	Male village elder & intellectual (73), former Kwan Chang	16.07.2019	Karen culture, beliefs and traditions, livelihoods of Kwan Changs in the old days (his own story)	2 b) 4
EX-IN 4	Expert Interview	Por Luang (40), male (village head) (recurring)	16.07.2019	Uptake from last interview: migration & remittances in the village, problems in the village, how maize cultivation was established in the village and what the difference to other cash crops is	2 b) 4
EX-HH-IN 2	Expert – HH Interview	Translocal man & founder of local elephant foundation (36), lives in the village and Chiang Mai, manages local elephant foundation	17.07.2019	HH structure, personal life- and migration story, community enterprise	2 a) 4
INT 1	Informal talk	Local sisters (over 40) who don't have a real homestay or elephants and do agriculture for a living	17.07.2019	Income, corn agriculture, agricultural debt, homestay system	1 3
HH-IN 5	HH Interview	Local female return migrant, shop owner (26) (Smoothie & Coffee Bar)	18.07.2019	HH structure, migration story, remittances, local business	1 2 b)
EX-HH-IN 3	Expert – HH Interview	Local man (70), formerly worked as Kwan Chang and former Por Luang (village head), now works for his son's local elephant foundation as a Kwan Chang and also does agriculture	18.07.2019	HH structure, life story as working with elephants and being a former representative in TAO and Por Luang	1 2 b) 4
INT 2	Informal talk	Village head deputy (34), male (recurring)	19.07.2019	problems in the village regarding the elephant ceremony and the homestay allocation, financial aid from TAO for the elephant ceremony and homestay allocation, rotational farming	1 2 b)edu 4
HH-IN 6	HH Interview	Female local return migrant (28) living in this village and village of her husband, education & work migration to CM, plans to open a bakery near the school	20.07.2019	HH structure, personal life- and migration story, plans to open own business	1 2 b)edu
EX-HH-IN 4	Expert-HH Interview	Village head deputy (recurring), interested in organic farming	20.07.2019	HH structure, personal life- and migration story, information about equality, wealth and debt in the village	1 2 b)edu 4
EX-HH-IN 5	Expert-HH Interview	Local in-migrant (38) (marriage migration) owns a coffeeshop and organic coffeeshop grower, initiator of community coffee enterprise, interested in organic and tree agriculture; former work migration around Thailand	20.07.2019	HH structure, personal life- and migration story, coffee community business	1 2 b)inmig 4
HH-IN 7	HH Interview	Local female return migrant (37); her husband is an in-migrant (marriage migration) and does cock-breeding besides agriculture, he is also interested in changing the agriculture to more trees; her father is a Kwan Chang with tourist organisation and is building a shop at the moment for his retirement when he no longer can work as a Kwan Chang	21.07.2019	HH structure, personal life- and migration story, income of the HH, non-farm activities of her HH	1 2 b)

HH-IN 8	HH Interview	Local boy (16) and son of participant in EX-HH-IN5, he works as a Kwan Chang for tourist organisation and has no further plans for education, he likes agriculture and being with the elephants	21.07.2019	personal education story, work as Kwan Chang for the volunteer tourism organisation	1
HH-IN 9	HH Interview	Two local female educational migrants (23) (22), who both study social work in CMI and are visiting, they both want to do community work in the village in the future	21.07.2019	HH structure, personal education- and migration story, problems in the village	2 a)edu
INT 3	informal talk	Local man (38) who does agriculture and is interested in organic farming. He also manages the elephant of his parents in law who is at a Bang Chang	28.07.2019	coffee growing, having an elephant in a Baan Chang education of his children	3
INT 4	informal talk	Old local woman (over 70) who lives in a house with a homestay	28.07.2019	homestay, living in the village for a long time, income	1 3
HH-IN 10	HH Interview	Female out-migrant from the village (28), works and lives with family in CMI	28.07.2019	education, remittances for education, lives in house in CM with husband and baby, works for tourist company (with elephants)	2 a)
INT 5	informal talk	Old local woman (over 60), who lives with her unmarried siblings without children, no homestay although it is in a good area	28.07.2019	Why she doesn't have a homestay	3
HH-IN 11	HH Interview	Local couple (over 40); who live in a very nice house built of teak, they own two elephants	28.07.2019	HH structure, their children's education and work, being a Kwan Chang. livelihoods	1 3
HH-IN 12	HH Interview	Educational out-migrant from the village , female (22), studies in CM to become a teacher	28.07.2019	education, becoming a teacher, challenges for villagers, more girls study than boys, social resilience if educated, remittances, family bonding, wanting to return to village	2 a)edu
INT 6	informal talk	Local couple (over 50) who have homestay	29.07.2019	how they like having a homestay	3
HH-IN 13	HH Interview	Local Family : both parents are quite sick (over 60), daughter (31) lives at home with them	29.07.2019	Livelihoods, Homestay, Coffee and Fruit Trees; family members having health problems (Asthma, Diabetes);	1
HH-IN 14	HH Interview	Two local women (27, 24), one is a, educational return migrant	29.07.2019	24 y.-o. studied social studies @ Monk University; brother has drug problem	2 b)edu
INT 7	Informal talk	Older local man , his house is one of the first who has a homestay	29.07.2019	homestay	3
HH-IN 15	HH Interview	Male educational and work migrant (37), lives in CMI and works at MaJoe University, organic orchard project	29.07.2019	personal education- and life story, fruit orchard project	2 a)
INT 8	Informal talk	Local family of village head deputy (recurring): four women and two men of different ages	29.07.2019	money loan system, village fund, (football)-education of their sons (Audio1), changing agriculture, Buddhists and Christians living together, old religion	1 3
EX-HH-IN 6	Expert-HH Interview	Male In-migrant (over 60), first teacher of the village, owns a rooster farm	30.07.2019	rooster farm business, fruit tree orchard, organic farming	2 b) inmig 4
HH-IN 16	HH Interview	Young male return migrant (26) with medical massage education & sister (23) who wants to stay in the village	30.07.2019	personal education, migration and return story, plans for the future: coffee shop, organic farming (coffee, fruit trees, vegetables) Sister: future plans, education (voluntary non-migrant)	2 b) edu 3
EX-IN 5	Expert Interview	Village head deputy , male (recurring)	30.07.2019	organic farming practices, organic farming group	1 2 b) edu 4
INT 9	Informal talk	Local male farmer (over 50)	31.07.2019	how farming used to be done in the old days, his view on organic farming	1 3
HH-IN 17	HH Interview	Local female farmer (56) and her daughter (27), who is a farmer as well	31.07.2019	HH structure, education of HH members, 2 sons are Kwan Changs in Na Klang, husband of daughter Dao grows pumpkins, have a homestay	1 3
HH-IN 18	HH Interview	Local Kwan Chang (65) male, lives with his daughter and her husband, the rooster farmer	31.07.2019	working as a Kwan Chang in the old days, working as a Kwan Chang for tourist organisation, his plans for the future	2 b)
INT 10	Informal Talk	Local in-migrant (38) (recurring) owns a coffeeshop and organic coffeeshop grower, initiator of community coffee enterprise, interested in organic and tree agriculture; former work migration around Thailand	31.07.2019	his organic orchard, new agricultural practices, influences	2 b)inmig 4
EX-IN 6	Expert Interview	Translocal man & founder of local elephant foundation (recurring)	31.07.2019	beginnings of tourism in the village	2 a)

HH-IN 20	HH Interview	Local female return migrant, shop owner (26) (recurring) and her brother (33), a return migrant who used to work in CM in a hotel	01.08.2019	her business, her brothers work migration and return story, Reasons for migrating to City, Education	2 b)
EX-IN 7	Expert Interview	Local man (70), formerly worked as Kwan Chang and former Por Luang (village head) (recurring)	01.08.2019	beginnings of tourism in the village	1 2 b)
HH-IN 20	HH Interview	Local educational return migrant (27) who studied accounting in Chiang Rai University, interested in organic agriculture	02.08.2019	organic farming, university	1 2 b)edu
HH-IN 21	HH Interview	Local female educational migrant (22), who studies social work in CMI (recurring)	03.08.2019	problems in village, small questions from last interview	2 a)eu
INT 11	Informal Talk	Local couple (over 40), work in agriculture (talked while rice planting)	03.08.2019	sons studying, agricultural work	1 3
HH-IN 22	HH Interview	Female return migrant (27), studied in Mae Cham and worked in a clothes shop and now owns a small snack shop in the village	03.08.2019	Education (health care), shop owning, wants to open another shop, barriers	2 b)edu
HH-IN 23	HH Interview	Local farmer (29) female	03.08.2019	Education (involuntary non-migrant) - had to stay with parents, future plans	3
EX-HH-IN 7	Expert-HH Interview	Local farmer (37) female, she and her husband are the pioneers for organic agroforestry	04.08.2019	first who planted fruit trees Education of children (private schools), Education differences in village	1 3
EX-HH-IN 8	Expert-HH Interview	Female educational return migrant (33) who studied accounting and now works in the local children day-care centre	04.08.2019	Education: daycare, different capabilities for villagers, gender	1 2 b)edu
EX-IN 8	Expert Interview	Local in-migrant (38) (recurring) owns a coffeeshop and organic coffeeshop grower, initiator of community coffee enterprise, interested in organic and tree agriculture; former work migration around Thailand	05.08.2019	coffee community enterprise	1 2 b)immig 4
INT 12	Informal Talk	Two older local couples (over 60)	05.08.2019	edu. of children; edu before HPK school: traditions, agri. practices, weaving	1 3
HH-IN 24	HH Interview	Local couple (29) & (26), he is an in-migrant; both work in agriculture, man rents tractor & dump truck	05.08.2019	edu m: Bible School, f: only grade 6 - mother sick - taking care of sibling	2 b)edu 3
HH-IN 25	HH Interview	Female in-migrant and return-work-migrant (29); owns a shop owner on main road and lives in the house in the opposite of shop with her local husband	06.08.2019	worked as nurse assistant in CM for 8 years, husband has motorcycle garage business,	2 b)
HH-IN 26	HH Interview	Local female return-migrant (27) who studied in BKK and worked in CMI in a bakery, opened a seasonal crepe & smoothie shop in the village	06.08.2019	education & migration story, her shop in the village, future plans	2 b)
HH-IN 27	HH Interview	Young local man (24) (recurring) who recently finished an Art Bachelor in CMI, owns a little art gallery in the village	06.08.2019	plans to become an art teacher, his gallery in the village and future plans with it	2 b)edu c)
HH-IN 28	HH Interview	In-migrant who worked in BKK (37) and returned to the village, where opened a guesthouse-shop-garage-complex close to the main road	07.08.2019	studied in BKK, rents rooms, restaurant in harvesting season, wants to grow and sell organic vegetables	2 b)
HH-IN 29	HH Interview	Local couple (42) & (55) who participate in the coffee community enterprise	07.08.2019	Edu 3 daughters stay away for studying, woman didn't want to go to school (one of first students in HPK prim. school); Agri are in coffee enterprise	1 3
HH-IN 30	HH Interview	Local female return-migrant (24) who studied in CMI and is currently pregnant.	08.08.2019	Edu studied social work; maybe goes back to city to work with husband	1 2 b)edu c)
INT 13	Informal Talk	Village head deputy (36), male (recurring)	08.08.2019	further information on community enterprise & tourism	1 2 b)edu

Annex B: HH Survey 2019

#	Nr. of HH members	adults m.	adults f.	child m.	child f.	household members	educational migration	work migration	migration	family structure + extra information	homestay
1	2	1	1	0	0	Mother (over 60) + unmarried adult son	0	1	1 son lives in Mae Wang: was Kwan Chang but now he is just employed at other company	2 adult children: 1 son lives with mother, 1 son lives in another house in the village with his family, 1 son lives in Mae Wang	0
2	3	2	1	0	0	Mother & Father (over 50) + son	1	1	1 son: Mae Wang (E.), 1 daughter: studies and works in CM	3 adult children: 1 daughter (studied/works in CM), 1 son (Mae Wang - E.), 1 son (Kwan Chang in nearby locally owned elephant foundation)	rent rooms to tourist organisation staff (monthly)
3	5	1	2	1	1	Mother (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	0		5 adult children: 4 daughters and 1 son, the youngest daughter still lives with mother, the other ones live in houses with their husbands	1
4	6	2	2	1	1	Mother & Father (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	1	1 son: in CM as employee, 2 sons: Mae Wang (E.) (all unmarried)		1
5	3	2	1	0	0	Mother & Father (over 60) + adult son	0	1	1 son: lives in CM (works with tourism)	4 adult children: 2 sons: 1 lives with parents, 1 lives in CM; 2 daughters: 1 lives in village with husband in other house, 1 lives in another village with husband	1
6	5	1	2	1	1	Mother + daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	1	2 sons: Mae Wang (E.), 1 son in "Metaman" (E.)	6 adult children: 1 daughter lives with mother, 1 daughter lives in village in other house, 2 sons work in Mae Wang, one in Metaman Baan Chang	0
7	6	2	2	1	1	Mother (over 50) & Father (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	1	1	Father used to be Kwan Chang; 1 daughter: studied in BKK, works and lives with her family in CM, 1 daughter: studies in CM	child girl: grade 3; child boy: grade 1	1
8	4	3	1	0	0	mother & Father + 2 adult sons (unmarried)	0	0	-	3 adult children: 1 daughter lives in other house with husband, 2 sons live with parents	1
9	7	4	3	0	0	woman (over 60), her sister & husband (over 60) + 4 adult children (3 male, 1 female)	0	0	-	5 adult children: 4 sons, 1 daughter --> 1 of the sons lives in other house in village	0
10	9	3	5	1	0	Mother & Father + 3 adult daughters + 1 adult son + daughter & husband + child (boy)	1	1	3 daughters: used to study & work in CM and Mae Chaem	daughter works for tourist organisation	1
11	2	1	1	0	0	Mother & Father	1	1	1 son (21): Mae Wang (E.), 1 daughter (18): studies in CM, 1 son (13): studying in Mae Cham	-	1

12	6	3	2	0	1	Mother + adult daughter + adult son & wife + adult son + adult daughter	1	1	1 daughter studied in CM, plans to go back to find a job with a salary, 1 son studied in CM but he dropped out because father died and he had to go back home and work as a Kwan Chang in Mae Wang, 1 adult son & wife: travel back and forth between Mae Wang, where they work as elephants grass choppers	4 adult children: 2 sons (30, 26), 2 daughters (23, 19); all live at home now although 1 travels back and forth with wife between home and Mae Wang and 1 daughter will probably go to CM soon to find job	0
13	6	3	1	2	0	Mother & Father + 3 adult son + 1 child (boy)	1	0	1 son: studied High School in Chong Thom, but could not continue to study because sickness of father - he had to help with farm	father is sick (stomach problem), 1 son has a disability and cannot walk	rent house to tourist organisation staff (monthly)
14	5	1	2	2	0	Mother + daughter & husband + 2 children (2 boys)	1	1	1 daughter: used to study in BKK, lives in CM; 1 son: lives in CM	3 adult children: 1 son, 2 daughters; father already died	1
15	10	5	4	0	1	mother (over 60), mother & father (over 60), father & mother, 2 adult sons, 1 daughter & husband + 1 child (girl)	1	0	1 son: studied in monk high school in CM	2 sons: work as Kwan Chang for tourist organisation	1
16	7	3	3	0	1	Mother & Father (over 60) + 1 son & wife + 1 son & wife + child (girl)	0	1	1 son: lives and works in CM (tourism) with wife	1 son lives in village and works in tourism (transporting tourists back and forth)	1
17	6	2	3	0	1	Mother (over 60) + 1 daughter + daughter & husband + 2 children (girl, 1 adult son)	1	0	1 daughter: studying in CM, 1 daughter studies in CM	4 children: 3 daughters (22, 17, 9); 1 son (20)	0
18	5	2	3	0	0	mother (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (adult son & adult daughter)	1	1	1 son (27): studied and worked in Chiang Rai, 1 daughter (23): studies in CM but comes home often due to her social work studies, 1 son (25) : football player in other province, does not come home often	4 adult children: 2 daughters (29, 23); 2 sons (27, 25); oldest daughter has own household in the village, youngest son does not live at home (he is a football player but also studies in BKK)	1
19	6	2	3	1	0	Father (over 60) & Mother (over 50) + 1 daughter + 1 daughter & husband + 1 child (boy)	1	0	2 daughters: studied in Mae Cham		0
20	3	1	1	1	0	Father & Mother (under 50) + 1 child (boy)	1	0	2 daughters: study in Mae Cham	children: 2 daughters, 1 son	1
21	6	3	2	0	1	Father & Mother + 1 adult son + son & wife + 1 child (girl)	1	0	1 daughter: studies in BKK, 1 son: studying in CM - Grade 10 (football related), 1 son: studying in Lamphun - Grade 7 (football related)	5 children: 4 sons, 1 daughter; 1 son works for local elephant foundation as Kwan Chang	1

22	7	2	2	2	1	Father & Mother (over 60) + daughter & husband + 3 children (2 boys, 1 girl)	1	1	1 adult daughter: studied in CM, lives in Chonburi, 1 adult son: studied and lives in CM, 1 child girl: studies in Mae Chaem at high school Husband is immigrant	6 adult children: 4 daughters, 2 sons. Both sons and 1 daughter live and work outside the village, 3 of the daughters stayed in the village, 2 have own household, 1 stayed with parents with her husband and their 4 children, of which 1 child girl lives and studies in Mae Chaem and 1 child boy works for tourist organisation as Kwan Chang	1
23	6	3	1	1	1	Father (over 60) + 1 son (divorced) + 1 daughter & husband + 2 children (girl & boy)	1	0	1 child son (14): Monk student	3 small children: 2 sons (14, 6), daughter (12)	1
24	2	2	0	0	0	Father (over 60), son (unmarried)	1	1	1 son: used to work in Mae Wang as a Kwan Chang, 1 son: working in CMI as security guard	son works as a tourist driver now; he also used to work in CM in the hotel sector and in Mae Wang as a Kwan Chang. 1 son lives in Chiang Mai and works as security guard	0
25	5	1	1	3	0	Father (over 50) & mother (over 30) + 3 children (all boys)	0	0	-	3 small children: 3 sons (9, 7, 5)	1
26	8	3	3	0	2	Father & Mother (over 60) + daughter & husband + 1 child (girl) + daughter & husband + 1 child (girl)	1	1	1 daughter: studied in CM, 1 son: studied and works in BKK, 1 son lives between CM and village, husband of wife studied in CM	5 adult children: 2 sons, 3 daughters 1 son lives and works in BKK, 1 daughter has own HH in the village, 1 son lives between village and CM (where his family lives) – he owns local elephant foundation, 1 daughter lives with husband and child in HH	1
27	6	2	2	1	1	Mother (over 50) + adult son + daughter & husband + 2 children (girl, boy)	0	1	1 son: works in BKK, 1 daughter: lives in CM, 1 daughter: worked in CM	5 adult children: 3 sons (33, 30, 28) 2 daughters (29, 26): 1 son has own household in the village, 1 son migrated to BKK, 1 daughter migrated to CM, 1 daughter (+husband + 2 children) and 1 son live in HH	0
28	4	1	1	1	1	Mother & Father + 2 children (boy, girl)	0	1	Father: used to live in CM	He is a self-taught carpenter HH next door is his mother and sister	1
29	3	0	3	0	0	Mother + adult daughter (widow) & 1 adult child (girl)	0	0		6 adult children: 4 daughters, 2 sons 1 son married to woman in another village, but has house in the village, 1 son married and lives in the village 1 daughter married and lives in another village, 2 daughters married and live in this village, 1 daughter lives in HH	1
30	9	3	4	2	0	Mother & Father + adult daughter (still in school) + daughter (pregnant) & husband + son & wife + 2 children (boys)	1	1	1 son 1 daughter: studied in CM and work in CM (hotel business) 1 daughter: studied in CM	5 adult children: 2 daughters and 1 son live in this house (1 still goes to school in Pang Un and comes on weekends), 1 daughter and 1 son live in CM	1
31	5	2	1	1	1	father (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	1	1 husband of daughter used to work at Hang Dong (E.); 1 son used to work in Mae Wang, now in Maeung Kut (E.)		0

32	5	2	2	1	0	wife (pregnant) & husband, niece & husband + baby (son)	1	1	Husband: worked with E. when he was single, niece + husband: studied in CM		1
33	4	2	1	1	0	wife & husband + 1 adult son & 1 teenage son	1	1	1 son: Hang Dong (E.) travels back and forth, 1 son: Hang Dong (E.), 1 son: studies in CM but took one year off bc. of health problem		0
34	2	1	1	0	0	husband & wife (over 60)	0	1	1 son: used to work with E. when he was single	6 children: 3 sons, 3 daughters 5 live in the village 1 son married and lives with wife in other village	0
35	4	1	1	2	0	husband & wife + 2 sons	1	0	husband studied at bible school in CM, he is originally from another village close by	husband is 29, wife is 26	0
36	3	1	2	0	0	father & mother + 1 adult daughter	1	1	1 son: soldier in Chonburi, 1 daughter: studying in CM (comes home once a month, father used to work with E.	2 adult children: 1 son (21) in Chonburi, 1 daughter (18-19) in CM	1
37	5	2	2	1	0	mother + 1 adult son + daughter & husband + 1 son	0	1	1 son (22): used to work in Mae Wang, 1 son (17/18): working in Mae Wang, 1 daughter: working in CM in elderly care (all unmarried)	4 children: 1 daughter (25) works in CM, 1 daughter (21) and 1 (22) son live in HH, 1 son (18) lives in Mae Wang	1
38	9	3	3	2	1	father & mother (over 60) + 1 daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl) + 1 daughter & husband + 1 son	1	1	1 daughter: studied & worked in BKK, 1 daughter: studied and worked in CM		1
39	4	1	1	0	2	father & mother (over 40) + 2 daughters	1	0	2 daughters (15, 13) study in Mae Chaem at high school	4 children: 2 daughters (15, 13) in Mae Chaem; 2 daughters live with parents (12, 7)	1
40	9	3	4	2	0	father & mother (over 60) + 1 daughter + 1 daughter + 1 son + 1 daughter & husband + 2 children (2 boys)	1	1	1 son: started Elephant Foundation in Na Klang, youngest brother works there too; 1 daughter used to study in BKK	5 children: 3 daughters live at home (1 with husband and children), 1 son lives at home, 1 son moved to nearby village to open own elephant foundation	1
41	7	4	2	1	0	mother & father (over 50) + son (Don, 26) + son (disability) + daughter (over 20) & husband + baby (son)	0	1	oldest son lives in Mae Tang (E.), 4th son works as a photographer in Baan Chang in Mae Wang	5 children: 1 son (Mae Tang), 1 son (26): works for tourist organisation in the village-not as Kwan Chang), 1 daughter (over 20), 1 son (Mae Wang), 1 son (Kwan Chang for tourist organisation)	0
42	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
43	1	0	1	0	0	mother (husband passed away)	1	1	1 son: in Mae Wang (E.), 1 daughter: studies (maybe in CM, not clear)	2 children: son and daughter live outside the village	1

44	6	2	2	1	1	mother & father (over 50) + son & wife + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	1	1 daughter: lives in CM with family (husband works in tourism), 1 son: Mae Wang (E.)	3 adult children: son (oldest son lives in house), daughter (CM), youngest son comes back once a month but lives in Mae Wang	0
45	4	2	2	0	0	mother & father (over 60) + 1 adult daughter (disabled) + 1 adult son	0	0		son work for locally owned elephant foundation as Kwan Chang	0
46	3	1	1	1	0	father & mother (over 40) + 1 teenage son	1	0	1 son: studies & lives at the temple in Mae Cham	2 children: oldest son (14) lives with family, youngest son (12, Monk)	0
47	6	2	2	1	1	father & mother (over 40) + 1 daughter & husband + 2 children (boy & girl)	0	1	father: used to live and work in Mae Tang & Mae Wang, 1 son: works in Mae Wang (E.) and comes home every 2-3 months	2 adult children: daughter (23) lives with husband and children at her parents' house; son (21)	0
48	5	1	1	1	2	father & mother (over 40) + 3 children (2 girls & 1 boy)	0	0	-	3 little children: girl (8), boy (6), girl (baby)	0
49	3	2	1	0	0	mother & father (over 60) + 1 adult son	0	1	1 son: teacher, works and lives in Mae Cham, 1 son: used to work in CM	3 adult children: daughter (oldest) lives in village; son (second) lives/works as teacher in Mae Chaem; youngest son lives in HH sometimes works with tourists in the village, but mainly agricultural work	0
50	6	2	2	1	1	mother & father (over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 children (girl & boy)	0	0	-	2 little children: daughter (10), son (7)	0
51	3	1	1	1	0	Mother & Father (over 60) + teenage son (17)	0	1	son worked in elephant camps in Mae Wang (has been for 2 years), just back for rice planting in rainy season		1
52	3	1	2	0	0	Mother & Father + daughter	1	0	1 daughter studies in Mae Cham	children: 1 daughter lives with parents, 1 daughter lives in Mae Chaem	1
53	7	4	3	0	0	mother & father (over 60) + 2 sons (30, 27) + 1 daughter (28) + daughter & husband	0	1	son (30) was working in Mae Tang in Baan Chang; husband of daughter lives/works in Lampang; wife of son (27) works in CM	4 children: all children are married, but only the youngest daughters partner live in house; 1 son (30) is working as Kwan Chang with tourist organisation	1
54	4	1	1	1	1	mother & father + son (15) + daughter (7)	1	0	oldest son (17) studies in CM in Vocational School, son (14) is a Monk and studies in Mae Chaem - comes back 1x/year	4 children: 3 sons (17, 15, 14); 1 daughter (7)	1
55	2	1	1	0	0	mother & father	1	0	son is monk and studies in Mae Chaem (Grade 8), daughter studies in high school (Grade 7)	2 children: 1 son (Monk); daughter (12)	1
56	4	2	2	0	0	mother & father + son + daughter (23)	1	1	twin daughters (25) live in different cities: 1 lives in Chonburi and works in a restaurant, 1 lives in BKK and works as a nurse assistant	4 children: 1 son, 3 daughters (twins)	0

57	4	2	2	0	0	mother & father + son (disability) + daughter	0	0	-	son with disability could not tell us age of him and his sister	0
58	7	2	2	2	1	father (over 60) + daughter + daughter & husband (over 60) + 2 children (boy & girl) + nephew of daughter (17)	1	1	daughter (37) used to work in BKK for 5 y.; husband moved from Lamphun to village for work (school); nephew of daughter used to study in CM (secondary school)		1
59	3	1	1	1	0	mother & father + son (10)	1	1	2 daughters (15, 12) study in schools in CM, son study at private school in Mae Chaem, husband works in hospital in Mae Chaem and comes home often		just hosts groups that come through locally owned elephant foundation
60	2	1	1	0	0	mother & father	1	0	All 3 daughters study and live away: oldest daughter studies in University in Chiang Rai, second and third daughter study in Mae Cham (high school)	Herold parents live down in the village	0
61	3	1	1	0	1	mother (33) & father (43) + daughter (7)	1	0	daughter (Grade 9) studies in CM, son studies in Lamphun (football)	3 children: 1 daughter (15, 7), 1 son (Lamphun, football)	0
62	4	1	1	1	1	mother & father + 2 children (boy & girl)	1	1	mother studied at a 6 months nurse assistant school in Mae Chaem, worked as a nurse assistant in CM for 8 years	shop on road, opposite: motorcycle business of husband, mother is from village 20km from this village	0
63	2	1	1	0	0	mother & father	1	0	1 daughter studies in BKK, 1 son studies in another district and has a scholarship as a football player		0
64	4	1	1	2	0	mother & father + 2 children (2 boys)	0	0			0
65	5	2	1	1	1	mother & father + 2 children (boy & girl) + nephew of father (19)	1	0	father studied Political Science in BKK	guesthouse (rent rooms), restaurant (in harvesting season), shop	0
66	7	3	4	0	0	mother + 2 sisters (all over 60) + daughter & husband + 2 sons (20, 18)	1	1	2 sons study in Lamphun, husband teaches in same school, they come home almost every weekend	sometimes they host people (homestay), but not often	0
67	4	1	1	1	1	Mother & Father + children (girl & boy)	0	0		her parents live in the village	0
Total amount	321	124	120	47	30		39	38			33

Annex C: German Abstract (Zusammenfassung)

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit untersucht den Einfluss translokaler sozialer Rimessen auf den Wandel von Lebensgrundlagen in einem ländlichen nordthailändischen Dorf. Der globale Wandel ist von einer Zunahme der Migration geprägt, welche ökonomische, soziale und kulturelle Auswirkungen auf Herkunfts- und Zielorte hat. Migrationsprozesse werden dabei als Mobilität wahrgenommen, die zum Entstehen translokaler Räume führt. Diese ermöglichen den Austausch von Gütern, Wissen, Ideen und Überlegungen. Dabei tragen MigrantInnen durch den Transfer von ‚inkorporierten‘ (z.B. praktische Fähigkeiten) und ‚immateriellen‘ (z.B. Ideen, Überlegungen) sozialen Rimessen zum Wandel ländlicher Lebensräume bei. Soziale Rimessen, welche durch translokale Beziehungen in Heimatgemeinschaften transferiert werden, können sich auf den Wandel ländlicher Lebensgrundlagen auswirken und zu deren Diversifikation, Transformation oder Substitution führen. Die Arbeit analysiert durch qualitative Interviews und eine Haushaltsumfrage die Lebensgrundlagen sowie die Translokalität im Untersuchungsgebiet und die daraus entstehenden sozialen Rimessen. Des Weiteren legt sie dar, in welchen Kanälen sich der Transfer vollzieht. Das vor allem auf landwirtschaftlichen Lebensgrundlagen sowie Einkommensquellen aus der Haltung domestizierter asiatischer Elefanten basierende Untersuchungsgebiet ist von interner Migration geprägt. Die zahlreichen daraus resultierenden inkorporierten und immateriellen sozialen Rimessen, welche vor allem durch Kanäle des direkten Kontaktes übertragen werden, haben Einfluss auf die alltägliche Lebenswelt der Menschen im Dorf und auf den Wandel der Lebensgrundlagen. Der Vollzug dieses Wandels und der Einfluss verschiedener sozialer Rimessen wird anhand von vier Beispielen im landwirtschaftlichen und nicht-landwirtschaftlichen Bereich dargelegt, welche im Untersuchungsgebiet stattgefunden haben: Agroforstwirtschaft & biologischer Landbau, Kaffeeanbau, Tourismus und kleine nicht-agrarische Unternehmen. Es wird beobachtet, dass der Einfluss von sozialen Rimessen meist zu einer Diversifizierung oder Transformation von Lebensgrundlagen führt, wobei zu bemerken ist, dass sich diese auf der individuellen, der Haushalts- und Gemeinde-Ebene vollziehen kann. Anschließend werden Faktoren, aufgrund welcher der Einfluss sozialer Rimessen variieren kann aufgezeigt sowie deren Materialisierung im lokalen Raum. Aspekte des Transfer-Kanals, Diffusions-Kontexts, sozio-ökonomischer Status sowie der Art der sozialen Rimesse werden als Faktoren festgestellt und untersucht. Vor allem die Ausstattung mit finanziellem Kapital aber auch die Diffusion von Ideen durch andere Kanäle zeigen große Auswirkungen. Abschließend wird festgehalten, dass es sich bei der Untersuchung von Wandel und Translokalität im ruralen Raum als fruchtbar erweist, neben finanziellen Rimessen auch den Einfluss sozialer Rimessen zu beachten sowie den lokalen Kontext von Migration und Entwicklung stärkere Aufmerksamkeit zu geben um die komplexen Lebensrealitäten ruraler Räume umfassender verstehen zu können.