

Summer School Report, Day 4:

The first session of Day 4 was on Migration, Mobility and Transdisciplinary Methodology. The different lecturers talked about how transdisciplinary research can be applied on the issues of migration and mobility. Due to diverse aspirations of TDR (to solve societal problems, to reflect on research and/or to aim at knowledge co-production), it was stressed that it is not useful to draw a strong boundary around the definition of transdisciplinarity but rather a flexible concept is required. With regard to migration and mobility, the process of migrating should be considered as an expression of the migrant's agency. Therefore, an actor's centred knowledge production, for example, would provide a different perspective, and would conceptualise the agency as social transformation.

The following division into four groups facilitated further discussions on transdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary research (TDR). It was a platform for open questions and exchange on TDR. One discussed issue was the co-production of knowledge as a central pillar of TDR. The discussion was about what knowledge coproducing means and what it involves: One approach is the co-creation of research questions with other disciplines and/or non-academic actors. Here, the collaboration between various actors, the mutual learn process and knowledge-sharing are put at centre of the research process.

During the third session, Daniel Hayward from the Chiang Mai University gave us an introduction to the Mekong Land Research Forum. The forum is to be understood as a resource for informed debate, research, advocacy and policy dialogue around land governance in the Mekong Region. Possible linkages of the forum's work to TDR are, for example, the engagement with real-life problems, the complexity, its inter-disciplinary approach, and the involvement of multi-stakeholders.

The final session of the day was a film screening of the documentary 'Tongpang' (1976) which depicts the struggles of agrarian communities during a period of rapid development projects. The movie showed how Thai students initiated a seminar on the planned Pa-Mong Dam on the Mekong river. Therefore, they went to rural areas in North-Eastern Thailand to talk to relevant

actors who were affected by the proposed Dam. One of them was Tongpang, a farmer who had lost his land when another dam had been built. The student's goal was to involve different actors, like students/academics, farmers and the Thai government, in the seminar in order to bring in various positions on the dam, and to discuss possible numerous impacts. The screening was followed by a brief discussion about its linkages with TDR. It had been discussed that the involvement or the participation of actors from different backgrounds in the seminar has parallels to the co-production of knowledge within TDR. Another issue were the depicted power relations in context of the seminar which mirror challenges of knowledge co-production.

One major learning outcome of the Day 4 was that there is no “ideal TDR” what is at the same time a strength of TDR. Thus, it is applicable on/flexible for different research topics and interests. However, transdisciplinarity is about going beyond disciplines. Therefore, a team is required that is aligned to the principle of transgressing disciplines. The discussions throughout the day helped us to better understand transdisciplinarity and co-production of knowledge in order to detect possible point of linkages for further own research. However, there are still open questions which were not addressed or answered within the discussion: How can hierarchies be addressed within TDR? Should non-academic actors be enlightened about TDR? How is it possible to collaborate if the understanding/definition of TDR is rather blurry than explicit (common understanding between different actors)?





KNOTS has been funded with support from the European Commission. This report reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.