

EFFECTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN TRADITIONAL RICE LANDSCAPES IN VIETNAM AND THE PHILIPPINES

EFFEKTE SOZIOÖKONOMISCHEN WANDELS IN TRADITIONELLEN REISLANDSCHAFTEN VIETNAMS UND DER PHILIPPINEN

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SUMMARY

In South-East Asia the accelerating transition from traditional to modern agricultural practices modifies agrobiodiversity, changes landscape sceneries, and affects lifestyles and human well-being. Efficiency-oriented land use strategies are increasingly replacing sustainable and sufficient land use practices. The study assesses current drivers and impacts of change affecting environment and biodiversity, land management, and socio-cultures of traditional rice landscapes exemplarily for current agrarian transformation processes in rural areas of South-East Asia. Based on a qualitative data collection in the mountainous provinces Ifugao (Northern Philippines), and Sapa (North Vietnam), the effects of recent transformation processes on farmer's livelihoods, their environmental perceptions and future aspirations are investigated. The most important opportunities for a sustainable development in these particular social-ecological systems are discussed with a focus on local strengths and potentials to create adequate livelihoods under avoidance of further environmental degradation. This research was conducted in the context of a large-scale consortia research project (LEGATO, 2011-2016). The results of this study support the identification and formulation of appropriate management recommendations for the investigated socio-ecological systems.

Keywords: socioeconomic transformation, rural landscapes, land use, poverty, perspectives, South-East Asia

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In vielen Regionen Süd-Ost-Asiens werden historisch gewachsene Landschaften mit traditionellen Subsistenzsystemen und nachhaltigen Landnutzungspraktiken zunehmend durch monokulturelle Landwirtschaftsmodelle verdrängt. Dennoch erhöhen sich Armutsdisparitäten und führen zu Abwanderungsprozessen aus ländlichen Räumen. Die vorliegende

Analyse untersucht explorativ und qualitativ die Treiber und Auswirkungen von Wandlungsprozessen, die mit einer agrarischen Intensivierung einhergehen. Basierend auf Interviewergebnissen mit Bauern aus zwei ländlichen Provinzen in Vietnam und auf den Philippinen werden alternative Entwicklungspotentiale verglichen und diskutiert, die zum Erhalt dieser komplexen Mensch-Umweltsysteme beitragen könnten. Die Ergebnisse sind Bestandteil eines interdisziplinären Konsortialprojekts (LEGATO, 2011-2016), welches nachhaltige Landnutzungsstrategien evaluiert, die auf der Selbstregulierungskapazität von Ökosystemen basieren. In diesem Kontext sollen vorliegende Ergebnisse dazu beitragen, Managementempfehlungen zum Erhalt dieser einzigartigen Mensch-Umweltsysteme zu entwickeln, die soziale und kulturelle Aspekte miteinbeziehen.

Schlüsselworte: sozioökonomischer Wandel, marginale Regionen, Landnutzung, Armut, Perspektiven, Süd-Ost-Asien

1 INTRODUCTION

In South-East Asia the tradition of rice cultivation is not only closely linked with impressing landscapes, and the development of distinct socio-cultural values and social structures, but it also reflects a successful strategy to manage poor soils in marginal areas. Increasingly, the pressing demand for food reinforces the intensification of agricultural production also in areas which have not yet been categorized as lucrative. The accelerating transition from traditional to modern agricultural practices strongly modifies (agrobiodiversity, leads to changes in the landscape sceneries, and affects lifestyles and human well-being. Efficiency-oriented management practices are increasingly replacing sustainable and sufficient land management strategies. However, the motivation of this turning away from traditional ways to manage land is based on the success of agricultural intensification in other regions in South-East Asia. Those serve as best practice examples to end poverty and hunger in rural areas, to safeguard food security, to give younger farmer generations a perspective, but also to include rural areas in the country's economic development (Kozel 2014; Fortier and Tran 2014; Republic of the Philippines 1997).

In particular in Vietnam the transformation from a centrally managed, planned economy towards a market-oriented but still state-controlled economy causes changes at the socio-cultural and at the socioeconomic level, respectively. The current governmental strategy to lessen poverty and hunger of ethnic minorities in the mountainous and poor regions in the north and central highlands focuses the increase of rice production as a panacea to “boost income [...]” and to “improve food security” (Yu et al. 2012). However, findings such as of Nguyen et al. (2006) illustrate that, next to other drivers that increase the probability of currently non-poor ethnic minority households to actually move *into* poverty, the expenses