

## 10th Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference

### **Abstract submitted to**

### **Workshop 10 - Landscape dynamics and sustainable resource use: On theories, concepts and methodological tools for integrative studies of human society and nature**

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### **The resilience of social networks as a component of social-ecological systems**

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In resilience theory, disturbance is usually conceptualised as a force impacting on a social-ecological system from the outside. If we consider a social-ecological system to consist of both social subsystems and ecological subsystems, a disturbance may impact on just one of them, effecting changes in the other. In the case of the social subsystem, a disturbance may also happen internally, i.e. within the social subsystem. I apply these concepts to social networks of actors with mixed backgrounds that work towards sustainable use of natural resources and landscape management.

The central question of this contribution is: What happens to the social-ecological system if part of the social subsystem, i.e. the social network, is not resilient? Based on case studies in three European countries I explore the impact of external and internal disturbances on social networks and, ultimately, on the social-ecological system (the landscape) it is part of. Methodological challenges include a) the definition and delineation of 'a disturbance', b) the multi-level nature of social subsystems and embeddedness of social networks, c) the attribution of responses to one or several simultaneous disturbances, and d) the description and measurement of the impact that the social network's response has on the resilience of the whole social-ecological system. I discuss these challenges and possible ways to address them by drawing on examples from the case studies and insights from institutional analysis.