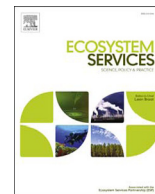




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Beyond benefit sharing: Place attachment and the importance of access to protected areas for surrounding communities

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ABSTRACT

The concept of place attachment can assist to integrate relational values into ecosystem service research, and assist us to rethink the notion of benefits in contemporary protected area thinking. We present a case study from South Africa, where the concept of two-dimensional place attachment was used to understand the relationship between a protected area and a land claimant community that now owns part of this protected area but does not have physical access to the land. A place attachment lens helps refocus access to protected areas as cornerstone to long term sustainability of such areas. Such access must be considered in the context of spatially and economically differentiated users, including a focus on trade-offs between such users. Our findings highlight that when communities previously displaced from protected areas respond to offers of 'benefit sharing' with demands for access and recognition as land owners, they are asking for a recognition of relational values, and identity, based on close interaction with nature. A place attachment and relational values perspective raises questions about the extent to which traditional conservation practice can accommodate such values, and therefore meet local people's expectations and remain viable in the long term.

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1. Introduction

Policy makers and managers are increasingly seeking ways to better sustain the earth's ecological function whilst improving human well-being (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). In the last twenty years, the ecosystem services (ES) framework has emerged as a key tool in this quest to link ecological sustainability goals and human development needs (Guerry et al., 2015; Bull et al., 2016) and has received significant scientific and political support (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010; Schröter et al., 2014; Ruckelshaus et al., 2015). At the heart of this framing lies the idea that we can better argue for ecological sustainability by focusing on nature's value to people through the services and benefits it provides (Daily and Ehrlich, 1999; Daily et al., 2000; Tallis et al., 2008).

Despite the promise of this approach, it has become increasingly clear that the flow of benefits and services from ecosystems to people are not straightforward (Mace et al., 2012; Reyers et al., 2013; Bagstad et al., 2014). Moreover, the significance of these benefits depends, in large part, on the multi-dimensional

ways in which people value nature (Brauman et al., 2007; Chan et al., 2012; Daily et al., 2000; Schröter et al., 2014) (Fig. 1). Since these perceptions and values are what drive policy decisions and ecosystem governance (e.g. Haines-Young and Potschin, 2011, 2013; Díaz et al., 2015; Preston and Raudsepp-Hearne, 2016), investigators have been eager to better understand these multiple dimensions, and their links to human well-being. Historically, ecosystem service research has focused predominantly on the instrumental (*what we can 'do' with what we have*) values that people attach to particular aspects of ecosystem processes (Justus et al., 2009; Schröter et al., 2014; Tallis and Lubchenco, 2014). This focus on instrumental values in ecosystem services research has come under increasing scrutiny. An early area of criticism revolved around the inherent danger of the economic valuation trend that followed close on the heels of ecosystem services research, and argued for an increased focus on the intrinsic value (*what we consider important*) of nature as the basis of ecological sustainability (e.g. McCauley, 2006). More recently, conceptual development in this area has pointed to the need to expand our understanding of values (and the significance of benefits to people) beyond simple dichotomies between instrumental and intrinsic values. People do not tend to make choices based solely on the inherent value or utility of nature (Chan et al., 2016). Rather, people also consider the relationship that they value having with nature (or the

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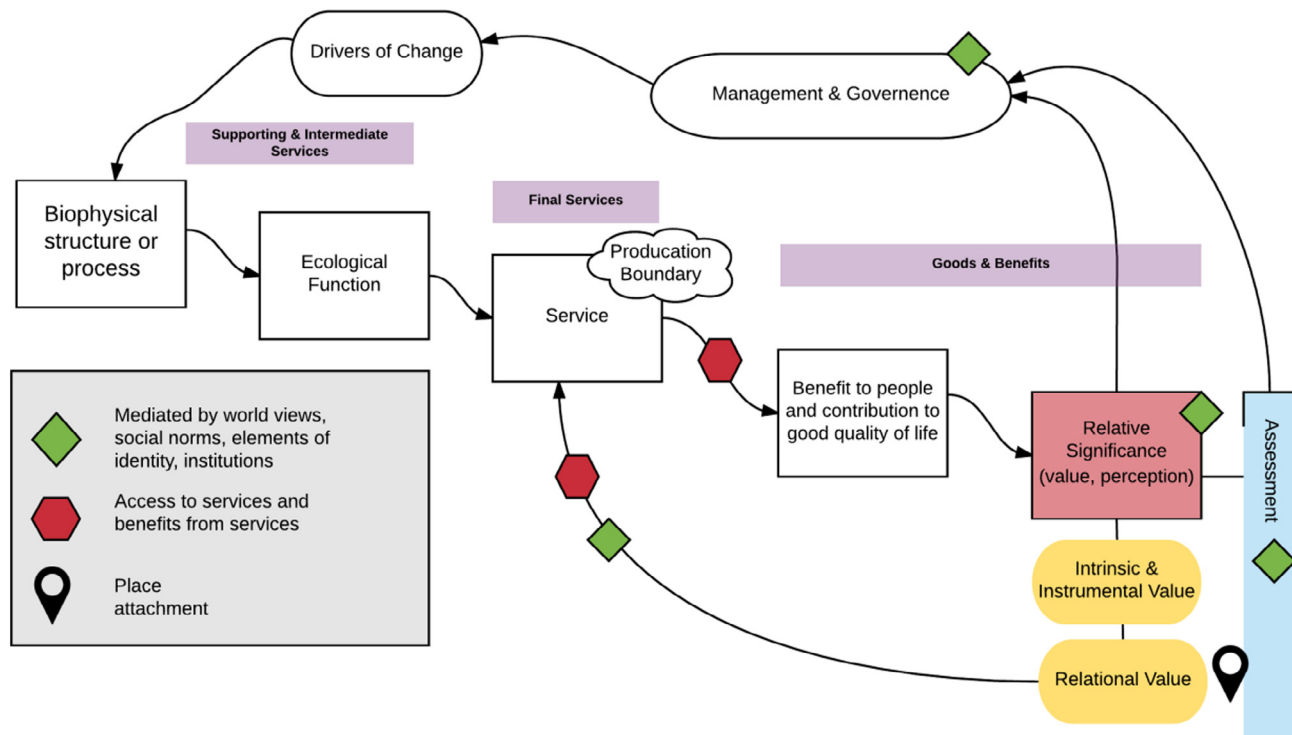


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework adopted in this paper, building on the widely accepted “cascade” framework proposed by Haines-Young et al., 2006, adapted by Haines-Young and Potschin (2013) and Preston and Raudsepp-Hearne (2016). In our framework, relational values determine the ways in which benefits from ecosystem services are deemed significant by people, which in turn drive ecosystem governance. These values are mediated by world views, social norms, institutions, elements of identity and ethic. Benefits from ecosystem services can fail to be realized when access to ecosystems is restricted, but relational values can also mediate access to ecosystem services by limiting or enabling the extent to which people know about or desire these services. Assessment of relational (and other) values affect ecosystem governance. Place attachment is positioned as a concept that enables researchers to better understand relational values, specifically place identity.

relationship that they think is ‘right’), as mediated through a variety of factors, including social norms, cultural identity and policies (Díaz et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2016).

These factors are captured within the concept of relational values, defined here as: “the values that are imbedded in desirable (sought after) relationships, including those among people and between people and nature” (Díaz et al., 2015: 14). At a collective level, relational values reflect elements of cultural identity, social cohesion, social responsibility and moral responsibility towards nature (Table 1). At an individual level, such values are mediated by individual identity and stewardship principles (Chan et al., 2016). Importantly, relational values “are not present in things, but derivative of relationships and responsibilities” to things (Chan et al., 2016: 1462), as illustrated in Table 1.

While some of nature’s services provide benefits that are overtly available to all, such as oxygen, other ecosystem services require particular forms of knowledge and/or practices in order to be converted into benefits (Palomo et al., 2016). Understanding this point helps to elucidate the importance of a relational values perspective in ecosystem services research. As an example, the provisioning service of fish can only be converted into a benefit if people have the required knowledge, equipment and interest in

fishing (Díaz et al., 2015). Artisanal fishing skills, in turn, require processes of knowledge production and transmission between generations (Begossi, 2014), and such knowledge transmission processes are a key means through which identity, worldviews, customary practices and therefore relational values are constructed (Ruddle, 2000). This example suggests that the conversion of ecosystem services into benefits to people often requires a joint contribution from nature and people, and also highlights that such human contributions are likely to be developed and change through long term interactions between people and ecosystems (Renard et al., 2015). Both points highlight the importance of understanding the historical evolution of human-nature relationships in particular places as a precursor to understanding the ways in which relational values emerge and benefits are derived.

If the ecosystem service framing, based on instrumental values or otherwise, has become one of the key strategies for linking nature conservation and human well-being goals, protected areas have been the cornerstone for achieving conservation targets in practice (Naughton-Treves et al., 2005; Le Saout et al., 2013). The synergy between the protected area agenda and the ecosystem service framework should be a straight-forward and complementary one (Justus et al., 2009; García-Llorente et al., 2016). Indeed,

Table 1

Examples of relational values associated with nature and some of the factors that mediate the emergence of such values (adapted from Chan et al., 2016).

Mediating factor	Expression of a relational value linked to each factor
Cultural identity	This place is important to my people, to who we are as a people
Individual Identity	This place is important to me, to who I am as a person
Social cohesion	Being in nature provides a means for me to connect with other people
Social responsibility	Caring for nature is a crucial part of caring for my community, and future generations
Stewardship Ethic	Keeping the land healthy is the right thing to do

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