

Editorial

Although we are already in February, we still would like to wish you all the best for 2017. We hope that, despite some very concerning developments, this year will bring you all the motivation and inspiration you need to keep doing important and relevant work. The new year also brings some changes to the organization of YESS: several members are stepping down to make place for a new generation of YESSers who will breathe new life into the community. We hope that there are several of you who would like to contribute to keep the YESS community alive and strong! Fortunately some things will remain the same; this newsletter has all the usual treats - info on conferences, papers by YESSers, upcoming events - and on top of all that an interview with Dolf de Groot! **André Mascarenhas & Samantha Scholte**

New Special Issue on Shared, Plural and Cultural Values



YESS member Jasper Kenter has recently edited a 15-paper Special Issue of the journal *Ecosystem Services* on 'Shared, Plural and Cultural values'. The issue was developed on the premise that to deeply resolve conflicts between nature conservation and exploitation, we need valuations that result from and are integrated with transformative processes that bring together different voices to develop shared understandings of conflicts between different ecosystem services and shared values around how to resolve them.

Key themes include the formation and institutionalisation of shared values through socialisation, formal and informal deliberation; deliberative alternatives for value-aggregation; understandings and critiques of deliberation; and interrelations between values, culture, place and identity. The importance of institutional factors, such as power issues, and the inevitable subjectivity of valuations around complex and contested issues are highlighted. A wide range of monetary and non-monetary analytical, deliberative, interpretive and psychometric methods are integrated in a range of empirical papers.

Shared, plural and cultural values are presented as a knowledge intervention critiquing the increasing tendency to artificially separate economic and socio-cultural values, and monetary and non-monetary valuation. The authors advocate deliberative valuations as a means to integrate plural values and as a boundary object between research, practitioner and policy communities, enabling more effective translation of values into decisions and creating new democratic spaces for transformative social change.

The issue will be freely accessible until the end of 2017, and can be accessed via <http://www.sharedvaluesresearch.org>.



Interview with Dolf de Groot

Associate professor in integrated ecosystem assessment and management with the Environmental Systems Analysis Group, Wageningen University the Netherlands, and chair of the ESP

What was your time as a PhD researcher like for you?

"That is a short question, but not easy to answer in a few words. My PhD-time was not concentrated in 4 years but lasted about 10, from when I was about 27-37, which even without a PhD is an exciting time of your life: finding your path in your career and in private life.

I became interested in the question why ecosystems are important (beyond the intrinsic value argument) as an MSc-student. I studied biology with specialization landscape ecology and stayed two years in the Galapagos Islands for my thesis.

After my return to the Netherlands I graduated in 1981 and was actually stimulated by my professor to continue my career as an ornithologist. However, because of my experience in Galapagos I was more interested in the problem of how to harmonize economic development with conservation. I decided to write a proposal to investigate the functions and economic values of protected areas.

In the mean time I got married and got two children so I needed a more stable income. I accepted a job at the Univ. in Wageningen to help organize a conference on landscape ecological effects of climate change. So, next to the 'deviation' of almost becoming a professional ornithologist I now had to decide to either continue as a climate-change expert or continue with my 'passion' for understanding ecosystem services and values. I decided for the latter. I continued to work on my PhD in the evening hours and weekends. In 1992 I finally published my book on "Functions of Nature" which was the basis for my PhD, about 10 years after I started.



I can truly say it was a very 'life-directing' time in many ways with much uncertainty but in the end also very rewarding in the sense that I found a topic, and a job that really fascinates me until today."

What do you think are the main challenges currently for young researchers in the field of ES?

"One of the main challenges for young researchers in ES-research is that there is now almost too much choice and information. This makes it difficult to find your own 'niche'. Much has been done on ES, but there is still so much to do. This is reflected in the large number of ESP Working groups. My simple advice would be to find out what interests you most and join the WGs. Also, take active part in discussions, conferences etc. and along the way 'grab' opportunities when they come by - even if they seem to deviate a bit from your plans (like my climate change 'adventure') - but never lose sight of your eventual goal or ambition, and be patient."

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How do you see the development of the ES research community: both in the past and in the future?

"The ES-community has developed rapidly since it beginning in 2008. After the release of the TEEB report (2010) and the establishment of IPBES (2014) the concept is becoming 'mainstream' on global and national scales: for example, the Obama-directive in 2015 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 are largely based on the notion of ecosystem services and natural capital.

An important challenge is to make the connection with local communities, to make a difference on the ground. For that I am pleased with the success of the regional conferences we have had and the national ESP networks and local initiatives, like in the Baviaanskloof in [S.Africa](#) and the creation of the ESP Asia Regional office in [S.Korea](#). These initiatives are important to turn science and policy into practice."

Looking at the development of YESS since its foundation, what role do you think YESS plays as a part of the ESP, and what further interesting roles do you think YESS has the potential to play?

"YESS is very important and I wish ESP could support YESS more than we do. In addition from keeping registration fees as low as possible I would like ESP to be able to provide fellowships and support exchange of PhDs between member organisations.

During ESP conferences we could give YESS a more visible role. For example: at the world conference in [S.Africa](#) in 2015, we asked one of the YESS representatives on stage to give a brief reflection on the expectations and outcome of the conference. If you look at ESP members and conference participants we are a rather young-aged community. I hope this is a reflection of the interest of YESS-ers to be part of ESP. Send me (or actually the Executive Committee) your ideas of how we can improve your role and visibility within ESP."

Do you see a positive evolution in the way people perceive human dependency on nature? How can we raise that awareness even further?

"It is fair to say overall people are becoming more aware of the importance of a healthy natural environment to our wellbeing and to the economy. To spread the word even more there are many ways: popular articles, interviews, documentaries, teaching at universities, high schools, focussed trainings, etc. .

Personally, I am increasingly asked to give lectures or contribute in other ways to short training-courses, some of which aim at "training the trainers and teaching the teachers". This can lead to a strong snowball effect. One [SERVICE](#) of ESP is knowledge transfer and development of curricula. Help with that SERVICE is very welcome, especially from YESS-members."

What might hinder a positive development in raising awareness? For example the current refugee crisis in Europe can make people focus on other aspects of their well-being, resetting the political agenda...

"Unfortunately indeed most people tend to be rather 'short-sighted' - both in terms of time and 'space'. For individual people this is often understandable but governments are supposed to have a broader and longer-term view. However, since their members are also only human, and re-elected every 4 years or so, they too tend to focus on short-term solutions which in the long term often turn out badly.

Maybe the refugee crisis could have been avoided if decision-makers in the past would have invested more in poverty-alleviation and stable governance structures in the poorer regions on earth. This is not popular with most of the electorate so most rich countries only spend a small portion of their budget on true sustainability. These measures ignore the huge costs associated with negative effects, which are usually burdened upon others: poor(er) people and future generations.



The main hindrance to improve awareness of the need for change is the apparently inherited conservative nature and short-sightedness of most people combined with a perverse economic system that still favours non-sustainable production over sustainable alternatives.

I do believe we are slowly moving in a more sustainable direction because it is unavoidable, for example because oil, and uranium, is running out. The very sad thing is that it could have gone so much faster, and without losing so many species and other disasters, if we would simply behave in a more sensible way. Most of the problems we have today are avoidable."

Last year smaller ESP conferences were held at multiple locations, as opposed to one bigger conference, which has been customary in previous years. What was the motivation for going into "regional conferences" and what we can expect from them?

"Fortunately, these regional conference do not seem to be smaller than the ESP World Conferences: the first regional conference was in Asia (S.Korea) early June and attracted almost 300 participants from 18 Asian countries; the next one was in Europe in September with around 600 participants. Also the ones in Latin America and Africa were well attended and generated much enthusiasm. This is encouraging and shows the great interest and potential in the regions. It is exactly why we made this decision: to give more people in the region the opportunity to attend an ESP conference and exchange views, ideas, and energy and take better account of cultural differences and language (the official language used in the Latin America-conference was Spanish).

Eventually I hope also sub-regional and national (or even local) ESP meetings will develop 'bottom-up'. This is happening in some regions: e.g. in the Balkan and in Asia. These local conferences can bring about real change at the local scale. For example, the host of the Asia conference in S.Korea, the Mayor of Ansan City, used the conference to

promote his strategy to make the city the greenest in S.Korea and supported the establishment of the first ESP Regional Office!"

Did you ever consider stop doing environmental research and do something completely different? This is something that crosses the mind of many young researchers...

"No, this never crossed my mind. In spite of the frustration that things move so slow, it gives me a lot of fulfilment to see how far we got. I am privileged because I was able to 'follow my dream' and develop my own research-field. My university position gives me the opportunity to connect my research with teaching and through ESP I can make the link between science and practice.

If I would stop - which officially will be in 4 years - I would like to focus even more on building up a network of local "show cases and learning sites". Hopefully I could spend more time away from my desk and more in nature where it all started.

After returning from Galapagos in 1980 the professor who financially had supported my research on owls was a famous Dutch ornithologist and he wanted me to continue in that field. He was a bit upset when I decided to follow my intuition and embarked on this - at the time - very unknown topic of exploring the 'Functions of Nature' which became the basis for my PhD 10 years later. I invited him to my PhD defense and the first thing he said after we met for the first time in 10 years was "I was wrong after all"; which was a very nice gesture and strengthened me in what was to become a 30+ year adventure. I hope it is not over yet.

My experience illustrates that if you really believe in something it usually works out sooner or later; if the thought to do something else crosses your mind too often it might indeed be better to choose another path."

Young Ecosystem Service Specialists have connected in Antwerp



Photos: Round-table discussions (left). Researcher listen to ERC presentations - more listeners than chairs (right)

The European Ecosystem Services Conference held last September in Antwerp, Belgium was a perfect opportunity to present a session specifically designed for early-career researchers interested in ecosystem services (ES). Having in mind that a great number of senior researchers, MSc and PhD students would be present, five YESS members decided to organise a dynamic and interactive time for session participants.

Given that conferences are usually flooded with sessions - in which the 'presentation' is at the center of the show - we wanted to offer a more lively and energetic time where discussion between participants would be at the heart of the session. With this in mind, we decided to start with six 5-minute presentation by MSc and PhD students, followed by round-table discussions of 30 minutes. We designed the round-table discussions for early-career researchers to network with other participants, and to find new ideas and answers to their questions. Each of the four tables was supported by one expert, who guided the discussions and provided insights into the topics.

Benjamin Burkhard guided the discussion

around 'Mapping of ES and Spatial Planning', Sander Jacobs discussed with participants about the 'Integrated Valuation of ES', Matthias Schröter headed the dialogue on 'ES and Ethics' while UNEP-WCMC Senior Programme Office Claire Brown gave valuable insights on 'Translating Scientific Research into Policy and Practice'.

Although there were attractive sessions at the same time, around 60 people attended the YESS session - mainly early career researchers. Nonetheless, some more senior researcher who were interested in the talks and the discussion tables afterwards also participated. Speakers as well as session participants enjoyed the interactive format of the YESS session. While all speakers gave us positive feedback on the session, some had hoped for even more time for either their own presentation or the discussion afterwards. The open conversations with the experts were seen as extremely positive.

This session was a great success for the conference, the organizers and YESS. It helped to promote and represent YESS at the European level and encouraged young researchers to connect with other researchers and come into dialogue.

João Garcia Rodrigues, Klara Johanna Winkler, Marta Sylla, Nathalie Pipart and Sarah Jeanloz organised the YESS session. João Garcia Rodrigues, Klara Johanna Winkler and Marta Sylla wrote this article.



Upcoming events

2017 Natural Capital Symposium | 20-23 March 2017, Stanford University, USA

This Symposium will be a major convening of leaders in natural capital approaches around the world. The organizers are coordinating with international and domestic groups focusing on natural capital approaches, to ensure that the growing community of practice around natural capital approaches continues to engage, learn, and adapt. Interactive sessions throughout the symposium will focus around five central themes (Sustainable Development Planning; Securing Freshwater; Fostering Resilient Coastal Communities; Developing Sustainable Cities; Creating Standards for the Private Sector) [Link](#)

Annual Conference of the Working Group „Geography of Seas and Coasts“ (AMK) | 19-22 April 2017, Kiel, Germany

This conference of the Geography Department – Christian Albrechts University in Kiel covers a wide spectrum of coastal and marine themes, including one on “Ecosystem Services and Indicators”. A Field Trip at Baltic Sea Coast outside Kiel is included covering those topics. The conference languages are English and German. [Link](#)

Joint BES and BESS Symposium 2017: Advances in Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services | 24-26 April 2017, Cardiff, UK.

The British Ecological Society and the “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Sustainability” programme present this Symposium that will showcase contributions aiming to understand the linkages between natural stocks, flows of ecosystem services and drivers of ecosystem change like increasing population, demand for housing and infrastructure, the need to feed a rapidly growing planet and climate change. The symposium will showcase those contributions through plenary presentations from leading researchers on a range of themes (e.g. understanding the resilience of natural systems to uncertain futures). Each of the plenary sessions is prefaced by a keynote address from leading international figures in the field and there are hands-on workshops showcasing practical tools needed by those taking an ecosystem services approach to management and decision-making. [Link](#)

ALTER-Net conference 2017: Nature and society: synergies, conflicts, trade-offs | 2-4 May 2017, Augustinian Monastery, Ghent, Belgium.

Through critical views from a range of disciplines, the conference aims to develop a deeper understanding of conflicts in human-nature relationships, and to explore the possibility that such conflicts may – through their resolution – actually lead to more sustainable solutions.

The conference will offer a mix of plenary sessions and interactive ‘living lab’ type workshop sessions aimed at participants from a wide range of disciplines, who will collaborate towards developing a practical guide to nature-related synergies, conflicts and trade-offs, focusing on positive outcomes for nature and society. [Link](#)





SCB's 28th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB 2017): Insights for Sustaining Life on Earth | 23-27 July 2017, Cartagena, Colombia

This Congress aims at responding to the need for conservation science to help create a better tomorrow for both biodiversity and people who depend upon it. The organizers welcome participants interested in conservation science and its application to policy and practice. They researchers, students, agency personnel, environmental educators, practitioners, and other conservation stakeholders to join them for lively discussions on the nexus between biodiversity conservation and genetics, ecology, biogeography, anthropology, history, psychology, economics, conservation marketing, religion, and more. [Link](#)

9th ESP World Conference

The 9th World Conference of the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) will be held in Shenzhen, China 11-15 December 2017. In addition to a broad range of topics on the latest state-of-the-art on the science, policy and practice of Ecosystem Services the overarching theme this year will likely focus on the role of ecosystem services in ecosystem restoration and nature based solutions in natural, rural and urban areas. A call for session proposals will be sent out soon. [Link](#)

New German ecosystem services blog

Our colleagues Klara Winkler and Matthias Schröter have started a German [ecosystem services blog](#). They welcome shorter and longer German blog posts on current research and papers on ecosystem services addressed for a general audience. If you send an e-mail to [Klara Winkler](#) or [Matthias Schröter](#) they will put them online.

Recent publications from YESS members

Dee, L.E., Allesina, S., Bonn, A., Eklöf, A., Gaines, S.D., Hines, J., Jacob, U., McDonald-Madden, E., Possingham, H., Schröter, M., Thompson, R.M., 2017. Operationalizing Network Theory for Ecosystem Service Assessments. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 32, 118-130. [Link](#)

Derkzen, M. L., van Teeffelen, A.J.A., Verburg, P.H., 2017. Green infrastructure for urban climate adaptation: How do residents' views on climate impacts and green infrastructure shape adaptation preferences?, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 157, 106-130. [Link](#)



Jacobs, S. Dendoncker, N., Martín-López, B., Barton, D.N., Gomez-Baggethun, E. et al., 2016. A new valuation school: Integrating diverse values of nature in resource and land use decisions. *Ecosystem Services* 22, 213-220. [Link](#)

van Oudenhoven, A. P. E., Schröter, M., de Groot, R., 2016. Open access to science on ecosystem services and biodiversity. *International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management* 12, 239-241. [Link](#)

Vaz, A.S., Kueffer, C., Kull, C.A., Richardson, D.M., Vicente, J.R., Kühn, I., Schröter, M., Hauck, J., Bonn, A., Honrado, J.P., 2017. Integrating ecosystem services and disservices: insights from plant invasions. *Ecosystem Services* 23, 94-107. [Link](#)

Locher-Krause KE, Volk M, Waske B, et al., 2017. Influence of temporal scale on landscape transformations: insights from a Landsat-based case study in Southern Chile. *Ecol Indic* 75, 132–144. [Link](#)

Kadykalo, A. N., Findlay, C. S., 2016 The flow regulation services of wetlands. *Ecosystem Services* 20 91-103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2016.06.005>. [Link](#)

Partelow, S. and K.J. Winkler (2016). Interlinking ecosystem services and Ostrom's framework through orientation in sustainability research. *Ecology and Society*. [Link](#)

Root-Bernstein, M., Guerrero-Gatica, M., Piña, L. et al., 2016. Rewilding-inspired transhumance for the restoration of semiarid silvopastoral systems in Chile. *Reg Environ Change*. [Link](#)

YESS – Young Ecosystem Services Specialists is a group of post-graduate students, early-career scientists and practitioners. If you would like to know more about YESS please visit our website or join us on Facebook and Linked-In!



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