

GUIDE TO READING ON ECOSYSTEM VALUATION

The stuff highlighted yellow has been uploaded to your student study site to save you time. The rest you should be able to download, but if there is anything you are struggling to get hold of, please email me: bethstratford@gmail.com.

Some accessible pieces to introduce you to the debate (particularly if you missed class):

- This is a **TED talk** by Pavan Sukhdev (study leader for the UN's [TEEB report - The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity](#) - which you should also have at least a cursory look at):
http://www.ted.com/talks/pavan_sukhdev_what_s_the_price_of_nature?language=en
- Juniper, T. (2012). We must put a value on nature if we are going to save it. *The Guardian*. Friday 10 August
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/aug/10/nature-economic-value-campaign>
The above article is a short journalistic **defense of the idea of putting a price on nature**, from Tony Juniper, who wrote a book called 'What has nature ever done for us?'
- This is a very short and early critique of the idea of valuing nature:
Rees, W.E. (1998). How should a parasite value its host? *Ecological Economics* 25, 49-52

A bit of history to set the scene:

- Gómez-Baggethun, E., de Groot, R., Lomas, P., and Montes, C. (2010). The history of ecosystem services in economic theory and practice: From early notions to markets and payment schemes. *Ecological Economics* 69: 1209–1218

Here is a very useful (and recent) back-and-forth debate specifically about how and whether to put a monetary value on nature. *I urge you all to read this exchange and follow the references that interest you:*

- Kallis, G., Gómez-Baggethun, E., Zografos, C. (2013). To value or not to value? That is not the question. *Ecological Economics* 94: 97–105
- Gsottbauer, E., Logar, I., van den Bergh, J. (2015). Towards a fair, constructive and consistent criticism of all valuation languages: Comment on Kallis et al. *Ecological Economics* 112: 164–169
- Kallis, G., Gómez-Baggethun, E., Zografos, C. (2015). The limits of monetization in valuing the environment A reply to Gsottbauer et al. *Ecological Economics* 112: 170–173

And some critical pieces from Clive Spash:

- Spash, C. (2008). How Much is that Ecosystem in the Window? The One with the Bio-diverse Trail. *Environmental Values* 17: 259–284.
- Spash, C.L. Contingent valuation design and data treatment: if you can't shoot the messenger, change the message. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 26, 34-53 (2008).
 - A focused critique of the methodology used in ecosystem valuation

RELEVANT PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Blackmore, E., Underhill, R., McQuilkin, J. & Leach, R., (2013). *Common Cause for Nature: Values and Frames in Conservation*, Public Interest Research Centre
 - See Section 1.4 (pp 36-40) of this report for a very **brief introduction to some psychological research** that has implications for this question. **Read this if you missed the class on Thursday 12th.**
- Bowles, S. (2008). Policies designed for self-interested citizens may undermine “the moral sentiments”: evidence from economic experiments. *Science (New York, N.Y.)* 320, 1605-9.
- Fehr, E., Falk, A., 2002. Psychological foundations of incentives. *Eur. Econ. Rev.* 46 (4–5), 687–724.
- Frey, B., Jegen, R., 2001. Motivation crowding theory: a survey of empirical evidence. *J. Econ. Surv.* 15 (5), 589–661.

Obviously you can follow the references in the above surveys if you want to read the original academic studies, but here are a couple of experimental studies which I referenced in my slides:

- Vohs, K. D., Mead, N. L., & Goode, M. R. (2006). The psychological consequences of money. *Science (New York, N.Y.)*, 314(5802), 1154–6.
- Evans, L., Maio, G. R., Corner, A., Hodgetts, C. J., Ahmed, S., & Hahn, U. (2012). Self-interest and proenvironmental behaviour. *Nature Climate Change*, 2(8), 1–4

OFFSETTING

You *may* want to reflect further on the real world ‘commodification’ of ecosystems through biodiversity offsetting or carbon offsetting through REDD+. (If you choose to do this, remember that you *must* explain in your essay how you believe that monetary valuation of ecosystems and commodification of ecosystems are linked!)

You can find the ‘official’ position on how biodiversity offsetting is meant to work by reading this (or searching for equivalent government documents from other countries):

- UK Government’s ‘Green Paper’ on Biodiversity Offsetting
https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity/biodiversity_offsetting/supporting_documents/20130903Biodiversity%20offsetting%20green%20paper.pdf

(NB Your University should offer you guidelines on referencing websites and government documents in a proper academic style).

A useful gateway to critical academic research about biodiversity offsetting is through reports from NGO FERN:

- FERN. (2013). *Response to ‘Biodiversity Offsetting in England’ Green Paper*. Available online: <http://www.fern.org/biodiversityoffsettingsubmission>
- FERN. (2013). *Critical Review of Biodiversity Track Record*. Nov 2013. Available online: <http://www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/Critical%20review%20of%20biodiversity%20offsets.pdf>

We didn't cover it in class but [REDD+](#) is international effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, and offer economic incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. While the overriding goal is climate change mitigation, expectations have been raised about the potential for REDD+ to alleviate poverty and facilitate sustainable livelihoods for forest dwellers. One proposal is to create carbon 'offsets' (based on the avoided deforestation) which can be sold into carbon trading schemes such as the [EU Emissions Trading Scheme](#).

You can find the 'official' position on how this scheme is meant to work through the UN website (<http://www.un-redd.org/aboutredd/tabid/102614/default.aspx>)

For a (highly critical) but accessible introduction to REDD+ see:
<http://www.fern.org/thestoryofREDD>

For critiques of carbon trading see the reading guide for lecture 7.