

Abstract for the poster presentation “The limits of economic valuation of nature - A review” by Christian Schneider (Institute for Geography Leipzig)

Many contributions to the ecosystem services discourse refer to ethical questions of the commodification of nature as well as to the risks and limits of economic valuation (e.g. Haines-Young et al. 2012, Potschin & Haines-Young 2011, Dempsey & Robertson 2011, Spangenberg & Settele 2010, McCauley 2006). Yet, relatively little effort was spent to adjust ES-approaches following these critical comments. Currently the main political and scientific focus lies on the development of monetary estimates.

But the ES-discourse is far from being homogeneous, and critical perspectives are essential to develop concepts of how to value and protect the biosphere in a holistic manner. Some scholars are anticipating criticism by using ES as a heuristically useful metaphor than as a standard commodity. Others focus on non-monetary measures.

Potschin & Haines-Young (2011) call on natural scientists to get involved in these topics to define and discuss “key research challenges in the biophysical arena”. Following this call, the poster presents a review of critical comments on the ES-approach from various backgrounds.

Methodological, social and political perspectives will be considered. The goal is to make critical perspectives accessible and to link it with conceptual discussions on ES at the workshop.

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