



Claudia Bieling and Tobias Plieninger (eds): The science and practice of landscape stewardship

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This book unfolds rich perspectives of landscape stewardship both in cases and their approaches. Alongside the main texts, and a key feature of the book, are the short case studies illustrating landscape stewardship in practice. The range of cases includes urban community supported agriculture in Copenhagen (pp. 262–263), green infrastructure in Vienna (pp. 239–240), and a solidarity land trust in France (pp. 328–330). The boundaries of the landscapes go beyond conventional agriculture, but include coasts, ranchlands, urban or forest lands. The cases include novel approaches such as the use of Facebook by hunters to monitor hare hunting.

Too often, a book concludes simply by celebrating diversity with illustrative cases. This is not the case here. The authors (and the editors) successfully bind this book with cross-cutting threads deriving mainly from two theoretical frameworks of the landscape stewardship approach and Social-Ecological Systems (SES) (Ostrom 2008; Cox et al. 2010). The landscape stewardship approach includes five elements: multi-layered goals, scale, cross-sector, self-organizations and values (p. 5). These two frameworks, of landscape stewardship and SES (or related concepts) appear throughout the book. Most chapters link the concepts with certain resources, sectors, or landscape arts. Is landscape stewardship, with key characteristics (such as self-organization, decentralization, etc.), any different from existing approaches, such as landscape planning? Questions such as these are applied in different ecosystems, whether natural, cultural, or intersections of culture and nature. Based on

these common frameworks (with somewhat different interpretations by each author), it is possible to see the challenges surrounding the science, the practice, and related inferences. Most of the authors, including the final chapter by the editors, list future research areas.

The careful examination of theoretical framework and applicability of them to the illustrative cases are insightful for the on-going global discussions of “scales” at the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Unlike the case for climate changes, the issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services (or “Nature’s Benefit to People” in IPBES terms) are context dependent and scaling up are not simple. Simultaneously, the evaluation and assessment of traditional knowledge or indigenous knowledge and local knowledge (ILK) are frequently put into boxes of case studies. Scaling these up to a certain form of synthesized analysis at the global scale, without falling into a reductionist style, while being respectful of different forms of knowledge, has been the challenge. In short, “going beyond boxes of case studies” in the SES and landscape and biodiversity has been one of the critical issues. The style, introduced in this book is one constructive way forward in approaching such challenge.

A central conclusion is that Ostrom’s framework principles hold for most natural resources, though with certain reservations—specifically, that it “does not indicate a panacea for addressing undesired landscape change such as land abandonment” (p. 115). This point is of high relevance to central European countries, Japan and increasingly for other Asian contexts, and will be an important future research area. The theoretical concepts discussed in this book can be utilized to understand the status and trends of landscape in the different contexts. Therefore, this book can contribute to developing knowledge and experience sharing platforms (cf. Plieninger et al. 2018).

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What is needed in future is not yet another approach to ecosystems or sectors but the consideration of values in various contexts. As the editors rightly acknowledged at the beginning, the process has a normative element, be it a top down versus a self-organizing approach or the relationship between art and society. Furthermore, the distinction between conventional planning approaches and landscape stewardship will be blurred, at least at the rhetorical level. Participation and inclusiveness are emphasized in the book. Yet, there seems to be further room for explorations in what was common or unique in discourse, interpretations and linkages of different actors. These concepts are emphasized in the concept of landscape stewardship. The term landscape is culture and context dependent (cf. Gehring and Kohsaka 2007).

The book is well-organized and thoughtful in comprehending different natural resources and sectors. Findings would be instrumental for policy makers and for mainstreaming the stewardship approach. This book would serve practicing resource managers from various fields, and academics and public policy analysts alike. Regarding the institutional tools of the stewardship approach, landscape related regional designations and products certifications such as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) or geographical indications are utilized in the different regions of the world. Those designations and certifications are expected to be synergistically utilized to support SES at regional and product levels (Kajima et al. 2017). The findings of this book can be applied to the design and utilization of those institutional tools involving various stakeholders. As this book discusses the application of the concepts of landscape stewardship and SES to various sectors and urban and rural areas, it has a potential to expand and reconstruct the integrated concepts of landscape available for use by practitioners and researchers in different contexts. The feedbacks from those actors will be helpful to address the future research areas that are demonstrated in the book. As

the editors note, “landscape stewardship is not a panacea” in the final page (p. 380), but this book will be an appropriate starting point.

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