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Chapter 14
Cultural Ecosystem Services and Rural-Urban Relations: Towards a Territorial Wellbeing Approach

Bryonny Goodwin-Hawkins, Sabrina Arcuri, and Isabel Loupa-Ramos ⓘD

Abstract Human interactions with ecosystems create numerous benefits. Until recently, the cultural benefits of ecosystem services had received less attention than environmental goods and economic opportunities, even though cultural ecosystem services (CES) are recognised as having important roles to play in supporting human well-being. In this chapter, we explore CES through the spatial lens of rural-urban relations, with the aim to move beyond traditional approaches looking at well-being benefits that urban dwellers might derive from rural "containers" of ecosystem services. Rather, we are interested in rural-urban relations as a locus for cultural ecosystem services that reveals complexity and multiplicity, interdependency and inequity. By drawing on three descriptive case studies—Garfagnana (Italy), the Cambrian Mountains (Wales) and Snowdonia (Wales)—we offer different views into the ways that CES emerge at the interface between environmental spaces and cultural practices. In particular, we highlight the potential for trade-offs, inequity and contestation. By reflecting on the complexities that arise from the rural-urban perspective on CES, we contribute to an emerging research agenda on territorial well-being.

Keywords CES · Rural-urban · Well-being · Mutual benefit · Identities · Capabilities · Experiences · Cultural practices

B. Goodwin-Hawkins (✉)
Countryside & Community Research Institute, University of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, UK
e-mail: bgoodwinhawkins@glos.ac.uk

S. Arcuri
Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

I. Loupa-Ramos
CiTUA, Técnico – Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

14.1 Introduction

Human interactions with ecosystems create numerous benefits. Until recently, the cultural benefits of ecosystem services had received less attention than environmental goods and economic opportunities, but their role in supporting human well-being is now increasingly acknowledged (Chan, Guerry, et al., 2012b; MA, 2005; Plieninger et al., 2013; Pröbstl-Haider, 2015). Yet, where cultural benefits are acknowledged, they are often abstracted into generic 'goods', with little attention to how they are created, which groups actually benefit and what the trade-offs may exist (Kosanic & Petzold, 2020).

As human dependencies on nature and ecosystem services are inherently spatial (Potschin & Haines-Young, 2011), in this chapter, we examine cultural ecosystem services through one particular spatial lens: rural-urban relations. Rural space typically doubles as 'natural' space, whether imaginatively evoked (Bell, 1992) or intentionally constituted (Figueiredo, 2008), and unsurprisingly (but not inevitably) many studies on cultural ecosystem services draw from rural cases (Kosanic & Petzold, 2020). While this may raise seemingly obvious questions about enabling urban access, the approach we adopt in this chapter moves beyond viewing well-being benefits as simply imbibed from rural spatial 'containers'. Rather, we are interested in rural-urban relations as a locus for cultural ecosystem services that reveals complexity and multiplicity, interdependency and inequity.

To do so, we draw upon examples from the Garfagnana region in Tuscany, the Cambrian Mountains in rural Wales, and Snowdonia National Park, also in Wales. These case studies illustrate, precisely by emerging at the interface between environmental spaces and cultural practices, that cultural ecosystem services reveal conflict and constraint, and reproduce uneven benefits. By reflecting on rural-urban relations through problematising assumptions about cultural ecosystem services, we contribute to an emerging research agenda on territorial well-being (Jones et al., 2020; Knickel et al., 2021; OECD, 2019). This agenda builds upon momentum to value 'good lives' beyond GDP (Stiglitz et al., 2009) by critically examining how well-being benefits are territorially distributed and spatially mediated.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, we outline how cultural ecosystem services are currently conceptualised and adopt a definition. We then consider rural-urban relations, and introduce mutual benefit as a normative ideal. Turning to our examples, we offer brief descriptive cases that indicate key issues for further exploration. In the final section, we reflect on these issues to discuss the implications for cultural ecosystem services within the broader context of territorial well-being.

14.2   Understanding Cultural Ecosystem Services

Costanza et al. (1997) define ecosystem services as the benefits humans withdraw from nature, as a way of putting monetary value on natural capital stocks and the life-supporting services that humans receive from them. This approach gained momentum through the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), launched in 2001. The MA (2005) did not report solely on the state of nature from an ecological perspective, but emphasised that future generations' well-being depends on present actions to preserve ecosystems. Ecosystem services were thus categorised as: supporting services (e.g. soils and nutrients), provisioning services (e.g. food and fuel), regulating services (e.g. climate and flood regulation), and cultural services. Cultural ecosystem services (CES), primarily contributing to the psychological and social constituents of well-being, were described as the "non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experience, including, e.g., knowledge systems, social relations, and aesthetic values" (MA, 2005, p. 40).

Research on ecosystem services has thrived since the MA, yet research has been strongly based in the natural sciences, leaving CES to lag behind as a specific field of inquiry. Moreover, since CES involve subjective perceptions, attitudes and beliefs (Milcu et al., 2013), dominant economic approaches to assigning monetary value to ecosystem services pose methodological challenges. Researchers and policy-makers may be consequently underestimating the *perceived* value of CES (De Groot et al., 2010). Multiple authors (e.g. Bullock et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2012a; De Groot et al., 2010) acknowledge the 'struggle' of progressing CES knowledge.

Ecosystem service mapping is a case in point. Ecosystems are intrinsically spatial and their mapping has deserved much attention (e.g. Burgess et al., 2016; Maes et al., 2012). Mapping ecosystem services complements measuring their monetary value, including by differentiating between territories supplying services and those demanding (and potentially paying for) them. Yet unlike many material ecosystem services, CES are not solely determined by geographical location. Rather than being measurably affixed *in* place, CES reflect a subjectively felt 'sense *of* place' (Urquhart & Acott, 2014; emphasis added). The methodological difficulties here have tended to be 'overcome' by simplistically "constructing culture so that it remains consistent with existing methods" (Fish et al., 2016, p. 209)—largely through selecting readily gauged indicators, like recreational activities or consumable goods (for a study of the monetary value of recreation ecosystems see, for instance, Lankia et al., 2015). However, effectively confining CES to measurable, mappable amenity proxies has skewed research, neglecting less evident benefits (Bullock et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2012b; Fish, 2011) and "further deepening the gap between counting that which matters to people and that which is easy to measure" (Milcu et al., 2013, p. 5).

Although ecosystem services as a general concept evokes instrumental human 'transactions' with nature, CES invite understandings that are less unidirectional, and more relational and non-linear (Fish et al., 2016). Dependent, as they are, on 'the expressive, symbolic and interpretive interactions between people and the

natural environment' encompassed by cultural practices (Fish et al., 2016, p. 212), CES emerge at the dynamic *interface* between environmental spaces and cultural practices, and are "co-produced and co-created outcome[s] of peoples' interaction with ecosystems" (Fish et al., 2016, p. 209; see also Chan et al., 2012b). To escape both simplistic environmental determinism and overly esoteric views of culture, Fish et al. offer an operational redefinition of CES as: "the contributions ecosystems make to human well-being in terms of the *identities* they help frame, the *experiences* they help enable and the *capabilities* they help equip" (Fish et al., 2016, p. 212; emphasis added). We adopt this definition here. The tripartite structure— identities, experiences, capabilities—enables us to capture difference while equally encompassing dimensions that could be collective and territorial (Jones et al., 2020). In this framework, *identities* may encompass belonging, rootedness, sense of place, which individuals and communities develop according to distinctive features of ecological phenomena. *Experiences* are physical or mental benefits felt through contact with ecosystems, like tranquillity, inspiration, and escape*,* while *capabilities* pertain to the way ecological phenomena affect people's capacity to understand things and progress, and include knowledge, judgement, and health, among others (Fish et al., 2016). With this in mind, we now 'place' CES in the rural-urban context.

14.3 Placing Cultural Ecosystem Services in Rural-Urban Perspective

Because CES emerge dynamically at the interface between environmental spaces and cultural practices, critical questions arise about *which* identities, capabilities and experiences are enabled, and for *whom*, that need to be unpacked. Following the work of the Horizon 2020 ROBUST project (Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies), we do so through the lens of rural-urban relations.

Rural areas are frequently associated with landscapes and natural capital, and rural communities typically live in closer proximity to the natural environment than their urban counterparts. From the ecosystems mapping perspective we discussed above, an equivalence between rural space and CES might appear as self-evident. Yet cultural identities, experiences and capabilities do not emerge automatically from rural spatial containers. Scholars have long critiqued the existence of a clear dichotomy between rural and urban, which despite reinforcement from classic social theory (e.g. Tönnies, 1912; Weber, 1921), reflects cultural histories (Williams, 1973) rather than an objective, ontologically prior reality. Recent efforts to 're-materialise' the rural (Woods, 2009) reveal multi-layered rural-urban interdependencies (Wu et al., 2016) and complex flows of people, commodities and capital (e.g. Champion et al., 2009; Lehtonen et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2016).

At the same time, pre-existing cultural "webs of significance" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5) inevitably continue to intervene in how people perceive rural (and urban) space. Common conceptions of a 'rural idyll' (Bell, 2006; Halfacree, 1993) idealise

rurality as the greener, gentler opposite to urban "noise, worldliness and ambition" (Williams, 1973, p. 1). Through this cultural lens, rural places are not only closer to nature (Bell, 1992) but to simpler "way[s] of life both past and passing" (Nadel-Klein, 1991, p. 110). The rural idyll is routinely debunked in rural studies, and should give us pause in approaching CES unreflectively. There is clearly a risk of equating rurality with well-being in pre-determined ways that romanticise 'wild-scapes' (Bell, 2006) while overlooking the contested ways in which the amenity values afforded to rural space are culturally reproduced (Abrams et al., 2012; Woods, 2011).

Similarly, there is also a need to be wary of construing rural-urban relations as urban-dwellers' ability to access and enjoy CES through recreation and tourism. From functionalist land-use schema (e.g. Christaller, 1933; von Thünen, 1826) to ecological footprint studies (Castán Broto et al., 2012; Rees, 1992), city-centric perspectives already reckon rural space through *urban* food and natural resource needs. The trouble with treating rural-urban relations through an ultimately one-sided logic is that this tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, leaving rural areas marginalised (Bock, 2016) and dependent upon urban desires, decisions and finance (Gkartzios & Lowe, 2019).

In this chapter, we draw upon the notion of *mutually beneficial* rural-urban relations as a normative concept. By mutually beneficial, we mean that the distribution of benefits is relatively balanced—though need not be exactly the same, or concern exactly the same benefits. By a normative concept, we mean that we do not assume that mutual rural-urban benefits actually exist nor necessarily constitute a practical goal. Rather, considering how mutual—or not—the well-being benefits arising from CES are between rural and urban spaces allows us to reflect on both potential opportunities and patterns of inequality and contestation.

In the following sections, we present three brief descriptive case studies. All three are located in rural areas, each with differing characteristics and circumstances: Garfagnana (Italy) is a geographically unique region, host to considerable agro-biodiversity, which reflects the region's cultural and culinary heritage; the Cambrian Mountains (Wales) is a sparsely populated and 'less favoured' upland area, where precarious agricultural livelihoods have shaped local communities and inflect their culture; Snowdonia (Wales) is a celebrated national park, where Welsh-speaking culture meets leisure and thrill-seeking visitors from further afield. The first two examples were initially identified during a rapid appraisal of existing data for the ROBUST project. ROBUST researchers engaged with the latter during interviews with local authorities. In all cases, we draw upon a mix of learning from ROBUST and supplementary desk research.

We do not present the cases as empirically rigorous and validated examples. Rather, we use them to highlight the *identities*, *capabilities* and *experiences* emerging from human-environment interactions and reflect on rural-urban mutual benefit. In each case, we focus on one aspect of the tripartite CES definition: identities in Garfagnana, capabilities in the Cambrian Mountains, and experiences in Snowdonia. Reality, of course, is not so clear-cut, and our discussion picks up the comparisons.

The Gold of Garfagnana: Agrobiodiversity and Territorial Identity

Garfagnana forms part of the Province of Lucca in Tuscany, Central Italy. Located in the upper valley of the Serchio river, Garfagnana is enclosed by two mountain ranges: the Apuan Alps to the West and Apennines to the East. Although covering 620 km², the region has a very low population density, with capital town Castelnuovo Garfagnana counting less than 6000 inhabitants. Population has been steadily declining for decades (MontagnAppennino, 2016).

The name Garfagnana originates from *faniana* "large forest" in old Umbrian, while the Celtic adjective *gar* stands for "grand, sublime" (Pieroni, 1999). History and geography have given the region cultural peculiarities that it does not share with the rest of Tuscany, including popular knowledge from diverse origins, such as the use of plants for food and medicine (Pieroni, 1999). The local population's attachment to these traditions and resistance to external influences (Pieroni, 1999) have combined with geographical isolation and topography to make Garfagnana home to considerable agro-biodiversity. This cultural asset is recognised by the Community for Food and Agro-biodiversity,[1] established in 2017, and protected by a local division of the Regional Germplasm Bank (Unione Comuni Garfagnana, n.d.). The Bank includes more than 250 herbaceous varieties, and traditional fruit and vines. The Bank also supports 38 '*agricoltori custodi*' (Laboratorio Sismondi, 2017), or seed savers: small, amateur producers, who are committed to reproducing the varieties they are assigned, usually in exchange for a small reimbursement of expenses (Unione Comuni Garfagnana, n.d.).

Cooperation between seed savers and the Germplasm Bank has protected several varieties, notably including a local maize crop called *Formenton otto file* (a name owed to its eight rows of kernels (Lunatici & Pieroni, 2014)). *Formenton* originated from small farmsteads, where it was grown for family consumption. Garfagnana's close, small valleys and high altitude enabled the variety to develop without cross-fertilisation (Arcuri et al., 2019). By the Second World War, however, *Formenton* cultivation had largely given way to hybrid maize varieties, which yielded ten times as much (Lunatici & Pieroni, 2014). In the early 2000s, a retired local farmer began an initiative to recover the *Formenton* landrace. He recalled that the *polenta* prepared from *Formenton*'s yellow flour was once the basis of peasant diets and folk medicine, and remained part of Garfagnana's cultural traditions (Rural, n.d.; Lunatici & Pieroni, 2014).

Several attempts have since been made to qualify the 'gold of Garfagnana' for Geographical Indication (GI) status. Unlike other locality produce from the region, however, the GI application for *Formenton otto file* was not successful. Nevertheless, *Formenton* flour and *polenta* have had a local revival. The product specification developed for the application has helped re-establish traditional methods for harvesting, drying and milling—the latter exclusively stoneground—and facilitated new relationships between *Formenton* producers and the region's remaining mills

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[1] A detailed account of the Community for Food and Agro-biodiversity of Garfagnana is available in Chap. 5.

(Arcuri et al., 2019; Lunatici & Pieroni, 2014), one of which dates back to 1736 (Rural, n.d.). Favourable contexts created by a network of motivated small-scale producers and processors, with crucial support from the Germplasm Bank, have combined with the strong sense of identity local people attach to *Formenton* to re-establish a market and preserve cultural heritage for future generations (Arcuri et al., 2019).

Formenton illustrates how the interface between Garfagnana's unique environment and cultural practices, both past and present, generates CES. Identities are particularly apparent here, although capabilities and experiences are traceable too. Practices of seed saving, cultivation and consumption entwine with place-making processes to reproduce a shared sense of belonging, as well as a specific knowledge and related skills. For instance, by reflecting collective knowledge, the Germplasm Bank's ostensibly scientific work is also recognised locally as supporting valuable cultural benefits. Yet, there are different motivations at play in *Formenton*'s revival as a part of Garfagnana identity. Many people in the region preserve, produce, and consume *Formenton* out of personal commitment to local traditions and collective benefits; many are equally aware that cultural heritage offers opportunities to diversify agri-food businesses. However, as much as local pride has cohered new networks and limited commercialisation by a few local enterprises has emerged, resistance to cooperation and lack of individual responsiveness have contributed to the failure of the collective action needed to secure GI status for *Formenton,* and to the loss of wider opportunities for promoting a clearly recognisable product beyond this region.

The rootedness of local identity may further mitigate against mutually beneficial rural-urban relations. Garfagnana residents are the primary beneficiaries of CES from agrobiodiversity, with little role for urban markets. The absence of GI status for *Formenton* has obviously resulted in missed opportunities for commercialisation, but could also have fostered wider appreciation. Arguably, by remaining independent of urban interest and demand, CES may contribute to perpetuating the isolation of Garfagnana's rural communities. In the next case, we look more specifically at the implications of rural-urban relations for developing local capabilities.

A Green Desert? Rebuilding Capability in the Cambrian Mountains

The Cambrian Mountains (*Mynyddoedd Cambria*) form the upland backbone of Wales, accounting for some 10% of Welsh land area, but with a population of just 30,000. The area's natural capital (Joyce, 2013) provides carbon storage in peat soils, and water management services supply over 200 billion litres of water annually to Wales and the English midlands (Manley, 2009). In the 1960s, the Forestry Commission introduced conifer plantation forestry to the area in the belief that few other development options were available (Cambrian Mountains Society, 2008). The economic benefits have proved fairly limited, and habitat loss and soil degradation have resulted (Joyce, 2013). Yet despite long-term efforts to recognise the region for conservation, a proposed National Park designation never came to fruition (Deane, 2011). Perhaps in consequence, the Cambrians do not attract

significant tourist numbers, and tend to be considered a 'green desert', "to be passed through on the way to somewhere else" (Cole et al., 2012, p. 8).

Eighty-five percent of the mountain land is estimated to be in agricultural use (Joyce, 2013), but farming in 'less favoured' uplands has distinct challenges. Even a bare living requires considerable land, and upland communities are particularly vulnerable to fluctuating agricultural returns (Midmore & Moore-Colyer, 2005). Further, with only one main road crossing the mountains, and much of the area inaccessible by vehicle, Cambrians residents face some of the poorest access to public services in Wales (WIMD, 2019). By the early 2000s, amidst concerns about declining, ageing populations and local dereliction (Cole et al., 2012), arguments were being advanced that:

> with the relative decline in the economic significance of production-oriented farming in the [Welsh] hills and uplands, these lands should be transformed into zones where the scope for human intervention is limited (Midmore & Moore-Colyer, 2005, p. 15).

But as Midmore and Moore-Colyer (2005, p. 15) further observe, such arguments "deny the broader cultural importance of hill and upland communities" in Wales, where sheep farming is particularly intertwined with national identity, and farming communities are living heartlands for the minority Welsh language. The strength of cultural identity shaped (continuing) resistance to land uses such as 'rewilding' or expanding forestry for carbon capture—yet for Cambrians communities to find a future, the contribution of CES to enabling capability would be crucial.

Rather than repeatedly lamenting the Cambrians' environment as an economic constraint, local leaders recognised that the region's contributions to culture and well-being needed to be recognised and strategically revalued (Cole et al., 2012; Joyce, 2013). In 2008, the Cambrian Mountains Initiative was established "to ensure a sustainable future for the communities of the Cambrian Mountains area in ways that care for its natural and cultural assets" (Cole et al., 2012, p. 11). Early actions included developing regional branding and produce marketing strategies, which aimed to help farmers gain a premium for traditionally-reared products while supporting sustainable land management practices. Participation grew, and in 2012 Cambrian Mountains Lamb gained Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) designation. Besides regulations for breed, locality and 'fork to farm' traceability, the designation crucially recognised the traditional *Hafod a hendre* seasonal grazing system, and *cefnewid*, or cooperation between farms for shearing and autumn gathering (Council Regulation 1151/2012). The initiative has since seeded producer groups for wool and beef, and the associated 'Cambrian Futures' project continues to work to revalorise the region, including through business support for rural enterprise.

The contributions of CES to enabling capabilities clearly play an important role in the Cambrians. Indeed, recognising the relationship between environment, culture and well-being proved a 'trigger' for new energy and ideas. PGI designation for Cambrian Mountains Lamb has been a particular success, creating a premium for a locality product that is, notably, sold and consumed in urban markets. Unlike *Formenton*, above, marketing Cambrian Mountains Lamb has offered opportunities

to constructively mobilise rural-urban relationships. At the same time, locality produce is consumed at a distance and, branding aside, the Cambrians remain underappreciated for direct visits. Despite the Initiative's ongoing efforts, the lack of a thriving visitor economy poses some limits to capability development, especially for small businesses and new entrepreneurs. As with Garfagnana, CES in the Cambrian Mountains primarily serve local beneficiaries in a relatively peripheral rural area—although as capabilities, CES rely on urban supply chains to maintain these benefits. But what would happen if the Cambrians did become more attractive for urban tourism? Our third and final case study offers potential insights.

Snowdonia (*Eryri*), in upland North Wales, became a National Park in 1951 on the basis of 'outstanding scenic beauty'. Celebrated for Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), the highest peak in Wales, Snowdonia was the third National Park to be created in the UK, following 1949 legislation to conserve the countryside and provide public rights of way. Today, Snowdonia National Park covers 2132 km^2 and is home to 25,000 people (StatsWales, 2020). The area is a popular destination for hiking and outdoor leisure, and attracts some four million visitors annually (Snowdonia National Park Authority, 2016b)—more than the entire Welsh population of 3.2 million—making tourism a significant part of the local and regional economy.

Yet, the significance of tourism in Snowdonia has raised a number of concerns, not least about the park's carrying capacity. As a local government officer in the region reflected during interviews for the ROBUST project in 2019:

> Look at the pictures from Snowdon … [on] Easter weekend, the queues to get to the top of Snowdon, it's madness … we're going to get letters in [from residents] saying, 'we don't want more tourist developments. We're having too much of this.' You know this is really changing our communities. And you read about it, it's happening all over the world really, isn't it? It's going to be quite an important discussion in the future … [How] do we manage this? Millions of people want to come here and destroy everything.

Common complaints among local residents include undesirable visitor behaviour, overcrowding and the consequent strains on infrastructures, ecosystems and community life. With over half of the resident population speaking Welsh (Snowdonia National Park Authority, 2016a), these concerns further play out against a difference between *Eryri* as a landscape named and known in Welsh language and culture, and Snowdonia National Park as a space claimed for a broader British public to access and 'own'. For example, a campaign to privilege the Welsh name Yr Wyddfa over the Anglicised 'Snowdon' recalls a long history of prejudices against the Welsh language (Llewelyn, 2021), and raises questions over *whose* culture gets to be valued.

This is not only a case of clashing values. The pursuit of visitor experiences in Snowdonia can be problematic in itself. Research with participants undertaking the high-profile Three Peaks Challenge—an endurance event in which the highest respective peaks in England, Scotland and Wales are climbed within a 24-h period, often as a charity fundraiser—has shown how adrenaline-fuelled participants are prone to risky decision-making (Ivaldi & Whitehead, 2021). Ill-prepared tourists requiring rescue after underestimating Snowdonia's rugged terrain and

unpredictable conditions are also a longstanding staple of media headlines.[2] As well as putting visitors in personal danger, stunts and irresponsible behaviours pass on risks to local rescue teams and can fuel further local resentment (e.g. Douglas, 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic has now raised new conversations about managing visitors to Snowdonia. During 2020, restrictions on mobility within and to Wales drastically reduced visitor numbers. Research on the local impacts found that many local residents perceived the reduction positively: there was less traffic on walking and cycling paths, fewer people in areas of natural beauty, and notably increased use of the Welsh language (Jones et al., 2021). Of course, there were also negative impacts, including lost income and, less obviously, fewer social opportunities, alongside alarming reports of conflict between residents mistaking each other for visitors (Jones et al., 2021). Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who had not lost income and viewed lockdown measures positively were least in favour of reopening the National Park to visitors, while those who emphasised tourism's economic value advocated rapid reopening (Jones et al., 2021).

CES in Snowdonia both create and collide experiences. For some, the sporting and leisure experiences Snowdonia enables are to be consumed, promoted and economically exploited; for others, natural beauty is best enjoyed and respected in quiet solitude. Just as experiences differ and thus can conflict, experiences of risk and injury, rescue and resentment are far from benign. Rural-urban relations mark an ever-present faultline here: simultaneously enabling connection while contributing to contestation. Snowdonia's National Park designation has enabled many to enjoy the natural environment. But while the designation seeks to preserve ecosystems and celebrates CES, the (urban) right to access and use rural space can directly detract from local residents' own well-being. The differences can be stark, but they are also not so simple, with potential conflicts cutting across language and occupation. As this case shows, whether CES are to be shared with a wider collective or kept for a closer community depends very much on how and why CES are valued. With this observation in mind, we now turn to a broader discussion of the issues raised across our three case studies.

14.4 Discussion: Towards a Territorial Wellbeing Approach

Reviving a landrace linked to local identity in Garfagnana, building capabilities among upland farming communities in the Cambrian Mountains, and contested experiences of (over)tourism in Snowdonia National Park—our three cases offer different views into the ways that CES emerge at the interface between environmental spaces and cultural practices. *Difference* is a key point here. Culture is plural, and plays out in polyvalent space. In both Garfagnana and the Cambrian Mountains, for

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[2] Examples include "Snowdonia: Teenagers in trainers planned to climb Tryfan in dark" (BBC News 10/1/21), "Snowdon mountain rescues 'unsustainable'" (BBC News 5/9/16) and "Most bizarre Snowdon rescues" (Wales Online 27/3/13).

example, CES entwines with agricultural heritage; yet while *Formenton* is locally celebrated, Cambrian Mountains lamb has become a premium product in markets further afield. At the same time, consumers who enjoy Cambrians' products might be more likely to take their leisure in Snowdonia, where their presence provides income for some but frustration for others. Our cases also echo findings from Bullock et al. (2018) concerning constraints on human-environment interactions, such as crowding, pollution, land abandonment and lack of infrastructure. Though Snowdonia stands out as the most egregious example of stretched capacities, the sparsely populated landscapes in the Cambrians are by contrast places of little accessibility and poor connectivity.

The prevalence of 'well-being' as a warm but fuzzy term in the ecosystem services literature can elide identities, experiences and capabilities that are neither the same across places, communities and groups, nor necessarily engender harmonious outcomes. Taking the concept of mutually beneficial rural-urban relations as a normative frame enables us to further reflect on how—and where—CES fit, facilitate and fracture. In Garfagnana, CES have contributed to local identity, yet potentially at the expense of mobilising connections across space. Although the Cambrians have found ways to connect to urban markets that help sustain local livelihoods, there remains a disjuncture between the urban value placed on consumable products and that afforded to actually *being in* Cambrians landscapes. In Snowdonia, the rural-urban interdependencies embedded in a substantial visitor economy had tipped towards a path dependency that took a pandemic to disrupt. All three cases illustrate rural-urban benefits that are *not* mutual, but uneven. In all cases, too, trade-offs are (potentially) present. Would exporting *Formenton* bring shared benefits to Garfagnana residents—or just to a small group of growers? Would drawing tourists to the Cambrians help the region thrive—or threaten Welsh-speaking communities? Would returning solitude to Snowdonia restore intangible benefits for local people—or destroy the local economy? There are few easy answers.

We draw four critical points for CES from these reflections. The first is that idealised representations of CES must be avoided. CES risks ready reduction to cultural conceptions of the 'rural idyll', which often fail to confront the precarities of community life in environments that are not always benevolent—nor beloved. Indeed, assuming that well-being benefits always already exist in rural space forecloses analysis of who benefits, how and why (Kosanic & Petzold, 2020), while airbrushing inequity and contestation.

Second, and relatedly, idyllic ideals can work to naturalise spatial inequalities. This is particularly so in an age of 'urban triumph' (Meijers & van der Wouw, 2019) in which cities are framed as economic 'engines of growth' and rural places as passive carriages pulled along behind (Shucksmith, 2008). Rural tourism used to be viewed by rural local administration as "life buoy" for local economies. But while there is certainly scope to revalorise rural cultures, CES is not—has proven to be not—a compensation for rural marginalisation, deprivation and decline. No community needs or deserves less from governance and policy-making because nature is nearby.

Third, converting CES into opportunity may problematically commodify well-being as a(nother) rural resource for urban consumption. The tendency within CES literature to count benefits via consumable proxies already frames well-being as, effectively, a rural amenity awaiting access, like a crop awaiting harvest. Tying CES to the 'consumption countryside' (Marsden, 1999) can reinforce rural dependencies and limit local development paths, leaving some communities locked in to tourism geographies that are both "predatory and sticky … naturali[sing] processes of extraction – of land, resources, labour and culture" (Córdoba Azcárate, 2020, p. 12).

Finally, lurking under all these points, there remains a need to assess, demonstrate and quantify the *actual* presence or provision of CES. Again, CES emerge at human-environment interfaces, rather than mere containers. Even within our own case studies, we have made assumptions about the scale and scope of identities, experiences and capabilities for certain groups in certain spaces. It has not been our intention to validate or interrogate these assumptions here. Nevertheless, advancing CES research continues to require that we take the object of our inquiry neither by proxy nor by leap of faith.

Our overall argument therefore is that the well-being benefits provided by CES should not be seen as straightforward or self-evident. In this, we respond to policy trends towards 'well-being economies' (Dalziel, 2019), which rightly advocate good human lives beyond GDP growth (e.g. CEC, 2009; Stiglitz et al., 2009), but in approaching well-being at a territorial scale have tended to treat territory as uncomplicated and well-being as apolitical (Evenhuis, 2021). The territories over which governance and policy seek to work are "not frozen frameworks where social life occurs … [but] made, given meanings and destroyed in social and individual action" (Paasi, 2003, p. 110). As convenient as it may be to order space into "something like a system of pigeon holes, or a filing system, for observations" (Popper, 2002, p. 462), enabling governance to weigh and measure the well-being each 'pigeon hole' contains, good lives in a territorial sense cannot be disentangled from complex, colliding socio-cultural circumstances, nor from spatial relations that are always in flux.

None of this negates the utility of understanding well-being at scale. Rather, we advocate a research agenda on territorial well-being that is at once critically aware and creatively informed. Emerging avenues for research and practice, such as the recent flowering of participatory methods and data visualisation techniques that can capture complexity in new ways, offer the means to gather multiple views and to develop analyses across and between spaces and scales. From a rural-urban perspective, this work could afford new insights and, indeed, promote new synergies.

14.5   Conclusion

Conceptualising ecosystem services acknowledges that biodiversity is essential for supporting human life: from our material needs for food and water, to less tangible 'goods' including self-fulfilment and well-being. This chapter has focussed on

cultural ecosystem services (CES), which emerge at the interface between cultural practices and environmental spaces. But culture is never a neutral category, nor space a simple container from which well-being benefits can be consumed. Our contribution in this chapter has been to call attention to the complexities that arise from CES from a rural-urban perspective.

Valuing warm but fuzzily intangible cultural benefits like 'belonging' plainly poses difficulties for policy and practice. Yet, as we have reiterated here, reducing CES analysis to more easily measurable recreation and tourism activities risks rehearsing limited views of the rural idyll, and skimming by the contested ways in which landscape amenities are consumed and cultural practices reproduced. Well-being benefits for some may not be accessible to others, or even actively impinge. Trade-offs are inevitable, and tensions remain unresolved. CES help frame *identities*, but who has which identities, where are these enacted, and how might conflict occur? CES help enable *experiences*, but who accesses which experiences where, and how are these culturally mediated? CES help equip *capabilities*, but who has which capabilities, how are these gained, and where and why do differences emerge? Acknowledging CES as a social construct, CES of a group or community can be threatened by another group's CES when spatially coinciding. Confronting the complexities inherent to CES appraisal, we have argued, cannot be ignored—especially when these complexities arise from rural-urban relations that are more often uneven than mutually beneficial.

Our intention in this chapter has been to provoke questions rather than illuminate a precise pathway forward. Nevertheless, we challenge current approaches to CES, notably those focused on its monetisation and suggest that CES scholarship could be advanced within a broader research agenda on territorial well-being: an agenda that responds to the real need for policies that value good and common lives on our single planet, without losing sight of critical perspectives.

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