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Linkages between ecosystem services and human wellbeing: A Nexus Webs approach

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1 **TITLE: Linkages between ecosystem services and human wellbeing: A Nexus Webs approach**

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16 **ABSTRACT:**

17 Ecosystems provide benefits to people, and, in turn, people individually and collectively affect the
18 functioning and wellbeing of ecosystems. Interdependencies between ecosystem services and
19 human wellbeing are critical for the sustainable future of ecosystems and human systems alike, but
20 they are not well understood. We offer an account of these interdependencies from the perspective
21 of social psychology. Using the Nexus Webs framework (Overton et al., 2013), we explore how a
22 fuller knowledge of coupled social-ecological systems will benefit resource management and
23 decision-making in contested spaces. We challenge the tacit notion that ecosystem health and
24 human wellbeing are linearly related, and suggest human wellbeing may affect ecosystem health.
25 We outline the multiple construals of the construct ‘wellbeing’, and identify additional psychological
26 constructs of importance. We examine how the benefits of ecosystems for human wellbeing may
27 accrue differently across regions and across people. Four areas for future research are identified.

28

29 **Keywords:** ecosystem services; human wellbeing; social-ecological systems; social psychology;
30 solastalgia; sense of place; locus of control

31

32 **Word count:** 12258

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37 **1. INTRODUCTION**

38 All human life depends on, and is a part of, ecosystems. Ecosystems provide benefits to
39 people, 'ecosystem services', and in turn people individually and collectively affect the functioning
40 and wellbeing of ecosystems. Developing a better comprehension of how ecological and social
41 systems are coupled is critical to the sustained and sustainable functioning of both human systems
42 and ecosystems (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2003). In this paper, we employ the Nexus
43 Webs framework (Overton, Colloff, Dunlop, Wallbrink, & Podger, 2013) to investigating these
44 interdependencies. The Nexus Webs framework offers a method for integrating biophysical
45 modelling, socio-economic modelling, and the assessment of human wellbeing, and promises to be a
46 useful decision-support tool for resource managers and management. From a social psychological
47 perspective, attention to some significant areas of the Nexus Webs approach will bolster the robust
48 contribution the framework can make in the arena of contested resource use. The Web's current
49 oversight of ecological feedbacks associated with human wellbeing is a particular focal point. In this
50 paper we draw on empirical evidence from social and environmental psychology to illustrate how
51 relationships and dependencies between human- and eco-systems often run counter to
52 expectations. In so doing we identify four important areas for future research, and outline
53 implications for contested resource use issues that can be managed with frameworks such as that
54 offered by an improved Nexus Webs approach.

55 **1.1 Existing frameworks**

56 The importance of ecological systems and services for human wellbeing is increasingly well
57 established and understood. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment work (MEA; Millennium
58 Ecosystem Assessment, 2003) provides an influential framework for analysing coupled social-
59 ecological systems. Within this framework, ecosystem services are categorised into provisioning
60 services (the products obtained from ecosystems), regulating services (the benefits derived from
61 regulation of ecosystem processes), and cultural services (non-material benefits derived from
62 ecosystems). The MEA also conceptualises close links between ecosystem services and human
63 wellbeing, articulating four main wellbeing categories: security, basic material for a good life, health,
64 and good social relations. Freedoms and choice cut across these four categories.

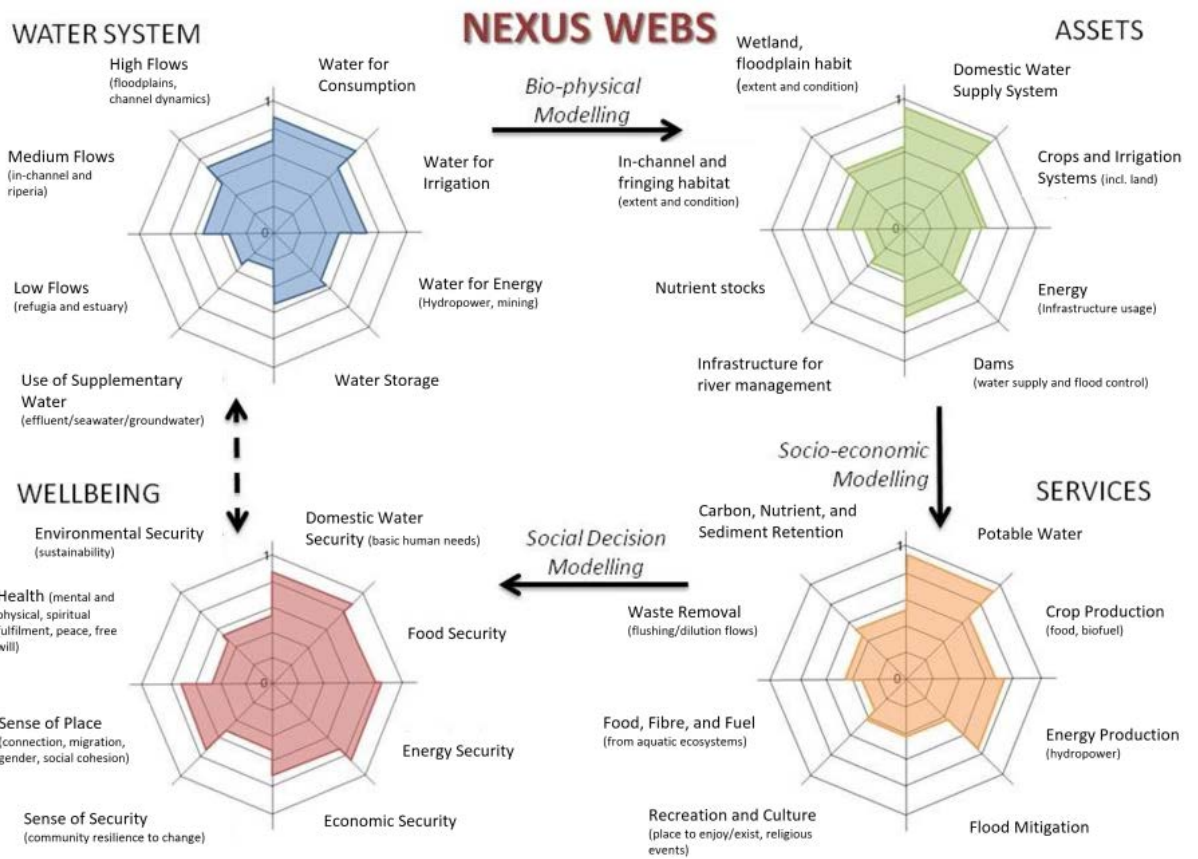
65 The MEA has been influentially globally, but retains some limitations. In particular, the
66 nature of interconnections between provisioning, regulating, and cultural services, on the one hand,
67 and the various aspects of wellbeing on the other, are under-researched. So too are the
68 interconnections among security, basic material for a good life, health, and good social relations, as

69 aspects of wellbeing. We do not know, for example, whether there is a hierarchy of importance
70 across these aspects of wellbeing or whether there are conditionalities among them. Critically, the
71 MEA framework conceptualises the connections between ecosystem services and wellbeing as
72 unidirectional. We suggest, as evidenced by findings in the social psychological sciences, that the
73 influence flows the other way too.

74 The MEA framework has been recently superseded by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
75 Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services framework (IPBES; Diaz et al., 2015a, 2015b). This
76 framework acknowledges the potential for bidirectionality between social-ecological systems;
77 improved human wellbeing for instance, influences institutional and governance provision of
78 ecosystem goods and services. Such interdependencies are consistent with a recent review of the
79 links between ecosystem services and human wellbeing (Bennett et al., 2015), where it was posited
80 that the answers to three key questions will improve decision-making for sustainable resource-use:
81 *how are ecosystem services jointly produced by coupled social and ecological systems?; who benefits*
82 *(and who loses) from ecosystem services?; and what governance arrangements will optimise*
83 *practices and outcomes?* Our analysis broadly concerns the first two of these questions, and in
84 particular, the social psychological factors implicated in the relationship between ecosystem services
85 and human wellbeing.

86 **1.2 The Nexus Webs framework**

87 Resource management in contested spaces involves interactions between biophysical
88 properties of ecosystems, evaluation of the assets associated with those ecosystems, evaluation of
89 the services supported by those assets, and consideration of the many aspects of human wellbeing
90 flowing from the assets and services. The Nexus Webs framework, shown in Figure 1 (Overton et al.,
91 2013), was developed from work in integrated water management to capture the interplay between
92 these factors. When integrated into resource management practice, it can be used as a decision-
93 support tool, and can provide a pathway for major industries and other stakeholders to gain a social
94 licence to operate.



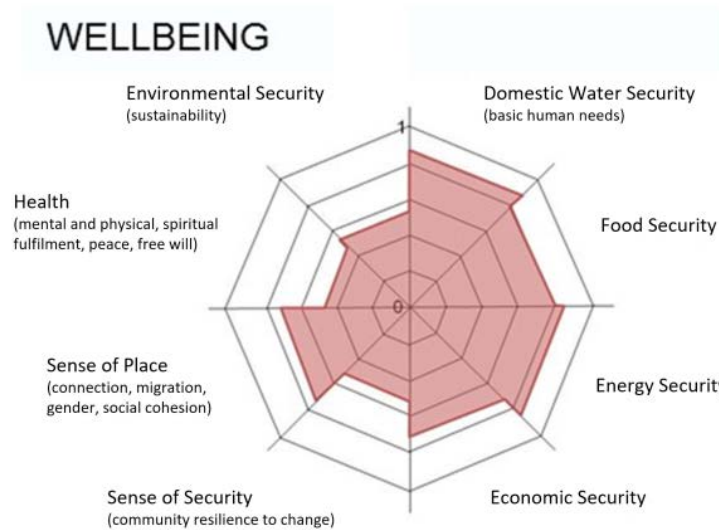
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96 **Figure 1. The Nexus Webs framework (modified from Overton et al., 2013, p. 10).**

97 Each of the Webs is comprised of a number of components. The set of components for each
 98 Web depends on the domain (e.g., water, energy, biodiversity), and has to be ascertained for each
 99 case. The four Webs are intended to be organised sequentially, and are connected via system
 100 dynamics that are largely unspecified. In any particular domain, the nature and number of
 101 components in each web has to be assessed, usually through consultation with stakeholders and
 102 relevant community groups and members. The very process of engagement is likely to have ancillary
 103 benefits too (such as greater acceptance and likelihood of adoption of recommendations through an
 104 iterative process of consensus). The Nexus Webs approach is a simple way of summarising complex
 105 system interactions for stakeholders and communities, and can be used to present likely futures
 106 under different scenarios.

107 The Wellbeing Web, pictured in Figure 2, specifies eight components of human livelihood:
 108 food security and domestic water security (basic human needs); energy security, economic security,
 109 and sense of security (community resilience to change); environmental security (sustainability);
 110 health (mental and physical health, spiritual/aesthetic value, peace, free will); and sense of place
 111 (connection, migration, gender, social cohesion) (Overton et al., 2013). It is suggested that the size
 112 and shape of the shaded area in the Wellbeing Web indicate a level of social wellbeing, distribution

113 of benefits to different stakeholders, and net trade-offs. In the example in Figure 2, eight areas have
114 been chosen to represent the key wellbeing factors as a specific example. In other cases, it may be
115 prudent to use more or fewer metrics.



116

117 **Figure 2. The Wellbeing Nexus Web (modified from Overton et al., 2013, p.15).**

118 The Nexus Webs approach has intuitive appeal and is easily communicable to stakeholders.
119 However, from a social science perspective, aspects of the Nexus Webs approach and the Wellbeing
120 Web in particular (and their attendant assumptions) are under-critiqued. For instance, the Webs
121 framework does not currently capture feedbacks. As currently conceptualised, the framework
122 suggests that an increase in an ecosystem service will translate directly to an increase in wellbeing,
123 though the ecosystem services may well be differently influential. This latter point is consistent with
124 the findings of Raudsepp-Hearne et al. (2010) that food production, which has increased over the
125 last several decades, has outweighed the detrimental effects to wellbeing driven by declines in other
126 ecosystem services, such as soil degradation and declining water quality. There is also an assumption
127 of unidirectionality, with services impacting wellbeing but not vice-versa. This particular assumption
128 deserves unpacking, as wellbeing may alter demand for or supply of particular ecosystem services,
129 and changes in wellbeing may influence environmental degradation. This paper focuses on
130 developing a fuller understanding of the connections between the services component and the
131 wellbeing component of the Web framework.

132 What follows is a review of extant literature from the social sciences (and in particular the
133 social and environmental psychological sciences) pertinent to unpacking these aspects and critiquing
134 their assumptions. A fuller appreciation of wellbeing, and its antecedents and sequelae, will make

135 frameworks such as those offered in the Nexus Webs approach more useful as a decision-making
136 tool for stakeholders. We start with an overview of how human wellbeing has traditionally been
137 conceptualised and measured, and what is thought to influence it, and proceed to a review of what
138 is known from the psychological sciences about wellbeing's interconnections with ecosystem
139 services. From there we formulate four areas for future research exploration.

140 **2. HUMAN WELLBEING**

141 What is human wellbeing? A long history of investigation across many disciplines has
142 resulted in an ambiguous concept with no universally accepted definition (Diener, 2000; McGillivray
143 & Clarke, 2006; Summers et al. 2012). The term wellbeing is often used interchangeably with
144 'quality of life', 'welfare', 'well-living', 'living standards', 'utility', 'prosperity', 'needs fulfilment',
145 'development', 'empowerment', 'capability expansion', 'human development', 'poverty', 'happiness'
146 and 'life satisfaction', often with no discussion of the distinctions between terms (McGillivray and
147 Clarke, 2006; McCrea, Walton, & Leonard, 2014).

148 Wellbeing has been investigated at a range of scales including individual, community,
149 national, and international, with many organisations focused on tracking wellbeing across cultures
150 and countries. Worldwide examples include the OECD Better Life Initiative (Durand, 2015), The
151 World Values Survey (Inglehart, Puranen, Pettersson, Nicolas, & Esmer, 2005), the World Happiness
152 Report (Helliwell et al. 2017), and the Gallup World Poll, with the Gallup wellbeing measure feeding
153 into the Happy Planet Index (Abdallah, S., Thompson, S., Michaelson, J., Marks, N., & Steuer, N.,
154 2009). The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment suggests that human wellbeing encompasses the
155 following: basic material for a good life (livelihood, food, shelter, clothing, access to goods); health
156 (feeling well, healthy physical environment), harmonious social relations (social cohesion, mutual
157 respect, ability to help others), security (access to resources, personal safety, security from
158 disasters), and freedom of choice (opportunity to achieve what an individual values) (MEA, 2005, V).
159 However, this conceptualisation has also been criticised for failing to be all-encompassing (Summers
160 et al. 2012).

161 Studies of wellbeing at the community level are often ambiguous, with measurable
162 components overlapping with dimensions of 'resilience', the ability to recover, adapt, or transform
163 in response to disturbances (Armitage, Bene, Charles, Johnson, & Allison, 2012; Hobman & Walker,
164 2015; McCrea et al. 2014). In their assessment of the impacts of coal seam gas mining on
165 communities in Queensland, McCrea et al. (2014) suggest that wellbeing should be thought of as a
166 state, and resilience a process. Elsewhere, Schirmer and Berry (2014) have considered the
167 components of wellbeing of thousands of Australians living in rural and regional areas. They suggest

168 wellbeing is comprised of safety, security, physical health, mental health, relationships, social
169 networks, access to goods and services, and the fairness of the society in which they live.

170 **2.1 What influences wellbeing?**

171 The wellbeing of individuals and communities is shaped by many factors, such as a healthy
172 natural and built environment; fair and stable governance, most particularly democracy, that
173 provides opportunities for local people to participate; ready access to resources and capital (e.g.,
174 food, water, shelter, safety, education and learning opportunities, health services, cultural and social
175 opportunities); a diverse economy; local environmental quality; and demographics (e.g., age, marital
176 status) (Bramley et al., 2009; Orviska et al., 2012; Schirmer & Berry, 2014; Smith et al., 2013).
177 Cooperation and trust are also important. Cooperative contexts and tasks (as opposed to
178 individualistic or competitive ones) can increase self-esteem and social support, and promote
179 positive relationships, which in turn can contribute to increased subjective wellbeing (Tov & Diener,
180 2009). Trust is often deemed necessary to facilitate cooperation, although some have questioned
181 whether it is essential (Cook et al., 2005). Having a positive mood or disposition can in turn promote
182 cooperation.

183 At higher levels of abstraction, cultural and societal factors play a fundamental role in group-
184 level wellbeing. Large differences in subjective wellbeing between countries can be explained by
185 variations in conditions such as food, health, and lack of corruption. There is evidence that some
186 cultures tend to be happier even when conditions such as income are controlled for, perhaps due to
187 differences in social support and positivity (Diener, 2012). Smith et al. (2013) highlight that, despite
188 the importance of the role of spirituality and culture in communities, wellbeing indices rarely
189 consider these aspects. Smith et al. cite a study by Swan and Raphael (1995) showing the importance
190 of Aboriginal Australians' holistic view of health, where the spiritual, environmental, ideological,
191 mental, and physical aspects are collectively known as 'cultural wellbeing'. Expanding on these ideas
192 of wellbeing for Aboriginal Australians, Gee et al. (2014, p. 57) extend Swann and Raphael's analysis
193 to describe nine 'guiding principles' that underpin social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal
194 people in Australia: health as holistic, the right to self-determination, the need for cultural
195 understanding, the impact of history on trauma and loss, recognition of human rights, the impact of
196 racism and stigma, recognition of the centrality of kinship, recognition of cultural diversity, and
197 recognition of Aboriginal strengths. These factors are substantially different from those that
198 conventional wellbeing frameworks articulate for majority-culture Australians, or for majority groups
199 in most developed Western countries. Clearly, human 'wellbeing' and its perceived

200 interdependencies with ecological health is as much a product of broader social and historical
201 factors as it is of individual characteristics (see also Hung, 2013 and Zubrick et al., 2014).

202 By contrast, studies have demonstrated mixed results for the influence of income on
203 wellbeing (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). Graham and Pettinato (2006) summarise that economic
204 growth is a necessary condition for achieving enhanced social wellbeing through the reduction of
205 poverty and, on average, the wealthy are happier than the poor; however, once a certain income
206 threshold is reached, there are no significant differences in happiness between wealthier and poorer
207 societies. Further, Graham and Pettinato's (2006) findings suggest that variables such as *relative*
208 income, changes in employment, and age are more important indicators of happiness in both
209 developing and developed countries.

210 **2.2 Approaches to measuring wellbeing**

211 Objective, measurable indicators of wellbeing include material and social attributes such as
212 access to physical resources, employment, income, education, health, and housing (King et al.,
213 2014). These are the social and economic attributes that reflect life circumstances and can be easily
214 measured at the population level. By contrast, subjective wellbeing refers to the thoughts and
215 feelings an individual has about life's circumstances, and their stated levels of satisfaction with
216 specific wellbeing dimensions (Diener, 2000; King et al., 2014). Numerous scales have been
217 developed to measure subjective wellbeing, such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al.
218 1985); Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (Diener et al. 2009); Flourishing scale (Diener et al.
219 2009); Quality of Life scale; and The Personal Wellbeing Index (Cummins, Lau and Davern, 2012; The
220 International Wellbeing Group, 2013). Subjective wellbeing often does not correspond to objective
221 indicators of wellbeing. People's sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is usually assessed by making
222 social comparisons with other people, rather than against objective aspects of life (Pettigrew, 2016).

223 Solely focusing on objective or subjective wellbeing measures has been criticised for its
224 limited assessment (Hagerty et al., 2001; King et al. 2014). Accordingly, much current research is
225 focused on developing an aggregate measure of subjective and objective wellbeing, as well as
226 considering and reflecting on the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems (Agarwala et
227 al., 2014; Armitage et al., 2012; Ivaldi, Bonatti, & Soliani, 2016).

228 To summarise, the concept of human wellbeing has evolved from a narrow focus on
229 objective measures (e.g., economic conditions, housing, education, and welfare) to one where
230 complex and multidimensional components such as subjective wellbeing and ecological measures
231 are included (King et al. 2014). Diener (2000) proposes that national accounts of subjective and

232 psychosocial wellbeing have become established in societies because wellbeing or quality of life
233 includes more than economic indicators. But despite the large body of research, there remains no
234 standard measurement of wellbeing (Diener & Tov, 2012). The International Wellbeing Group (2013)
235 audited over 1200 instruments that claim to measure life quality in some form, and concluded that
236 many of these measures are limited due to a focus on specific groups, or a failure to distinguish
237 between subjective and objective dimensions. This suggests to us that applications such as the
238 Nexus Webs framework may have to include key relevant indicators of wellbeing *in situ*, according to
239 the needs and insights of particular stakeholders, and accordingly to the specific ecological
240 circumstances confronting the individual or group. Locally relevant indicators of wellbeing will also
241 help to take into account circumstances where individual preferences are formed in response to
242 their available options, a phenomenon known as adaptive preferencing (Nussbam, 2000; Sen, 1999).

243 **3. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND WELLBEING: A SOCIAL AND** 244 **ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE**

245 Ecosystem services are the benefits people derive from ecosystems (Roberts et al., 2015). It
246 is tempting to assume that an increase in the particular services an ecosystem provides will confer a
247 corresponding increase in human wellbeing to those living within that ecosystem and deriving
248 services from it; but there are many reasons for resisting this temptation. In this section, we outline
249 several approaches that have been used to investigate linkages between ecosystem services and
250 human wellbeing in the social and psychological sciences, provide an overview of existing empirical
251 research on ecosystem and human health relationships, and present several additional psychological
252 constructs that might develop our understanding of the interrelations, interdependencies, and
253 temporal considerations of ecosystems and wellbeing.

254 **3.1 Ecosystem services, wellbeing, and psychology: A human needs approach**

255 Wellbeing can be thought of as derived through the attainment of human needs. Perhaps
256 the most well-known (and most critiqued) construct emerging from psychology on this theme is
257 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Maslow purports that the successful attainment of higher level
258 needs (culminating in 'self-actualisation') are contingent on basic physiological needs (e.g., water,
259 food, air) being met. Somewhere between basic physiological needs and self-actualisation are what
260 Maslow termed 'deficiency needs' – the need for safety, affection, and belonging. As the fulfilment
261 of these needs fluctuates so too does the person's wellbeing – deficiency in any of these categories
262 will lead to stress, tension, and lower levels of wellbeing.

263 If the ability of ecosystems to provide adequate services for the most basic physiological
264 needs in one domain (e.g., water security) is compromised, the level of services in other domains
265 becomes irrelevant. That is, each domain must satisfy certain ‘basic requirements’ for each
266 individual. It is far less clear, though, how fluctuating levels of ecosystem services in each domain
267 might differentially impact the higher needs of people, and how ecosystem degradation might
268 undermine deficiency needs over the long term.

269 This needs-based approach, originating in the psychological sciences, has gained momentum
270 in the environmental sciences. In reviewing how ecosystem services might contribute to the
271 wellbeing of New Zealanders, Roberts et al. (2015) draw upon a similar needs-based approach that
272 describes nine fundamental human needs (Max-Neef, 1991): subsistence, protection, affection,
273 understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, and freedom. Unlike Maslow’s hierarchical
274 approach, Max-Neef posits that human needs are much more interrelated and interactive, and as
275 such are analogous to non-human ecosystems. Roberts et al. articulate how ecosystem services
276 might contribute to these nine fundamental human needs. They conclude that improved public
277 decision-making depends upon more effectively measuring these different components of wellbeing,
278 and a greater awareness of how ecosystem services contribute to each of these components. The
279 contributions of ecosystem services identified by Roberts et al. are categorised under the following
280 headings: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity,
281 and freedom.

282 Roberts et al.’s conceptualisation of ecosystem provision is comprehensive, but again it is
283 largely unidirectional; ecosystems, through the various services they afford, contribute to the overall
284 wellbeing of humans. What is not captured in these needs-based approaches is an element of
285 wellbeing that has long occupied the interest of psychologists. This element, captured variously
286 under concepts such as self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan,
287 2011), effectance motivation (Harter, 1978; White, 1959), and learned helplessness (Seligman,
288 1972), concerns the basic and chronic motivation for humans to master, or control, their own
289 environment, and to respond adaptively to fluctuations within that environment (Maddux, 1995;
290 Waytz et al., 2010). If efforts to adapt to environmental changes, or to effectively control one’s
291 environment are thwarted, wellbeing is compromised. Similarly, compromised wellbeing may
292 motivate compensatory responses; an individual may alter their behaviour and attitudes toward
293 their ecological surroundings to make their environment more predictable, manageable, and
294 understandable, thereby enhancing wellbeing (Waytz et al., 2010). This directly implies the capacity
295 for bidirectionality between human wellbeing and ecosystem.

296 **3.2 Ecosystem health and human health: A reciprocal relationship**

297 A growing body of empirical evidence from the social psychological sciences and related
298 disciplines suggests ecosystem health plays an important role in shaping people’s subjective
299 wellbeing (Albrecht, 2005, 2006; Higginbotham et al., 2007; Jardine, Speldewinde, Calver, &
300 Weinstein, 2007; Rapport, 2002; Rapport & Singh 2006; Sandifer, Sutton-Grier, & Ward, 2015;
301 Speldewinde, Cook, Davies, & Weinstein, 2009). To date, research on the human health impacts of
302 ecosystem disruptions, such as climate change, has focused largely on the physical effects of
303 extreme weather events, higher temperatures, and food shortages (Fritze et al., 2008). But direct
304 impacts on mental health and wellbeing may also ensue through trauma and displacement from
305 extreme events, as well as indirect effects related to disturbance of mental health determinants and
306 distress about the future (Fritze et al., 2008). Such impacts are illustrated by research linking drought
307 with reduced life satisfaction (Carroll, Frijters, & Shields, 2009), dryland salinity with hospitalisation
308 rates for depression (Speldewinde et al., 2009), and declines in agricultural terms of trade with
309 suicide rates (Fragar et. al., 2008). There is also evidence that enhanced ecosystem health improves
310 wellbeing. For instance, an abundance and diversity of bird species, vegetation cover, and quality
311 bushland has been linked to increased satisfaction with place and health benefits (Kuo, 2015; Luck,
312 Davidson, Boxall, & Smallbone, 2011). Further, Kamitsis and Francis (2013) found that
313 connectedness to and engagement with nature predicted greater subjective wellbeing, and that this
314 was significantly mediated by spirituality. In addition to the importance of cultural spirituality in
315 shaping conceptions of social ecological relations, Kamitsis and Francis’s findings suggest spirituality
316 also operates at an individual level to explain linkages between ecosystem health and wellbeing.

317 Pathways from ecosystem degradation to psychological distress have been a particular focus
318 of research in the agricultural domain. Broadly, these pathways include financial pressures due to
319 reduced productivity and land values; and declines in population, social networks, community
320 services, and employment opportunities (Jardine et al., 2007; Greenhill et al., 2017; Staniford,
321 Dollard & Guerin, 2009; Caldwell & Boyd, 2009). But psychological quality of life has also been linked
322 to people’s ‘sense of place’ (Ogunseitn, 2005), and environmental degradation is thought to
323 adversely influence this relationship (Rogan, O’Connor, & Horwitz, 2005). Degradation of physical
324 surroundings can also lead to anxiety and feelings of helplessness (Sartore et al., 2008). Another
325 posited pathway is ‘Solastalgia’, a sense of human distress induced by ecological decline (Albrecht,
326 2005, 2006; Speldewinde et al., 2009).

327 While the pathways from environmental degradation to psychological distress and wellbeing
328 are increasingly understood, the pathways from psychological distress to environmental

329 degradation, and from social systems to the provision of ecosystem service supply, are less clearly
330 defined (Bennett et al., 2015).

331 In the agricultural domain, and following a needs based approach, Leviston, Price, and Bates
332 (2011) suggest that Australian farmers differ in their stages of security, and therefore have different
333 levels of wellbeing needs more or less satisfied. This in turn influences their engagement with land
334 management practices that either promote or degrade wider ecosystem health. For example,
335 converting to 'minimum till' or 'no till' practice to reduce input costs and time may be driven
336 primarily by the need for financial security. In this case, concern for family livelihood takes
337 precedence over caring for the natural environment or long term soil viability. Conversely,
338 converting to minimum till or no till practice primarily for biodiversity purposes may satisfy higher
339 levels of need: self-esteem and development, or, in a land management context, innovation and
340 land stewardship. This is a case of the same segmented behaviour (minimum or no till) being driven
341 by different levels of needs necessary for that individual's wellbeing; but in the former case it is less
342 likely to 'spill over' into other realms of good practice associated with land stewardship (weed
343 management, native vegetation retention, stocking practices and so on) (Leviston, Price, & Bates,
344 2011). In short, promoting the uptake of the full suite of land management practices required to
345 increase long-term services to the farmer and promote wider ecosystem health (and therefore
346 increased services to the broader community) may only be possible once basic and overriding needs
347 such as safety and security are satisfied.

348 **3.3 Solastalgia**

349 Solastalgia describes the relationship between ecosystem distress and human distress
350 (Albrecht, 2005, 2006). The term solastalgia derives from the words 'nostalgia' (home-sickness) and
351 'solace' (alleviation of distress). It is a painful experience related to the desolation or loss of the
352 place where one resides, manifesting in a deteriorated sense of belonging or place identity. As such
353 it can be characterised as 'homesickness one gets when one is still at 'home'' (Albrecht, 2005, p.17)
354 stemming from an unwanted transformation of the environment. Maintenance of the state of one's
355 environment is thought to comfort and provide solace, and solastalgia therefore is the sickness
356 caused by a lack of solace from the environment. High levels of mental health issues and suicide in
357 rural Australia may be related to landscape degradation (e.g., erosion, salinity, loss of biodiversity)
358 and subsequent human distress (Albrecht, 2005). These psychological issues may be the
359 manifestation of environmental distress. Links between distress and a sense of powerlessness have
360 been demonstrated in Australian communities experiencing environmental degradation (Leviston et
361 al., 2011).

362 Drawing on the Solastalgia literature and models of stress and coping (Baum, Fleming, &
363 Singer, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), Higginbotham et al. (2007) investigated the effects of
364 ecosystem disturbance on environmental distress. They present environmental distress as a cycle:
365 environmental changes elevate threat perceptions, resulting in social, economic, and psychological
366 impacts that are followed by behavioural reactions that in turn influence the environment. Sense of
367 place and trust in government and industry are thought to mediate threat appraisal, impacts, and
368 actions. This thinking again highlights the reciprocal or bidirectional relationship between ecosystem
369 health and wellbeing. That is, poor environmental conditions may impair human health and
370 psychological resources, reducing the likelihood of pro-environmental behaviour, which
371 subsequently further degrades ecosystems.

372 **3.4 Locus of Control**

373 The theory and concept of 'Locus of Control' (LOC), introduced by Rotter (1966), posits
374 individuals with an 'internal' locus believe outcomes are contingent on their own actions, while
375 those with an 'external' locus believe chance, fate, or powerful others control outcomes affecting
376 them (see Levenson, 1974; Paulhus & Van Selst, 1990, for reviews and adaptations). LOC has
377 important implications for wellbeing. People with an internal LOC are more able to adequately
378 respond to stress than are others (Krause & Stryker, 1984), and ascribing control over one's life to
379 external sources can be detrimental to wellbeing (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). LOC has also been
380 related to perceived income adequacy, an important component of subjective wellbeing (Danes &
381 Rettig, 1993; Sumarwan & Hira, 1993). Perceived income inadequacy can trigger a sense of relative
382 deprivation, if it is seen as unjust, and a sense of injustice coupled with a sense of internal control
383 can lead to various forms of social protest (e.g., Walker, Wong, & Kretzschmar, 2002).

384 There is a host of empirical evidence that LOC might directly or indirectly influence
385 ecosystem health (and therefore services). An internal locus has been found to predict
386 environmentally responsible behaviour (Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Darner, 2009; Hines, Hungerford &
387 Tomera, 1987; Huebner & Lipsey, 1981; Hwang, Kim & Jeng, 2000), attitudes (McCarty & Shrum,
388 2001), environmental concern (Pettus & Giles, 1987), and pro-environmental land management
389 behaviour (Leviston et al., 2011).

390 LOC is a good example of a psychological construct linked to wellbeing that also influences
391 the ability of an ecosystem to provide adequate services. LOC is traditionally viewed as a fixed,
392 largely immutable personality trait, and therefore something that is largely 'decoupled' from one's
393 physical environment. Recent evidence casts significant doubt on this tradition (e.g., Ryon &
394 Gleason, 2014). For instance, in a study of farmers' pro-environmental land management practice,

395 Price and Leviston (2014) found that different levels of severity of environmental degradation (in this
396 case, brought about by long-term and severe drought) was associated with farmers' loci of control:
397 farmers in regions more severely affected by drought were more likely to have external loci of
398 control than farmers in neighbouring regions less severely impacted.

399 This seemingly symbiotic relationship between individual psychological differences and
400 environmental quality suggests constructs such as LOC might be important indicators to include in
401 investigations of ecosystem services and wellbeing. In particular, longitudinal monitoring programs
402 would help unpack the reciprocal nature of the relationships between different aspects of
403 ecosystem health and human wellbeing. For resource management, LOC, and what causes it to
404 fluctuate, is important not just from a wellbeing perspective, but because of its close relationship
405 with trust. Leviston et al. (2011) and Price and Leviston (2014) found that one's LOC directly and
406 indirectly influences trust in and willingness to receive information from multiple sources (including
407 natural resource management experts), such that an external LOC is associated with lower levels of
408 both trust in expert information, and willingness to use information from resource management
409 experts in their own land management activities (see also Duram, 1997). The erosion of trust in
410 environmental agencies has broader social and cultural ramifications. Trust is critical for ensuring
411 social license to operate, for instance (Moffat & Zhang, 2014). Further, trust is central to the
412 generation of social capital; a community that questions the legitimacy of information from public
413 and expert institutions is likely to have lower collective capacity to respond to environmental shifts
414 (Leonard & Leviston, 2012; Putnam, 2009). The empirical evidence cited here suggests that a high
415 level of ecosystem services is vital to regaining, building, and retaining trust in agencies.

416 **3.5 Sense of Place and Place Attachment**

417 Sense of Place refers to the emotional and physical bonds an individual has with a physical
418 place. It has three dimensions – place attachment, place identity, and place dependence. It is
419 manifest most visibly in the ways people feel about and use the landscape (Seddon, Duany, &
420 Tredennick, 1972). People's connection to place and the formation of emotional attachments has
421 been extensively explored in the literature (see Brehm, Eisenhauer, & Stedman, 2013; Devine-
422 Wright, 2009; Trentelman, 2009 for detailed definitions and an overview of related concepts).
423 Generally of interest to place-based studies is how people perceive, experience, and value the
424 environment (Cheng et al., 2003). These place-based values in turn influence the trade-offs people
425 make when adapting to ecological changes in their environment; what is worth preserving and what
426 is worth relinquishing will be made within values frameworks, at both individual or group levels, that
427 articulate what is important in people's lives and how this connects with where they live (Graham et

428 al., 2013; Tschakert et al., 2017) It is thought that place-based meanings are generated through
429 place-based experiences (Rudestam, 2014) and people with a greater sense of place are more likely
430 to conserve or care for their local environment (Leonard et al. 2013) or display increased levels of
431 pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour (see Ryan, 2005; Stedman, 2003; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001).
432 Further, encouraging place attachment may directly lead to an increase in pro-environmental
433 behaviour (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

434 Sense of Place is generally viewed positively, as something to be promoted, and as
435 contributing to overall wellbeing. Indeed, issues of identity comprise one of Max-Neef's nine
436 fundamental human needs, and continuity of place is an important component in reinforcing and
437 maintaining identity (Adger et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2010). However, some research suggests
438 that it might also have unintended and undesirable consequences.

439 Marshall et al. (2012) investigated the transformational capacity of peanut farmers to adapt
440 to the altered productivity of natural resources (exacerbated by climate change). They found a
441 strong negative correlation between transformational capacity and place attachment. Other
442 research has indicated that striving for higher levels of place attachment, identity, and dependency
443 might drive a shift in population to more bushfire prone areas, in turn placing further strain on
444 ecosystem management (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). Place attachments and identity may also
445 increase place-protective actions that are ecologically counterproductive, such as local place-based
446 opposition to the construction of wind farms (Devine-Wright, 2009). As such, place attachment can
447 constrain adaptations necessary for long-term ecosystem health (see Bonaiuto, Alves, De Dominicis,
448 & Petrucci, 2016 for a review of literature assessing place attachment and adaptation and
449 maladaptation responses). This hints at an intriguing paradox for frameworks such as the Nexus
450 Webs: that too much of a particular aspect of wellbeing might under some circumstances degrade
451 ecosystem services.

452 **3.6 Environmental Worldviews**

453 People's subjective perception of their relationship with nature can shape their responses to
454 debates surrounding the allocation of ecosystem services (Price, Walker, & Boschetti, 2014). These
455 multiple views of human-environment relationships, based on cultural perspectives, compete and
456 conflict both between and within individuals (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Price et al. (2014)
457 conceive of two underlying dimensions of worldviews: a 'ductile' perspective, where the ecosystem
458 is viewed as altered by physical activity and is ill-equipped or unable to recover from damage; and an
459 'elastic' perspective, where the ecosystem is viewed as resilient and capable of recovering from

460 damage. Elastic views are associated with support for environmental exploitation and resistance to
461 policies aimed at protecting the environment; ductile views have the opposite associations.

462 It is important to note that in this theoretical framework, worldviews are not stable
463 characteristics of individuals, but rather are socially available discursive resources able to be drawn
464 upon by all people in a community, including stakeholders in contested land use arenas. Although
465 conceptually these worldviews are socially available discursive resources, there are consistent
466 patterns of individual differences in endorsement of one worldview or another (Price, Walker, &
467 Boschetti, 2014).

468 These competing worldviews may underlie differences in the subjective perception of the
469 contribution (and potential future contributions) of ecosystem services to increases or decreases in
470 wellbeing. These worldviews, and other 'mental models' of human-environment interrelations
471 (Richert, Boschetti, Walker, Price, & Grigg, 2016), are therefore also critical in determining how
472 conflicts surrounding the provision of natural resources might best be resolved. For instance,
473 designing participatory decision-making processes that encourage stakeholders to acknowledge the
474 different sets of biases and assumptions they each bring to the table may be an effective means of
475 consensus building (Boschetti, Richert, Walker, Price, & Dutra, 2012).

476 **3.7 Sense of Justice and Relative Deprivation**

477 In their recent review, Bennett et al. (2015) highlight the centrality of understanding who
478 benefits and who loses from changes in ecosystem services in improving decision-making for
479 sustainable resource use. This is squarely an issue of social justice, about which the social sciences
480 have had much to say (Jost & Kay, 2010).

481 The distinction between *distributive* and *procedural* justice is vital – the former refers to
482 judgements of the fairness of the distribution of the rewards and punishments of life; the latter to
483 judgements of the rules and procedures that generate patterns of reward distribution. Judgements
484 about the two forms of justice are often independent, and people often accept apparently unjust
485 distributive outcomes if they accept as fair the procedures that produced those outcomes (Syme,
486 Nancarrow, & McCreddin, 1999).

487 Relative deprivation (RD) is the sense of being unfairly deprived of something one feels
488 entitled to, and can be made about individual or about group outcomes (Walker & Smith, 2002). The
489 shape of behavioural responses to RD depends critically on whether it is an individual or a group
490 outcome being judged: individual RD typically leads to individual-level behaviours; group RD leads to
491 group-level behaviours. If we consider the case of the health of a whole ecosystem, and its

492 attendant ecosystem services, we can easily imagine how outcomes affecting people can be
493 assessed individually (an individual farmer facing restrictions on the amount water that can be
494 drawn from a basin, for example) or collectively (the impact of changes to water rights on a whole
495 downstream community). Both cases may be judged to be unfair, but the consequences will likely be
496 very different (the individual farmer may change farming practices, or may leave the land; a
497 community may agitate collectively for political action).

498 We are not aware of research that specifically uses RD to examine human responses to
499 changes in ecosystem services, but we can suggest that if deprived individuals feel entitled to
500 something (e.g., an ecosystem service), they are more likely to feel resentful if their access is
501 hindered or denied. We do not know whether people feel entitled to some services more than
502 others, or who feels entitled to which service. Responses to deprivation depend on patterns of
503 attribution for the current situation (Walker, Wong, & Kretzschmar, 2002) – feeling self-blame can
504 reduce the sense of entitlement, so any investigation in this area must also ask the extent to which
505 people feel responsible for the quality/decline of ecosystem services. A further factor influencing
506 resentment is the ease with which people can imagine how better outcomes could have occurred
507 (competing alternatives). There is also recent evidence (Walker, Leviston, Price, & Devine-Wright,
508 2015) that, for Australians who perceived that the quality of the environment had declined, an
509 accompanying sense of RD predicted support for collective environmental behaviours and for a
510 range of national environmental policies. The link between RD and these outcomes was mediated by
511 the strength of place attachment.

512 RD focuses on distributive justice. In terms of procedural justice, the perceived legitimacy of
513 relevant authorities to regulate distributive processes is critical (Hough, Jackson, & Bradford, 2013).
514 Legitimacy stems from assessments of the fairness of decision-making procedures used by
515 authorities and institutions. Perceptions of procedural fairness build values that lead people to feel a
516 long-lasting personal obligation to accept decisions and support rules. Fairness of outcomes has little
517 direct influence over perceived legitimacy (Syme, Nancarrow, & McCreddin, 1999). Procedural
518 fairness is important partly because of the link between procedural fairness and issues of social
519 identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Fair treatment communicates to a group's members that they are
520 highly valued, respected, and included, in turn leading to increased feelings of self-worth and
521 wellbeing.

522 Judgements about procedural fairness are also closely related to perceptions of trust, which
523 are central to all models of Social Licence to Operate (SLO; Moffatt & Zhang, 2014). Important
524 predictors of trust are the anticipated impact on social infrastructure, the quality and the quantity of

525 contact the community has had with the company, and a sense of procedural fairness in the way the
526 company interacts with the community over the proposed venture.

527 Moffat and Zhang (2014) have researched SLO in the mining sector, finding trust to be the
528 strongest determinant of SLO. Richert, Rogers, and Burton (2015) used the SLO concept in a way
529 more directly relevant to the relationships between ecosystems, ecosystem services, wellbeing, and
530 SLO. They found that most people in their survey of Western Australian residents supported the
531 development of the oil and gas sector in the state, because of perceived economic benefit, but
532 support and perceived social legitimacy are higher when the sector provides for marine biodiversity
533 offsets as a means of protecting the environment.

534 While yet to be empirically established, it seems likely that perceptions of justice and
535 injustice are related in frameworks such as Nexus Webs because of their centrality to a sense of
536 security, including economic security, a sense of place, and through the 'good social relations'
537 constituent of wellbeing.

538 **4. TOWARD AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AGENDA**

539 Connecting ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human wellbeing through frameworks such
540 as Nexus Webs promises to be of value for decision-making for, and governance of, ecosystems. It
541 also affords an opportunity for inter- and cross-disciplinary cooperation to jointly produce a more
542 comprehensive system of knowledge. In this review, we have identified several key areas where
543 social and environmental psychology can contribute to understanding the interlinkages and
544 interrelationships of social-ecological systems. We see four areas as being most important for future
545 research, each with a set of empirical research questions (these are summarised in Table 1,
546 alongside the social psychological concepts of relevance to the research questions listed).

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555 **Table 1. Summary of proposed research agenda investigating linkages between social-ecological systems.**

Research area	Research Questions	Social-Psychological Concepts
Identifying the primary dimensions of wellbeing in relation to ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Which dimensions of wellbeing are the most relevant to ecological systems? * What are the trade-offs and interdependencies between these dimensions? * Are wellbeing dimensions mediated and/or moderated by perceptions of the quality of biophysical environment? 	Environmental worldviews Learned helplessness Locus of control
Identifying the primary relationships between ecosystem services and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * How do direct experiences with different elements of the biophysical ecosystem influence wellbeing? * How do objective characteristics of ecosystem services relate to how they are perceived subjectively? * Are there 'tipping points' in ecological decline, beyond which wellbeing is affected in the long-term? 	Locus of control Place attachment Institutional trust Social capital Solastalgia
Unpacking people's 'mental models' of human-environment interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Do mental models systematically vary across different 'types' of stakeholders? * How are mental models informed by environmental worldviews? * How do mental models change in response to participatory stakeholder engagement (using Nexus Webs)? 	Environmental worldviews Mental models Institutional trust
Analysing the distribution of costs and benefits of ecosystem services within and across catchments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * How does participatory stakeholder engagement (using Nexus Webs) influence social license to operate? * How does participatory stakeholder engagement (using Nexus Webs) influence perceptions of fairness and equity? * How does perceived fairness of the distribution of ecosystem services impact on decisions within and across catchments? 	Distributive and procedural justice Relative deprivation Environmental worldviews Locus of control Social license to operate Institutional trust

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558 **4.1 Identify the important dimensions of human wellbeing in the context of ecosystems and**
 559 **ecosystem services.**

560 Approaches to the conceptualisation and measurement of human wellbeing have yielded a
 561 broad, and often disparate, set of wellbeing sub-dimensions. The abundance of wellbeing
 562 dimensions in the extant literature represents both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one

563 hand, the abundance makes it more difficult to precisely define the outcomes of interest in
564 ecosystem service provision. On the other hand, it allows for contextual specificity; that is, we are
565 able to consider a comprehensive set of human impacts when determining those most relevant to
566 the functioning of ecological systems.

567 Working from a paradigm that explicitly acknowledges the bidirectionality of social-
568 ecological systems, we propose a renewed research effort focused on identifying the primary
569 dimensions of wellbeing as they relate to ecosystem services. Embedded within this are several sub-
570 topics: are primary dimensions of wellbeing the same across people and across biophysical domains?
571 Are some dimensions more critical than others; that is, can some dimensions be foregone with little
572 impact on overall levels of wellbeing? Are there trade-offs between these dimensions, or do they
573 fluctuate independently of one another? Finally, what are the relationships between objective and
574 subjective aspects of wellbeing within an ecosystem context, and are these mediated or moderated
575 by (perceived and objective) aspects of the biophysical environment?

576 **4.2 Identify the primary relationships between ecosystem services and human wellbeing (bi-** 577 **directional as well as unidirectional).**

578 The second area of research concerns the deliberative and systematic investigation of
579 bidirectionality between ecosystem services and human wellbeing. Most, if not all, of the research
580 outlined in this paper has not explicitly set out to identify bidirectionality; rather these causal
581 possibilities have been inferred or established post-hoc. Disentangling causality more formerly
582 requires suitable research design, including longitudinal investigations and experimental
583 intervention studies.

584 Working within such designs, critical questions include the following: How does experience
585 of the biophysical ecosystem (e.g., droughts, floods, bushfires) influence levels of wellbeing, and are
586 these effects different for different dimensions of wellbeing? How do objective characteristics of
587 ecosystem services relate to subjective characteristics, and are these relationships direct, or
588 mediated by elements such as social capital and community service provision? Are the relationships
589 between ecosystem services and wellbeing direct and linear, or are there optimal ranges? What
590 roles do aspects of personal sense of control and place attachment play in moderating relationships
591 between wellbeing and ecosystem services? And finally, what are the 'threshold points' beyond
592 which ecosystem service decline has a significant, meaningful, lasting impact on dimensions of
593 wellbeing, and vice-versa?

594 **4.3 Articulate ‘mental models’ of how people understand the relationships between ecosystems,**
595 **ecosystem services, and human wellbeing.**

596 People’s perceptions of the world, including human-environment interactions, we argue,
597 should be *as* fundamental a consideration in natural resource management as ‘objective’
598 relationships between social and biophysical systems. This is especially so in contested resource-use
599 arenas, where stakeholders bring with them their own set of values, beliefs, worldviews, and
600 knowledge systems, each of which shape negotiations. The biases and distortions inherent in
601 people’s ‘mental models’ of human-environment interactions will influence receptivity to ‘objective’
602 ecological models in several ways. For instance, people may discount the probability or relevance of
603 distant events, may consider other modelling outputs as irrelevant to their everyday lives, or may be
604 skewed by deeply held ideological beliefs (Boschetti, Walker, & Price, 2016). They may also be
605 distorted by misperceptions regarding other people’s environmental preferences and beliefs. For
606 instance, people tend to assume that others think as they do, and this cognitive bias can constrain
607 shifts in thinking (Leviston, Walker, & Morwinski, 2013).

608 Investigating people’s mental models (simplified mental representations of physical reality
609 and how systems work) of the interactions between ecosystems and human wellbeing is, we think,
610 an important and fruitful avenue of future research, encompassing such questions as the following:
611 Do people’s mental models of the dynamics of human-environment interactions vary fundamentally
612 across the general public, decision-makers, stakeholders, and scientists? Can we use these mental
613 models to identify patterns or clusters of people or of models? What are the major points of
614 difference between different mental models and scientific models? How malleable and subject to
615 social influence are these mental models? How do different mental models relate to different
616 worldviews about human-nature interactions, and to narratives and beliefs about environmental
617 decline and recovery, and about social change? How are these mental models related to judgements
618 about procedural and distributive justice?

619 Finally, when stakeholders participate in an intervention based on approaches such as the
620 Nexus Webs framework, how do their mental models of the ecosystem, ecosystem services, and
621 wellbeing change? Can such frameworks be used to overcome competing or conflicting mental
622 models of ecosystems and their management?

623 **4.4 Analysis of the distribution of costs and benefits of services across and within ecosystem**
624 **catchments.**

625 Our final area of future research concerns spatial and distributive considerations. Although
626 frameworks such as Nexus Webs rely on comparisons (between scenarios, sectors, regions,
627 catchments, or groups of beneficiaries), more work is needed to examine the social and political
628 consequences of the costs and benefits of ecosystem services accruing differently both between and
629 within different catchments. Such differentials have implications for social license to operate,
630 acceptance of decisions influencing the distribution of services, trust in systems and authorities, and
631 fostering or dampening a sense of grievance, resentment, or deprivation.

632 It is plausible, for instance, that proposals for operations with equivalent impacts on
633 ecosystems could enjoy vastly different levels of community support. Firstly, relevant ideologies,
634 including values about nature and conservation, and even the acceptability of development in areas
635 of high ecosystem value, are not evenly distributed over space (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Hemson,
636 Maclennan, Mills, Johnson, & Macdonald, 2009; Raymond & Brown, 2007). Rather, we see
637 geographical places as spaces where values tend to 'cluster', as people coalesce in space with like-
638 minded people, and are influenced by the people and environment around them – we can think of
639 these clusters as 'ideological catchments'.

640 Further, structural elements of communities might influence the management and quality of
641 ecosystem services. For instance, if communities are better resourced, better connected, and are
642 higher in other levels of social and political capital, enterprises with reasonable, or even positive,
643 ecological outcomes might face vocal opposition, while a less ecologically desirable but similar
644 proposition might face little community resistance in areas with few social resources. These
645 structural elements might also have important linkages with the notion of adaptive preferences,
646 whereby people tend to adjust to, and form preferences for, the unfavourable circumstances they
647 find themselves in. If this extends to ecological preferences, whereby people come to prefer
648 degrading environments, it has important implications for the assessment of wellbeing in connection
649 to ecological outcomes. Within this research area, particular questions might include the following:
650 Can social licence to operate be conceptualised as an outcome of applying a framework similar to
651 Nexus Webs to contested ecosystem management? Who gains the licence, and to do what? How
652 does perceived benefit (and cost) to self, family, neighbourhood, and region influence judgements of
653 trust and legitimacy? How are objective and subjective costs and benefits distributed within and
654 between communities? Are these distributions, and the processes that produced them, seen as fair?
655 How are current distribution patterns of costs and benefits seen to project into the future? Do
656 people anticipate their livelihoods improving or worsening, and with what consequence? And finally,
657 what influence do the attitudes and future projections of 'influential outsiders' (such as city-dwelling
658 populations remote to a particular catchment) impart on decisions within ecosystem catchments?

659 **4.5 Conclusions**

660 We envisage that the pursuit of such a research agenda will result in more powerful and
661 nuanced predictive models of the factors influencing both wellbeing and the acceptability of
662 decisions related to the provision of ecosystem services. Further, a systematised approach to the
663 interrelations between human wellbeing and ecosystem services would yield an inventory of critical
664 determinants of the acceptability of resource-use proposals. Such an inventory, based on
665 distributive and procedural fairness principles, objective and perceived ecological and social costs
666 and benefits, and socio-cultural characteristics of catchment communities, would better enable
667 decisions that result in the optimised functioning of both social and ecological systems. These
668 understandings could also be used to iteratively update and refine the Nexus Webs framework. This
669 would arm resource use planners with a decision support tool that more accurately reflects the
670 trade-offs to be considered between different components of the web during stakeholder decision-
671 making.

672 More broadly, the proposed research agenda would progress our current understanding and
673 measurement of ecological indicators. By systematically measuring and identifying how, when, and
674 why variations in human conditions influence ecological health over both time and space, we can
675 develop indicators and models that more fully account for, and anticipate the impact of, the
676 reciprocal nature of human-environment interactions.

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