

Editorial

The present issue of the Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Studies contains three articles and covers issues ranging from the relation between climate change and changes in human activities, the relation between researchers and local stakeholders in identifying and ranking local needs and priorities, and the relation between international regulatory concepts and their implementation in a national context.

In the article “10,000 years of climate change and human impact on the environment in the area surrounding Lejre”, Niels Schrøder et al. have re-examined the classical site for Holocene studies – Lejre (Denmark) and its surroundings in order to contribute to the debate about the decisive factors behind the main changes in human activities in the area. The re-examination of the area is comprehensive and draws on a wide range of methods covering drill hole analysis, pollen analysis, chemical analysis, geological mapping and hydrological modelling and archaeological as well as historical data. On the basis of the re-examination of the area surrounding Lejre, the authors conclude that climatic change has been the driving force behind the main changes in human activities during the last ten thousand years.

Quentin Gausset’s article “Ranking Local Tree Needs and Priorities Through an Interdisciplinary Action Research Approach“ reviews different ranking methods used within the PETREA research programme. Taking a comprehensive and a critical look at the various ranking methods’ ability to identify, rank and address local needs, the author argues that only an interdisciplinary approach can address local needs and priorities successfully. The discussion on interdisciplinary research addresses issues related to the overlap of various ranking methods, the involvement of local stakeholders in deciding local priorities and not least the opposing interests of researchers in deciding and ranking local needs and priorities relating to trees.

The last article “Environmental Impact Assessment in Malaysia, South Africa, Thailand, and Denmark: Background, layout, context, public participation and environmental scope” by Jens Stærdahl et al. compares EIA systems across four countries. The authors take an alternative methodological approach to the comparison of the EIA systems by insisting on studying how the EIA system was adopted and how it works in the context in contrast to assessing the EIA system in relation to an “ideal” EIA system. The comparative analysis addresses process effectiveness, and highway projects are chosen as illustrative examples of the scope of environmental impact assessment and the character of public participation. The authors bring to light the fact that the standard EIA system is recognizable in all four countries and see it as an indication of the importance of policy diffusion and the pressure to implement internationally established regulatory concepts properly. The authors argue that the political background for adopting a new regulatory concept in the long run is of minor importance for the implementation of the regulatory concept.

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