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**Synthesising Deliberative Democracy and Environmental Sustainability:
Lessons from the Stange Forum.**

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SYNTHESISING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS FROM THE STANAGE FORUM

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ABSTRACT

Environmental theorists are increasingly placing their confidence in deliberative democracy to achieve environmental sustainability. However, there are two key issues that must be addressed, and to which this chapter aims to contribute, if the synthesis between environmental sustainability and deliberative democracy is to be accepted and achieved. In terms of acceptance this connection must be empirically tested in deliberative decision-making. With relation to achievement, deliberative democracy must be approximated in practice, which involves linking citizen deliberation with decision-making. The Chapter focuses on a case study, the Stanage Forum, to illuminate both of these issues. It is suggested that this forum, from the Peak District in the United Kingdom, is an approximation of deliberative democracy and demonstrates the trade-offs that need to be made between the theory and practice of deliberative democracy, at each stage of the decision-making process. As environmental issues are central to the conflicts in the Stanage Forum, it is also a good test of whether environmentally sustainable decisions will be promoted through deliberative democracy in practice.

INTRODUCTION

The hegemony in environmental theory, has for sometime been, that environmental sustainability is most likely to be achieved through community participation in localised decision-making and Planning (Coenen et al., 1998; Plumwood, 1998, p. 569; Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 240). More recently, with the rise to prominence of deliberative democracy, within democratic theory and practice, the current hegemony in environmental theory (Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 245) is the assertion that not just any form of community participation will achieve environmental goals, but participation in public debate, as this will encourage participants to offer public reasons, commensurate with common goods like environmental sustainability (Dryzek, 1990, 2000; Barry, 1999; Gundersen, 1995; Eckersley, 2000, 2004; Smith, 2001; Baber and Bartlett, 2005). However, there are two key issues that must be addressed, and to which this chapter aims to contribute, if the synthesis between

environmental sustainability and deliberative democracy is to be accepted and achieved. In terms of acceptance this connection must be empirically tested in deliberative decision-making. With relation to achievement, deliberative democracy must be approximated in practice, which involves linking citizen deliberation with decision-making.

The empirical evidence linking deliberative democracy with sustainability is inconclusive. Significantly, most of the evidence that supports the link is from instances of unpartisan deliberation that is not linked to decision making (Gundersen, 1995; Kuper, 1997; Aldred and Jacobs, 2000; Kenyon and Nevin, 2001). In contrast other evidence that disputes the link is from examples of partisan deliberation that is linked to decision-making (Zwart, 2003). Essential to the idea of deliberative democracy is that it involves public debate that leads to decisions (Bohman, 1996, p. 177; Dryzek, 2000, p. 2; Squires 2002, p. 142; Leib 2004, pp. 5-6 & 39; Elstub, 2008a) and therefore if instances of democratic deliberation do not culminate in more sustainable decisions then we must be sceptical as to whether environmental sustainability and deliberative democracy can be synthesised. In which case we must conclude, in agreement with Goodin (1992, p. 168), that there is nothing specifically environmental about democracy, deliberative or otherwise, because democracy is a set of procedures for making decisions, while environmental sustainability is a substantive issue.

The empirical evidence is clearly inconclusive, and more is required, especially from instances of deliberative that culminates in binding decisions. This leads to the next significant problem for the synthesis of deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability: approximating deliberative democracy in practice, especially if high levels of community participation are to be achieved and the deliberation is to culminate in binding decisions. Clearly if deliberative democracy is a counterfactual ideal that cannot be approximated in practice, it cannot be synthesised with environmental sustainability. If deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability are to be normatively linked, as they have been, then it is important to understand what challenges face the synthesis of these elements in practice and where real life exigencies require trade-offs between the practice and the ideal (Blaug, 1999). Blaug highlights the fact that deliberative democrats have paid little attention to how groups might actually deliberate and make decisions in practice (Blaug, 1999, p. 131). This is an issue that

deliberative democrats are addressing as research on deliberative democracy takes an ‘empirical turn’ (Dryzek, 2008), but is still insufficient (Cohen and Rogers, 2003, p. 243; Baber and Bartlett, 2005, p.179).

Empirical evidence from deliberative democracy in practice is essential for the development of deliberative democracy and its synthesis with environmental sustainability:

‘the idealising force of the deliberative model as blueprint is not especially helpful when it comes to real-world institutional design and political decision-making where time, information, knowledge and other constraints abound...’ consequently, ‘if we are to achieve feasible outcomes, then political procedures and institutions must not be formulated in the philosophical laboratory (where power disparities are absent), but in the real world, where power disparities, distortions in communication and other pressures are ever-present’ (Eckersley, 2000, p. 125; see also Blaug, 1999, p. 134).

Although it is essential that the theory of deliberative democracy informs the development of real life instances, as otherwise there could not be any normative critique of democracy in practice or a theory to provide inspiration for approximation (Eckersley, 2000, p. 125), in turn there is much that the theory of deliberative democracy can learn from practical examples.

Consequently, this chapter will review deliberative democracy in practice to discover lessons that can be learnt about the trade-offs between theory and practice, that must be made, when approximating the ideal of deliberative democracy, but will further investigate whether this instance leads to more environmentally rational preferences amongst the community participants and more sustainable decisions. The case study is the Stanage Forum, the purpose of which was to produce an effective Management Plan, through the participation of all key stakeholders, for the North Lees Estate, an area in the Peak District, a national park in the UK. It provides a suitable case study because it is an intrinsically important example, [which is a legitimate methodological reason for case study selection (Yin, 1994)], because the decision-making structure, in the Stanage Forum, approximates the norms of deliberative democracy, is based upon community participation and environmental issues are at the heart of the conflicts in the North Lees Estate. This conflict derives from a tension between recreational use, cultural, economic

and environment concerns, however, the Forum aims to build consensus upon a Management Plan, through facilitating the participation of the conflicting stakeholders in dialogue.

This is not to say that this one case study can make amends for this lack of empirical research, only that such empirical studies are essential to a genuine understanding of deliberative democracy and its implications. Case studies are useful for both theory building and theory testing (Yin, 1994) and the Stanage Forum case study should contribute to both of these functions by testing the claims that instances of deliberatively democratic decision-making, combined with community participation, can lead to greater environmentally sensitive decisions and in terms of theory building by contributing to understanding of the specific problems the institutionalisation of deliberative democracy faces and ideas on how these might be overcome. Although such trade-offs are relative to the context, some general themes in relation to theory and practice will be articulated and this should enable the theory of deliberative democracy to be constructed and adapted in manner that is sensitive to practical exigencies and therefore make it a more robust and relevant theory to a variety of contexts. Although the processes in the Stanage Forum are not necessarily the best practice available to us now, the case will shed some light upon such problems. The empirical data has been generated through a triangular combination of documentary analysis, participatory observational analysis (through participation in all of the Forums between 2000 and 2002 and several of the Steering group meetings),¹ and semi-structured interviews with the Forum organiser and the Forum facilitator.

The chapter is structured into four sections. The first section outlines the key norms and justifications of deliberative democracy and highlights the theoretical and empirical connections that have been made between these and environmental sustainability. Section two introduces the case study under review, the Stanage Forum. The third section then analyses the extent that the Stanage Forum is an approximation of deliberative democracy, highlighting where, and how, trade-offs have been made between theory and practice in all stages of the decision-making process. Section four

¹ The Steering Group was a representative body that was seen as essential to the efficiency of the Forum. A full explanation of its role is included below.

then analyses the decisions that the Stange Forum made to see if they reflect an increased environmental rationality.

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The meaning and interpretations of deliberative democracy are expanding continuously but ‘a vague and loose core can still be identified’, around both democracy and deliberation (Elstub, 2006, p. 302). Democracy involves ‘collective decision-making through the equal participation of all relevant actors’, while deliberation is ‘the give-and-take of rational arguments’ (Elstub, 2006, p. 302; cf. Elster, 1998, p. 8). Essential to the theory of deliberative democracy is the suggestion that preferences are exogenous and can therefore adapt to, and be transformed by, the reasons provided in deliberation (Elster, 1998, p. 6). Deliberation therefore requires, ‘reflection upon preferences in non-coercive fashion’. If these reflective preferences influence collective decisions and all have had an opportunity to deliberate equally, then we have an approximation of deliberative democracy (Dryzek, 2000, p. 2; Elstub, 2006, p. 303). Several key elements of deliberative democracy can therefore be identified:

- the making of collective decisions
- involving the participation of relevant actors (the more equal this participation the more democratic)
- through the consideration and exchange of reasons
- aimed at the trans(formation) of preferences

(Elstub, 2006, p. 303).

These elements of deliberative democracy are best embodied by the ‘ideal speech situation’, where communication is undistorted because all participants are free and equal, all views are aired in an unlimited discourse, aimed at rational consensus and the ‘unforced force of the better argument’ is decisive (Habermas, 1990, pp. 56-58; Elstub, 2008b, p. 61).

It should be further noted that deliberative democracy is a decision-making mechanism (Elstub, 2008a, p. 170): ‘Unless a direct link can be established and

maintained between informal deliberation and formal decision-making the decisions made cannot realistically benefit from the legitimacy generated by the deliberation alone' (Squires, 2002, p. 142; see also Bohman, 1996, p. 177; Dryzek, 2000, p. 2; Leib, 2004, pp. 5-6 & 39). Deliberative democracy is justifiable independently of its suggested ability to lead to sustainable decisions (Arias-Maldonado, 2007), however, its prominent justifications (prudential, procedural and epistemic) relate to the various connections that have been made between deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability, but all require deliberative democracy to provide decisions.

The prudentialist justification asserts that deliberative democracy enables citizen's preferences to become more informed and therefore autonomous (Festenstein, 2002, p.103; Elstub, 2008b, chapter 2). By including all participants in dialogue the deliberative process increases the availability of relevant information (Manin, 1987, p. 349; Sunstein, 1984, p. 1702; Elstub, 2008b, p. 74) enabling these participants 'to grapple with the complexity of environmental problems' (Niemeyer, 2004, p. 348). This is especially important as environmental problems are currently not understood well by most citizens (Baber and Bartlett, 2006, p. 56). However, deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability will not be fully synthesised if these more informed participants do not get to make decisions.

The proceduralist justification highlights how deliberative democracy embodies a fair set of procedures (Festenstein, 2002, p. 102-103; Warren, 2002, p.193; Elstub, 2006, pp. 304-305). Due to inclusion being so central to the norms of deliberative democracy, where it is envisioned that all views should be heard, it is argued that certain views and opinions, such as environmental concerns, that are often marginalised in other decision-making methods, will gain a 'voice' and be ensured due consideration, and this means that interests of nature and future generations are enfranchised and will at least be considered (Goodin, 1996, p. 847). As before deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability will not be fully synthesised if these procedures do not lead to decisions.

The epistemic justification argues that deliberative democracy can lead to true or just decisions (Bohman, 1998, p. 403; Festenstein, 2002, p. 99; Warren, 2002, p. 192; Elstub, 2006, p. 304). Processes of deliberative democracy encourage the reasons

exchanged and the resulting preferences to be 'public', which means they must be potentially understandable and acceptable to all citizens (Bohman, 1997, p. 26). Public reason then encourages citizens to find reasons for arrangements that will not 'neglect the good of others' (Cohen, 1998, p.197). It is this potential to produce public reason that has motivated green theorists (Dryzek, 1990, 2000; Crosby, 1995; Barry 1999, pp. 214-215; Gundersen, 1995; Eckersley, 2000, 2004; Smith, 2001; Ward, et al, 2003; Baber and Bartlett, 2005) to argue that democratic deliberation could lead to the promotion of the public good of greater environmental sustainability. Deliberative democracy promotes public rationality, but the deliberative environmentalists argue that this can develop into environmental rationality, defined as 'collective, holistic, and long term thinking' about the environment, because sustainability can be rationally established as a common good (Gundersen, 1995, p. 22) and possibly the most generalisable of all generalisable goods (Dryzek, 1990, p. 55; Zwart, 2003, p. 24; Niemeyer, 2004, p. 363).² Deliberative democracy is thought to generate 'public reason' as selfish reasons will be unconvincing to others and participants in a deliberative debate will want to convince others to gain support for their proposals, so will consider public values and the interests of others to achieve this (Miller, 1993, p. 82; Benhabib, 1996, p. 72; Elster, 1997, p. 12; Elstun, 2006, p. 306). Due to this it is suggested by environmental theorists that deliberative democracy can extend beyond a consideration of the interests of other citizens to the environment, whereby deliberative participants connect their lives and roles with that of the environment and become aware of how they are interdependent (Dryzek, 1990, 2000; Gundersen, 1995; Sagoff, 1998, p. 221; Eckersley, 2000, p. 120; Smith, 2001; Baber and Bartlett, 2005). This can result in an abandonment of 'individual subjective utilities' (Sagoff; 1998; p. 221) and a greater focus on reasons for sustainability that do not relate to ones own interests (Valadez, 2001). Once again deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability will not be fully synthesised if the environmental rationality, generated through deliberation, is not reflected in decisions.

Gundersen (1995) has produced empirical evidence to suggest that participation in deliberative democracy does lead to more environmentally sensitive preferences. He conducted deliberative interviews with forty-six different citizens about environmental

² For amore detailed discussion of environmental rationality see Baber and Bartlett (2006), especially chapter 2.

issues, most of who were not environmentally minded prior to participating in the deliberation. However, all of the citizens became more environmentally rational:

‘Deliberation tended to improve these citizens’ understanding of the social value of the environment and simultaneously improve the fit between their environmental aims and the means they chose of realising those aims.’ He concludes therefore that ‘given the opportunity to engage in political deliberation on environmental questions, citizens do learn. Hence expanding such opportunities holds a very real promise for environmental solutions’ (Gundersen, 1995, p. 5).³

Other empirical evidence from citizens’ jury experiments, which are based on the norms of deliberative democracy (Coote and Lenaghan, 1997; Smith and Wales, 2000), has also suggested a greater environmental rationality will be developed amongst the participants. For example in the UK, in the citizens’ juries related to the establishment of wetland areas in the Fens (Aldred and Jacobs, 2000); waste management in Hertfordshire (Kuper, 1997); co-ordination of environmental activities across the South of Scotland and enhancement of air quality in Edinburgh (Kenyon and Nevin, 2001), we see that the resulting recommendations reflect ecological concerns. In a citizen jury in Queensland Australia an underlying environmentally rational consensus was released through the deliberative process as private interests were dissipated (Niemeyer, 2004). Such evidence demonstrates that citizens are capable of deliberating about complex environmental problems (Renn et al, 1995; Webler et al, 1995; Crosby, 1995; Smith, 2001, p. 83), and that their preferences can become more environmentally sensitive in light of new information, than they were at the start of the deliberative process. Nevertheless, it does not prove that citizens will be more likely to make decisions that reflect a greater environmental rationality, after engaging in deliberation. In both Gundersen’s Socratic interviews and these citizen’s juries, collective decisions were not made, as citizens’ juries have an advisory role (Crosby, 1995), and perhaps necessarily so as their legitimacy would be significantly question if they were given such binding powers (Parkinson, 2006). Therefore as Zwart appreciates ‘such research does not tell us how people will act in practice, when faced with a decision affecting their own material well being’ (Zwart, 2003, p. 24). The Stanage Forum did involve

³ Gundersen’s (1995) research methods used were ‘deliberative interviews’ between himself and the interviewee on hypothetical issues. However, I have suggested that democratic deliberation involves

citizens making decisions after participating in collective deliberation, moreover, the participants were the key stakeholders who would be directly affected by the decisions, and therefore the level of environmental rationality present in these decisions will provide important insight into the relationship between deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability.

One of the principal reasons why citizens' juries, and also deliberative opinion polls, have been the primary instances of deliberative democracy in practice is because such artificial forums are much easier to instigate precisely because they do not result in binding decisions. However, as already argued above, decision-making must be the result of the deliberative process if we are to approximate the deliberative democracy more closely in practice. Consequently the synthesis of deliberative democracy with sustainability is threatened by the suggestion that deliberative democracy is utopian and uninstitutionalisable in modern, large and complex societies (Baber and Bartlett, 2006, p. 12), which is a significant problem facing deliberative democracy per se (Benhabib, 1996, p. 84; Femia, 1996; Warren, 1996, p. 242; Miller, 2000, p. 143). Practical exigencies and features of complexity form significantly challenging barriers to the institutionalisation of macro deliberative democracy (Hendriks, 2006; Parkinson, 2006) across a cross a political system, an issue I have addressed elsewhere (Elstub, 2007). However, these same barriers are present when approximating deliberative democracy on the micro level (Hendriks, 2006; Parkinson, 2006) in small forums (Dryzek, 2008, Blaug, 1999). This chapter maintains that the Stanage Forum is a genuine attempt to approximate micro deliberative democracy in a small scale forum. An analysis of the Stanage Forum can therefore help illuminate the trade-offs that need to be made between the ideal theory and these practical barriers. It is then to the Stanage Forum that we now turn.

INTRODUCING THE STANAGE FORUM

The Peak District is a national park in the north of England in the UK. The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) has been devolved the power to manage the Peak District National Park. Decisions within the PDNPA are made by its thirty-eight

collective decision-making rather than the 'Socratic' interviews employed by Gundersen (Elstub, 2006, pp. 306-307).

members. These members consist of representatives from the Park's local councils 'whose boundaries fall within the Park', as well as those appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs due to their specialist knowledge (PDNPA, 2000a). Although in many ways the PDNPA operates like a local authority (Connelly, 2006, p. 274), it does not enjoy the same powers and the significant decision-making role of appointed specialists ultimately gives it a quango status. As with most quangos there are issues of legitimacy (Weir, 1996; Harden and Marquand, 1997; Flinders, 1999). Therefore, the PDNPA has tried to increase its legitimacy by attaining a more democratic structure, of openness and accountability to all stakeholders (PDNPA, 2000a). To achieve this aim, the PDNPA have opened up all their meetings to more direct participation from the public, and implemented several public participation initiatives. One such initiative is the Stanage Forum.

The purpose of the Stanage Forum, as set out by the organisers themselves, is to produce an effective Management Plan, by involving stakeholders, for the North Lees Estate. This is an area in the Peak District National Park, six miles from the centre of Sheffield, a city located in South Yorkshire in the north of England. Stanage Edge is a cliff feature that is central to the North Lees Estate, hence the name of the Forum, and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to appreciate its natural beauty, to climb, to walk, to cycle, to hang-glide, boulder, run, horse ride, and camp. The area is also internationally important for wildlife, as it provides a range of habitats e.g. flower-rich pastures, hay meadows, woodlands, crags and boulder slopes, and 'supports as dense a breeding population of rare wetland birds as anywhere else in the U.K' (PDNPA, 2000b; Croney and Smith, 2003, p. 15).⁴ Consequently, certain parts have been designated a 'Special Protected Area' under the EU Birds Directive. There are also areas of archaeological, cultural and historical interest on the estate e.g. a Catholic chapel, a Roman-British settlement, Bronze Age sites and a Grade II listed 16th century hall. In addition the estate hosts a working farm and has several rural communities within it and nearby. As the estate is situated between two large cities, Sheffield and Manchester, there is also significant commuter traffic, as no motorway links these cities. This range of uses and features has meant that a tension between recreational use,

⁴ The notable bird species in the area are Golden Plover, Curlew, Snipe, Ring Ouzel, Whinchat, Long and Short Eared Owls, Pied Flycatcher, Reed Bunting and Linnet.

cultural, economic and environmental concerns exists in the Estate. Nevertheless, the Stanage Forum aimed to build consensus upon a Management Plan.

The previous ten year Management Plan was drafted by a representative from the PDNPA, and then the Park's users were consulted and given the opportunity to give feed back on it. There are obvious problems with the legitimacy of this method, but it was also considered a poor method to resolve the conflicts that existed between the users, and this provided part of the incentive to hold the deliberative forum to create the new Management Plan (PDNPA, 2003). In fact this top-down method was actually escalating the conflict as users couldn't understand the decisions in the Management Plan, and felt frustration at being unable to effectively change them (Cronney and Smith, 2003, p. 15).

The PDNPA selected ICARUS⁵ as Forum facilitator out of tenders from five companies that were 'independent' and skilled in using participative decision-making techniques in countryside management. ICARUS was selected, because it was felt it had the necessary skills and experience of co-ordinating this type of decision-making and furthermore it offered a tender with, what the PDNPA considered, a realistic time frame and budget (PDNPA, 2003).

Between 2000 and 2002 there were three Forums held to form the Management Plan and a fourth Forum to launch and ratify it. Since then there has been an annual Forum to review and revise the Management Plan. Each Forum lasts a day. The first Forum was used to discuss the environmental capital of the North Lees Estate. In the second Forum participants debated what they wanted from the area for the future. Both these Forums led to the identification of key problems and tensions as well as shared objectives. Solutions to these problems and methods to achieve the objectives, was the main topic of discussion in the third Forum. In the fourth Forum the Plan was ratified and launched.

⁵ ICARUS is a community development collective based in the north of England. The collective was formed with the aim of achieving excellence in the facilitation and delivery of training, research, evaluation and developmental work (ICARUS, 2001).

The diagram in Fig.1 outlines the organisational structure of the Stanage Forum. As should be apparent from the diagram, in addition to the PDNPA, ICARUS and the Forum, there was also a Design Group and a Steering Group. The Design Group's roles included helping design a process and a set of procedures for the first Forum meeting, and selecting those who would be members of the Steering Group. The Steering Group's role included discussion and clarification of issues covered in the Forum; selection and consultation of Technical Groups to act as advisers; setting of deadlines for the various stages of the Management Plan process; approving and commenting upon the draft of the Management Plan and providing representation for the key stakeholders.

Therefore essential to the legitimacy of the Steering Group, and to the approximation of the norms of deliberative democracy within the Forum as a whole, was transparency and accountability. To achieve these aims the Steering Group regularly provided detailed reports back to the main Forum (Connelly et al, 2006, p. 273). In total the Steering Group met twenty-two times over the two years the Management Plan was decided upon (Croney and Smith, 2003, p. 16). Issue-based Technical Groups, selected by the Steering Group, were also used to provide specialist information on certain areas where information was lacking, such as ecological issues and traffic management, but had no decision-making powers themselves.

Participants in the Stanage Forum were predominantly representatives from the local community and voluntary associations and were self-selecting. Nevertheless, prior to the commencement of the Forum, 'relevant actors' were identified and these associations were categorised into three broad groups of 'stakeholder': recreationalists, environmentalists, and locals (residents and business). The voluntary associations representing these stakeholder groups that participated in Forum, between 2000 and 2002, are listed in Fig. 2. These stakeholder groups are not mutually exclusive as it is possible to be in all three at once. For example a local resident could use the area for the recreational pursuit of walking, but like walking there because of the natural environment, birds and plants, which they have a desire to conserve. Nevertheless, in general the recreationalists' main concern was access and they sought the promotion of opportunities for the enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public, although in different ways and to different degrees. Therefore, the dominant goals for

this stakeholder group were cost free and easy access by car and public transport, unrestricted access to the whole estate, opportunities for recreational pursuits and convenience for local facilities. At the start of the Forum many of the recreationalists refused to accept that their access had any detrimental effect of the local ecology at all. The environmentalists' priorities were the conservation and enhancement of the local ecology. Therefore, key issues for this stakeholder group were the preservation and enhancement of localised and rare species of animal and plant, protection against excessive erosion and in general keeping the environment as natural and undisturbed as possible. To achieve this it was thought necessary to restrict and control access to the estate. The locals were seeking to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities. This was by far the most divided stakeholder group. Much of the local economy is generated by the tourism of the area so many locals were loathed to restrict access. They also wanted to ensure convenient commuter links to the cities of Sheffield and Manchester. However, other important economies like farming have been threatened by tourism, with many sheep being killed by traffic. Locals also wanted to preserve the area as a nice place to live and limiting tourism was seen as important to achieve this. Although there are many commonalities of interests between the stakeholder groups, there are also clear tensions. Unrestricted access is incompatible with the preservation of the environment. Easy access by car is incompatible with farming, maintenance of the beauty of the estate, lack of pollution of the area, and the area being a nice place to live. Use for all recreational pursuits is incompatible with peacefulness, wilderness and environmental considerations of the area.

The Stanage Forum provides a suitable case study because it is an intrinsically important case⁶ in terms of the relationship between deliberative democracy, community participation and environmental sustainability. The Stanage Forum is of intrinsic importance because it is an approximation of deliberative democracy, involving participants from the local community in public dialogue with the aim making collective decisions in which environmental considerations are central.

TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE STANAGE FORUM

⁶ Which is a legitimate methodological reason for case study selection (Yin, 1994).

Even in micro deliberative forums, practical realities mean that model deliberative democracy only exists as a theoretical construct, as the ideal speech situation is a ‘methodological fiction’, (Habermas, 1996, p. 326), but this ideal should still be employed to guide practice (Habermas, 1996, p. 340): ‘The idealised and demanding conditions of deliberative democracy are aspirational and therefore can only ever be approximated (rather than fully realised) in everyday politics’ (Eckersley, 2000, p. 127; see also Cohen, 1997; Lieb, 2004, p. 40; Elstub, 2008b, p. 99). Trade-offs between the ideal and practice, to regulate between legitimacy and efficiency, are therefore inevitable and these trade-offs will vary in relation to the practical situation (Blaug, 1999, p. 140). Inevitably instances of deliberative democracy will approximate some aspects of deliberative democracy more closely than others. It seems likely that the elements are all interrelated and the very fact that it can approximate one aspect of deliberative democracy relatively closely might prevent it from approximating another aspect more closely. The Stanage Forum is no exception, and trade-offs have been made between efficiency and legitimacy. Surely, then, Fishkin is right to suggest that it is unrealistic to expect real life instances of deliberative democracy to meet impossible normative standards: ‘In practical contexts a great deal of incompleteness must be tolerated. Hence, when we talk of improving deliberation, it is a matter of improving the completeness of the debate and the public’s engagement in it, not a matter of perfecting it’ (Fishkin, 1995, p. 41). Although ‘approximation’ is a scalar value making it possible to have varying degrees of approximation, nonetheless, it is not a completely relative value. In which case, a practical example, such as the Stanage Forum, still requires significant evidence that the principles of the ideal are embedded. Exactly how closely the Forum approximates the norms of deliberative democracy will be the focus of this section of the chapter.

To enable the analysis of the trade-offs between theory and practice, the procedures and processes of the Stanage Forum will be broken down and analysed. Blaug (1999) has outlined five stages that occur in a decision-making process. The first is agenda setting and the recognition that there is a problem that requires a collective decision; the second element is the process of deliberation; third is the making of the decision, while in the fourth, the decision is implemented; and the fifth and final element is the evaluation of this whole process: ‘if the process of decision-making as a

whole is to be legitimate, all these moments must be as fair as possible under the circumstances' (Blaug, 1999, p. 141). Each of these stages, within the Stanage Forum, will be considered in turn. At each stage the ideal of what 'should' happen according to the theory of deliberative democracy will be outlined, and then the actual practice of the Stanage Forum will be compared to this theory, thereby using the theory of deliberative democracy as a lens to examine practice (Blaug, 1999, p. 43), the lessons from which will be used to reflect on the theory.

Stage 1: Setting the Agenda

The controlling of the agenda is one of the most dynamic 'faces' of power (Bachrach and Barratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974; Schattsneider, 1975). Due to the agenda-setting potential of the organisers of forums, the 'mobilisation of bias is at its highest' prior to the commencement of the forum' (Smith, 2001, p. 84). Ideally, in a deliberative democracy the agenda would be set through democratic deliberation itself (Parkinson, 2006, p. 170). Such an ideal process is though difficult to achieve, as it leads to an inevitable regression (Michelman, 1997), as who would organise and set the agenda for the deliberation on the agenda and so on. In practice deliberation must start somewhere, and it tends to be elites that will determine the start (Parkinson, 2006, pp. 128-33).

Inevitably then the PDNPA had a significant agenda setting role in the Stanage Forum and the first element of the decision-making process (the realisation for the need for a collective decision to be made) came from the PDNPA themselves. This is significant because the PDNPA is not a neutral apolitical body, but has its own interests. Nevertheless, the need for a forum did not emerge solely from the PDNPA acting in isolation. It was a response to the legitimacy and implementation problems they had experienced with the previous top-down Management Plan, but also demands from recreational visitors to the area (particularly climbers, and especially the BCA) who opposed the PDNPA's decision to introduce car park charges and launched a national campaign against it (Croney and Smith, 2003). Therefore, influence over the agenda can come from civil society and the informal public sphere (Habermas, 1996) where macro-deliberation often occurs (Hendriks, 2006). However, messages from the informal public sphere are unlikely to be specific enough for forums like Stanage, as such micro-deliberative sights require a clear and, often, narrowly focused agenda to be

effective and enable rational decision-making, and good deliberation (Thompson and Hoggert, 2001, p. 358) as such forums ‘could not decide anything if they were chaotic’ (Leib, 2004, p. 120). In addition agendas arising from the macro-public sphere will still need to be interpreted and, inevitably, this seems to be a role that will still involve elites (Parkinson, 2006, pp. 128-33), which was the case in Stanage where the PDNPA called the Forum and set its broad ‘Management Plan’ agenda. To decide that the Forum must result in a Management Plan, does constrain decisions to a degree, especially as the PDNPA had a clear idea of what criteria they wanted the Management Plan to fulfil. According to the PDNPA a Management Plan needs to fulfil two main functions of strategy and operation. A strategic plan provides information about the site, identifies the value and significance of the site, and sets out aims to be achieved. An operational plan outlines how these aims are to be achieved, stipulates who will fulfil the tasks, when they will be fulfilled, considers what resources will be required to achieve this, and provides criteria for checking the effectiveness of site management (PDNPA, 2000c). Nonetheless, even within this framework, there is still plenty of scope for determining the issues that needed to be addressed in the Management Plan, and these were decided on by the Forum and Steering Group. Despite this the agenda was disputed. Many of the climbers who attended the first Forum were under the impression that the Forum’s purpose was simply to resolve the parking charge issue. Consequently when they were required to discuss many other issues, this led to frustration and led to several of these climbers not attending the subsequent Forums.

The PDNPA also had the significant authority to select the Forum’s facilitator, although the fact that they resisted the temptation to facilitate the Forum themselves, and instead chose to have an ‘independent’ facilitator, was vital and in keeping with the norms of deliberative democracy. When selecting a facilitator there are two general principles that can inform this decision, either they should be process experts or alternatively experts on the issues that are under debate. Buttoud (1999, pp. 11-28) is in favour of the latter, as issue experts ‘cinch down’ the debate. However, Forester (1999) and Edward-Jones (1997) argue that it is not the role of the facilitator to substantively influence the debate, but only provide influence through the enforcement of agreed upon procedures that are compatible with the norms of deliberative democracy. Otherwise too much power and influence would be in the hands of the facilitator.

Fortunately then it is the latter approach that the PDNPA opted for, as ICARUS were seen as process specialists (Richardson and Connelly, 2002, p. 40).

Once the PDNPA had decided to hold a forum to decide on a Management Plan, and had selected the facilitator, they were conscious of the influence they held over the Forum and wanted the initial stages of the Forum design to be seen as legitimate. Consequently, in order to ensure that the PDNPA did not exert excessive control at the initiation of the Forum, a Design Group was constructed by ICARUS and the PDNPA to help with the Forum design. Although the Design Group didn't determine any substantive issues it did have a considerable amount of power. The group had two meetings, the first helped design a process and a set of procedures for the first Forum meeting, while the second meeting selected members for the Steering Group from applications. As will be detailed below, the Steering Group was a part of the Forum process which would go on to wield much decision-making power. However, the role of the very first Forum was to set an agenda for the rest of the Forums by deciding what the key problems and tensions were that needed to be resolved in the Management Plan. Therefore, although the PDNPA, and the Design Group, did enjoy much influence in the first stage of the decision-making process, this was combined with influence from the participating stakeholders in the first Forum. In general much of the agenda did derive from deliberative democracy itself, as the theory advocates it should, although with some influence from elites, which might be inescapable in practice.

Stage 2: The Process of Deliberation

The process of deliberation will be broken into two elements. Firstly issues of participation and representation in the Stanage Forum will be considered to determine who deliberated. Secondly the type of deliberation between these participants will be reviewed.

Participation & Representation

The ideal in a deliberative democracy is that all affected by a decision will participate equally in a deliberative process together. Achieving the inclusion of all in debates is a key problem facing the institutionalisation of deliberative democracy in

practice, especially in micro deliberative forums where decisions are made. There are logistical difficulties in including all in debate. To have all citizens meet together and deliberate together, actually or virtually, is an empirical impossibility, especially if debates are to be inclusive and have depth (Bohman, 1996, p.2; Parkinson, 2006, p. 151; Elstub, 2007, p. 15). Collective action problems mean that not all affected want to participate directly in decision-making (Olson, 1965). Inclusion is made easier with forums like Stanage as it is operating at a decentralised level and this means that decisions affect less people; decisions are closer to the people they affect so participation is available to more citizens (Warren, 2002, pp.188-189; Elstub, 2007, p. 16); it is easier to ensure the representation of all key interests; and informed participation and representation is easier because less information is relevant to the decision (Follesdal, 1999, p. 15; Elstub, 2007, p. 16). Decentralisation can also enable citizens to have a potentially greater influence on decisions, which can lead to greater efficacy and, consequently, more participation (Hyland, 1995, p. 261; Elstub, 2008b, p. 194). Nevertheless even a decentred forum like Stanage had significant problems in including all stakeholders in open, public, transparent and inclusive debate (Connelly et al, 2006, p. 273).

As mentioned above, participants in the Stanage Forum are predominantly self-selected representatives from the local community and voluntary associations with relevant interests regarding recreation, environmental concerns, and the locality as an area to live and work. There have been participants from each of the three key stakeholder groups at all four of the Forums, although some stakeholders have been represented more than others. Recreationalists were the best represented, especially climbers and in particular the BCA. In the first Forum, there were sixty-seven participants; in the second Forum, there were forty-three; the third Forum had forty-four participants; and thirty-five people attended the fourth Forum. In total approximately one hundred and fifty different people participated in the first four Forums held between 2000 and 2002. Since the Management Plan has been launched, attendance has dropped at the annual review Forum, although the average has been thirty, with all three stakeholder groups still represented at each Forum.

Many of those participating in the Forum were not representing any particular voluntary association, however most did belong to a specific and organised group. The

full list of which voluntary associations had representatives involved in the Forum is listed in fig.2. There are significant inequalities of power and resources between these associations and although they have all been involved in some manner, they have participated in different ways and to different extents. For example, some associations were involved in both the Design Group and the Steering Group, some associations have only acted as invited technical advisors and attendances in the Forums themselves have varied considerably. Whereas representatives from certain associations have been in attendance in all Forums, others have retracted their participation, and there have been notable absentees from particular interests; specifically from the motorised recreational section, the local cement works factory, a gas works company and local transport companies.

The extent the agenda of the Forum has been determined by the PDNPA was discussed in the above section, however, there still remains the very real problem of framing the decision through controlling who participates (Rippe and Schaber, 1999, p.82), and therefore the manner in which the PDNPA has sought to engage stakeholders in the Forum is of paramount importance. As with all democratic arrangements, who participates and to what level and who does not participate and why, determines the nature of the conflict and ultimately the decision (Schattsneider, 1975): 'By recognising 'established' groups and leaders, and subtly encouraging others to participate, the mediator effectively shapes public understandings of what is at stake, perceptions of who has power in the community, and assumptions about what subjects merit public concern' (Reich, 1988, pp. 140-141).

Therefore the PDNPA had an opportunity to exert significant influence on the process by controlling who participated, although who is not completely under the control of Forum organisers. Part of the reason for this is the greater the level of exclusion the greater the deficit in legitimacy and potentially the harder it is to enforce the resulting decisions (Connelly and Richardson, 2002, pp. 16-17). In this instance there were no formal barriers to participating in the Forum, as anyone who wanted to was allowed to attend. To a degree then the participants in the Stanage Forum were a 'self selected minority', which Jordan fears is an inevitable consequence of institutionalizing deliberative democracy (Jordan, 2007, p. 62), and usually means that they are not socially representative (Mason, 1999), which was also the case with the

Stanage Forum. Informal barriers exist which prevent people from participating in such forums, however, it was not necessarily the fault of the PDNPA that certain groups are excluded, but the cause of broader inequalities of civil society. Socio-economic inequalities can affect the potential for certain socio-economic groups to mobilise and form groups, or to join existing ones (Schattsneider, 1975; Verba et al, 1995, chapter 12; Salamon and Anheier, 1996; Van Deth, 1997, p. 9; Rosenblum, 1998, p. 189; Gutmann, 1998, pp. 3-31; Skocpol, 1999, pp. 66-73).

One informal barrier is not being aware of the forum, but the PDNPA made a genuine effort to advertise the Stanage Forum, and to contact easily identifiable stakeholders. The Forum was advertised on a national radio station (BBC Radio 4), in a national newspaper (The Guardian), in all local radio and newspapers, in specialist national magazines (Climber and the Great Outdoors), on television (on BBC1's Countryfile) and on the PDNPA's website. In addition several of the larger associations, e.g. the BCA, advertised the Forum to their members (PDNPA, 2001). However, the level of advertising dramatically reduced after the first Forum, meaning those who were unaware of the first Forum were given less opportunity to participate at the later Forums. Another informal barrier is being unable to attend due to the time and location. The time and day of the week (i.e. weekend, weekday; evening, daytime) for the Forums was altered with the hope of enabling all stakeholders to participate, at least in part of the Forum, if they wished. It is then fair to say that most people had an opportunity to attend the Forum, or part of it. Furthermore, the inclusion of a variety of associational groups in the Forum provided an important source of representation. If members of these associations were unable to attend, or not sufficiently interested in, the Forums themselves, another member of their association could still represent them, as they are likely to share some relevant interests through virtue of being a member of the same association. This is an example of how representation offers a solution to the problem of including all in deliberative debates, with those not participating directly ideally feeling as though their reasons have been aired by their representatives (Parkinson, 2006, p. 29). Consequently, participation must be combined and balanced with representation in any democratic process (Baber and Bartellett, 2006, p. 125). In contrast, individuals, if unable to attend, are not included in the process. However, in the Stanage Forum those unable to attend the Forums can participate in the on-line

discussion on the website. Such electronic and interactive media are therefore essential to ensure openness and inclusive (Ward et al, 2003, pp. 291-292).

Other forms of representation were also seen as essential to adapting deliberative democracy to the practicalities. A Design and Steering Group were seen as necessary representative mechanisms due to limitations of time, money and number of participants, which meant that the Forum was not able to cover all issues in sufficient detail. The representative from the ICARUS collective accepts that ideally, the Steering Group would have had much less power and influence than it has enjoyed, and that in similar local governance forums on which he has facilitated, the Steering Group has had a reduced role in comparison to the Stanage Forum, which indicates that this was not necessarily an example of best democratic practice, at least in this respect. This is evidence of a significant trade-off between theory and practice. The theory of deliberative democracy stipulates open and equal participation between all relevant actors. If there had been more time for the Forums and more money available to hold more Forums then the Steering Group would have had a reduced role. It was then practical constraints, which led to a movement away from the deliberative ideal in this situation (ICARUS, 2001). The Forum, up to the launch of the Management Plan in 2002, cost £14,000 (plus the PDNPA's staff time of 160 days) (Croney and Smith, 2003, p. 18). Although the Forum kept to budget, this suggests this is a minimum cost to hold such a forum. Had the PDNPA released more funds then the Steering Group's role could have been reduced, making for a more legitimate process and potentially making the implementation process more successful too. However, less power to the Steering Group and more power with the Forum would also have required more participation from Forum members, as more Forum's would have been required to fill the gap left by the Steering Group meetings. As the Steering Group met twenty-two times, it is unlikely that such a level of participation in the Forum's could have been sustained. However, this still does not mean the appropriate balance of power, between the Forum and the Steering Group, was reached.

Members of the Design Group were 'chosen at short notice for availability and to give a broad range of views of the Estate' (PDNPA, 2000d). Representation in the Design Group was therefore based on interest representation. However, it is certainly debatable whether the Design Group did fully represent the full range of views and

interests. There were ten members on the Design Group altogether, the full details of which can be seen in fig. 2. It appears here that certain interests (climbing, PDNPA) are over-represented, and other recreational pursuits (hang-gliding, cycling), environmental interests and local residents were under represented. Nevertheless, there were representatives from all three stakeholder groups, and the Design Group was not discussing any substantive issues. However, it becomes apparent that the group did exercise considerable power when we see that of the ten members, all of them made it into the seventeen member strong Steering Group.

These seventeen representatives were selected to achieve ‘a broad representation of the wide cross section of interests that are present in the Forum’ (ICARUS, 2001). The Steering Group was then based upon symbolic and interest representation and was definitely more inclusive in its representation of groups and interests than the Design Group with a cycling association, hang-gliding association, local farm and the County Council now represented. In both the Design and Steering Group there is still the over-representation of recreational interests in comparison to the other stakeholders, especially climbing and particularly the BMC. The PDNPA justifies this by pointing out that climbers are the greatest number of visitors to the Stanage area (PDNPA, 2001). However, this does not justify their overrepresentation in a deliberative context. Each association should have the same number of representatives in the Forum, regardless of the size of their membership. This is appropriate in a deliberative democracy as it is the inclusion of all relevant reasons, rather than an equal representation of all interests and identities, which is key, as Parkinson appreciates: ‘So long as group representatives are present in proportion to their numerical strength, identities and views which command the allegiance of many will always dominate those of the few, regardless of the reasonableness of those views’ (Parkinson, 2006, pp. 33-4; see also Williams, 2000, p. 125). This is a key difference between aggregative decision making methods, where sheer numbers are decisive and deliberative democracy where reasons should have more sway.

The Steering Group also decided that it should ‘remain central to assist implementation, monitoring, evaluation and revision of the Plan’ and that ‘Steering Group membership should be based on the existing members and their representation. Each year, the Steering Group will assess whether it is still representative of the wider

Forum' (PDNPA, 2002a). The Steering Group has therefore given itself the power to re-elect itself and to determine the terms of how they will be accountable to the Forum. This makes it unlikely that the Steering Group will achieve its own objectives of being 'transparent, open and receptive, have ability to co-opt members and be accountable to the Forum and the groups it is representing' (PDNPA, 2002a). This statement on the Group's objectives also highlights the lack of clarity over who the Group is meant to represent and be held accountable to, the Forum or the voluntary associations of which they are members. If the principles of deliberative democracy are to be approximated the Steering Group must be held accountable to the Forum rather than the various associations, as this is where open participation has been sought, in concurrence with democratic principles. Granted, those participating in the Forum should be held accountable to their associations, but the Steering Group is meant to co-ordinate the decisions made in the Forum so must be representing the Forum and no one else. The PDNPA representative thought that they might be able to represent both (PDNPA, 2003), but this seems untenable if conflicts of interests arise. This was clearly demonstrated by an example from one of the Steering Group meetings, where a member from the BMC criticised one of the objectives that had received majority support in the Forum. Moreover, he wanted it to be abandoned because he felt it went against the BMC's interests. However, to the credit of the other Steering Group members this representative was told that it was not the role of the Steering Group to question the principles behind objectives that arise from the Forum, but only to decide the best way to co-ordinate them, prioritise them and make practical recommendations for their achievement. One of the suggestions to come out of the Forum review process is for the Steering Group to be elected by the Forum (PDNPA, 2008a). This would clarify accountability between the Forum and Steering Group, but could mean that the Steering Group no longer reflects the diversity of all views and interests present in the Forum.

The Stanage Forum was well advertised, with a diversity of meeting times and this meant that all key interests were included in the Forum and the Design and Steering Groups. However, these latter representative bodies could have been more balanced. These representative bodies were seen as essential to overcome practical exigencies, which although were alleviated by the decentralised nature of the Stanage Forum, still impacted, and were selective meaning that most were prevented in participating in these powerful arenas of the Forum. Despite the necessity of these representative bodies, they

still seemed to have too much power, and there was a lack of clarity over which agency they should be representing, the Forum or the associations of which they were members.

Processes of Deliberation

In addition to having participation from the key stakeholders, the procedures introduced by the facilitator have enabled the Stanage Forum to approximate the ideal of deliberative democracy. In the first Stanage Forum the meeting started with all members having to accept the following principles that clearly embody the ideals of deliberative democracy outlined earlier:

- Participants speak directly to each other and reach agreement openly
- Everyone will have a say and their opinion will be valued
- Everyone who has an interest in the Management of the North Lees Estate can participate
- Every effort is made to reach agreements acceptable to everyone, rather than by voting
- People will work from an open position, where their interests are stated and understood, even if not agreeable to others
- People accept, and are willing to work with, each group's differences in order to reach a consensus that benefits all
- An independent facilitator will be used to design and facilitate the work and activities of the Forum

(Croney and Smith, 2003, p. 16)

Embodied in these procedures are the ideals that problems should be resolved through discussion, aimed at consensus on the common good, that all affected should have a chance to participate, and that all views should be listened to and included in the debate. These are the same principles that are at the heart of democratic deliberation. The Stanage Forum is therefore a serious attempt to approximate democratic deliberation in practice.

Procedures create the conditions for equal access to the deliberative arenas at both the agenda setting and decision-making stages. The design of fair procedures is a very complicated process. It is important that the procedures are the subject of democratic debate themselves, for the same reasons decisions should be, as the formation of procedures are decisions that could bias the decision-making process. In the Stanage Forum the procedures have been designed by the ICARUS collective, and through debate in the Design Group initially and then the Steering Group. In the Forum participants did not get to discuss the procedures, but had an opportunity to contest and reject the procedures, although all the above procedures were accepted by everyone, and consequently it was thought legitimate to ensure all abide by them. The facilitator justified this approach to procedural design by arguing that democratic decision-making and debate ‘must start somewhere.’ He questioned ‘what procedures would regulate the debate on procedures?’ Again we see practical necessity forcing a trade-off between the ideal and practice, but the facilitator thought this was ‘inevitable’ (ICARUS, 2001). This indicates that despite the relevancy of the normative justification that trade-offs should be made discursively and democratically between all participants (Blaug, 1999), empirically this may be impossible to attain, and will inevitably be made by elites, otherwise there is an infinite regress (Michelman, 1997). At least in this instance the procedures were designed by a process facilitator in conjunction with a representative and deliberative body.

The type of deliberation prevalent in the forum resembled an ‘evidence-driven’ deliberation style. In evidence-driven deliberation certain options and opinions are discussed without people being categorised or formerly associated with any particular perspective. In contrast in verdict-driven deliberation participants are associated with certain proposals early on in the process, (sometimes taking an early vote). The ‘verdict-driven’ style approximates more closely the aggregative model of decision-making as it accepts the validity of pre-political preferences, and concentrates more on conflict. In this method few preferences change and the decision usually reflects the initial views of the majority (Elstub, 2006, p. 32). Evidence-driven deliberation appears more inclusive because it encourages all views to be expressed and so more participants speak and this in turn causes more people to change their opinions. Moreover, there is a greater emphasis of all participants trying to reach an acceptable decision for all, rather than having one view winning out. It is more equipped to do this as it avoids people

conforming to majority opinion (Sanders, 1997, p. 367). However, the evidence-driven approach does present the danger that conflict is suppressed, giving a false appearance of agreement (Richardson and Connelly, 2002, p. 41), potentially disarming 'participants of their legitimate feelings of outrage and frustration' (Amy, 1987, p. 126). It is further suggested that 'genuine' transformation in preferences requires the conflict that the verdict-driven style embodies, as the evidence driven method can just give the 'illusion of common ground' (Connelly and Richardson, 2002, p.19). For example, some participants at the Stanage Forum criticised the Forum's procedures, questioning when they would get to talk about the 'real issues' (Richardson and Connelly, 2002, p. 41). On balance, however, the evidence-driven approach seems to more accurately embody the characteristics of 'good political deliberation' (Miller, 2000, p. 146). However, it might well be the case that different deliberation styles are required for different types of conflict.

As discussed above, deliberative democracy relies on participants exchanging reasons. This form of communication certainly dominated the exchanges in the Forum, but other forms of communication were also apparent. Young (1996) and Sanders (1997) argue that a sole reliance on reason disadvantages subordinate groups, and have consequently advocated the inclusion of greeting, rhetoric and storytelling. They argue that these forms of communication will make debates more inclusive and equal because they are more amenable to social diversity and the particularity of participants (Elstub, 2006, p. 309). It is further argued that these forms of communication are also essential for the promotion of environmental goals, as these can not always be communicated through reason (Ward et al, 2003). Many deliberative democrats have accepted that greeting, rhetoric and storytelling could and should play a part in deliberation (Dryzek, 2000, pp. 67-71; Miller, 2000, pp. 156-157), and other empirical evidence also confirms that these forms of communication will be incorporated in instances of deliberative democracy (Barnes et al, 2004; Parkinson, 2006, pp. 139-42). These three forms of communication have all been present in the Stanage Forum. Storytelling has played a particularly important role and enabled many to share their personal experiences on the Estate. Although storytelling was common place in the process, it was not always accepted as a valid contributions to debate, with one climber criticising some testimonies, by environmentalists, on nesting birds as being 'spurious' and merely 'anecdotal' evidence to restrict access.

The problem of scale within the Forum still affects the opportunities for all to deliberate together, as despite the use of decentralization and representation here, which both help alleviate the problem of scale, the 40-70 people typically attending the Stanage Forum, is too many to ensure effective, equal and inclusive deliberation, as the number of people that can deliberate together is very limited (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996, p. 131). Research from focus groups suggests that between 7-12 people is the optimum number for inclusive deliberation (Kruger, 1994, p. 78; Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). The facilitator also confirmed that this was the optimum number of participants from his experience of running community governing initiatives (ICARUS, 2001). This is a very small number indeed and would preclude other key norms of deliberative democracy being approximated if followed, such as ensuring all affected participate or are represented in the decision-making process, and that all relevant reasons are made public. Therefore innovative mechanisms are required to adapt deliberative democracy to the scale of the decision and participants affected. In all the Stanage Forums participants were split into mixed stakeholder groups, with seven in each group, with each group discussing the same issues. This method allowed each individual a reasonable amount of opportunity to participate, and with the mixture of groups, still allows people to hear a range of views and express their views to a range of people.

This is obviously a trade-off between the ideal of deliberative democracy, in which all participants are involved in the same debate, and the practical necessities of real life decision-making. However, such methods are common in German Planning Cells, which are based on the norms of deliberative democracy, and according to empirical research by Thompson and Hoggert (2001), can reduce the potential for the development of factions that would otherwise offset the benefits of the deliberative process. This is because in small groups, factions and 'internal psychological divisions' are less likely to develop. Moreover, these subgroups do not need to have 'rigidly defined boundaries', if the subgroups have revolving membership, which was the case in the Stanage Forum (Thompson and Hoggert, 2001, p. 358). One of the deficiencies of the methods used here in the Stanage Forum is that there is a lack of communication and debate between each sub-group, meaning all participants do not get to hear all arguments which could potentially affect their preferences, so the sub-groups need to be

combined with deliberative plenary sessions (Thompson and Hoggert, 2001). Alternatively a member of each sub-group could have come together to form another group and then discussed what each group decided so that everyone gets to hear what the other groups have discussed, but this makes an already long process of participation even longer. Deliberation also occurred in the Steering Group but with much smaller numbers, with a maximum of seventeen participants. This is slightly higher than the optimum deliberative numbers of 7-12, but this number of Steering Group participants was seen as necessary to ensure representation of all the relevant interests and is still a relatively small and manageable number of deliberators. Consequently the Steering Group all deliberated together and sub-groups were not needed.

The Steering Group set up their own deliberative procedures for their meetings, in their first meeting, These were bracketed under three principles: ‘freedom to speak’, ‘decision-making’ and ‘accountability’ and resembled the deliberative norms of the Forum itself, with all agreeing that all should have an equal chance to participate in a debate, that aimed at consensus, in which all were listened to. Due to the representative element, accountability was also introduced with the group further agreeing to be transparent and to publicise their minutes and decisions through the website, and through reporting back to the Forum (PDNPA, 2001b; Connelly et al, 2006, p. 273). Without this the general Forum participants are completely excluded from hearing the reasons of the representatives, and the element of publicity, an essential aspect of deliberative democracy, is compromised. Reporting back by the Steering Group certainly occurred, and all meeting reports were posted on the PDNPA website, but was still something that could have been increased to ensure greater accountability. For example after the Steering Group had drafted the Management Plan and it was presented at the fourth Forum, the Forum participants were not given the opportunity to raise any issues as to whether it accurately encapsulated the decisions made at the previous Forums. Steering Group members were given an opportunity to justify their decisions, but Forum participants were not given the opportunity to challenge them.⁷ In this sense the ‘clear lines of communication’ that were meant to hold Steering Group

⁷ In the last forum, when one Steering Group member was challenged during one of the small group debates, she became indignant, as she and the Steering Group had obviously invested much time and energy into the process, she therefore felt that she was owed gratitude rather than appreciating that her actions did need to be held to account. This shows the necessity of formal procedures to hold representatives to account.

members accountable to the Forum were one-way, and therefore not consistent with the norms of deliberative democracy. This trend of the Forums being used as a mechanism for Steering Group members to inform the Forum participants of their decisions, rather than being an opportunity for meaningful deliberation between the participants themselves, has continued in the review Forums, following the launch of the Management Plan.

In a deliberative democracy Young argues that we need ‘representation as relationship’ (Young, 2000, p. 125) where the representatives must explain and justify the resulting decision to the members and provide the information that caused them to change their preferences, but such a relationship was not sufficiently in place here. In a deliberative democracy representation will be essential, but it should be an interactive and deliberative relationship; and not one where the represented just receive reasons, but one where they can give them as well (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). In the Stanage Forum, however, the relationship between the Steering Group and the Forum was excessively one way.

In a deliberative democracy all participants should receive the same information, as it can impact upon preferences. However, in the Stanage Forum information supplied by the Technical Groups was only presented to the Steering Group because of insufficient time for the Technical Groups to report all their information to the Forums, meaning the Forum did not receive the information directly. Again then there is a trade-off between the ideal and the practical need for efficiency and perhaps displaying the information on the website is a good method to provide a balance between these two aims. Overall then the Stanage Forum was certainly deliberative, but again practical exigencies meant this deliberative processes were excessively dominated by the representative bodies within the Forum.

Stage 3: Decision-Making

Due to the relationship, outlined earlier, between deliberative democracy and public reason, where participants are encouraged to find reasons that all affected will find convincing, it has been suggested that decisions in a deliberative democracy could be consensual as participants form and find common interests though the exchange of

reasons (Cohen, 1989, p. 23; Habermas, 1996, pp. 17-19; Elstub, 2006, p. 308). In contrast many deliberative theorists have suggested that a consensus will not be achieved due to the pluralism of ultimate values (Elster, 1989; Christiano, 1997; Weale, 2000) and interests (Benhabib, 1996; Elstub, 2006, p. 308). Debate can also increase disagreement by generating a greater diversity of opinions on an issue as it is explored more extensively and deeply (Mansbridge, 1980, p. 65; Knight and Johnson, 1994, p. 289; Fearon, 1998, p. 57; Christiano, 1997, p. 249; Shapiro, 1999, p. 31; Budge, 2000, p. 203; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002, p. 195; Elstub, 2006, p. 308). Moreover, there is an influential argument from some democratic theorists that consensus is not desirable because it disadvantages minority social groups, by promoting the status quo and should therefore not be the aim of democratic deliberation (Mansbridge, 1980, p. 32; Gould, 1988, p. 18; Young, 1996, p. 127; Sanders, 1997; Gambetta, 1998, p. 21; Elstub, 2006, p. 308). Consensual decisions are desirable as they are perceived to be legitimate, because all have agreed to them, but this leads to a temptation to 'make' rather than 'build' a 'consensus', where the decisions can favour the interests of more powerful groups. In such circumstances coercion is often involved and only weaker participants change their preferences (Connelly and Richardson, 2002, pp. 13-14). The desire to achieve consensus can motivate facilitators to limit decision-making to 'acceptable issues' and to exclude people, issues, or possible outcomes (Connelly and Richardson, 2002, p. 11). Despite all these arguments it is still maintained by some deliberative theorists that consensus should remain the ideal guiding discussion (Cohen, 1998, p. 197; Habermas, 1996, pp. 304-305).

A consensus building approach to decision-making was explicitly employed in the Stanage Forum from the outset. As discussed above the aim of the evidence style deliberative procedures, employed in the Forum, is to deflect the focus from the areas of conflict, so that people were not simply 'defending their position', but deliberating about common solutions to common problems, with the possibility of preference change. Other research on the Stanage Forum concluded that the approach to consensus building used meant the process was manipulated with contentious decisions being removed from the agenda, which indicated that the decision-making approach used, and the Forum facilitator, were not neutral (Connelly et al, 2006, p. 273). In fact Richardson and Connelly argue that if consensus is to be achieved some level of exclusion is inevitable, but that decisions on exclusion should be 'explicit and accountable'

(Richardson and Connelly, 2002, p. 44), which they do not think was the case in the Stanage Forum (Connelly et al, 2006). This analysis of the Stanage Forum therefore supports the suggestions that consensus should not be explicitly sought in micro deliberative forums.

Despite this accusation of manipulation to achieve consensus in the Stanage Forum there certainly was no agreement upon all the specifics of the Management Plan, but perhaps there was a broader agreement upon general principles reached through compromise under deliberative conditions. Theory suggests that if consensus is not reached, then compromise, achieved under deliberatively democratic conditions, might be the best alternative (Dryzek, 1990, p. 16-17; Festenstein, 2002, p. 92-95; Richardson, 2002, Chapter 11; Warren, 2002, p.185). Deliberative democracy helps make compromise easier to achieve, as it improves understanding of alternatives and rival positions, which can in turn lead to respect and empathy (Warren, 2002, p. 184; Festenstein, 2005, p. 127; Elstub, 2008b, p. 67).

Due to the absence of consensus voting was necessary to make the final decisions on the specifics of the Management Plan. However, consistent with the ideal of deliberative democracy, voting occurred following deliberatively democratic debate, therefore the aggregation was of transformed, post-deliberative preferences. However, the fact that voting did have to occur for decisions to be made, does indicate the necessity for participation to be evenly spread across all interested stakeholders. It was unfair that the BMC would have had more votes than any other association. The facilitator and PDNPA Forum organiser defended this by claiming it should not be viewed as voting 'but indicating support', but this seems to be ignoring the reality (ICARUS, 2001; PDNPA, 2003).

Many of the decisions in forming the Management Plan were not taken in the Forum itself, but in the Steering Group. As the published Plan itself states: 'This Plan has been agreed in principle by all stakeholders who have taken part in the Forum process and in detail by all Steering group members' (PDNPA, 2002b, Section 2.4). Again the power held by the Steering Group has been much to do with limited resources of money, time and participation. This has caused a trade-off between the ideal of all participating in a deliberative arena to make collectively binding decisions and the need

for representation due to problems of size and time. In one of the Steering Group reports, it is accepted that although most of the objectives that arose from the Steering Group were originally agreed upon in the Forum (or at least received majority support when voting occurred in the third Forum), some of the recommendations were supplemented by Technical Group advice and from website suggestions. It is therefore apparent that the Steering Group was sovereign and not the Forum; as the Steering Group was not completely bound by Forum decisions (PDNPA, 2002c; PDNPA, 2002d). However, it was claimed that proposals not agreed on in the Forum were added only if all Steering Group members agreed that they ‘obviously added to the package of proposals’ (PDNPA, 2002a). It is also important that those participating via the website have their views heard and considered. Clearly the Steering Group used a range of decision-making procedures, at times accepting the advice of the technical experts, at other rejecting it and taking suggestions from the Forum or website. Some of the Steering Group’s decisions were made through consensus, but in general it took majority decisions as the necessity of time and the need for decisions to be made overrode the desire for consensus (Connelly et al, 2006, p. 273). The Steering Group’s considerable decision-making powers were predominantly justified because the output from the Forum was uncoordinated, with little or no direction. The co-ordination problems have been enhanced due to some of the procedures in the Forum, which have divided participants into small mixed stakeholder deliberative sub-groups. Here we see a discursive dilemma. The Management Plan could reflect the preferences that received majority support in the Forum vote, regardless of their compatibility. Alternatively decisions could be co-ordinated to be rationally consistent, but be unresponsive to the Forum’s preferences. The former is more democratic, but at a sacrifice to deliberation and the latter more deliberative, but at a loss to democracy (Pettit, 2003, p. 138). Petit suggests that it is more important that decisions meet deliberative requirements and are rationally compatible (Pettit, 2003, p. 155), which is what the Steering Group in the Stanage Forum attempted to ensure. Petit further suggests that it is necessary to ensure that all decisions remain contestable, especially as participants will change over time (Pettit, 2003, p. 156), as they have done in the Stanage Forum. Importantly then the Stanage Forums have continued with an annual review of the Management Plan.

A range of decision-making methods were used in the Forum. Decision-making was not achieved through consensus, despite attempts to manipulate one. However, a

deliberative compromise on broad principles was achieved with voting required to decide on the specifics. These were co-ordinated by the Steering Group to ensure compatibility. The Steering Group used combinations of consensus, compromise, voting and deferring to the Forum, the website and specialists when making these decisions.

Stage 4: Implementation

The Steering Group also decided who should be responsible for implementing the Management Plan's proposals, and provided a timescale for implementation, and set out which objectives should have priority (PDNPA, 2002b, Section 4.2). Since 2002 implementation has been ongoing and it has been suggested is stalling as the original conflicts that were present at the start of the Forum, between recreationalists and environmentalists, over access and conservation are still persisting (Connelly et al, 2006, p. 272). Certainly more research is required on the implementation of the Stanage Forum's Management Plan to establish if this is the case.

Nevertheless, many of the aspects of the Management Plan have been implemented and many of the stakeholders have been actively involved in this implementation. Theory suggests that the main advantage of stakeholders being actively involved in decision-making processes is that once the decision has been made, it generally becomes easier to implement (Barber, 1984; Fung and Wright, 2001, p. 26). This is partly to do with the fact that stakeholders, who have participated in making the decision, are more likely to see the process as a legitimate one and, therefore, accept the consequential decision, even if it is not what they hoped for, than if it was imposed by an external authority without their involvement. Moreover, if the members have been engaged in democratic debate about these issues themselves, they can see how their own views may have influenced that debate, again making the resulting decision even more legitimate. Secondly, the participants can then help in the implementation of the decision, either through the carrying out of the services/ activities set out, or in dissemination of information about the decision. Due to the fact that decisions are now easier to enforce, more options become open, rather than being ruled out tout court (Fung and Wright, 2001, p. 18). Voluntary associations, involved in the Forum, have been actively involved in the implementation of much of the Management Plan. Furthermore, many of these associations, such as BMC, Ramblers Associations,

Derbyshire Soaring Club and Dark Peak Fell-runners, have been able to disseminate the decisions made in the Management Plan and advice on the most environmentally friendly ways to access the Estate, to their members. Although this has not led to complete compliance, by all recreationalists from these groups, with all the decisions made in the Plan, it is suggested that implementation 'has been much easier and much more successful than before the Forum process began' (PDNPA, 2008b).

It is further suggested that participatory processes mean that powerful organisations have less ability to veto any decisions that they dislike because their co-operation will become less important, due to the increased co-operation of other stakeholders (Cohen and Rogers, 1995, pp. 65-6; Smith, 2001, p. 78). However, the experience of the Stanage Forum process suggests that certain organisations are so powerful, and their co-operation so vital to implementing decisions that they can derail any decisions that they dislike. There were several pertinent examples of this in the Stanage Forum including local bus companies, the cement and gas works, none of which the PDNPA has been devolved sufficient powers to control, despite proposals coming from the Forum aiming to increase and integrate bus provision to the Estate and reduce pollution. Consequently, these companies cannot be forced to abide by these proposals and the PDNPA was left to try and persuade, negotiate and compromise with these companies in order to implement these proposals, which ultimately proved unsuccessful. Therefore the status quo has remained in these key respects and the status quo will usually favour already dominant groups, which it has done here, at the expense of environmental concerns. The inability to implement decisions made then has seriously prevented the synthesisation of deliberative democracy and sustainability. Richardson and Connelly have rightly realised that one problem to the consensus building approach is that certain stakeholder groups may be unwilling for authority to be democratically shared, and think that a continuation of conflict is a better strategy to further their interests than through striving for consensus (Richardson and Connelly, 2002, p. 21). This certainly seems to be the case with local bus companies, the cement works and gas company, as they have been able to achieve the promotion of their interests without having to participate in the Stanage Forum, where they would have had to justify these interests publicly.

This indicates that the PDNPA has not been devolved sufficient powers, as the powers to control these companies have not been devolved but are retained by the national government. If deliberative democracy is to be genuinely institutionalised, and deliberation and decision-making linked, then it is essential that micro forums like Stanage have binding decision making power to ensure the decisions are implemented and enforced: ‘Democracy involves debate and discussion, but these are not enough if they remain inconclusive and ineffective in determining actual policies’ (Dahl, cited in Gastill, 1993, p. 16; Elstub, 2008a, p. 178). As the evidence from Stanage indicates if forums do not have the power to make binding decisions then it is more likely that some stakeholders, especially those with commercial interests, will choose not to participate or withdraw, if they feel the forums are going against their interests, especially if they have ‘a lot to lose’ (Hendriks, 2002, p. 65; Hendriks 2006; Cohen and Rogers, 2003, p. 252). This also suggests that if the deliberative forums do result in binding and enforceable decisions, stakeholders are more likely to want to participate, precisely because they have a lot to lose or gain, as the most effective way to influence outcomes will be through participation in the forums (Fung and Wright, 2001, p. 24; Newman et al, 2004, p. 213; Hendriks, 2006; Elstub, 2008b, p. 149). This is the case with local bus companies, the cement works and gas company as they have had effective veto over decisions, as their co-operation was essential for several aspects of the Management Plan to be implemented. However, it is impossible to say whether different proposals would have been agreed on in the Forum, if they had participated.

Some of the Forum’s more environmentally sensitive decisions were also overruled by the introduction of Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), which ensured access for all, even previous areas on the estate where access had previously been limited. In addition the Police and the County Council refused to implement a roadside parking clearway that had been advocated in the Management Plan (PDNPA, 2008b). Therefore another threat to democracy in arenas such as the Stanage Forum is that powerful groups can operate, ‘from points outside the range of observable political behaviour...’ without actually intervening ‘directly in the deliberations’ of those participating (Crenson in Lukes, 1974, p. 43). In complex societies, with multiple modes and levels of governance that constantly change and overlap, all decision-making arenas are likely to be curtailed by decisions taken in other locations of governance. Here we see the PDNPA being restricted by both National and Local government.

It seems the participation of the key stakeholders in the Forum has made the implementation of the Management Plan easier and more efficient. However, more evidence is required, and implementation of the Plan is still very much an ongoing process. However, where implementation has occurred, a variety of stakeholders have been involved. However, much of the implementation of the plan has been prevented by powerful, private companies refusing to comply, or by alternative forms of governance. If deliberation and decision-making are to be joined, and deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability synthesised, then citizens' forums must be devolved sufficient power to enforce the decisions they make.

Stage 5: Review

Although the Management Plan was ratified in the fourth Forum in 2002, it was not the end of the forum or the democratic deliberative process, as there has been an annual Forum held to evaluate the Management Plan, its implementation and its effectiveness. This means that all decisions made in the Forum were provisional and potentially subject to change as new information and reasons come available for consideration. Deliberative democracy is not a decision-making mechanism that leads to 'final' decisions, as the process often reveals deeper problems than had been anticipated, and preferences continue to change in light of new information (Niemeyer, 2004, p. 364). As ecologies are complex, uncertain and variable 'definitive once-and-for-all outcomes are not possible', review procedures are essential to environmentally sensitive decision-making (Niemeyer, 2004, p. 352). Several proposals, incorporated in the original Management Plan have been reviewed changed and implemented through this process, although the overriding principles agreed in the Forum have remained the same. Decision-making review processes are considerably faster where the decisions have been decentralised as 'the distance and time between decisions, action, effect, observation, and reconsideration' is vastly reduced. Therefore, if poor decisions have been made, which is always inevitable even in a deliberative democracy, they can be amended expediently (Fung and Wright, 2001, p. 26).

It is important that the review process also embodies the norms of deliberative democracy. The idea has been for the deliberative Forum's to continue annually to

ensure this. Unfortunately, despite attracting a large number of new participants, levels of participation in these review Forums has declined. The Steering Group has also continued to meet and review the Plan, holding approximately four meetings a year to do this. Overall the Steering Group has gained in power over the Forum since the launch of the Management Plan. The Forum meetings now have fewer opportunities for deliberative participation, and tend to be dominated by reports from the Steering Group. The Forum is now used more as a body to ratify suggestions for reform that have originated from the Steering Group, rather a deliberative event to produce suggestions.

THE STANAGE FORUM'S DECISIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RATIONALITY

Despite the fact that the Stanage Forum could have approximated the norms of deliberative democracy more closely, especially in relation to reducing the power of the Steering Group to ensure all participants had an equal say in the making and review of the decisions, it is still an example of deliberative democracy in practice. Consequently, if environmental theorists are right in suggesting that such a decision-making structure will generate environmentally rational preferences and decisions, then an analysis of the Stanage Forum's Management Plan will be a good test of this theory.

As detailed above, consensus was not reached in the Forum, but there was deliberative compromise on the overall aims. The key aims of the Management Plan was to guarantee access to the estate for visitors, including those with special needs local residents, local business, commuters and people passing through; while ensuring that this access was compatible with the protection and enhancement of the ecology and the landscape. Therefore, proposals that did not ensure access would be incompatible with this aim and it is then immediately evident that the overall focus of the decisions did not reflect a particularly strong environmental rationality. Although the conservation of the ecology was a key priority, it was secondary to access to the area. The overall aim is to balance both of these, but in all circumstances that is unrealistic due to the inherent tensions between these aims, and the stakeholders associated with them.

Consequently, the evidence here indicates that deliberative democracy will not inevitably lead to sustainability. One of the main reasons for this is deliberative

democracy is unlikely to result in a consensus, so compromise and aggregation are required to make final decisions. Even if the compromise occurs under deliberatively democratic conditions, and the preferences that are aggregated are post-deliberative ones, experience from the Stanage Forum indicates that democratic deliberation will aid people in focusing on and accepting the common goods like sustainability, but this will still conflict with other common goods, such as access. Sustainability is then destined to be compromised with other goods, meaning that the most environmentally sustainable suggestions fail to be included in the final decisions.

In the Stanage Forum the most environmentally rational proposals did not receive majority support and in some instances environmental considerations were completely overridden. Measures that were proposed and discussed that had a strong environmental rationality, but did not make it into the Management Plan, included road closures and tolls, parking limits, speed limits, footpaths used to channel visitors away from sensitive areas and the active discouragement of hang-gliders from using a sensitive site during the breeding season (PDNPA, 2002b). A key reason why these proposals were not adopted was that they restricted access to the estate too significantly.

It seems that environmentally rational reasons will not necessarily be the most convincing in all circumstances. Another argument that was offered against the more radical environmental proposals, listed above, and that ultimately proved decisive, were that many of these measures would have a negative impact on the view, natural landscape and wilderness experience of the Estate. Although this argument was 'public' and proved persuasive, it was put forward by the recreationalists, especially climbers and particularly by the BMC. It could therefore have been an argument that was instrumentally motivated to ensure access was not compromised to achieve sustainability. Therefore although deliberative democracy encourages participants to offer public reasons, these can still be offered to justify instrumental ends (Cohen, 1989; Miller, 1993, p. 76), especially where there is an established majority in the forum as there was with recreationalists, climbers and the BMC in particular in the Stanage Forum. The experience of the Stanage Forum therefore supports, to a degree, the findings of Zwart (2003, pp. 37-38), that following instances of democratic deliberation between stakeholders, where participants enter the forum with strong opinions on an issue, public reasons can be produced to defend pre-deliberative self-interested

preferences rather than a 'generalisable interest' arising. Or at the very least that participants associate with the interpretation of the common good that most closely mirrors their initial interests.

Consequently, the majority of measures included in the Management Plan, were a compromise between access and sustainability in favour of access and therefore tried to ensure access, but reduce its impact on the environment. Therefore there have been many objectives in the proposal to increase and integrate public transport, including new bus routes, a shuttle bus between Stanage Edge and local stations, park and ride schemes, co-ordination of buses with local trains, the encouragement of cycle access through the introduction of cycle lanes and drop off points by the cliffs for special needs and elderly visitors and those with heavy equipment, e.g. climbers and hang-gliders, were included in the Plan.⁸ As well as trying to reduce the amount of traffic into the estate, measures such as free and hidden parking outside the estate, with public transport connections, restricted parking and parking charges in the estate were also advocated to reduce the impact of access, but once again not to curtail access. Similarly environmentally sensitive access by all recreational users was also to be maintained by encouraging people to use recreational paths through improved education and information and the temporary fencing-off of key areas to ensure sufficient provision of essential food sources to birds. It was decided that money generated from the outdoor industries should be used to subsidise management of the area and public transport. The farm's role was also redefined with the priority now being maintenance of the landscape rather than profit generation (PDNPA, 2002b).

Therefore there is still evidence, from the Stanage Forum, of a link between deliberative democracy and environmental rationality. Although these decisions favour access over environmental sustainability many of these measures were still significant because they went directly against the original interests and preferences of many of the recreationalists, as set out in the first Forum. However, most of the recreationalists voted for these proposals in the fourth Forum, which indicates that preference change, to take into account environmental issues, did occur due to the deliberative process

⁸ As discussed above the problems in implementing this proposal has been trying to get local bus companies, none of which actually participated in the forum, to carry roof racks or trailers to transport

(PDNPA, 2002b). Therefore, although the participants in the Stange Forum have not discarded their own interests in favour of environmental interests, they have at least realised, to a greater extent, how their interests and actions affect the environment and how their interests are connected to the environmental wellbeing of the area, which is what Eckersley predicted democratic deliberation on environmental issues might produce (Eckersley, 2000, p. 120).

There were some more radical proposals included in the Management Plan which favoured environmental concerns above access, which further indicates this to be the case. For example the use of off road four-wheel drive and motor bike was banned. This was significant because it goes completely against the interests of those who participate in this recreational activity.⁹ Other recreational pursuits that, although not as damaging to the environment as the use of motorized vehicles, still had a negative environmental impact had their activities restricted, but not banned. For example the access of hang-gliders and para-gliders was restricted to locations that did not affect anticipated bird breeding sites. Once again highlighting a growing ecological rationality, as the hang-gliders had been loathed to restrict their access at all when the Forum began. The Management Plan also included the development of designated areas for nature conservation, where access would be permanently restricted and localised temporary access restrictions and voluntary restriction on access to certain less visited areas during the bird breeding season. These measures were significant, because they demonstrate the change in preferences of the recreationalists, who were prepared to restrict their own access, at least to an extent in favour of environmental considerations following the debate in the Forums. Moreover, it shows that following the Forum debates they have acknowledged responsibility for environment damage and taken on the duty of environmental protection, which they were reluctant to do at the start of the process (PDNPA, 2002b).

recreational equipment. Consequently, the PDNPA has started running its own bus service, with these features instead (PDNPA 2008c).

⁹ However, there were no representatives from these recreational groups in the Forum to articulate their reasons for maintaining this activity. This suggests if participants from a certain interest are not present their interests will not be protected by the other participants. (Having realised that by refusing to participate in the Forum they were effectively excluding themselves, associations representing these interests have participated in the review Forums and a compromise is being sought). However, it is also the motorised recreational pursuits that cause the most environmental damage, so it could also indicate an environmental rationality taking precedence over unlimited access.

Despite this increasing awareness of environmental issues that deliberative democracy in the Stanage Forum produced, it seems apparent that in a deliberative democracy environmental values cannot be guaranteed to prevail; a claim that is supported elsewhere both theoretically (Goodin, 1992; Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 236), and empirically (Zwart, 2003). It is clear that although sustaining the ecology of the estate was seen as a common good, access to the estate was also seen as a common good, which indicates that there will often be more than one common good in any situation. A compromise between access and sustainability, more in favour of access, was the ultimate result. Although there is evidence to suggest that the Stanage Forum's participant's preferences have changed due to debate in the deliberative arena and that they have become more environmentally aware, this change is also limited as most participants were not willing to overly restrict their access.

However, much of this analysis depends on one's conception of sustainability, and it is not an objective concept (Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 247) or a 'fixed goal' (Niemeyer, 2004, p. 367). Therefore the most important contribution that deliberative democracy could make to environmentalism, and the synthesis between these two theories, is enabling public debate on the varying and competing interpretations of sustainability in a given context. If this is accepted then 'there is a necessary link connecting an open view of sustainability and deliberative politics' (Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 247). The Stanage Forum has, in varying degrees, approximated the norms of deliberative democracy, and enabled those with a stake in the North Lees Estate to do exactly this. The resulting vision of sustainability is one that aims to protect, preserve and enhance the local environment, but is also purely anthropocentric in that sustainability here also involves ensuring people get to enjoy this environment too.

CONCLUSION

The current hegemony in environmental theory is that deliberative democracy will lead to the promotion of environmental sustainability. However, if this synthesis is to occur deliberation must result in binding decisions. There are significant challenges to linking deliberative democracy with decision-making, which the case study of the Stanage Forum highlights. Ultimately many trade-offs need to be made between the ideal of deliberative democracy and its approximation in practice.

Because these trade-offs, between ideal and practice, are to do with empirical necessities, which vary from situation to situation, the nature of the trade-offs will differ from context to context. Despite this, the Stanage Forum can help identify some general problems, and solutions, in relation to the various decision-making stages.

Ideally the agenda would emerge through democratic deliberation itself. In reality it seems elites will play a significant role, although pressure for an agenda can also derive from civil society. In addition the pressure to make legitimate decisions means elites may well open formal routes for stakeholders to participate in agenda setting. This was the case in the Stanage Forum, where the PDNPA determined the broad agenda, with the specific agenda being determined through deliberation in the Forum.

The agenda and nature of the decision is also determined by who participates in deliberation and decision-making. Ideally all affected should participate in collective deliberations, but there are significant problems with this in practice. Including all in a debate is logistically impossible and not all people want to participate, even in decisions in which they have a stake. Although decentralisation helps alleviate both of these problems, it cannot remove the need for representation. Within the Stanage Forum the key stakeholders were mainly represented through members of voluntary associations and through the Steering Group. The difficulties with these representative mechanisms included ensuring a balance of all views (which the theory of deliberative democracy demands), having clear lines of representation and accountability and ensuring the representatives do not gain excessive and unaccountable power. It was in all these aspects that the Stanage Forum proved most unsuccessful, and where the greatest movement away from the deliberative ideal was experienced. More funding for the Forum could have alleviated these problems, at least to a degree, but there are tensions between these varying aims. The representative bodies could be elected by the Forum to establish principle-agent bonds and clear lines of accountability, but this could compromise the balance of views in the body.

Ideally the procedures that regulate deliberation will be designed through democratic deliberation. The obvious regress here means that elites will inevitably play a role in procedure design, although this can be done in conjunction with citizen

representatives, as was the case in the Stanage Forum. Broadly speaking, there are two choices in deliberative style; evidence and verdict. Evidence style deliberation is inclusive, consensual, with more chance of preference transformation, but it can suppress conflict, but ultimately seems more in line with the norms of deliberative democracy. Reasons will dominate deliberative exchanges, but other forms of communication, including greeting, rhetoric and storytelling, will also be prevalent. Logistical problems can necessitate the breaking down of a deliberative body into small fluid groups, but this can also reduce factions developing, and therefore facilitate preference change. The Stanage Forum also indicates that an interactive website is essential to ensure that all have access to all relevant information and reasons, can offer their own information and reasons, which might impact upon preferences, and to publicise the deliberations of representatives.

Deliberative theorists dispute whether it is possible or desirable to have consensual decision-making. In the Stanage Forum no consensus was reached, despite this being the aim, but there was compromise on the overall aims and a vote taken on the specifics, after a period of deliberation. This led to a discursive dilemma of whether to ensure democratic responsiveness to the proposals that received majority support or to ensure rational compatibility between these proposals. The Stanage Forum opted for the latter, which further added to the importance of representative bodies, like the Steering Group used here.

When it comes to implementing these decisions it seems likely that the stakeholders who participated in the decision-making process will assist, which will accommodate implementation. However, this can be significantly offset by powerful groups, who operate outside the forum process, and who benefit from maintaining the status quo. Consequently, the decentralisation of sufficient powers to such forums to enforce the decisions they make is absolutely essential. However, in systems of multi-level governance there will inevitably be conflicting sources of authority. Decisions must also be reviewed and changed in light of new reasons and information. This review process must also approximate the norms of deliberative democracy. However, the experience of the Stanage Forum suggests it is more difficult to sustain the same levels of participation in the review process, providing more opportunity for elites to dominate.

Overall, trade-offs between theory and practice are essential and consequently the Stanage Forum is an approximation of deliberative democracy. This means analysis of its decisions can be employed to judge whether deliberative democracy will lead to sustainable decisions. Some of the decisions did reflect a greater environmental rationality, than was present at the start of the Forum, and participants certainly became more aware of how their behaviour impacts upon the environment. Ultimately though, environmental goods were compromised with other general goods, such as access, which was seen as the most important, and generalisable, good in this context. Therefore environmentally sustainable proposals, that went against access too excessively, were not accepted. Although much more empirical evidence is needed to establish this, the Stanage Forum case does indicate that Goodin (1992, p. 168) is right to argue that there is no necessary connection between deliberative democracy and environmental rationality and sustainable decisions, because the process cannot guarantee any outcome, even when environmental issues are on the agenda. Although environmental arguments were heard throughout the Stanage Forum, 'to listen to is not necessarily to embrace' (Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 238). People will not always find environmental arguments the most convincing. Environmental theorists are therefore asking deliberative democracy 'to do more than it can deliver' (Arias-Maldonado, 2007, p. 246), if they expect deliberative democracy and environmental sustainability to be synthesised in every context. However, 'sustainability' is not a fixed and objective concept, and should therefore be determined in each context through deliberative democracy. Environmental theorists are therefore right to see deliberative democracy as the most justifiable decision-making mechanism, but not because it can guarantee sustainable outcomes. The good news is that deliberative democracy can be approximated in practice, but we must learn from this practice to constantly strive to approximate it even closer.

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